

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 founda-
tion/melody and instructs the per-
former 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 ap-
proach 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

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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 tradi-
tional 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 com-
puters 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 teach-
ing 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

John Schnell, and Mark Manduca.
All brass players and members of
the Portland Symphony Orchestra,
the professors performed solos,
duets, and trios, and introduced a
world premiere as well.

In spite of the informal atmos-
phere, some fairly profound music
was performed and enjoyed. The
evening's highlight came when Man-
duca, a trombonist, performed the
world premiere of "Night Tide" by
Howard J. Buss. Manduca met Buss
at a trumpet convention. They
struck up some friendly conversa-
tion while manning their respective
music booths, and Buss agreed to
compose a piece for Manduca.

"Night Tide" is a duet for trom-
bone and marimba. PSO principal
percussionist Nancy Smith joined
Manduca for the performance. Writ-
ten as an impression of the Maine
coastline at night, the piece begins
with a poem about "endless tide
cycles." The instruments presented

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 pre-
sented 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 composi-
tion — 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.*