

Howard J. Buss. *A Day in the City*—
Seven vignettes for unaccompanied
trombone, baritone, or bassoon.
Lakeland, FL: Brixton Publications, 1986.
Duration 9:30. Score, \$4.75.

Each of these short movements is programmatic in nature, adding up to a musical "day in the life of . . ." Although his musical palette is not especially large or provocative, Howard Buss provides a range of pleasantly accessible rhythms, harmonic implications, and clever motifs wide enough to make this solo suitable for both study and concert purposes.

"The Waitin' in Line Blues" is the most engaging of the seven movements. Buss establishes a slow, rhythmic foundation/melody and instructs the performer to alternate between straight tone and a "corny vibrato." The effect is that of a confident, sardonic sneer. This movement is juxtaposed nicely between the three previously interesting, but tame, movements and the Bordogni-ish "Romantic Interlude" which follows.

The final two movements are both very fast and require a fairly high level of technical proficiency. "Sudden Storm" has, as one might expect, many accents, melodic leaps, and abrupt dynamic shifts. But Buss also instills energy that runs throughout "A Day" by deploying simple material in short shifts, placing rests in places that create added dimension, and building to a recognizable climax. This work lies somewhere between the organic *Suite for Unaccompanied Trombone* by Leslie Bassett and the free-spirited *Sonata for Solo Trombone* by Barney Childs.

This piece is also available for several other solo instruments. The low purchase price and the incisive approach of a skilled composer make this a piece worth seeking out.

—Joel Elias

University of California-Davis



Reviews

NIGHT TIDE for trombone and marimba duo by Howard J. Buss - \$8.95

Published by Brixton Publications
4311 Braemar Ave., Lakeland, FL 33813-1608 U.S.A.

12E *Maine Sunday Telegram*, February 5, 1995

USM faculty shows off its brass

By ROJEAN TULK

If you put an F trumpet body on an E-flat bell, you'll get an E trumpet.

An important transition for the French horn occurred around 1850 when players employed the traditional use of the hand in the bell with newly invented secondary valves to change pitch.

And you'll find trade show booths at trumpet conventions just like you would at similar events for computers or cars.

These are some of the little musical gems that were imparted at Friday evening's installment of the University of Southern Maine's 1994-95 Faculty Concert Series.

This kind of trivia sets a faculty concert apart from the traditional formal concert setting. Here, the players are music professors, and they play in the setting where they teach. In this case, it's Corthell Hall on USM's Gorham campus.

Therefore, the participants often slip into a comfortable, casual teaching mode while performing. And why not, since a healthy portion of the audience is made up of their students.

Friday evening's sold-out concert reinforced this theory. The program featured USM music faculty John Boden (head of the department),

CONCERTREVIEW

USM Faculty Concert

Where: Corthell Concert Hall,
USM, Gorham
When: Friday, Feb. 3

a stunning aural portrait of the sea's ebb and flow.

John Boden's interpretation of two of Charles Francois Gounod's "Six Melodies for Horn" offered another concert highlight. Neither piece featured flashy technical feats. Instead, they presented lovely lyrical impressions. Boden's interpretation was superb in spite of the valve/hand demonstration the audience was compelled to watch.

Trumpeter John Schnell presented a classical work, "Concerto for Trumpet in E Major," composed by a student of Mozart, Johann Nepomuk Hummel. Schnell put parts of two different trumpets together to concoct the E trumpet he played.

The work was similar to Mozart in style, but lacked the master's vitality. Schnell's performance matched the quality of the composition — it was OK, but not his usual sparkling best.

The concert was topped off with an encore that featured the three brassmen playing trumpets on Leroy Anderson's "Bugler's Holiday."

RoJean Tulk is a musician and teacher of piano and voice.