

Foreword

During one of my last lessons with Emory Remington, I asked the “Chief” what method book he would recommend to use with beginning and intermediate students. It was the Ernest Clarke **Method for Trombone**. Since that time, I have used this excellent book for my students and myself and have recommended it to many others as well.

The Clarke **Method for Trombone** has some uncommon features not found in other method books.

1. First, is the use of the key of “C” for the initial 33 exercises. The author then progresses through all of the keys, alternating the sharp (first) and flat keys through to six sharps and six flats by the end of exercise 155.
2. Secondly, there are no exercises devoted solely to minor keys. However, Clarke employs the minor mode in all of his exercises through the use of scales and arpeggios, so in fact the performer is receiving a steady “diet” of minor melody “built in” for him/her.
3. Thirdly, Clarke uses no metronome markings. He explains; “each exercise should be practiced carefully over and over again until every difficulty is thoroughly overcome – until the exercise can be played through correctly – before going on to the next.” His purpose is to avoid speeding through them.

Clarke’s exercises are progressive throughout the keys, however each one starts out easily in order to keep the student focused on the new key and the new progression notes that come with it.

For the advanced performer, this book is great to use as a way to ease back into shape after a rest from the instrument, allowing the performer to “relearn” the instrument carefully and methodically. I use it also for tone building, phrasing, and breath control. Throughout the book, Clarke reminds the performer to always produce a noble sound, stressing natural playing (without forcing) and relaxation. His phrase, “the breath is the life of the tone”, is a phrase that Remington used throughout his great teaching career as well. Clarke talks about tonguing, saying that, “the tongue is used merely as an aid in articulating – not as a necessity... the tone does not depend on the tongue... the tongue should not be made too important...”

This 100-year-old book seems dry by today’s standards, without flashy names and images. Do not let this simplicity fool you. Clarke gives us great words of brass pedagogical wisdom that are still relevant after 100 years! I recommend this book to be used as a springboard to encourage you to greater and greater artistry with your instrument.

Gordon Cherry
March 2013

Ernest Horatio Clarke

(1865-1947)

Ernest Clarke was born in Woburn, Massachusetts into a musical family, the son of a composer, organist and organ builder. All three of his brothers became prominent musicians, however brother Herbert L. Clarke, the cornet soloist and bandmaster, would gain international fame as one of the greatest brass performers of all time.

As a professional musician, Ernest's career began as a performer, touring with some of the leading concert bands and orchestras of the era: the Innes Band, Neyer's 7th Regiment Band (1887-1898), Victor Herbert's Orchestra, Sousa's Band (1915-1916) and Patrick Sarsfiel Gilmore's band of 100 musicians, reputedly the best in the USA. He also performed as Principal Trombonist with the Walter Damrosch Symphony Orchestra (also known as the New York Symphony Orchestra) from 1898 to 1918.

Clarke's other great musical achievement was as a teacher, teaching at the Institute of Musical Arts (the precursor to the Juilliard School of Music) in New York City for 25 years, from 1922 until his death in 1947. His student Davis Schuman succeeded him. Clarke's teaching became so legendary that; "it was thought by many musicians that he turned out more fine trombone players than any other teacher in the Eastern United States during the first part of the 20th century." [Bridges, Glenn D. Pioneers in Brass. Detroit: Sherwood Publications, 1965, p. 90]

In addition to the **Method for Trombone**, Clarke also composed the following works for Trombone:

Orchestral Studies for Trombone (1908)
In Rank and File March – solo for Trombone (1934 Carl Fischer)
At the Shrine – Prayer for solo Trombone (1934 Carl Fischer)
Devotion for Trombone (1934 Carl Fischer)
Strolling Minstrels – Serenade for solo Trombone (1934 Carl Fischer)

In this 100th year of the first publication of Ernest Clarke's **Method for Trombone**, I wish to salute this man who was one of the true pioneers of the American School of Trombone playing.

Gordon Cherry
March 2013

Exercise 1. should be practiced slowly. The time should be counted with the foot, so that each measure is evenly divided into four equal beats.

Ex. 1 1st Position

1st Position

6th Position

6th Position

6th 1st

Breath should be taken, when needed, between the tones, without interfering with the time or rhythm. The breath may be taken either through the nose or through the sides of the mouth.

In either case the lower jaw should not leave the mouth-piece. The player should practice to be able to take breath either way. The inhaling should be as natural as possible— with the throat open, so as to allow the breath to be taken freely.

Exercise 2. In the third measure a new position is employed— the 2nd position. The 2nd position is obtained by extending the slide about $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches from the first position. By lengthening the instrument in this manner the pitch is flattened or lowered a half-tone. The movement from one position to another should be instantaneous, decisive and accurate. The wrist should not bend.

Ex. 2.

2^d Position

1st Position 2^d Position

6th

The player should count the time slowly and evenly with the foot. The time is as important to the player as the measurements of the architect are to the builder. The player must learn to measure the time correctly in order to produce the music according to the plan. Thus, every little part will fit exactly; and when many players are playing together from different parts, the entire structure will be perfect because every detail has been observed according to the plan of the composer.

One part incorrectly played can spoil an entire ensemble performance. The player may avoid such a circumstance by cultivating a correct sense of rhythm with the use of the foot in all exercises.

Each exercise should be practiced carefully over and over again until every difficulty is thoroughly overcome— until the exercise can be played through correctly— before going to the next.

Exercise 3. In the third measure a new position is employed—the 7th position. By extending the slide about 4 inches beyond the 6th position, the 7th position is obtained.

In the 7th position the thumb should not relinquish in the least its firm hold on the cross-piece of the slide. The wrist should not bend. The line from the shoulder to the end of the thumb should be perfectly straight. In all movements of the slide the wrist should be stiff, forming a straight line from the elbow to the end of the thumb.

Ex. 3.

Exercise 3 musical notation: Three staves of bass clef music in 6/8 time. The first staff begins with a 7th position marking above the first measure. The second staff includes 7 and 6 position markings above the 5th and 6th measures. The third staff includes a 2 position marking above the 3rd measure.

Exercise 4. The attention of the player is again called to the importance of holding the slide firmly in each required position as long as the tone sounds, and of moving the slide quickly and accurately to the next required position.

Ex. 4.

Exercise 4 musical notation: Six staves of bass clef music in 6/8 time. The first staff includes 6 and 7 position markings above the 5th and 6th measures. The subsequent staves continue the exercise with various rhythmic patterns and rests.

Ex. 38

Musical score for Ex. 38, bass clef, 3/4 time, key of D major. The score consists of seven staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#), indicating the key of D major. The music is written in bass clef. The first staff contains 8 measures, the second 8 measures, the third 8 measures, the fourth 8 measures, the fifth 8 measures, the sixth 8 measures, and the seventh 8 measures. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Ex. 95

Musical notation for Example 95, consisting of four staves of bass clef music in 6/8 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The notation includes various rhythmic patterns such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accidentals (sharps and naturals).

Ex. 124

Musical score for Ex. 124, bass clef, 6/8 time signature, key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of three sharps, and a 6/8 time signature. The music features a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, with some slurs and accents. The second staff continues the melodic line with similar rhythmic patterns. The third staff introduces a rest in the first measure, followed by eighth notes and quarter notes. The fourth staff continues with eighth notes and quarter notes, including some slurs. The fifth staff concludes the exercise with eighth notes and quarter notes, ending with a rest in the first measure of the final phrase.