

Ernest Clarke

Updated

**An Intermediate/Advanced Method for
Trombone with F Attachment**

Updated with modern notation, augmented with warm-up exercises, new exercises in minor keys, irregular meter, mixed meter and completely annotated with alternate positions.

**By James A. Biddlecome
New York City Opera Orchestra**

James Biddlecome

James Biddlecome was a member of the New York City Opera Orchestra for 42 years. He has also played with the Group for Contemporary Music, the Brooklyn Philharmonia, the Caramoor Music Festival, the US Army Field Band, the American Ballet Theater Orchestra, the Goldman Band and the New Hampshire Music Festival.

Retiring in 2006 from the NYCO Orchestra, he remained as the Assistant Orchestra Librarian for several seasons. While a member of the orchestra, he created the NYCO Education Department's *Opera in a Nutshell*, (now known as *Opera is Instrumental*) a program for young instrumental musicians for which he was the director and conductor. Among the Nutshell programs he presented were Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Puccini's *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca*.

Mr. Biddlecome was also personnel manager for the National Grand Opera and the New York Grand Opera.

For several years he appeared as a regular guest conductor of the Queens Symphonic Band. In January of 2002 Mr. Biddlecome was appointed Music Director of the North Jersey Philharmonic where he remained until the demise of the orchestra in 2007. It was there that he conducted a number of outstanding concerts, including popular concert opera performances of *La Bohémé* and *Carmen* and several innovative Children's Concerts.

From 2006 until 2013 he was Music Director of the Ridgewood (NJ) Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company, where he conducted eleven of the thirteen Savoy operas. In June of 2010 at the Gettysburg International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival he was presented the award for Best Musical Director for the Ridgewood G&S production of *The Grand Duke*. In 2012 he was appointed to the Advisory Board of the International Gilbert & Sullivan Assoc. of North America.

Additionally, Mr. Biddlecome has conducted the All North Jersey High School Orchestra and the West Virginia All-State Orchestra and the South Dakota All-State Orchestra. He is presently Orchestra Manager for the Martina Arroyo Foundation's Prelude to Performance program.

Foreword

This volume, *Ernest Clarke Updated*, is the result of my having studied out of the original *Clarke Method* with my teacher, Roger Smith and having used it in my own teaching for the past thirty some years. Most importantly, however, is that I have grown quite tired of the marking of each student's book in order to present the material my way. When I began teaching the trombone, I began to form certain definite ideas as to what I wanted to teach and how it might be presented. One of my primary beliefs is in the use of alternate positions. Another book that I studied from was the *Trombone Virtuoso* by Simone Mantia. "Mr. Mantia believed avidly in the use of alternate positions and his main thrust was in keeping the motion of the slide continuing in the same direction. I too believe in that concept; but I also believe in the use of adjacent positions in a back and forth motion when they are available. which will be evident as one progresses through this book.

One way of thinking has changed as I became more involved in teaching. I used to feel that a student should learn to play on a straight horn and that the F-attachment was a crutch. I also thought that the student horn that Davis Schuman designed in the 1950s was nonsensical; however, a number of my students came to me with exactly the problem that I was trying to solve. Because they had begun their trombone studies at about nine or ten years of age, which is the usual age that public schools introduce instrumental music, students whose arms were not quite long enough to reach 6th and 7th positions had developed the habit of pulling the trombone to the right to compensate, thereby distorting their embouchure. Those students played with embouchures that were off center and they were clearly hindered in the ability to produce a good sound and to articulate properly. Davis saw the problem quite clearly and felt that offsetting the slide to the right would allow the student to maintain the correct embouchure while allowing the right arm to swing to the right. Time has proven that his design was not the answer; I have not seen a Davis Schuman trombone in thirty years and I'm sure a great number of young players and teachers may never even have heard of it. I now feel that the answer is an F-attachment. I have taught a great number of young players who have been studying for a year or so and if they do not already have a trombone with an F-attachment I require that they acquire one.

In all other matters I feel quite the same way I did when I began teaching. I have never felt that the original version of the Clarke Method was in any way suited to beginning students and therefore I have designed my version as an intermediate to advanced method for students who have learned the fundamentals of playing the trombone. To this end I have chosen to begin with the exercise marked 20 in the original method and continue from that point. I have tried to make this volume challenging enough for the more serious student and yet keep it within reach of the average student; consequently, I have left everything in bass clef. I have always liked the presentation of non-flat keys early on for the young trombonist as Mr. Clarke has done and I have kept the original order of Major keys. I have, however, introduced minor scales along with major scales, because I believe the concept is well within the grasp of any student. My students are taught that by learning a major key they have also learned a minor key. Irregular and mixed meter also should not be mysterious to students who are approaching the level beyond that of intermediate performance. I have added an explanation of irregular meter and mixed meter and exercises in those styles as well as slurring exercises which are essential to flexibility and make excellent warm-up material along with long tone exercises. None of this is a revelation to a good teacher but, except for long tones, none of this is in the original method. As the player progresses, the *Rochut Melodious Etudes* should be added as well as a wealth of other material that is readily available, including the *Giampieri Etudes* and the *Weissenborn Advanced Studies*, both of which I have edited for trombone with F-attachment using the principles set forth in this book.

My thanks to Fred Messner, Larry Rosen, Gordon Cherry, Larry Witmer and Bruce Docherty all of whom helped me with the enormous burden of proof-reading both music and text.

James A Biddlecome
May, 1997

Daily Long Tones for Breath Control, Tone & Control of Alternate Positions

Pause between each two measures. Also play notes in alternate positions.

1st & 6th

2nd & 7th

pp \leftarrow *ff* \rightarrow *pp* Continue to cresc. & decresc. each two measures

3rd & # 7th

2nd & # 6th

Slur Patterns

The following slur patterns (with the exceptions of numbers 28 and 29) are all shown in first position, but are to be played in all seven positions, or in all the positions the student can reach. Slurs are basic to developing good flexibility and learning to trill. They should be included in a good daily warm-up. These patterns may be inverted or, in most instances, doubled into groups of sixteenth notes rather than eighth notes and played at a faster tempo. When learning to play slurs, it is often helpful to maintain a volume of at least *forte*.

The image displays six numbered slur patterns on a single bass clef staff in C major. Each pattern consists of a sequence of notes followed by a dotted half note, all under a slur. The patterns are as follows:

- 1**: A slur over a quarter note G2, eighth notes F2, E2, D2, C2, and a dotted half note G2.
- 2**: A slur over eighth notes B1, A1, G1, F1, E1, D1, C1, and a dotted half note G1.
- 3**: A slur over eighth notes G1, F1, E1, D1, C1, B1, A1, and a dotted half note G1.
- 4**: A slur over eighth notes F1, E1, D1, C1, B1, A1, G1, and a dotted half note F1.
- 5**: A slur over eighth notes E1, D1, C1, B1, A1, G1, F1, and a dotted half note E1.
- 6**: A slur over eighth notes D1, C1, B1, A1, G1, F1, E1, and a dotted half note D1.

No. 1



No. 54



No. 117

First staff of musical notation in bass clef, 2/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three flats. The melody starts with a quarter note G2, followed by eighth notes A2, B2, and C3. A dynamic marking 'v' is above the first eighth note. The piece continues with sixteenth notes, including a triplet of sixteenth notes (D3, E3, F3) marked with a '6'. The staff concludes with a quarter note G2 and a final '5' fingering above the last note.

Second staff of musical notation in bass clef, 2/4 time. It continues the melody with eighth notes G2, F2, E2, and D2. A dynamic marking 'v' is above the first eighth note. The piece features a triplet of sixteenth notes (C2, B1, A1) marked with a '#5'. This is followed by a quarter note G2 and another triplet of sixteenth notes (F2, E2, D2) marked with '#5'. The staff ends with a quarter note G2, a dynamic marking 'v', and a final '5' fingering above the last note.

Third staff of musical notation in bass clef, 2/4 time. It begins with a quarter note G2, followed by eighth notes A2, B2, and C3. A dynamic marking 'v' is above the first eighth note. The piece continues with a quarter note G2, a dynamic marking 'v', and a triplet of sixteenth notes (F2, E2, D2) marked with a '6'. The staff concludes with a quarter note G2, a dynamic marking 'v', and a final '5' fingering above the last note.