



Warm-Ups for Trombone Choir

Bruce Tychinski

Dedication

Thank you to my students at the University of Southern Mississippi (2005-10) and the University of Delaware (2010-2013) for inspiring me to compose these exercises and helping refine them along the way.

Introduction

In 2005 I wanted to have some short exercises to play at the start of Trombone Choir rehearsal to get my students listening to one another so they could find the correct intonation, blend and balance. Standard chorales are fantastic for this but offer very little variety in style and harmony. I sketched three short exercises that I used with my group for several years, but I discovered that the older students had learned what these "felt" like and could replicate it very quickly. A good thing perhaps, but it also meant that we needed some new material to keep them on their toes.

How to Use This Book

Warm-Ups for Trombone Choir is divided into two volumes: Volume One is Quartets and Volume Two is Octets. The two volumes contain completely different exercises and are both intended for use by trombone choirs of all sizes: chamber ensembles and large choirs doubling, tripling or even quadrupling the parts. The octets expand the range considerably on the top and bottom parts to make room for lots of chord notes in between. The early exercises in each volume are principally just harmonic, with very little moving parts. They gradually add more moving lines and begin to resemble an actual composition with a variety of meters and settings.

The book focuses largely on harmony and balance in the choir, but there are also exercises that address specific concepts. Exercises listed as "Traditional Harmonies" use only three or four-note chords, but not always in traditional chord progressions. "Extended Harmonies" add in 9ths, 11ths, and 13ths. In the exercises with "Common-Tone Modulations" there is a note in every chord that carries through into the next one, although it may be respelled. "Perfect 4ths and 5ths" and "Tritones" highlight those intervals both vertically and linearly. "Unison Breakout and Rejoining" starts with true unisons or octaves, branches to chords, and proceeds back to unisons. "Consonant Clusters" follow clusters of diatonic notes, while "Dissonant Clusters" have tightly grouped half steps. "Bell Tones" are used as a sole basis in the quartet edition and as a background setting in the octet edition. Replicating style and articulation of a melodic fragment is explored in the "Pass the Motive" exercises. The final exercise in the octet edition is at a very slow tempo with the harmony changing gradually so that the players will need to stagger breathe and work on sneaking in and out during longer notes.

I tried to use a variety of keys and frequently omitted dynamics, tempo, or articulations intentionally. This allows the conductor to choose these for a full exercise or change them on the fly, which I often do in rehearsal. I recommend using three or four warm-ups at the start of rehearsal, choosing exercises that are similar to music you are about to rehearse. There are plenty from which to select, so you can play new exercises every rehearsal or use some favorites regularly to develop a consistent pattern. In a brief 7-10 minute period, your choir will be focused, listening to one another, and the overall group sound will steadily improve from one week to the next!

Warm-Ups for Trombone Choir

Volume 1: Quartets

Bruce Tychinski

1: Traditional Harmonies

Moderato

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Trombone 3

Trombone 4

This system contains the first five measures of the warm-up for a four-part trombone choir. Each part is written on a bass staff with a common time signature (C). Trombone 1 starts on G2, moves to A2 in measure 2, and returns to G2 in measure 3. Trombone 2 starts on F2, moves to E2 in measure 2, and returns to F2 in measure 3. Trombone 3 starts on E2, moves to D2 in measure 2, and returns to E2 in measure 3. Trombone 4 starts on D2, moves to C2 in measure 2, and returns to D2 in measure 3. All parts use half notes with slurs connecting the notes across measures.

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

This system contains measures 6 through 10. A rehearsal mark '9' is placed above the staff for Trombone 1 at the beginning of measure 9. The parts continue with the same harmonic structure as the first system, with Trombone 1 moving between G2 and A2, Trombone 2 between F2 and E2, Trombone 3 between E2 and D2, and Trombone 4 between D2 and C2.

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

This system contains the final five measures (11-15) of the warm-up. The parts conclude with the same harmonic structure, ending on the same notes as the previous system: G2 for Trombone 1, F2 for Trombone 2, E2 for Trombone 3, and D2 for Trombone 4.

2: Traditional Harmonies

Moderato

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

The first system of tuba harmonies consists of four staves, each with a bass clef and a common time signature 'C'. The notes are as follows:

Staff	Measure 1	Measure 2	Measure 3	Measure 4	Measure 5
Tbn. 1	C4	B3	Bb3	Bb3	A3
Tbn. 2	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3	A3	Bb3
Tbn. 3	C4	C4	C4	B3	C4
Tbn. 4	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3	A3	A3

9

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

The second system of tuba harmonies starts at measure 9, indicated by a box with the number '9'. It consists of four staves with the following notes:

Staff	Measure 9	Measure 10	Measure 11	Measure 12	Measure 13	Measure 14
Tbn. 1	A3	A3	G3	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3
Tbn. 2	Bb3	Bb3	A3	A3	Bb3	A3
Tbn. 3	C4	C4	B3	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3
Tbn. 4	C4	C4	B3	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

The third system of tuba harmonies consists of four staves with the following notes:

Staff	Measure 15	Measure 16	Measure 17	Measure 18	Measure 19
Tbn. 1	A3	G3	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3
Tbn. 2	A3	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3
Tbn. 3	A3	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3	A3
Tbn. 4	A3	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3	Bb3

19: Bell Tones

Moderato

Tbn. 1

fp

fp

fp

fp *mf*

Tbn. 2

fp

fp

fp

fp *mf*

Tbn. 3

fp

fp

fp

fp *mf*

Tbn. 4

fp

fp

fp

mf

Tbn. 1

fp

fp

fp

mf

Tbn. 2

fp

fp

fp

fp *mf*

Tbn. 3

fp

fp

fp

fp *mf*

Tbn. 4

fp

fp

fp

fp *mf*

