

## Addendum to “Bruckner on Valve Trombone?— Low Brass Performance Practice in Anton Bruckner’s Works”

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Translated by Howard Weiner

Following the publication of my article on the performance practice of low brass instruments in Bruckner’s works in the previous issue of the *HBSJ*,<sup>1</sup> several colleagues have called my attention to sources that provide interesting and decisive new evidence on this subject.

As stated in my article, there are a number of indications that, soon after their invention, valve instruments found their way to Upper Austria, the area of the country where Anton Bruckner grew up and experienced his musical socialization. The recently published chronicle of the band of Micheldorf (a small market town approximately fifty kilometers south of Bruckner’s place of birth) now offers the first source that clearly supports this scenario. In the foundation charter, dated 11 October 1833, of the Micheldorf Musical Society as a brass band, six musicians are named with their instruments. Besides a *Zugtrompete* (slide trumpet) and a slide trombone, the thirteen-piece ensemble also had at least two valve trumpets, two valve horns, and a valve trombone at its disposal.<sup>2</sup>

This first unambiguous evidence of the use of the valve trombone in Upper Austria (albeit in the area of amateur music-making) lends more weight to my hypothesis that valve trombones were employed in first performances of Bruckner’s works. This hypothesis receives additional confirmation through pencil annotations found in the accessible autograph performance material used for the 1854 premiere of Bruckner’s motet *Libera me* (WAB 22). In the “alto” trombone part of this motet, numerals were added in pencil above a number of notes by someone other than Bruckner.<sup>3</sup> The only logical explanation for this is that a musician, who was obviously not very proficient on his instrument, wrote in the numerals as a reminder of the required fingerings. While the numeral 2 over the notes *db'*, *e'*, and *a'* could indicate either the actuation of the second valve of a valve trombone in *Bb* or the second position of a slide trombone in *Bb*, the numeral 1 above the notes *c'* and *eb'* clearly has to be understood as the fingering for the first valve of a valve trombone.<sup>4</sup> The situation becomes unequivocal through the notation of the numeral 0 above the notes *bb'* and *f'*, indicating that all valves are to remain open. It goes without saying that these fingerings correspond to the fingering system of the *Bb* (alto/tenor/bass) valve trombone shown in the second edition of Andreas Nemetz’s trombone method, which dates from the 1830s.<sup>5</sup>

In my article I proposed the scenario that three valve trombones had been purchased by St. Florian Abbey half a year before the premiere of *Libera me*, instruments that were then used in the performance of the motet, possibly by amateur musicians.<sup>6</sup> Although the pencil markings in the “alto” trombone part cannot be dated precisely (the handwriting appears to be contemporary with Bruckner’s autograph), their existence confirms my hypothesis.

Apart from this, recently rediscovered parts from contemporary Bruckner performances and the digitalization of a large proportion of the generally known Bruckner performance materials have brought to light further interesting evidence.<sup>7</sup> For example, some of the parts labeled “Trombone Alto” or “Trombone 1mo (Alto)” in the performance material of Bruckner premieres are notated in bass clef.<sup>8</sup> In other cases, tenor clef parts were changed into treble clef parts to be read in B $\flat$  by means of penciled-in alterations of accidentals and the addition of a treble clef in a hand different than that of the copyist.<sup>9</sup> All this clearly points to semi-professional performers who were not used to reading alto and tenor clefs. These observations in turn strengthen my hypothesis that military musicians or members of civil guard bands participated on valve trombones particularly in the premieres of Bruckner’s early works.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Bernhard Rainer, “Bruckner on Valve Trombone?—Low Brass Performance Practice in Anton Bruckner’s Works,” *Historic Brass Society Journal* 28 (2016): 135–61.

<sup>2</sup> The charter of the “Verein der musikalischen Gesellschaft zur Blechharmonie in Micheldorf” was signed on 11 October 1833 by the following musicians:

*Franz Zeitlinger* 1. *Maschinhorn* (*Vorsteher des Vereines*) [1st valve horn (head of the society)]

*Michael Zeitlinger*, *Blumau*

*Johann Moser*, 3. *Maschin Tromba* [3rd valve trumpet]

*Franz Resl*, *Maschintrompetist* [valve trumpeter]

*Ignaz Frischauf*, *Zugtrompete* [slide trumpet]

*Michael Weinmeister*, 2. *Maschin Horn* [2nd valve horn]

*Johann Burer*, *Zug Posaunist* [slide trombonist]

*Leopold Johann Gamd*, *Maschin Posaunist* [valve trombonist]

*Ignaz Kollerer*

*Franz Rechberger*

*Anton Closz*

*Josef Schnefus*

*Simon Hochegger*

See *Chronik der Musikkapelle Micheldorf* <http://www.mmk-micheldorf.at/index.php?page=about> (accessed 5 August 2017). I would like to thank Andreas Lindner (Vienna) for calling my attention to this website.

<sup>3</sup> I would like to thank Mario Aschauer (Huntsville, TX), a collaborator on the *New Anton Bruckner Complete Edition*, for pointing out the existence of the pencil annotations in the “alto” trombone part of the performance material of the premiere.

<sup>4</sup> See manuscript 20-34, Stift St. Florian, fol. 08r. A digital image of the performance material of the premiere of *Libera me* (WAB 22) can be viewed on the website of the Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Institut für kunst- und musikhistorische Forschungen, Abteilung Musikwissenschaft, Bruckner Forschung: [http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page\\_id=959&Signatur=A-SF20-34](http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page_id=959&Signatur=A-SF20-34).

<sup>5</sup> See Plate 3, scale with fingerings for the alto trombone, in Howard Weiner, “Andreas Nemetz’s *Neueste Posaun-Schule* Revisited,” *Historic Brass Society Journal* 23 (2011): 103–18, here, 112.

<sup>6</sup> On the basis of new information, it is possible to date the premiere of *Libera me* to 28 March 1854, rather than 24 March 1854 as stated in my article.

<sup>7</sup> For example, the performance material for Bruckner's E-Minor Mass (WAB 27) was found only recently in the Linz episcopal archive. See Ikarus Kaiser and Robert Klugseder, "Neu aufgefundenes Aufführungsmaterial des Linzer Domchors im Diözesanarchiv Linz," in *Mitteilungen des Abil* (2016).

<sup>8</sup> For example, the first trombone parts to the cantata *Auf, Brüder! Auf, und die Saiten zur Hand!* (WAB 60), manuscript 19-8b, Stift St. Florian, fol. 48r./v.; the *Festkantate* (WAB 16), manuscript 470\_6\_29, Diözesanarchiv Linz, Domchorarchiv, pp. 095/096; and the E-Minor Mass (WAB 27) manuscript 20-69a, Stift St. Florian, fols. 224r.-227v. Digital images of these parts can be found at: [http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page\\_id=959&Signatur=A-SF19-8b](http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page_id=959&Signatur=A-SF19-8b) (WAB 60), [http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page\\_id=959&Signatur=A-LId470\\_6\\_29](http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page_id=959&Signatur=A-LId470_6_29) (WAB 16), [http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page\\_id=959&Signatur=A-SF20-69a](http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page_id=959&Signatur=A-SF20-69a) (WAB 27).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the *Trombone Tenore* part of the Requiem in D Minor (WAB 39), manuscript 20-53c, Stift St. Florian, pp. 159-164 (accessible at [http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page\\_id=959&Signatur=A-SF20-53c](http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page_id=959&Signatur=A-SF20-53c)). In a second set of parts for the performances of the Requiem in the 1890s, copied by Bruckner's friend Franz Xaver Bayer after Bruckner's revision of the work in 1892, the *Trombone alto* part is notated in B $\flat$  treble clef, and the *Tenor Trombone* part in B $\flat$  treble clef as well as in bass clef. See Mus.Hs.2125-II, Austrian National Library, Musiksammlung, fols. 116r-121r. Digital images at: [http://search.obvsg.at/primo\\_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?institution=ONB&vid=ONB&onCampus=false&lang=ger&docId=ONB\\_aleph\\_onb06000211223](http://search.obvsg.at/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?institution=ONB&vid=ONB&onCampus=false&lang=ger&docId=ONB_aleph_onb06000211223). At the end of the bass-clef *Trombone 2ndo* part of the motet *Afferentur* (WAB 1), the complete part was copied a second time in pencil by a professional scribe in tenor clef. Additionally, this tenor-clef part was then altered again by another hand (that of the trombonist?) into treble clef prefixed by the indication *In B* (in B $\flat$ ), with the accidentals modified accordingly. It cannot be determined with certainty whether this double copy and the B $\flat$  treble-clef adaptation were made for the premiere. However, in this set of performance material, which was written in the ink used by Franz Schimanschek, Bruckner's main copyist during his time in Upper Austria, there are further pencil annotations in other parts, one of which indicates the date of the premiere: 13 December 1861. See manuscript 20-52b, Stift St. Florian, fol. 14 (*Trombone Tenore*), fol. 15 (Uraufführungsdatum). Accessible at: [http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page\\_id=959&Signatur=A-SF20-52b](http://www.bruckner-online.at/?page_id=959&Signatur=A-SF20-52b)

