

Road
Not
Taken

Concerto for Bass Trombone
and Trombone Ensemble

James M. Stephenson

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Road Not Taken

Concerto for Bass Trombone and Trombone Ensemble

by James M. Stephenson

Three Movements:

- I. Two Roads
- II. Diverged
- III. All the Difference

Duration: Approx. 16 minutes.

Scored for Solo Bass Trombone and 11-player Trombone Ensemble:

1 Alto/Tenor Trombone
7 Tenor Trombones
3 Bass Trombones

Program Notes:

The title for 'Road Not Taken' was arrived upon after completion of the score, and in a rather 'wandering' manner.

Much of the piece is based on off-beats, set in many different forms; therefore my working title was always "Off the beaten path". This title didn't really hold much water for me, and after a bit of stretching and re-working, I arrived at the current title, based obviously on Robert Frost's famous poem. The more I thought about it, the more connections I began to realize between my musical life, this piece, and the title.

First of all, in my own life, I have chosen the less traveled path. Having been comfortably situated in two steady performing jobs for almost 20 years, my wife and I decided to quit, move to a completely different location, and follow my new-found passion for composing. One might argue also that composing a bass trombone concerto, in and of itself, is a 'road less taken'. It is not the most common choice for a concerto. Lastly, it was my goal to allow for the solo bass trombone to be featured in a manner inconsistent with the often misguided preconceptions: at the request of the dedicatee and co-commissioner, Matthew Guilford, the instrument is presented lyrically, and the upper range is displayed equally, if not more than, the lower.

More technically speaking, the movements themselves are pretty standard in form, with themes, ideas and harmonies recurring and developed throughout the piece to form a consistent whole. An interesting device only used in the slow movement is the introduction of a separate trio of players, who interrupt occasionally with their off-kilter fragments, almost a skipping old record-player. The last movement is quite virtuosic, calling for much endurance, agility and extended range from the soloist.

It is with much gratitude that I dedicate this score to the co-commissioners: the Washington Trombone Ensemble (Sam Woodhead) and Matthew Guilford, the latter of whom I am delighted to reconnect with after our paths again converge more than 20 years after our shared college years at the New England Conservatory.

Jim Stephenson, February 1, 2010

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ROAD NOT TAKEN

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and Trombone Ensemble

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Score

I. Two Roads

Andante - chorale ♩ = 66

1 - Alto
2 - Tenor

3 - Tenor
4 - Tenor

5 - Tenor
7 - Bass 1

6 - Tenor
8 - Bass 2

Solo Bass Trbn.
(Guilford)

6

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

Concerto for Bass Trombone - 1st movement

[illegible]

16

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

pp

ppp

pp

ppp

pp

ppp

lazy gliss.

ppp

p

mp

Freely

Concerto for Bass Trombone - 1st movement

22 *quick fall-off* *poco a poco accel.*

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

mf *p* *p* *p* *p* *mf*

25 *mp* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

mf *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Concerto for Bass Trombone - 1st movement

Ⓑ **Spirito** (♩ = c. 120)

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

ff
8vb

loco

Ⓒ **Tempo Primo** ♩ = 66

31

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

f

mp

pp

fz $\triangleright$ *mp*

Concerto for Bass Trombone - 1st movement

37

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

pp *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

pp *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

pp *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

pp *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

p *pp*

44

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

ff *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

p *mp* *ff*

Concerto for Bass Trombone - 1st movement

ⓓ **Allegro** (M.M. ♩ = c. 144)

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

mf

mf

mf

f

mf

53

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

mp

ff

f

ff

mp

Concerto for Bass Trombone - 1st movement

57

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

ff

mf

p

3

p

mf

62

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

pp

p

pp

p

pp

p

f

mp

mf

mp

lazy gliss.

(E)

Concerto for Bass Trombone - 1st movement

66

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

mf *p* *p*

① F

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

mp *f* *p* *mf* *p*

Concerto for Bass Trombone - 1st movement

77

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

mf
p
f
mp
fz

©

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

f
p
f
p
f

Concerto for Bass Trombone - 1st movement

87

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

p *f* *p* *fp*

92

1 - A
2 - T

3 - T
4 - T

5 - T
7 - B1

6 - T
8 - B2

Solo
B. Tbn.

pp *p* *pp* *p* *f*