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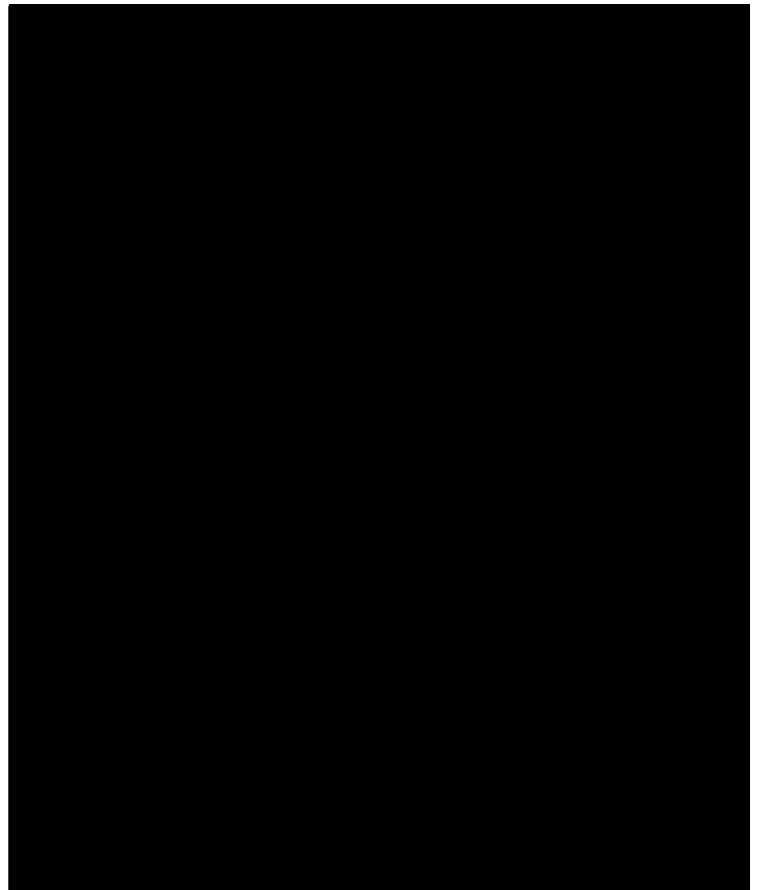
A COMPARISON OF TWO DISTINCTIVE JAZZ TROMBONE ARTISTS,  
DAVID STEINMEYER AND CURTIS FULLER

by

Eddie Lee Elsey, Jr.

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved:



May 2008

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2008

The University of Southern Mississippi

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Abstract of a Dissertation

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## ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON OF TWO DISTINCTIVE JAZZ TROMBONE ARTISTS,

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by Eddie Lee Elsey, Jr.

May 2008

This dissertation discusses two jazz trombonists, David Steinmeyer and Curtis Fuller. Six solos performed by these two artists are analyzed for the purpose of studying and comparing their individual styles of playing. Each solo is analyzed melodically, harmonically, and rhythmically with musical excerpts from each solo included to provide emphasis on a particular area.

This dissertation also includes comparisons of overall styles, full transcriptions of each solo, discographies for both artists, and brief biographical sketches of each artist. Although the artists play in different styles, they still share similar philosophies in approaching the performance of playing jazz trombone.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, the author would like to thank God for giving me the strength and wisdom to write this document. I would like to thank my wife, Melissa, and my son, Donovan, for being so supportive throughout this process. I would also like to thank my parents, Eddie and Angela Elsey, for allowing me to play an instrument by letting me sign up for beginning band. I would like to thank the committee chair Dr. Richard Perry, and the other committee members, Dr. Joseph Brumbeloe, Dr. Chris Goertzen, Dr. Jennifer Shank, and Dr. Charles Elliott for their help and support.

I would especially like to thank my applied lesson teachers, Dr. William Mathis (Bowling Green State University) and Dr. Marta Hofacre (ret.) for inspiring me to practice and to work hard to perfect my craft. A sincere thank you goes to Mr. Larry Panella who showed me that jazz is much more than being in a jazz band. I'd like to also thank Mr. Art Ruangtip for allowing me to listen to his jazz recordings for research and Mr. Tom Luer for sending invaluable research materials to me. Last but not least, I would be remiss if I didn't thank Mr. Curtis Fuller and Mr. David Steinmeyer for their time, talent, wisdom, and openness to allow me to conduct interviews with them for this dissertation. Without their graciousness, this work would not exist.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In studies of modern jazz, trombonists have often taken a “back seat” to other, more common jazz instruments. Playing in the high register on a trombone may not captivate an audience like playing in the high register on a trumpet. Saxophonists and pianists can produce incredible improvisations as well as amaze crowds due to easier facility on their instruments. Bass players can also bring high levels of intensity into their melodic ideas as well. Although all performers must work to perfect their playing, there are techniques that instruments with keys, valves, or strings can do that the slide trombone cannot.

Although jazz trombonists tend to be neglected in studies of jazz history, there are a few names that are usually mentioned. Players such as Kid Ory, Jack Teagarden and Tommy Dorsey were pioneers of early jazz trombone playing. In the bebop era, Carl Fontana, Frank Rosolino, and especially J.J. Johnson were both musically and technically gifted on the trombone. Great players today such as Bill Watrous, Steve Turre, Robin Eubanks, and Conrad Herwig have revolutionized the sound of jazz trombone playing.

Two jazz trombonists have been overlooked in the history of jazz trombone. Curtis Fuller and David Steinmeyer have not received the documented respect that they deserve. David Steinmeyer led one of the best-known military service bands, the Airmen of Note. Curtis Fuller recorded with such noted jazz artists as Art Blakey, Art Farmer, Benny Golson, and Quincy Jones. Although there are a few documented articles on Curtis Fuller and his improvisations, there has been little research on David Steinmeyer.

While not necessarily well-known during their prime, these two trombonists produced recordings that influence jazz trombonists to this day.

This study focuses on six specific solo transcriptions of these two trombonists: Curtis Fuller's "Three Blind Mice", "But Beautiful", and "Quantrale;" and David Steinmeyer's "Twisted", "Imagination", and "A Tune for Billy." These solo transcriptions demonstrate improvisations on a swing style tune, a ballad, and a latin tune for each trombonist respectively.

The three tunes of Curtis Fuller in this study were recorded between the late 1950's and the early 1960's. This was an important time in jazz history because of the relative popularity of the music. Serious jazz scholarship began during this era. While most of the contributors to these reference sources were not musicologists or historians, they still treated their works with the serious thought that is associated with the study of a particular art. While jazz was not the dominant popular music in America during this time, jazz had an audience that probably consisted of millions of listeners.<sup>1</sup>

During this period of Fuller's recordings, there were different facets of jazz players. Players like Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk were categorized as "hard bop" musicians once that movement surpassed the "bebop" movement in the mid-1950's and musicians like Art Farmer and Benny Golson were categorized as lyricists due to their rich sounds and engaging melodies in their improvisations. Although Curtis Fuller performed with many jazz legends in various styles, he would stand out soloistically as a lyrical player who avoided using a lot of notes in his musical ideas, like the other

---

<sup>1</sup> Collier, "Bop and Modern Jazz: General Trends, from the late 1940s to the early 1960s", (Grove Music Online) <http://grovemusic.com>.

“boppers” of his time. His style was so different that (according to Fuller) Dizzy Gillespie called him “The Master of the Middle Range” of the trombone.<sup>2</sup>

The three tunes of David Steinmeyer in this study were recorded between the mid-1970’s and the mid-1980’s. One of the ways that jazz performers received their start would be through the military service bands. This route worked for musicians such as Julian “Cannonball” Adderley, Nat Adderley, and even Curtis Fuller. This was also the route taken by David Steinmeyer during his tenure with the Air Force’s Airmen of Note. His participation and leadership played an integral part of keeping the big band tradition alive through the group’s live performances and recordings. This study is based upon researching and analyzing the improvisations, musical aspects, and legacies of Curtis Fuller and David Steinmeyer.

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<sup>2</sup> Fuller, Curtis. “Interview,” (2007).

## CHAPTER II

### RELATED LITERATURE AND METHOD

Research materials used in this study included sound recordings (CD's), liner notes, improvisation transcription books, subject interviews, historical jazz literary works, periodicals, and jazz-specific encyclopedias. Most of the materials listed refers to the careers and stylistic characteristics of Fuller and Steinmeyer.

Six primary sound recordings were used for this study: the Airmen of Note's *Airmen of Note and Sarah Vaughan, Better Than Ever*, and *Bone Voyage*; and Art Blakey's *Three Blind Mice, Vol. 1*, Yusef Lateef's *Gettin' It Together*, and Art Farmer and Curtis Fuller's self-named album, *Curtis Fuller-Art Farmer*. Other secondary recordings include: J. J. Johnson's *The Eminent Jay Jay Johnson, Vol 2*. and Stan Kenton's *New Concepts of Artistry in Rhythm*.

In order to understand the process of solo transcription necessary for this study, current and out-of-print transcription books were examined. Resources of this type include Matt Niess' *My Favorite Things*, Sanford Martin's *Wayne Shorter: Artist Transcriptions*, and Armin Marmolejo's *Curtis Fuller's Greatest Transcribed Solos*. Marmolejo's transcription book contains several Fuller improvisations as well as a short biography on Fuller. The transcriptions were written by using the computer notation software program *Sibelius 4* for Microsoft Windows. Based on the layout and structure of existing transcription books, each transcription in this study will include: chord changes, metronome markings, articulations, stylistic indications (slurs, glissandi, etc.), album title, track, and time of recording in which the solo occurs.



The biographical information on Curtis Fuller was taken from a number of sources. Between the years of 1962-2005, several periodicals conducted interviews with Fuller. The majority of these interviews highlight his playing career, his influences, his playing style, and his personal philosophies on music. Most of the biographical and historical information for David Steinmeyer came through the author's interview with Steinmeyer. There is little published biographical information.

The six pieces selected for analysis were chosen using the following standards:

1. Solos were chosen from three jazz styles: Swing, Ballad, and Latin. Analyzing one solo of each style from each artist provides consistency through the analyses.
2. Each solo contains main stylistic characteristics of both trombonists.

“Three Blind Mice” is a 16-bar repetitive form of the well-known children's tune of the same name composed and recorded by Fuller on the album, *Three Blind Mice, Vol. 1* in 1962. This album was originally issued on United Artists before the company merged with Blue Note. Personnel include Art Blakey on drums, Freddie Hubbard on trumpet, Jymie Merritt on bass, Wayne Shorter on tenor sax, and Cedar Walton on piano.<sup>3</sup>

“But Beautiful” is a two-part form ballad that was composed by the duo of pianist Jimmy Van Heusen and lyricist Johnny Burke. The arrangement that features Fuller was recorded on the album entitled *Gettin' It Together* which was originally released by the album company Warwick in 1961 and reissued by Collectables in 2000. Personnel

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<sup>3</sup> Art Blakey, *Three Blind Mice, Vol. 1*. (Blue Note 84451, 1962).

include Freddie Hubbard, trumpet, Yusef Lateef, saxophone, Walter Bishop, Jr., piano, Buddy Catlett, bass, and Stu Martin, drums.<sup>4</sup>

“Quantrale” is a 32-bar, AABA form that was composed in the Afro-Cuban style by Fuller. It was recorded by Fuller on the *Curtis Fuller-Art Farmer* album in 1957 in the Van Gelder Studio in New Jersey. Personnel include Art Farmer on trumpet, Sonny Clark on piano, George Tucker on bass, and Louis Hayes on drums.<sup>5</sup>

“Twisted” is a 48-bar, AABA form, based on common blues chord changes. The tune was originally composed by tenor saxophonist Wardell Gray and lyricist Annie Ross. The Airmen of Note’s *Bone Voyage* version of the tune was arranged by Airmen of Note tenor saxophonist Kim Richmond and this piece was arranged for and recorded by the trombone section of the Airmen of Note on the album in 1984. Personnel include David Steinmeyer, Rick Lillard, Gary Hall, and Dave Morgan on trombone, Rick Whitehead on guitar, Mike Rubin on piano, Tom Williams on bass, and C.E. Askew on drums.<sup>6</sup>

“Imagination” is a four-part, AABA form ballad that was composed by the Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke. The Airmen of Note’s *The Airmen of Note and Sarah Vaughn* version of the tune was arranged by Airmen of Note tenor saxophonist Roger Hogan and it featured Steinmeyer as the soloist on the album in 1974. Personnel include Ernie Hensley, Gene Gaydos, John Dodge, Roger Hogan, and Dave Napier on woodwinds, Ken Smukal, Jim Lay, Dick Perry, and Larry Trautman on trumpet, Dave Steinmeyer, Mike Smukal, Lee Robertson, Paul Rawlins, and Dave Boyle on trombone,

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<sup>4</sup> Yusef Lateef, *Gettin’ It Together* (Collectibles 6129, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Art Farmer and Curtis Fuller, *Curtis Fuller-Art Farmer* (Blue Note 1583, 1957).

<sup>6</sup> Airmen of Note. *Bone Voyage* (Airmen of Note Audio, 1984).

Rick Whitehead on guitar, Gil Cray on piano, Brent McKesson on bass, and Dave Palamar on drums.<sup>7</sup>

“A Tune for Billy” is a 17-bar form composed in the latin style. The piece was composed for Dr. Billy Taylor who is the head of the NPR Jazz Program by Airmen of Note guitarist Rick Whitehead. The piece was recorded on the Airmen of Note’s album *Better Than Ever* in 1983. The piece features solos from composer Rick Whitehead as well as David Steinmeyer. Personnel include Pete BarenBregge, Gene Gaydos, Tim Eyermann, Don New, and Doug Gately on woodwinds, Vaughn Nark, Jimmy Lay, Ken Smukal and Larry Trautman on trumpet, Dave Steinmeyer, Rick Lillard, Gary Hall, and Dave Morgan on trombone, Rick Whitehead on guitar, Sydney Lehman on piano, Tom Williams on Bass, and George Honea on drums

Each transcription was analyzed by using the following criteria:

1. What were the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and stylistic similarities and differences of each trombonist’s improvisation?
2. How were the respective trombone styles of Fuller and Steinmeyer reflected in these improvisations?

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<sup>7</sup> Airmen of Note. *Airmen of Note and Sarah Vaughan* (Airmen of Note Audio, 1974).

<sup>8</sup>Airmen of Note. *Better Than Ever* (Airmen of Note Audio, 1983).

### CHAPTER III

#### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

#### Curtis Fuller

Curtis Fuller was born on December 15, 1934 in Detroit, Michigan. He was raised in a Jesuit orphanage after both of his parents died at an early age. He never knew if his parents had any musical talent but he did have a sister who played piano. Fuller's first instrument was not the trombone, but the violin.<sup>9</sup> After realizing early on that he was not productive on the violin, he decided to play the trombone since that was the only instrument left at the orphanage. After Fuller began to play the trombone, one of the sisters of the orphanage took him to see jazz saxophonist Illinois Jacquet to allow Fuller to see how professional trombonists played. J.J. Johnson was a part of Jacquet's group at that time. When Fuller saw Johnson play for the first time, he was enamored at the way that Johnson played.<sup>10</sup>

“There was something intellectual about the way he stood there; he was involved with the music. Illinois was involved with crowd-pleasing things: bitin’ the reed and screamin’ and layin’ on his back. And J.J. just stood there and played the music. That to me showed such dignity. J.J. just seemed like he was the man, and I thought gee, that’s what I want to do.”<sup>11</sup>

Curtis Fuller was basically a self-taught trombonist because as a beginning band student, his band director was a reed player who was unfamiliar with brass techniques. By the time Fuller reached high school, he was one of the main players in the jazz scene

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<sup>9</sup>Fuller, interview by author, 5 May 2007.

<sup>10</sup>Andrew Sussman, “Curtis Fuller’s Great Depression,” *DownBeat* (March 1981) 25.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

in Detroit. He grew up with Donald Byrd, Paul Chambers and Doug Watkins. He also played (and learned) with Barry Harris, Tommy Flanagan, Kenny Burrell, Pepper Adams, Milt Jackson, Lucky Thompson, Yusef Lateef, Roland Hanna, Louis Hayes, Charles McPherson and the Jones brothers (Hank, Thad, and Elvin).<sup>12</sup>

Fuller joined the Army in 1953 and became a member of the Army band directed by Julian “Cannonball” Adderly. Nat Adderly was a part of the trumpet section and Mel Wanzo (who eventually became the lead trombonist in the Count Basie band) was in the band as well.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Fuller acknowledges that he was a part of the last African-American service band before integration.<sup>14</sup> Fuller also stated that he was the first black musician to be placed in a service band with white players after integration. After leaving the Army in 1956, Fuller enrolled at Wayne State University to major in sociology. While in college, he continued to play with different groups in Detroit.<sup>15</sup>

In 1957, Fuller moved to New York where he was in demand as a group leader as well as a sideman. In between the years of 1957 and 1962, he recorded with Blue Note and other record labels. He made 19 albums as a leader, making this period in his playing career the most productive as a leader.<sup>16</sup>

A measure of Fuller’s early reputation can be seen in the dates where he participated as a sideman. One of Fuller’s early recordings was John Coltrane’s *Blue Train* (1957).<sup>17</sup> According to Fuller, Coltrane always maintained that “Blue Train” was his favorite album, because of the chemistry of the musicians and not just the tunes that

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<sup>12</sup>Sussman, 26.

<sup>13</sup>Les Tomkins, “The Curtis Fuller Story,” *Crescendo International* (June 1976) 6.

<sup>14</sup>Fuller, interview by author, 7 May 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Gene Lees, “Curtis Fuller,” *Cadence* (March 1962) 17.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Cuscuna, *The Complete Blue Note/UA Curtis Fuller Sessions* (Stamford, CT: Mosaic Records, 1996) 2.

<sup>17</sup> Bob Rusch, “Curtis Fuller: Interview,” *Cadence* (Mar 1977) 5.

were recorded. In fact, Coltrane liked Fuller's playing so much that Fuller was the only trombonist to record and solo with Coltrane in Coltrane's recording career.<sup>18</sup> Fuller also achieved commercial success with Benny Golson and Art Farmer in the Jazztet.

According to Fuller, the group was to be led by Golson, Farmer, and Fuller. But since Farmer and Golson were older and better-known, Fuller was seen as a sideman. Even though Fuller was not listed as a leader of the group, he still states that the name "Jazztet" was his idea.<sup>19</sup>

Fuller was also a member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers from 1961-1965, part of one of Blakey's strongest lineups, including Wayne Shorter, Freddie Hubbard, Cedar Walton, and Reggie Workman. During this time, he grew as a musician and as a composer, but the group was not receiving as much recognition as Fuller felt that they should have received. In fact, they were the first group to ever bring jazz to Japan but they didn't receive an interview from one publication, not even the popular jazz periodical *Down Beat*. This caused Fuller to become disenchanted with the music business.<sup>20</sup>

After his stint with the Messengers, Fuller toured and recorded with Dexter Gordon, Woody Shaw, Slide Hampton, Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, and again with Art Blakey. He also took jazz studies courses at the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin.<sup>21</sup>

The most influential musicians that Fuller attests to working with were Miles Davis and John Coltrane. He saw Coltrane as a strong musical and spiritual influence

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<sup>18</sup> Fuller, interview by author, 7 May 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Lees, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Rusch, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Sussman, 27.

and Davis as a harmonic influence. Fuller's goal as a young musician was to develop the trombone in another way. He wanted to "play like a saxophone" thus showing the Coltrane influence.<sup>22</sup>

Fuller had some periods in his life where he did not play music. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, Fuller had a job on Wall Street to provide for his children from his first marriage. Fuller returned to performing was through a reunion group formed by Dizzy Gillespie. Fuller gives Gillespie credit for bringing back his interest in music.<sup>23</sup> Fuller had a partial lung operation in 1994 which prevented him from playing for a few years. Although Fuller has recovered from his operation, he still admits to having to adjust his style of playing due to his lung capacity. Fuller has toured and recorded again, mostly as a leader, since his recovery. Fuller finds this time in his playing career most rewarding because he can play his own compositions.<sup>24</sup> He taught for brief tenures at Cuyahoga Community College (Cleveland) and the New England Conservatory (Boston) and he teaches at a jazz clinic at Skidmore College every summer.<sup>25</sup>

Fuller has recorded over thirty albums as a leader and he has been credited on over 350 albums, including reissues. His influences on trombone include the aforementioned J.J. Johnson, Frank Rosolino, Bennie Green, and Kai Winding.<sup>26</sup> Fuller's technique allows him to overcome the difficult slide shifts of the trombone, and he is able to perform wide leaps and rapid passages with ease. Since Fuller's solos contain proficient melodic gaps, harmonic ventures, and lyrical rhythmic sense along with great

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 26

<sup>23</sup> "Curtis Fuller," *Jazz Improv Magazine* (Jan 2004) 93-94.

<sup>24</sup> Fuller, interview by author, 9 May 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Waggoner and Barry Kernfeld, "Fuller, Curtis (Dubois)," (Grove Music Online) <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

<sup>26</sup> Sussman, 26.

use of jazz scales and superimposed chords, Fuller's solos have amazing effects on the listener.<sup>27</sup> His personal philosophy on music is that "It's gotta swing."<sup>28</sup> This statement makes sense for Fuller because he has been swinging in the music business for over fifty years.

### David Steinmeyer

Author's note: All biographical information about David Steinmeyer was obtained in an interview with Steinmeyer conducted at his home November 4-5, 2006.

David Steinmeyer was born in Jacksonville, Florida on December 22, 1943. His parents were not professional musicians; however, they did sing in church and in small groups around the neighborhood and they played music in their home. Steinmeyer was introduced to music through his parents and his siblings. Steinmeyer's older brother and sister performed in amateur regional contests as a duo and Steinmeyer would listen to them perform. Steinmeyer's first recollection of playing music was when his father would record him playing tunes by ear on the piano.

The piano was Steinmeyer's first instrument. His first piano teacher was Ms. Lillian Lawrence. He studied piano from the ages of five to twelve. At twelve, Steinmeyer wanted to join the junior high school band to play trumpet like his friend, Jimmy Lay. Once he joined the band, his band director informed him that there were too many trumpets in the band and that David would have to play trombone. At first Steinmeyer was discouraged, but after his father played a recording of Tommy Dorsey

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<sup>27</sup> Waggoner, (Grove Music Online) <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

<sup>28</sup> Fuller, interview by author, 7 May 2007.



playing “I’m Getting Sentimental Over You,” he was inspired to focus solely on trombone for the rest of his musical career.

Steinmeyer’s early band directors did not give much guidance on learning the technique of the trombone. His junior high band director was a clarinetist who could only show him where the positions were on the horn, and his high school band director, a saxophonist, knew little about trombone technique. Fortunately, Steinmeyer listened to many recordings of professional trombonists and he practiced so much that he was able to progress very quickly. Eventually, his high school band director introduced him to Don Moore, a local trombonist in Jacksonville. Moore was able to teach Steinmeyer how to lubricate his trombone slide and that would be the majority of the half-hour lesson. Steinmeyer did not go to college to study music opting instead to join the military and play in the service bands.

Steinmeyer’s first service band experience was in the Air Force Norad Band called “The Commodores” in Colorado under the leadership of Bobby Herriot. He auditioned for and won the first trombone chair in that band in 1961. After playing in that band for four years, Steinmeyer’s band commander suggested that he audition for the United States Air Force Band in Washington, D.C. This band was known as the “Airmen of Note” and it was a band created to keep alive the legacy of Glenn Miller and big band music, Steinmeyer auditioned for and won the lead trombone chair with the “Airmen of Note” and would keep that position for the rest of his military career.

The “Airmen of Note” provided Steinmeyer with many opportunities to travel and to record. The band performed a live radio show entitled “Serenade In Blue” once a week, and this allowed the band to showcase Steinmeyer’s playing ability for the fifteen

years that the show was on the air. The band constantly received arrangements from their arranging staff and they recorded several times a week. The band also traveled to Los Angeles, and worked with celebrities such as Sarah Vaughn, Joe Williams, and Tony Bennett. Steinmeyer saw these early years as an integral part of his own personal musical growth, which helped him when he assumed the duties of leading the “Airmen of Note” in 1979.

The appointment was supposed to be temporary, but the Air Force could not find an officer to replace Steinmeyer, and he kept the position until he retired from military service in 1989. Steinmeyer is credited with emphasizing the importance of recording the band because he felt that it needed to be heard in the mainstream civilian public. Outside of guest appearances on such venues as “The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson” and “The Mike Douglas Show”, the only audiences that really knew about the “Airmen of Note” prior to Steinmeyer’s tenure as band leader were military. Steinmeyer wanted to let the civilian public know that the band could perform and produce great music and he did that by producing eight recordings of the “Airmen of Note”, more recordings than any leader prior to Steinmeyer.

Steinmeyer was known for his ability to play the trombone in magnificent fashion. His ability to play ballads musically and to play consistently in the higher registers of the trombone were influential among other trombonists. Steinmeyer never felt that his upper register was unusual because it was something that he had been able to do for most of his playing career. After an accident as a youth chipped Steinmeyer’s teeth, his range increased an octave. After practicing in the higher registers for an

extended period of time, he was able to control his high range and use it to perform melodies that seemed impossible to the average trombonist.

Steinmeyer's ability to play in "non-functional" ranges earned him the opportunity to be a clinician for Leblanc Instruments. Steinmeyer had met trombonist Urbie Green in the 1970's. Urbie Green was already a clinician for Leblanc and he allowed Steinmeyer to test out a new model, the Martin 4501. After Steinmeyer tried the horn and liked it, he received a call from Leblanc representative Sandy Sandburg asking Steinmeyer if he wanted to be a part of the Leblanc team. Steinmeyer flew to Kenosha, Wisconsin and tried out several different horns and eventually became a Leblanc clinician. The owner of G. LeBlanc at the time, Vito Pascucci, was extremely interested in Steinmeyer because of his service in the "Airmen of Note". Pascucci knew Glenn Miller personally and he was impressed that the "Airmen of Note" kept the Miller big band sound alive after Miller passed away. Unfortunately, Pascucci passed away while prototypes of the "Steinmeyer" model Leblanc trombone were created and as soon as the horns were created, Leblanc was sold and production ceased on the model.

After twenty-eight years of military service, Steinmeyer retired from the "Airmen of Note" in 1989. Since his retirement, he has appeared as a clinician throughout the country. He has also been instrumental in the development of many young trombonists who aspire to emulate his style and his tremendous range by presenting range-building master classes across the country. He continues to serve as a dominant force in the jazz trombone world. He has performed at the International Trombone Association's annual convention as well as jazz festivals across the country. He enjoys giving back to younger musicians and his personal philosophy on music is that "Music should be fun." His

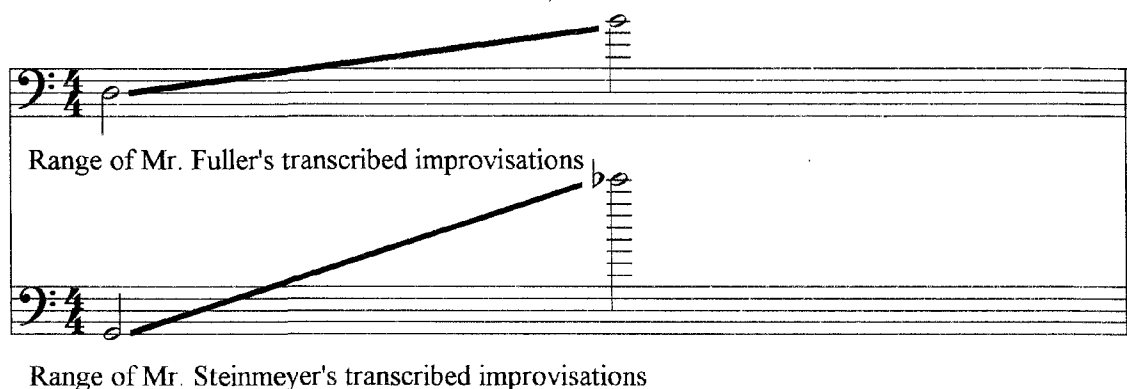
personal trombone influences are J.J. Johnson, Frank Rosolino, Phil Wilson, and Urbie Green. He currently lives in his hometown of Jacksonville, Florida with his wife, Judy and their two dogs, Buddy and Rio.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF FULLER AND STEINMEYER IMPROVISATIONS

There are some obvious contrasts in the playing styles of Fuller and Steinmeyer. The most noticeable aspect is the range.

Example A: Range comparison of Fuller and Steinmeyer



As shown in Example A, there is a dramatic difference in range between the two artists. In fact, that is the main point of comparison that can be seen on paper and heard in their recordings. The range of Fuller contains a low point of “D<sup>3</sup>” to his highest note of “B<sup>4</sup>”. This range spans an octave and a major sixth. The range of Steinmeyer contains a low point of “G<sup>2</sup>” to his highest note of “Eb<sup>6</sup>”. This range spans three octaves and a minor sixth.

The concepts of high range playing can be heard by several jazz brass instrumentalists such as jazz trumpeters Jon Faddis, the late Bill Chase, and the late Maynard Ferguson. Jazz trombonists such as the late Frank Rosolino, Bill Watrous, and Phil Wilson are also known for playing in the upper register in their improvisations.

Typically, trombonists focus on building the upper register by practicing various etudes and exercises, such as playing Rochut Melodius Etudes up an octave or by practicing scales in higher octaves.<sup>60</sup> Steinmeyer attributes his high playing to those same practice techniques but he also attributes his high note ability to his ear.<sup>61</sup> He is able to hear in the extreme high registers of the trombone. On the other hand, Curtis Fuller claims to not hear the trombone in that register and this is why he does not play in that register very often.<sup>62</sup> According to Steinmeyer himself, he also does not use a tremendous amount of lip firmness in his playing. It makes sense with the idea that too much lip firmness can cause the tone to become distorted.<sup>63</sup>

Another factor in tone production is the use of slide vibrato. Slide vibrato is an important part of jazz trombone playing. However, Steinmeyer uses a lot of slide vibrato while Fuller uses little, if any, slide vibrato in his improvisations. Steinmeyer's vibrato is similar to Phil Wilson because of its wide, quick resonance on longer notes. Fuller's vibrato is similar to J. J. Johnson because it has a shorter wavelength in frequency and overall slower tone to the listener. Another factor in tone is the function of each artist in their particular ensemble. In Fuller's transcribed solos, he was always in a small group. Because of the small-group setting, Fuller did not have to play as loudly as if he were in a big-band trombone section, as Steinmeyer was for most of his career.

Each artist has an individual concept of tone. Steinmeyer feels that as a lead trombonist, a player needs to have a "sizzle" in the sound, like lead trumpet players have

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<sup>60</sup> Kyle Mack, "Trombone Upper Register," The Instrumentalist (December 1991) 56.

<sup>61</sup> Steinmeyer, interview by author, 5 November 2006.

<sup>62</sup> Fuller, interview by author, 7 May 2007.

<sup>63</sup> Lewis H. Strouse, "Diagnosing Embouchure Problems," The Instrumentalist (October 1988) 38.

in big band playing. If a brass player has the “sizzle”, then they will be able to be heard within the ensemble. Like Steinmeyer’s musical mentor, Urbie Green, this is evident in Steinmeyer’s tone production because his use of air speed along with the bore size of his horn allows his sound to direct the trombone section. Fuller wanted to make the trombone sound like other instruments that he was fond of, like the saxophone, the French horn, and even the male voice.<sup>64</sup> Fuller was influenced by the sound of J. J. Johnson and this influence is evident in Fuller’s dark and smooth trombone sound.

Both Steinmeyer and Fuller use the concepts of vertical and horizontal playing. “Vertical” playing can best be described as playing melodies using superimposed chord structures while “Horizontal” playing can be seen as creating more linear and scalar melodic lines.<sup>65</sup> In the solos of Steinmeyer, there is a more “Vertical” playing style and he also incorporates short motivic phrases in his improvisations. In the solos of Fuller, there is a more “Horizontal” approach in which (by his own admission), he uses more lyrical lines with repetition in his improvisations. Although they differ in structural improvisational style, their solos are both very tonal in nature. They rarely go outside the key and chord structure in their melodies.

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<sup>64</sup> Geraldine Wyckoff, “Fest Focus: Curtis Fuller (interview).” *Offbeat* (May 2005): 138.

<sup>65</sup> David D. Lambert, *A Comparison of Three Divergent Jazz Trombone Styles from 1953: Jack Teagarden, J.J. Johnson, and Frank Rosolino.* (DMA diss., University of Miami, 2005) 19.

## Three Blind Mice

### Melody

Melodically, Fuller's improvisation on his own arrangement of "Three Blind Mice" contains mostly horizontal, scalar phrases with a few vertical, arpeggiated phrases. The first sixteen measures of the solo (shown in example #1) set up the pattern that will become the standard for this improvisation.

Example 1. Curtis Fuller, "Three Blind Mice" improvisation, measures 1-16

While the solo doesn't focus on the actual melody of "Three Blind Mice", the repetition of the phrases can draw the listener into the improvisation and away from the initial melody. The turn-around section (the harmonic sequence that eventually leads to the ii-V-I progression) in measures 13-16 proves to be an effective transition throughout the improvisation. Fuller doesn't repeat this exact motive in every turn-around section, but this initial motive serves as a useful source of variety in the other turn-around sections for the duration of the solo.

This type of scalar improvisational playing can also be found in these examples.



Example 2. Curtis Fuller, “Three Blind Mice” improvisation, measures 17-32.

Example 3. Curtis Fuller, “Three Blind Mice” improvisation, measures 49-55.

Not only does Fuller repeat motives within the solo, he also repeats individual notes to transition into other motives. In example #4, Fuller uses the tonic note B natural with rhythmic variance and articulations to match the style of the piece.

Example 4. Curtis Fuller, “Three Blind Mice” improvisation, measures 33-37.

This also occurs in measures 49-53 (example #5).

Example 5. Curtis Fuller, “Three Blind Mice” improvisation, measures 49-53.



This style of repetition can be compared to that of other prominent jazz trombonists such as Fuller’s main influence J. J. Johnson. In two different improvisations (examples #6 and 7), Johnson shows how single-note repetition can help develop melodic content.

Example 6. J. J. Johnson, “Turnpike” improvisation, measures 25-31<sup>66</sup>.



Example 7. J. J. Johnson, “Old Devil Moon” improvisation, measures 21-24.



There is not a lot of alternation in this solo between horizontal and vertical playing, but a basic pattern is set within the solo. The first twelve bars of every sixteen-

<sup>66</sup> Lambert, 28.

bar phrase contain short, fragmented melodic ideas while the last four bars tend to contain more connected melodic content. These brief excerpts from Fuller's improvisation are characteristic of the melodic material of the entire improvisation. Fuller develops his ideas in this solo through indirect repetition of motives and pitches. Also, Fuller is always aware of where the tonic notes are at each cadential point.

### Harmony

Fuller tends to stay inside the chord changes throughout his improvisation. In fact, the outlines of the melodic motives are mostly outlined through a combination of the B major scale and the B mixolydian scale. The B mixolydian scale contains A natural instead of the A-sharp which is found in the B major scale. This use of A natural also comes in handy when playing the B7 chord which is found through the majority of the form. Example #8 shows the usage of the B major scale.

Example 8. Curtis Fuller, "Three Blind Mice" improvisation, measures 17-23.

The musical notation consists of two staves of bass clef music in 4/4 time. The key signature is B major (two sharps). The notation includes various notes, rests, and slurs. Chord changes are indicated above the staff: B7, B7, B7, B7, B7, B7, and B7. A Roman numeral IV is also indicated above the staff in the fifth measure.

The only noticeable area where Fuller goes outside of the written chord changes occurs in measure 48 (example #9). At this tonic cadential point, Fuller ends his idea by playing the notes C-natural and G-natural which are outside of the key of B as well as

being outside of the B7 chord. A way to explain this melodic ending is by noticing that by playing the notes C-natural and G-natural, Fuller is experimenting with playing the Neapolitan Sixth chord (bII) over the tonic chord to provide extra dissonance.

Example 9. Curtis Fuller, “Three Blind Mice” improvisation, measures 45-48.

The image shows a single staff of music in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. Above the staff, chords are indicated: F7, A#7, D#o, G#7(b9), C#, F#7, and B7. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' below the staff under the D#o chord.

Fuller’s use of harmonic structure is simplistic yet inventive at the same time. The majority of this solo contains the root, third, and fifth of each chord in this solo. Of course, he uses notes outside the chord structure to add to his melodic content. He uses the fourth and sixth (especially in the B7 chord) to create his scalar style of playing by working those particular pitches in with the root, third, and fifth of the chords used. In fact, the majority of this solo consists a mixture of 2+3 pentatonic scalar playing (five-note scales consisting of the root, second, fourth, fifth, and sixth scale degrees in a major key) and 3+2 pentatonic scalar playing (five-note scales consisting of the root, second, third, fifth, and sixth scale degrees in a major key) as seen in examples #10 and #11.

Example 10. Curtis Fuller, “Three Blind Mice” improvisation, measures 37-39.



Example 11. Curtis Fuller, “Three Blind Mice” improvisation, measures 65-68.

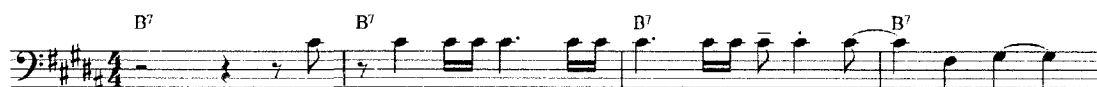


### Rhythm

The rhythms in Fuller’s improvisations mostly consist of quarter and eighth notes. Just like his melodies, Fuller gives his content diversity by using various rhythms to provide interest throughout the solo.

One of the aforementioned features in this solo is the way that Fuller will repeat a particular pitch but with varied rhythms and syncopations. An example of this can be found in measures 33-37 (example #4). Another example can be found in measures 49-53 (example #5). Here, Fuller emphasizes the ninth in his melodic content. This concept is also repeated in measures 68-71 (example #12).

Example 12. Curtis Fuller, “Three Blind Mice” improvisation, measures 68-71.



The only noticeable deviation of rhythm that isn't imitated within the solo occurs in measure 21. In example #13, Fuller shifts to a more virtuosic fast triplet feel by alternating between the pitches of D-sharp and E-natural. Although it is a bit out of line with what occurs within the rest of the solo, the passage maintains the ease that is associated with the entire solo due to the fact that the two pitches are only a half step apart. This minimizes slide motion and makes it easier to play if a performer can support the notes with adequate tonguing ability.

Example 13. Curtis Fuller, "Three Blind Mice" improvisation, measures 40-44.

The image shows a single line of musical notation in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notation represents measures 40-44 of an improvisation. It begins with a whole rest in measure 40, followed by a quarter rest in measure 41. From measure 42 to 44, there is a continuous fast triplet feel. The notes are primarily D# and E natural, alternating in a pattern that creates a rhythmic drive. Above the staff, there are five 'B7' chord markings, each with a slur over the notes it covers. Below the staff, there are six '3' markings, each centered under a group of three notes in the triplet pattern. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 44.

A key to this improvisation as well as the majority of Fuller's other solos is his use of motives. Even when the ideas don't resemble the original melody, the alternation of imitation and repetition of material gives the listener a sense of Fuller's ideas. As shown in the examples above, the ability to have a common theme can lead to a long and productive improvisation such Fuller's solo in "Three Blind Mice".

## Twisted

## Melody

The majority of the melodic content of this solo is scalar, with little repetition. Each idea flows into the next because of the brevity of the solo and the fact that Steinmeyer plays only two choruses of blues changes.

Melodically, this solo can be divided into three distinct sections. Example 14 illustrates the first section. *An a capella soli* by the trombone section (including Steinmeyer) leads into Steinmeyer's improvisation. Once the *soli* section is complete with Steinmeyer "falling" after holding a high B-flat, he keeps the solo going because his initial entrance occurs within the middle of the form of the blues changes.

Example 14. David Steinmeyer, "Twisted" improvisation, measures 1-13.

The use of chromaticism matches the horizontal style of playing that is prevalent through this solo. The intervallic pattern is repeated in measures 9-11 by Steinmeyer using two-note groups that ascend chromatically by a perfect fourth. The ascent begins

with the movement from F-natural resolving to B-flat in measure 9. This provides a linear introduction to the next phrase of the solo, which begins at the start of the blues form shown in example 15.

Example 15. David Steinmeyer, “Twisted” improvisation, measures 14-17.



Although there are only four measures of melody, some similar traits can be noted in this excerpt. Once again, chromaticism is used here especially with the use of the G-sharp leading into the A-natural along with the use of the D-flat as well. There is consistent repetition of the descending three note passage of D-natural, D-flat and C-natural in measure 14 (beat 4), 15 (beat 3), and 16 (beat 2). Also, this passage is very linear with only one arpeggiated chord (the F triad in measure 15). The melody stays within the third and fifth partials of the trombone and only starts to reach the higher partials by measure 17 as it leads to the final cadential point of the solo.

The last few bars of this solo (shown in example 16) are not as chromatic as the previous two sections. There are a few spots where melodic leaps are incorporated. This can be seen in measure 23 along with the arpeggiated triad use in measures 22 and 25.



Example 16. David Steinmeyer, “Twisted” improvisation, measures 18-26.

This section has melodic qualities that are similar to J. J. Johnson and Frank Rosolino. In examples 17 and 18, the same ascending line found in ex. 16, measures 22-23, are used in developing their material.

Example 17. J. J. Johnson, “Old Devil Moon” improvisation, measures 1-4.

Example 18. Frank Rosolino, “Prologue (This is an Orchestra)” improvisation, measures 1-2.

The content in Rosolino’s improvisation excerpt became his signature melodic line in his solos. Other trombonists tend to use this type of content because it works well with the mechanics of playing jazz trombone. The player does not have to move the slide

very much and the use of the Bb-D-F triplet contains notes in the middle to upper-middle register of the instrument.

Steinmeyer's playing range allows him to produce melodies that ascend in range with ease. His patterns in this solo are mostly diatonic in relation to key. Also, the treatments of chromatic pitches are always used to resolve to a pitch that is a part of the chord to aid in the development of the musical line (Steinmeyer develops his melodic ideas in this solo by working around the original key of F major).

### Harmony

Steinmeyer tends to stay within the harmonic structure of the chord changes in this solo. In the tonal portions of the solo, Steinmeyer works around the C mixolydian scale which is the scale built on the fifth scale degree of F major. He also switches between major and minor modes throughout the solo.

In Example 19, the use of chromatic alteration is apparent. Steinmeyer inserts chromatic tones to create an interesting ascending line in measures 10-11.

Example 19. David Steinmeyer, "Twisted" improvisation, measures 10-13.

The musical notation for Example 19 shows four measures of music in bass clef. Measure 10 starts with a G-7 chord and features a melodic line with chromatic alterations. Measure 11 has a Cb chord. Measure 12 has an F7 chord. Measure 13 has a C7 chord and contains a triplet of eighth notes. The notation includes various accidentals and slurs to indicate the melodic flow and harmonic changes.

The second chorus of this solo (example 20) utilizes the root, third, fifth, and sixth scale degrees of F major.

Example 20. David Steinmeyer, “Twisted” improvisation, measures 14-26.

### Rhythm

The rhythms in this Steinmeyer improvisation mostly consist of eighth notes and triplets. Steinmeyer keeps the solo appealing to the listener through his use of articulations to create areas of metric modulation (superimposing an alternate time-feel on the underlying beat pattern).

In example 21, the alternation between the quarter note and the eighth note keep the melody going until beat 3 of measure 11. This rhythmic pattern deviates from the common use of continuous eighth notes that are typically heard in swing style pieces.

Example 21. David Steinmeyer, “Twisted” improvisation, measures 9-11.

In example 22 the placements of the accents allow the melody to be heard in an unconventional manner. The accents are placed three beats apart beginning in measure

14 to provide a hemiola of three against four until the accent aligns with the first beat of measure 17. Once the accents and the measures line up here, Steinmeyer continues the solo by using conventional rhythms.

Example 22. David Steinmeyer, “Twisted” improvisation, measures 14-17.



Even though the solo is short in duration, Steinmeyer provides a good mixture of eighth note rhythms to keep the solo flowing melodically, harmonically, and especially rhythmically.

### Comparison of Swing-Style Improvisations

A difference between Fuller’s solo on “Three Blind Mice” and Steinmeyer’s solo on “Twisted” is that Steinmeyer uses more chromaticism in his solo, while Fuller uses more ideas based upon pentatonic scales. In “Three Blind Mice”, Fuller uses a lot more direct and indirect melodic and rhythmic repetition in his solo than Steinmeyer’s “Twisted” solo.

There are also a few similarities that can be found between these improvisations. Both Fuller and Steinmeyer keep the majority of their respective solos diatonic. Although “Twisted” is more harmonically complex of the two, both solos tend to stay within the confines of their respective keys. They both also play in the same general

range of the horn, staying between second and sixth partials for the majority of the solos. Both soloists provide flowing melodic lines and flawless execution of technical passages. Also, neither soloist depends on using the original tune to help with creating his improvisation.

## But Beautiful

## Melody

Fuller's solo performance of the standard "But Beautiful" includes two improvised choruses. During the opening statement, Fuller stays close to the original melody. This is especially evident in the beginning of his solo.

Example 23. Van Heusen/Burke, "But Beautiful", original melody

The influence of John Coltrane and Miles Davis are apparent in Fuller's ballad playing. Fuller shapes his melodic phrases in a clear manner without being overly aggressive. Like Coltrane and Davis, Fuller's ballad style is very smooth and connected and hardly uses any vibrato at all.

When comparing Fuller's interpretation to the original melody, Fuller stays close to the tune even though he makes minor rhythmic and melodic changes. Fuller makes this solo fit his style by slightly altering the original rhythmic values of the pitches and by

adding the techniques of “scooping” (a nuance of the trombone that allows the player to bend up to an intended pitch by using the slide) and “falling” (a nuance of the trombone that allows the player to fall away from an intended pitch by using the slide) to set the mood for the solo. This is found in measures 6, 8, and 10 of example 24.

Example 24. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 1-17.

Fuller improvises for two choruses on “But Beautiful” and with each chorus he uses the chord changes to get away from the melody while still giving cues to the listener.

In the middle of the first chorus (example 25), the listener can hear one such cue--the melodic chromatic progression B-flat, A-natural, and A-flat that is also present in the original melody. Another cue is shown in measures 28-29 when Fuller leads into the F-natural. In this particular section, Fuller uses more notes to construct his melodic ideas but he still remains close to the melody. The only major deviation from the melody is seen in measures 36-40 where Fuller plays new material to close out the chorus, using the higher ranges of the horn.

Example 25. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 25-40

Examples 26 and 27 show Fuller's most noticeable deviation from the melody.

This occurs in the first section of the second chorus. He does this by adding more notes and by using more chromatic tones.

Example 26. Van Heusen/Burke, “But Beautiful”, original melody, measures 23-32.—

Example 27. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 31-39.



In example 28, Fuller is able to simplify his ideas in the second section of the second chorus after giving his most complex effort in the previous section. He uses fewer notes and even lesser amounts of chromaticism to display his motives. He also maintains the use of the aforementioned stylistic inflections of “scooping” and “falling” to develop the solo. The cadenza in example 29 continues the linear, mid-range playing that appears throughout the improvisation.

Example 28. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 41-56.

The musical score for Example 28 is written in bass clef, 4/4 time, and B-flat major. It consists of four staves of music. The chord symbols and articulations are as follows:

- Staff 1:  $B^b6$  (triplets),  $D-7b5$  (triplets),  $G7b9$   $C-7$  (triplets),  $E-7b5$  (triplets),  $A7b9$  (triplets),  $B^b6$  (triplets).
- Staff 2:  $D-7b5$  (triplets),  $G7$  (triplets),  $C7$  (triplets),  $C7$  (triplets),  $F7$  (triplets).
- Staff 3:  $B^b$  (triplets),  $G$  (triplets),  $C7$  (triplets),  $F\#$  (triplets),  $F$  (triplets),  $B^b$  (triplets),  $A$  (triplets),  $D7$  (triplets),  $G-$  (triplets),  $G-$  (triplets),  $G-$  (triplets),  $G7-$  (triplets),  $G-$  (triplets).
- Staff 4:  $E^o7$  (triplets),  $C$  (triplets),  $C-7$  (triplets),  $D-$  (triplets),  $E2-$  (triplets),  $F7$  (triplets).

Example 29. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 57-74.

The musical score for Example 29 is written in bass clef, 4/4 time, and B-flat major. It consists of five staves of music. The first three staves contain the main improvisation with various chords and triplets. The fourth staff is labeled 'Cadenza' and features a B-flat note. The fifth staff continues the improvisation with a final cadence.

Again, Fuller uses imitation within his musical ideas. The motive in example 30 can be found in three different places within the solo. It is located in measures 45, 65-66, and also in the middle of the final cadenza.

Example 30. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measure 45.

The musical score for Example 30 is written in bass clef, 4/4 time, and B-flat major. It shows a single measure of music with a B-flat chord and a triplet of eighth notes.

Example 31 shows that Fuller also uses a motive that contains a chromatic double-tongue type figure several times inside the solo.

Example 31. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measure 23.



Also, Fuller tends to repeat his melodic cues in the same places to keep the melody recognizable as seen in examples 32-34.

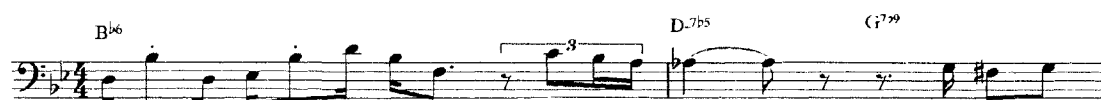
Example 32. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 9-10.



Example 33. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 25-26.



Example 34. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 57-58.

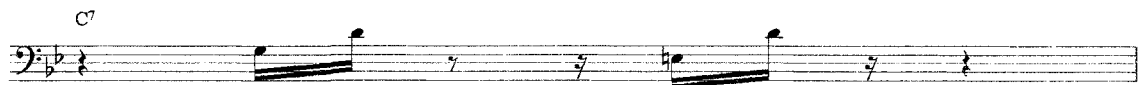


## Harmony

Fuller stays within the basic parameters of the key of the piece. Fuller alludes to the melody to keep the tune recognizable and seldom departs from the chords. He tends to commonly use the root, third, and fifth for the chords that he improvises over. Although there is some chromaticism, the chromatic pitch is still a part of the chord and scale that is being used on the particular beat.

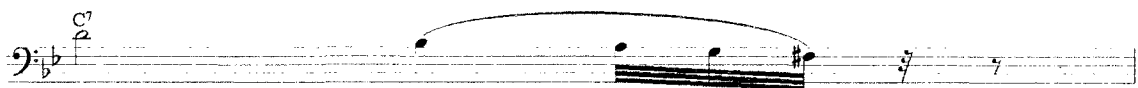
Example 35 shows that even though the E-natural is played which does not fit in the key of B-flat major, it does, however, fit in the chordal structure of the C7 chord (or the C mixolydian scale). Fuller is able to make his ideas flow by finding the common tones within the progression of chords that are in the piece.

Example 35. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measure 47.



There is only one place where a chromatic pitch is used that is out of character with its respective chord. The F-sharp shown in example 36 serves as a tritone substitution in the C7 chord. This is the only instance in the improvisation where the chromatic tone does not resolve properly.

Example 36. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measure 31.



In example 37, even the cadenza stays true to the key of B-flat major by using only two chromatic pitches that resolve to chordal or scalar tones.

Example 37. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, cadenza.

Cadenza

### Rhythm

Rhythm is a vital component of this improvisation. Through the use of varying rhythms and placing double-time motives within the slower feel of this tune; Fuller makes the solo more appealing with each melodic section. Fuller makes the piece fit his style by using rhythms that allow him to stay behind the beat. In example 38, Fuller accomplishes this by alternating between playing and resting .

Example 38. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 8-12.

This type of ballad playing style allows Fuller to use metric modulation to “cross the barline” and give the listener a feel that the piece is extended beyond the boundaries of

the basic 4/4 feel. Another example of this can be seen in example 39 in which Fuller plays so far behind the beat that it is difficult to distinguish where the downbeats are.

Example 39. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 52-54.

Fuller incorporates thirty-second notes to give a double-time feel to his melodic motives. Once again, it can be seen how Fuller imitates himself melodically and rhythmically in examples 40-42.

Example 40. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 30-31.

Example 41. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 43-47.

Example 42. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 55-57.



There is one noteworthy area in this improvisation that showcases Fuller’s rhythmic and technical prowess. Not only does the idea in measure 49 (example 43) show Fuller’s ability to produce a great melodic resolution, but, it also shows Fuller’s ability to use a scalar passage to alternate between varying types of note diminution.

Example 43. Curtis Fuller, “But Beautiful” improvisation, measures 49-50.



## Imagination

### Melody

David Steinmeyer's approach to ballad playing is centered on his extensive range. Not all trombonists are capable of playing as high as Steinmeyer, however, players of past eras such as Urbie Green, contemporaries of Steinmeyer's era such as Phil Wilson, and professionals of today like Harry Watters are all able to take the concept of air speed, intent listening, and embouchure strength to create outstanding melodies that transcend the normal limitations of the trombone.

Steinmeyer's rendition of the standard jazz tune "Imagination," consists of a single chorus. The melody can be broken up into four sections (AABA') just like the original melody of Van Heusen and Burke. In keeping with ballad style playing, he tends to focus on the key notes of the melody by using mostly scalar passages throughout the improvisation. While keeping the solo interesting, he does not stray far from the original melody which can be seen in example 44.

Example 44. Van Heusen/Burke, "Imagination", original melody, measures 1-8.

The musical notation for Example 44 shows the original melody of "Imagination" in bass clef, 4/4 time, and B-flat major. The melody is presented in two staves. The first staff contains measures 1 through 7, and the second staff contains measures 8 through 14. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: A<sup>2</sup>ma<sup>7</sup>, A<sup>o7</sup>, B<sup>b.7</sup>, E<sup>b7</sup>/C<sup>b</sup>, C<sup>-7</sup>, C<sup>-7</sup>(b5), and F<sup>7</sup>. The melody features a mix of quarter and eighth notes, with some triplet markings (indicated by a '3' under a bracket) and a final double bar line with repeat dots.



Due to the duration and tempo of the piece (approximately 56 beats per minute), the length of phrases in this solo would be a difficult for a trombone player with lesser lung capacity. His lengthy phrases are apparent in the first section of the solo. In the first four measures of example 45, the phrases seem to connect with one another. The second A section also demonstrates the length of Steinmeyer's phrases.

Example 45. David Steinmeyer, "Imagination" improvisation, measures 1-7.

In example 46, Steinmeyer embellishes the melody further before arriving at the bridge. The melodic range is still constant by staying in between the fourth and seventh partial of the trombone. He also uses stylistic inflections such as "scoops" and "ghost tones" (an instrumental articulation that produces a tone that is implied instead of producing an actual tone) to modify and add to the melodic core of the original melody.

Example 46. David Steinmeyer, "Imagination" improvisation, measures 9-16.

At the bridge in measure 17 (example 47), Steinmeyer continues to play extended phrases but the major difference is his use of range. Steinmeyer plays into the highest tessitura of the trombone in measures 21-22. In fact, of the three Steinmeyer solos that are analyzed in this study, the E-flat in measure 22 is Steinmeyer's highest played pitch. Since every half-step above a 12<sup>th</sup> partial F-natural creates a new partial, the E-flat in measure 22 could be played in the twenty-second, twenty-third, or twenty-fourth partial of the trombone depending on what slide position is used.

Example 47. David Steinmeyer, "Imagination" improvisation, measures 17-24.

The image shows a musical score for two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The top staff contains measures 17-20, and the bottom staff contains measures 21-24. The music features complex phrasing with many triplets and slurs. Chord symbols are placed above and below the notes. The top staff has chords: D<sup>b</sup>ma<sup>7</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>.7, D.7, G<sup>7</sup>, C.7, F.7, and B<sup>7</sup>(b<sup>9</sup>). The bottom staff has chords: E<sup>b</sup>ma<sup>7</sup>, C.7, F.7, B<sup>b</sup>7, B<sup>b</sup>m<sup>9</sup>sus, and E<sup>b</sup>7(#<sup>9</sup>). There are also markings for 'tr' (trill) and '8va' (octave up) in the bottom staff. The music is characterized by high register playing and intricate rhythmic patterns.

For the final A section (example 48), Steinmeyer returns to the range and phrasing he used in the first sixteen measures of the solo. He remains accurate to the original melody and stays within the fourth and eighth partial of the trombone. At the end of the final A section, Steinmeyer improvises an eight-measure coda, returning to the extended upper register of the trombone. Steinmeyer also continues to use stylistic inflections such as mordents, grace notes, “ghost tones”, and alternating between the use of tenuto and staccato tonguing to produce the common “long-short” (“doo-dat”) articulation like in measure 35 of example 48.

Example 48. David Steinmeyer, “Imagination” improvisation, measures 25-41.

### Harmony

Steinmeyer tends to stay within the key throughout this solo. Even when he plays variations on the original melody, the original melody is still audible. Of interest is the way in which Steinmeyer treats the G-flat found in Van Heusen’s original melody.

In examples 49-52, the G-flat is a part of the chord or scale that is implied in the chord progression. Examples 53 and 54 show how the G-flat is treated outside of the chord. Both examples use the G-flat as an enharmonic raised ninth of an E-flat dominant seventh chord. In example 55, the G-flat can either be viewed as a lowered ninth scale degree in the F7 chord, or it can be seen as a part of F due to the use of B-flat in measure 32. Although Steinmeyer uses chromaticism in this solo, each chromatic tone resolves in an apt manner to lead into a chordal or A-flat scalar tone.

Example 49. David Steinmeyer, "Imagination" improvisation, measures 3-4.

Example 50. David Steinmeyer, "Imagination" improvisation, measures 11-12.

Example 51. David Steinmeyer, "Imagination" improvisation, measure 23.

Example 52. David Steinmeyer, "Imagination" improvisation, measures 27-28.

Example 53. David Steinmeyer, "Imagination" improvisation, measure 24.

Example 54. David Steinmeyer, “Imagination” improvisation, measures 38-39.

Example 55. David Steinmeyer, “Imagination” improvisation, measures 31-32.

### Rhythm

The rhythms in Steinmeyer’s improvisation of “Imagination” mostly consist of eighth and sixteenth notes along with many alternations of duple and triple feels. This diminution allows Steinmeyer to play more notes per thematic idea. There are a few places where Steinmeyer likes to repeat a particular pitch with varying rhythms to move the melody along.

Examples 56-58 show Steinmeyer’s affinity for using the third of the C minor chord to keep the melody moving. Whenever the piece progresses to the fourth and fifth measure of each of the three A sections, Steinmeyer emphasizes the E-Flat with a different rhythm each time. This is an example of how the piece maintains its interest through rhythmic variety.

Example 56. David Steinmeyer, “Imagination” improvisation, measure 3-4.

Example 57. David Steinmeyer, “Imagination” improvisation, measures 11-12.

Example 58. David Steinmeyer, “Imagination” improvisation, measures 27-28.

As shown in examples 59-61, Steinmeyer also likes to give some of his thematic ideas a double-time feel. Adding thirty-second notes to the improvisation also coincides with the use of more notes within each idea along with giving the solo a heightened sense of virtuosity.

Example 59. David Steinmeyer, “Imagination” improvisation, measures 6-12.

Example 60. David Steinmeyer, “Imagination” improvisation, measures 23-27.

Example 61. David Steinmeyer, “Imagination” improvisation, measures 30-32.

By taking advantage of his tremendous range, and by reducing the note values, Steinmeyer is able to create many ideas and motives for his rendition of “Imagination”.

### Comparison of Ballad-Style Improvisations

There are some aspects that are similar about the two improvisations “But Beautiful” and “Imagination”. Both Fuller and Steinmeyer tend to stay within the limits of their respective keys. They also tend to resolve dissonances properly within their ballads. They both also experiment with adding notes to the original melody and they also like to use the double-time feature to keep the melody in motion.

The differences outweigh the similarities in these two ballads. The first noticeable aspect is range. Fuller’s highest pitch in “But Beautiful” is an eighth partial B-flat which only occurs once within the piece. In Steinmeyer’s “Imagination”, he plays an E-flat that is an octave and a perfect fourth above Fuller’s B-flat and he returns to that

range at the end of the solo. Another aspect to note is the duration of each respective piece. Steinmeyer only performed through the form once in his arrangement while Fuller was able to improvise over two choruses of the form. Both performers were able to develop excellent ideas but Fuller could spread his ideas over a longer period of time. While Steinmeyer and Fuller both experiment with rhythms, Steinmeyer has more notes per thematic idea than Fuller. Fuller's shorter melodic ideas allow for more space within his improvisation. Fuller uses the technique of "crossing the bar" to disguise the melodic feel of the downbeat while Steinmeyer is more aligned with the downbeat.



## Quantrale

### Melody

In the improvisation on Curtis Fuller's original tune "Quantrale", Fuller plays through the form twice. Like Fuller's solos, the melody for "Quantrale" is linear. This is shown in Example 62 with the repetitive motive that ascends in a scalar manner. He also maintains his repetitive style by directly and indirectly imitating his own fragments and ideas as shown by the similarities in the second bars of both examples 63 and 64.

Example 62. Curtis Fuller, "Quantrale" original melody, measures 9-16.

Example 62 shows the original melody for "Quantrale" in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major (three flats). The melody is linear and repetitive, featuring a scalar ascent in the second bar. The notation includes Trombone and Tbn. parts with chord symbols: B $\flat$ , A $^{\circ}$ , G $\flat$ , F $^7$ , B $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , G $\flat$ , F $^7$ , B $^{\circ}$ , A $\flat$ , G $\flat$ , F $^7$ , C $^7$ , F $^7$ , B $\flat$ .

Example 63. Curtis Fuller, "Quantrale" improvisation, measures 10-11.

Example 63 shows an improvisation on "Quantrale" in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The notation includes a single staff with a repetitive melodic motif and chord symbols: G $\flat$ , F $^7$ , B $\flat$ , A $\flat$ .

Example 64. Curtis Fuller, "Quantrale" improvisation, measures 36-37.

Example 64 shows another improvisation on "Quantrale" in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The notation includes a single staff with a repetitive melodic motif and chord symbols: G $\flat$ , F $^7$ , B $\flat$ , A $\flat$ .

Examples 63 and 64 show a particular motive that is repeated at different points in the solo. Even though the notes that precede the motive are different, Fuller is still able to use the motive to transition between ideas.

In examples 65 and 66, Fuller imitates fragments by using the sixteenth note-dotted eighth note figure (E-natural to F-natural). Even though the chord symbols are different, he is still able to make the fragment fit melodically.

Example 65. Curtis Fuller, “Quantrale” improvisation, measures 21-22.



Example 66. Curtis Fuller, “Quantrale” improvisation, measures 31-32.



Examples 67 and 68 show two different forms of repetition. In measures 25-27 of example 67, Fuller uses repetition of the same pitch to work through the progression. In measures 28-29 of example 67, there is an indirect imitation of the melodic pattern displayed in example 68.

Example 67. Curtis Fuller, “Quantrale” improvisation, measures 12-13.

Musical notation for Example 67, measures 12-13. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of three flats and a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a whole rest in measure 12, followed by eighth notes in measure 13. Chords  $G^b$ ,  $F^7$ ,  $B^b-$ , and  $A^b$  are indicated above the staff.

Example 68. Curtis Fuller, “Quantrale” improvisation, measures 25-29.

Musical notation for Example 68, measures 25-29. Two staves are shown: Trombone and Tbn. Both are in bass clef with a key signature of three flats and a 4/4 time signature. The Trombone staff has eighth notes and rests. The Tbn. staff has eighth notes and rests. Chords  $B^b-$ ,  $A^b$ ,  $G^7$ ,  $F^7$ ,  $B^b-$ , and  $A^b$  are indicated above the Trombone staff. Chords  $G^b$ ,  $F^7$ ,  $B^b-$ , and  $A^b$  are indicated above the Tbn. staff.

Fuller’s stylistic inflections enhance the overall style of the composition. In the A sections (as shown in example 69), Fuller plays with a straight-ahead Latin style. In the bridge section (as shown in example 70), Fuller plays with a swing style and the differences in articulations and rhythms show the difference in styles.

Example 69. Curtis Fuller, “Quantrale” improvisation, measures 43-48.

Musical notation for Example 69, measures 43-48. Two staves are shown: Trombone and Tbn. Both are in bass clef with a key signature of three flats and a 4/4 time signature. The Trombone staff has eighth notes and rests. The Tbn. staff has eighth notes and rests. Chords  $B^b-$ ,  $A^b$ ,  $G^7$ ,  $F^7$ ,  $B^b-$ , and  $A^b$  are indicated above the Trombone staff. Chords  $G^b$ ,  $F^7$ ,  $C^7$ ,  $F^7$ ,  $B^b-$ , and  $F^7$  are indicated above the Tbn. staff.

Example 70. Curtis Fuller, “Quantrale” improvisation, measures 49-56.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Trombone' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Tbn.'. Both staves are in a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a 4/4 time signature. The Trombone staff has a melodic line with slurs and triplets, with chord symbols E7, Eb, Bb, and Bb written above it. The Tbn. staff has a similar melodic line with slurs and triplets, with chord symbols Eb, Eb, C7, and F7 written above it.

Fuller’s linear bop melodies are similar to a section of J. J. Johnson’s improvisation on the tune “Turnpike”. Example 71 shows scalar tones mixed with chromatic tones in a smooth ascending and descending manner. Since most tones on the trombone are either a position up or a position down away from playing a chordal tone, using chromaticism in improvisations is a useful tool in jazz trombone playing.

Example 71. J. J. Johnson, “Turnpike” improvisation, measures 10-13<sup>67</sup>.

The image shows a single staff of musical notation in a key signature of two flats and 4/4 time. The melodic line is a scalar pattern with slurs and chromaticism. Chord symbols Cm7, F7, Dm7, G7, Cm7, F7, Bb6, and Bb7 are written above the staff.

A noteworthy melodic feature occurs when Fuller leads into the second chorus of the form. In measures 32-33, Fuller extends his phrases outside the chord structure by first continuing the idea that began in measure 30 of example 72 (three measures before the second chorus begins). It then extends to measure 34 continuing the solo without any noticeable break in the melodic content. This entire improvisation makes great use of scalar patterns to keep the solo exciting.

<sup>67</sup> Lambert, 30.

Example 72. Curtis Fuller, “Quantrale” improvisation, measures 30-34.

Chords:  $G^b$ ,  $F^7$ ,  $C^7$ ,  $F^7$ ,  $B^b$ ,  $F^7$ ,  $B^b$ ,  $A^b$ ,  $G^b$ ,  $F^7$

### Harmony

This improvisation stays within the boundaries of the key centers of the tune (B-flat minor and E-flat minor). The harmonic structure of this improvisation centers around the A section (i-VII-VI-V7) as opposed to what happens in the bridge (iv-iv-i-i-iv-iv-V7/V-V7).

In the Latin sections (A sections), Fuller alternates his melodic lines between using the B-flat Blues scale and the B-flat harmonic minor scale (ex. 65 and 69). In the bridge, Fuller uses the E-flat blues scale and the E-flat dorian scale (ex. 73).

Example 73. Curtis Fuller, “Quantrale” improvisation, measures 20-21.

Chords:  $B^b$ ,  $E^b$

As with Fuller’s other improvisations, the dissonance created by the use of the E-natural is resolved to a tone that fits in the chordal structure of the tune.

## Rhythm

This improvisation primarily consists of eighth notes and quarter notes. The rhythms are performed in a straight forward manner with adequate space (rests) for Fuller to begin his next idea. The sixteenth notes in examples 67 and 68 are two of the more virtuosic areas of the improvisation. As Fuller has used imitation in his melodic and harmonic content, he has also used imitation in his rhythmical content as well.

Examples 74, 75 and 76 show indirect melodic and rhythmic imitation even when the chord changes are different. This displays the versatility of Fuller's motives and how they can be used in various situations. While the rhythmic contrast is modest compared to his other pieces, Fuller accomplishes this by using his main attribute of imitation.

Example 74. Curtis Fuller, "Quantrale" improvisation, measures 30-34.

Example 74 musical notation: Bass clef, 4/4 time, B-flat major. Chord changes: G<sup>b</sup>, F<sup>7</sup>, C<sup>7</sup>, F<sup>7</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>-, F<sup>7</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>-, A<sup>b</sup>, G<sup>b</sup>, F<sup>7</sup>.

Example 75. Curtis Fuller, "Quantrale" improvisation, measures 45-46.

Example 75 musical notation: Bass clef, 4/4 time, B-flat major. Chord changes: B<sup>b</sup>-, A<sup>7</sup>, G<sup>b</sup>, F<sup>7</sup>.

Example 76. Curtis Fuller, "Quantrale" improvisation, measures 50-52.

Example 76 musical notation: Bass clef, 4/4 time, B-flat major. Chord changes: E<sup>b</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>-, B<sup>b</sup>-.

## A Tune for Billy

*Author's note: The recording of "A Tune for Billy" that was obtained through David Steinmeyer is pitched in the key of G-flat major due to a variation in turntable speeds. The transcription is written in F Major, the key of the original recording.*

### Melody

David Steinmeyer plays two 17-bar phrases for his improvisation on "A Tune for Billy." The melodic material in "A Tune for Billy" contains a mixture of scalar passages and arpeggiated playing interspersed within the improvisation. Steinmeyer's musical ideas develop at a slower notation pace than in his other previously discussed solos. His ideas incorporate more space and less phrase length. He also does not refer to the melody for his ideas.

In examples 77, 78, and 79, the improvisation outlines the use of scalar ascension and descent to give the improvisation a linear sense. While the improvisation contains higher notes for the trombone, it focuses more on technique rather than range.

Example 77. David Steinmeyer, "A Tune for Billy" improvisation, measures 1-4.



Example 78. David Steinmeyer, "A Tune for Billy" improvisation, measures 7-10.



Example 79. David Steinmeyer, “A Tune for Billy” improvisation, measures 18-20.

Musical notation for Example 79, measures 18-20. The score is in bass clef, 4/4 time, and B-flat major. It features a single melodic line with various chords (Fma7, E-, A-, D-, Abo) and triplet markings.

Most of the solo is played in a legato manner; however, Steinmeyer continues to use the inflection of “ghost tones” along with “scooping” and “falling” to his advantage in the expansion of the solo. As shown in example 80, in measures 21, 22, and 27, his ghost tone usage helps ascend the melodic content without using the actual pitches to state his idea thus showcasing Steinmeyer’s techniques as well as his range to conclude the solo.

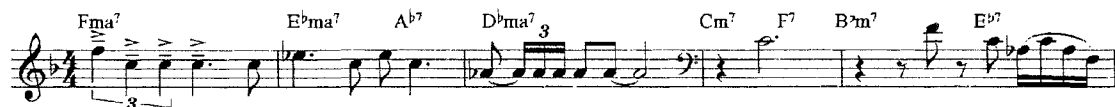
Example 80. David Steinmeyer, “A Tune for Billy” improvisation, measures 22-35.

Musical notation for Example 80, measures 22-35. The score is in bass clef, 4/4 time, and B-flat major. It features three staves: Trombone, Tbn., and Tbn. with various chords (G-, F#o, F#, B-, E-, A-, D-, C7, Fma7, D-, G, C7, F, Bb, E-, A-, F, Bb, D-, G7, F#7(b9), 8va) and triplet markings.

This can also be compared to Frank Rosolino’s high range playing. In example number 81, Rosolino demonstrates his high range playing ability. This sound has more of a lead trombone concept in which the lead player is expected to play the upper notes for a longer duration than the average section player.



Example 81. Frank Rosolino, “Frank Speaking” improvisation, measures 35-39<sup>68</sup>.



### Harmony

Chord progressions in this piece are more harmonically challenging than the other pieces analyzed in this document. The other pieces analyzed here are either based on blues changes, standard chord progressions, or other relatively simple chord changes. They are also in commonly found forms that are 12, 16, or 32 measures long. This solo contains neither aspect-- the form is 17 measures long and some of the chords are remotely distant from the original key of F major.

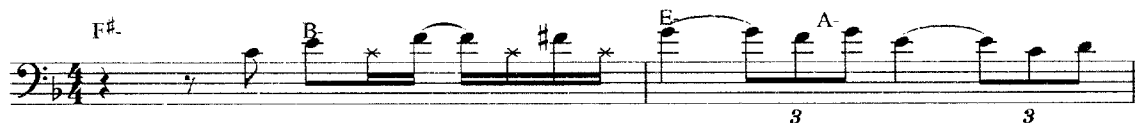
Even though the form and chord progressions are unusual, Steinmeyer still remains diatonic throughout the piece by using primarily the notes in the F major scale. He only uses chromaticism to build and add to the linear musical passages (ex. 82-84). As with Steinmeyer's other solos, his chromatic notes resolve quickly to keep the improvisation within the key.

Example 82. David Steinmeyer, “A Tune for Billy” improvisation, measures 15-16.



<sup>68</sup> Lambert, 39.

Example 83. David Steinmeyer, “A Tune for Billy” improvisation, measures 22-23.



Example 84. David Steinmeyer, “A Tune for Billy” improvisation, measures 32-34.



### Rhythm

In “A Tune for Billy”, the rhythmic content consists of eighth-notes with some sixteenth note passages for high skill and technique. The solo also has a duple feel mixed together with a few triplet patterns to match the style and feel of the Latin rhythm section. Once again, the use of smaller note values helps Steinmeyer to get away from using the melody as a crutch for his solo.

Steinmeyer uses the eighth and sixteenth notes to ascend within the melodic content. Quarter notes serve the same purpose in this solo. They either set up or end the faster, more technical passages. However, there are not nearly as many quarter notes that are used here as was used in Steinmeyer’s other solos. The rhythmically adventurous part of the solo can be found in measures 18-21 (ex. 79). He successfully combines duple and triple feels to create the introductory motive in the second chorus.

### Comparison of Latin-Style Improvisations

There are some melodic similarities between the improvisations of Fuller's "Quantrale" and Steinmeyer's "A Tune for Billy". Both solos are diatonic and motivic in melodic substance and both performers inflect their melodies with the proper styles. They both also develop their ideas at a slower pace than in their other respective solos. The same differences that applied previously discussed solos also apply between these latin solos. Steinmeyer uses a wider playing range than Fuller and Fuller uses more direct/indirect imitation than Steinmeyer.

Both artists use harmony in the same way due to the fact that chromaticism is resolved fairly quickly and they both stay within the guidelines of playing through the changes. However, Fuller does create more dissonance in his solo than Steinmeyer due to the E-natural in the chord structure of "Quantrale". They also have similar rhythmic qualities to their Latin playing. Both artists use eighth notes occasionally using sixteenth notes to transition from one idea to another as well as to surprise the listener. The main rhythmic difference between Fuller and Steinmeyer in these solos is that Fuller is more rhythmically repetitive than Steinmeyer.

## CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

David Steinmeyer's melodic ballad playing and extreme high-range execution has inspired professional jazz trombonists such as Matt Niess and Harry Watters. While these two among many others are a part of the current generation of high-note jazz trombonists, they were able to listen to (and even study with) Steinmeyer to keep the doors open for trombonists who aspire to play in the upper register with a better sense of comfort. Curtis Fuller has inspired trombonists like Tom "Bones" Malone and Dennis Rollins due to Fuller's sense and treatment of melody. Like his influences J. J. Johnson and Kai Winding, Fuller's style and technique made jazz trombone playing sound less uncomfortable and this has branched through to many of the modern trombonists today.

While the range of Steinmeyer compared to Fuller may be the most obvious comparison to detect, the overlying difference lies within the space used in their respective improvisations. Steinmeyer uses more notes in his melodies and he does not have a lot of space between ideas. Fuller uses shorter, repetitive motives with larger gaps between his ideas. Both Fuller and Steinmeyer bring enthusiasm to the listener. The improvisations in this document show that while the approach may be different, the delivery is impressive nonetheless.

It is one thing to listen to, admire, and even try to emulate the top professionals in your particular field. It is another to try to analyze and break down music that is being made up on the spot. The two artists studied should not fade away into obscurity. Personally speaking, I don't know if the world will ever give Fuller and Steinmeyer the

respect that they deserve but, in my opinion, they should be seen as more than just great but instead, legendary. Just this year, Fuller was presented with one of the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Awards as well as being honored as a “Living Legend.” Maybe jazz musicians and critics are starting to realize that Fuller should never be seen as “relatively obscure”. Steinmeyer should also be praised for changing the way that people hear the trombone. Although there were players before and after Steinmeyer that could play in the higher ranges of the horn, Steinmeyer was a master during his prime recording days and he is still just as impressive today. Both artists were able to use the trombone to produce lyrical and technical sounds due to their understanding of the instrument combined with their own musical style and influences. This document will be the first in a series to write and transcribe more improvised solos of prominent jazz trombone artists. By doing this dissertation, I have found that the best way to improve in any facet of playing an instrument is to listen as much as you can and emulate to the best of your ability.



RECORDED ON THE ARMMEN OF  
NOTE'S "BONE VOYAGE" ALBUM  
TRACK 3-2:43 (SOLO)

# IMPROVISATION AS RECORDED FOR "TWISTED" (PERFORMED BY DAVID STEINMEYER)

$\text{♩} = 125$

TROMBONE

TEN.

TEN.

TEN.

TEN.

TEN.

TEN.







RECORDED ON THE "CURTIS FULLER-ART FARMER" ALBUM  
TRACK 3-2:39 (SOLO)

### IMPROVISATION AS RECORDED FOR "QUANTRALE" (PERFORMED BY CURTIS FULLER)

CURTIS FULLER

**TROMBONE**

6  $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b_3$   $F^7_3$   $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b_3$   $F^7_3$   $B^b-$   $A^b$

**TBN.**

12  $G^b$   $F^7$   $C^7$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$

**TBN.**

17  $E^b-$   $E^b-$   $B^b-$   $B^b-$   $E^b-$   $E^b-$   $B^b-$   $B^b-$   $E^b-$   $E^b-$   $B^b-$   $B^b-$

**TBN.**

22  $E^b-$   $C^7$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$

**TBN.**

27  $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$

**TBN.**

31  $C^7$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$

**TBN.**

37  $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$   $C^7$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$

**TBN.**

44  $G^b$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$   $C^7$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $F^7$

**TBN.**

49  $E^b-$   $E^b-$   $B^b-$   $B^b-$   $E^b-$   $E^b-$   $B^b-$   $B^b-$   $E^b-$   $E^b-$   $B^b-$   $B^b-$

**TBN.**

55  $C^7$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$

**TBN.**

60  $G^b$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $A^b$   $G^b$   $F^7$   $C^7$   $F^7$   $B^b-$   $F^7$

**TBN.**



## Appendix B

## Transcription of David Steinmeyer Interview

Author: When and where were you born?

David Steinmeyer: I was born right here in Jacksonville, Florida in December of 1943.

Author: Immediate Family?

DS: The only member of my family that's left besides me is my older sister, Gail. She lives here in Jacksonville and she's lived here all her life.

Author: Any pets?

DS: Yes. As a matter of fact, you can probably hear one of them. I have two dogs that we rescued probably four years ago and I love 'em (sic) to death. One is named Buddy, he's half Shepard, half beagle and the other is Rio and he's a cocker poodle.

Author: Were your parents involved in music?

DS: Yes. My mother and father sang. They were amateurs and they basically sang in church choirs and in little groups that happened around the neighborhood but other than that, they were not professional at all. However, they were involved in it (music) and there was always music around our house.

Author: Were they able to read music or was it mostly sung by ear?

DS: It was by ear most of the time.

Author: Please discuss your childhood and how (when) you were introduced to music?

DS: As I said, my parents were... it (music) was always around my house. I was the last kid and I had an older brother and an older sister. They were ten and eight years older than me and from my first recollections, there was a thing called WestCo (or something like that) where you could record on wax discs and my brother always sang in and around town in churches for extra money. My sister accompanied him and my brother and sister won the Ted Max Amateur Hour Southeast regionals in the 40's. They never went anywhere with it. My brother was offered to go (sing) with the Jordanares that backed

up Elvis Presley and he opted to stay in Jacksonville and not go. A friend of his used to sing with the Jordanaires. So, I was always around music. My first recollection with that machine in which my father recorded me picking out tunes at three years old on piano keyboards. Well, it was actually piano because it didn't have what we know as "keyboards" or electronic but it was a little spin-it (sic) piano. I would do that and sing whenever they would sing. There was always something going on.

Author: Do you have any children and if so, are they involved in music?

DS: Yeah I have a daughter, Adrienne, who took up the flute in high school. Actually, it was in junior high and she played it through her first two years in high school but she became disenchanted with the program and became a swimmer. She was really, really good. The good thing about her was that she had enough knowledge of reading music and stuff that if the band director needed a bassoonist in the band, I would get her a bassoon or find one through the Air Force supply that wasn't being utilized and she would teach herself. I'd show her the stuff and we knew a lot of other military bandspeople that would come over to the house and show her how to do the double reeds and show her what to do. She taught herself flute and taught herself clarinet in about fifteen minutes and it was amazing. I mean at least enough to get a nice sound to play scales on. She was really quick with that. As a matter of fact, she still plays. We got her a crystal flute for her birthday one year and she plays on a glass flute. She still has her Gemeinhardt but I'm not sure if she said that she needed to have the pads redone because the pads were leaking. But, yeah, she's a pretty good kid.

Author: Was the Trombone your first instrument?

DS: As far as learning how to play like I mentioned earlier, I used to just sit there and use my finger and pick out the tunes (on piano) because I had a pretty good ear. By age 5, my mother allowed me study piano with Ms. Lillian Lawrence and I studied with Ms. Lawrence from the age of five to the age of 12. I wanted to be in the band like my friend Jimmy Lay who was a year ahead of me in school. Jimmy played trumpet and I wanted to play trumpet. The funny part about that was my father as a kid played trumpet until he developed a dental disease and he lost his teeth at an early age and no longer could play the trumpet. I wanted to play like Jimmy and my father but they had too many trumpet players in the band so I ended up playing the trombone. After playing it for a little while, I gave up the piano by twelve and concentrated solely on trombone.

Author: Is the Trombone your only instrument?

DS: I play a euphonium. I've been playing euphonium since they wrote a part for me for the "Christmas in Washington" TV show in Washington, D. C. about fifteen years ago. I

learned (euphonium) because I messed with a trumpet a little bit. I knew the fingerings but I just had to drop it a step from a trumpet. But yeah, they wrote a part for me for that and I played euphonium well until I moved out of Washington, D. C. I played euphonium once a year and that was for the presidential Christmas TV show and it was a challenge.

Author: Who was (were) your primary teacher(s)?

DS: Well....In junior high, the band director was a clarinetist and told me that he could show me the positions but that he didn't really know how to play it so he said that I was basically on my own and when I got into high school, the band director was a saxophone player and by the time I got to high school, I had already practiced and listened enough to where I could do pretty well. So, I started progressing really quickly because back in the day when I grew up, there wasn't a whole lot of distraction. I couldn't afford to go to the movies so I played a little baseball outdoors and I practiced a lot on trombone and I got pretty good. I had one guy by the name of Don Moore that was introduced to me through my band director in high school in my senior year. What he showed me was how to go from using slide oil to the cold cream and water that everybody was using...Pond's Cold Cream back in those days....and that was my half-hour lesson. He greased my trombone slide and the first water bottles were Dristan Nasal Mist. We didn't have the atomizers (the ones with the little pumps on them) yet but we would just use the mist spray off the nasal sprays and that was my first lesson. After that, I graduated high school and I immediately became a professional.

Author: What equipment do you primarily use?

DS: Right now I'm at a crossroads between the horn that I helped design for Martin Management and a horn that I acquired back in 1980 from the Selmer/Bach people. I played a Bach 12 GLT which was a gold-plate, lightweight slide horn that I recorded an album with (I really liked that horn) but I had been playing on an Urbie Green Model 4501 Martin for...oh I got in 1976 and I played it up until about three years ago. I was asked by the owner of Leblanc Music Instruments which was the parent company for Martin Band Instruments, Mr. Vito Pascucci, who has since passed away two years ago, if I would help them out with another model that was sort of like the sister horn to the Urbie Green model jazz horn. So they came out with the Model 4510 David Steinmeyer Signature Model that was supposed to go forward but Mr. Pascucci died, the parent company, Leblanc, was bought by Steinway and Conn/Selmer was a subsidiary of Steinway so they had already owned King Musical Instruments and several others. The Steinway people gave them all of the brass concerns from Leblanc which were Holton, Leblanc, and Martin. Martin was immediately sold and it no longer exists. It was dissolved. So, therefore, there was no place for me to go with the model that I helped design. But, I still have a couple of those around and they sold several of them over the year that they were floating around (or at least the six months that they were floating around). But I'm right back between the Bach and the model Martin that I helped design.

Author: How has your equipment varied or changed throughout your playing career (e.g. mouthpiece, bore size, mute usage)?

DS: Back in 1956, I was introduced to the eighth-grade band program. We rented a trombone (an Olds Recording Trombone) and it came with a mouthpiece which was an Olds 3, which, was a standard stock mouthpiece for all those horns that came from the student lines. I played that through high school and in my senior year in high school, I really didn't know much about equipment. I just played and as I got into the band programs that were a little bit more than high school level (the All-State bands and All-County bands where I ended up trying out for those and ended up being first trombone in those), and I would meet different directors and people who were professional people who played. I was introduced to the Bach system of mouthpieces (the Stradivarius models). I acquired it at one of the county festivals. I went to the music store where I had my horn rented from and I bought a Bach 12C and that changed my whole style of playing. It made my sound with that little horn sound a little warmer because the Bach mouthpieces are a bowl shape and I played that after I got out of the high school here in Jacksonville. I joined the United States Air Force into the band program and went down to Cape Canaveral at Patrick Air Force Base and I played that little Olds for maybe about 6 months until the Air Force came up with some King 3B Silversonics back in 1962. When those came in, I happened to be looking through a mouthpiece cabinet in the supply room and found another Bach 15C mouthpiece. So, I took that out and played that (mouthpiece) and it was even better for me. It had that same nice warm sound but it was much easier to play for me. So I played that 3B with that 15C mouthpiece during my first hitch in the Air Force for four years. Then, I auditioned with the Norad Band in Colorado under Bobby Herriot (the Canadian Trumpet artist) and got the first trombone chair to go to Colorado to the Norad band, The Commanders. Before I had a chance to have orders cut, my band commander suggested that I audition for the United States Air Force Band in Washington, D. C. and their jazz band which was, at that time, the official Air Force dance orchestra (which was the Airmen of Note---the band that was formed after Glenn Miller had passed away in 1950 to carry on Glenn's style). I went up with that 3B and the 15C and I auditioned and got that job and immediately when that day that I was in D.C., they red-lined me from the Colorado band and I got direct orders that day to report back to Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. in October with a date to follow and that's how that happened. I played that equipment (the horn that my band commander, Mr. Chief Warrant Officer Herman Englert, let me keep) for about the first two months of my change of station up to the Washington band until I could find a horn. In a short period (amount) of time, two months, we had met the head of artists and clinicians for the King Musical Instrument Company (S. Bob Frazier) and Bob suggested that King would like to use me as a clinician along with J.J. Johnson and Urbie Green and would I have to travel to East Lake, Ohio, which is Cleveland, and have them fit me to a trombone something that I could play with. The Air Force sent me over there and they built a special horn for me that was a forerunner of the now King 2B+ which was the one that I played that they put together for me. It had an Urbie Green slide, well; actually it was a Jiggs Whigham slide on an Urbie Green bell. The horn was very light and it was a

single .500 bore. It had one bore size because the original 2B was a .485/.495 dual bore and they built a .500 bore for me and the only thing that it said on the bell was King and I played that from (oh my goodness) 1966 until 1976 when I got the Urbie Green trombone (his 4501 Martin) and I played that forever and then I got the 4501 Martin from the Leblanc Musical Instrument People and became their clinician and (like I said) I played that Martin forever. In 1972 in Hollywood, CA we (Airmen of Note) were doing a guest appearance. We were doing guest artists for a radio show. I met with the lead singer with the musical group "The Four Freshmen", a gentleman by the name of Bob Flanagan, who played great trombone and who used to work a lot with the Stan Kenton people. Bob was a great trombonist and he was showing me a marching Olds trombone that looked like a big, fat trumpet and it had a mouthpiece in it and he said "What do you think of this horn?" and I said "The heck with the horn, what's this mouthpiece?" It was so easy to play and he said, "Oh, that's something I got from Jack Teagarden back in 1948" and I said "My goodness gracious!"

He said "What do you think of the horn?" and I said "The heck with the horn. I want to know how I can get a hold of this mouthpiece" and he said "You can't have that mouthpiece." Well, it happened that that day we were at Capitol recording on Vine St. in Hollywood. The band director came up with (a piece) a solo for me to do. They had just written it for me and we were sightreading it and it was a tune called "Imagination". I asked Bob if I could use the mouthpiece with my King 2B just to try it while they ran through it and he said "Okay". I put the mouthpiece in there and we ran "Imagination" and in one take, it was put on an album. Bob Flanagan came out of the booth and said to me, "I hate to tell you this but, I'm gonna have to give you that mouthpiece. That was phenomenal." I still have that mouthpiece that I got in 1972 from Bob Flanagan. I cannot get off of it. It's just like old home for me. No matter what horns I've tried to mess around with, I always go back to either the Urbie model or this Bach 12G. I always seem to go back to that.

Author: Do you have any "rituals" or methods that you use to test equipment out when you play a new horn? Is there something that you do every single time?

DS: Yea. I basically taught myself how to play. I'm a natural player. So what I do when I pick up a trombone is I'll play the tuning B-flat with it. I'll play it down to the F and down to the low B-flat. Then I'll go back to the tuning B-flat and I'll do a scale up to high b-flat and while I'm holding that high B-flat, I'll usually gliss up to a double B-flat. Now if the air stream is working for the horn, then there are no hitches. If around the sautered left in the end of the U-joint at the end of the slide or, if something is messed up in the leadpipe (if the leadpipe is wrong), then it'll choke out. So, that's basically what I'll do and then I'll do Dorsey's theme ("I'm Getting Sentimental Over You") and little things that (players) in the real world play because that's what the older folks like to hear and now that's what the younger folks are starting to find again because it's a hard solo to play. So I'll do that and then I'll do arpeggios or double tongue or triple tongue stuff but that's basically it just to see if it'll speak. Especially for the job that I do, which is the lead trombone/ballad player, I try to see if it has above high B-flat, if the high E-flat and the high E are locked in where they're supposed to be and if they're not, then I usually



don't mess with that horn because that's right where they (the pitches E-flat and E-natural) need to be and if they're not there then it won't do me any good.

Author: To continue with this topic: Where is the best place to play high E-flat and high E?

DS: Well, I was so used to playing on a Martin trombone that they are right where they are an octave lower. Now most trombones you can play the high E-flat in ultra sharp second position, it'll lock in there. The high E is the worst note on the trombone. That high E is murder but on the Martins, they seem to be locked in just like they were in the lower octave and if you can trust it (because it's usually from the mouthpiece back that creates the problem), you can force yourself to let the horn do its job. That's where I find out if I can use a horn or if I can't use a horn. When I'm up at a microphone or under pressure to do a solo, I don't want to think, "Is this horn gonna do what I need it to do?" I need that horn to do what it has to do.

Author: What is your personal philosophy on music?

DS: Well (and we discussed this before)....Basically, music (in my mind) is meant to be fun. Now with that being said, you can't have fun if you don't know how to play your instrument. The more prepared you are, the more fun you have and I like the comparison between my musical instrument and a golf game. The reason that I like it is because it's individual and that's why I think I like golf so well. You're not in a competition with anybody...it's you and an inanimate object that you have to make perform but, different equipment is made such that you have to find out what it'll do like you were asking me about what do I look for (in equipment). Now, I wouldn't take a tenor trombone that is a .500 bore horn which in the business is called a jazz horn and isn't it funny how most orchestras many years ago, that's the only size that they had....All of a sudden, somebody came up with a gee whiz idea of sticking a trigger on it because the short-armed people didn't like to go down to sixth position... That was explained to me by a short-armed bass trombone player in the Pittsburgh Symphony. He said "No, my arms weren't long enough"... Well, they used to have leather straps around your arms to be able to throw them down and guys would just shoot it down there. The funny part about it is that they never really had to do that because you can move your shoulder in such a way but anyway.... You just have to find the combination that will work and then sit and actually find out where you are with that equipment.... You wouldn't wear a baseball suit to play football. You have different equipment to do different things. You don't take a tenor trombone and try to play bass trombone with it although there are guys that can, that doesn't mean that it's the right equipment.... Conversely, you don't take a big large bore horn and try to play lead in a dance band. First of all if you are recording, the sound will be horrible because the section won't blend. You won't blend with the trumpet because the trumpet player's job is to tear your head off if you are a trombone player, that's their job. Your hair is supposed to grow forward. You know, they play beryllium bells or very light-weight bells and they get what the trumpet players call the "sizzle".

Well trombones can “sizzle” too for a large instrument as you heard from our playing together. Different mouthpieces with different equipment can get nice “edge” as we call it. But yeah, practice, get to a point, and then the fun comes out and if you’re not having fun, go do something else. Very few people make tones of money playing a musical instrument, very few. It’s just like real estate in which not that many people make all the millions, maybe three percent. Maybe three percent of the musicians that are instrumentalists will make that (money). The rest of us that are out here are just having fun and trying to pass on what knowledge we find out during our careers back to the other people. Who knows, there may be somebody there who is a “world beater” that can go out and do phenomenal things. Tommy Dorsey was the first solo that I heard after my father played it for me when I couldn’t play trumpet and I had to play trombone. I was devastated because I wanted to play trumpet but then when I heard “Sentimental Over You”, I thought “Oh boy, there we go!” and that’s been a lifelong thing. Even after 50 years later, it’s always a crapshoot if you’re gonna miss the high C-sharp. You just don’t know because playing a musical instrument is a physical thing.

Author: Since you’ve mentioned about equipment and how one should not use a large bore horn to play lead in a jazz band, what do you think that jazz trombone sections should consist of at least equipment wise and size wise?

DS: Now you’re starting to get to a fine line here. Let me qualify something here. The Airmen of Note, was a very special band and they wrote arrangements for the individuals in that band. We would play stock arrangements but most of the time, things were written expressly for us and I had a range that was beyond the normal capacity. Now let’s go back to my first assignment with the 536 Air Force Band in Patrick Air Force Base between that Olds trombone that I had in high school and getting that King 3B, I went into supply and they gave me a horn to play. They didn’t like that little Olds so they gave me a double trigger bass trombone Reynolds Comtemptra with a Reynolds 3 mouthpiece. Now mind you, I’m self-taught and I’d never left home before. So, the Air Force is telling me “Here kid, you’re playing first trombone and you’re gonna use this horn.” So I said OK and I made it work. It killed me but I made it work and I did my best not to make any mistakes and it nearly killed me. Now when I found that 3B, it was like opening up the Red Sea. The seas parted and the clouds went away and the sun came out and my range improved. I mean it was so easy to play. So lets go back to 1969, somewhere around in there, between 1967-1969. Vietnam was cranked up and we had three tenor trombone players playing .500 bore horns and one double trigger Holton bass trombone with a ten inch bell. Nice red rose bell with a nice sound, great player, Gary Ross. The rest of us played tiny jazz horns with a bowl mouthpiece and it would get a nice, round sound even with a small bore. But the difference was when you started cranking up on the volume, then it would get edgier and edgier unlike the horns like the .525 bore (like a Bach 36 per se) with a small shank or a large shank, you could suffice with that because a lot of guys put a trigger on that and then you have a legit horn. But, when you start playing four hours a night and you’re doing solos and you’re playing up above high B-flat’s, high C’s and High D-flats all night long, never stopping, after forty minutes, that’s about the max. But there are guys out there that can play forever that can

just do that because for some reason, they're built that way. They can do that but as a rule, no, the Airmen of Note back in the late 60's had two bass trombone players and two tenor trombone players...two .500 bore horns and two double trigger bass trombones...the third and fourth were double triggers. When we recorded, we recorded off of a microphone where we had One tenor and one bass opposing each other for each side. That sound was so great because the third trombone player also played tuba so when we needed that, we would switch that because we had the ability to do that but we always kept the trumpet section is always playing for that edge. I mean the decibel level of the band was about 104 without amplification. It was just the "gorillas" that were playing the instruments. When they wanted to "crank down", you could blow people away with it and we did several times and we'd get a lot of complaints about that. But, again, we're talking about philosophy of music and if you're prepared and you're playing all day long, then you can get away with that. But, as life goes on, you can't get away with that so you have to start finding ways around that that you can maintain your playing abilities with lesser air. I had been guest starring with different bands such as the Navy where guys thought they could play an (Conn) 88H in college with a 6 ½ AL but that gets lost in a band and I don't care who you are. We had Rick Lillard that came on the band from the Wright-Patterson band and he had an 88H (not with a 6 ½ AL but a fairly nice sized mouthpiece) and we couldn't hear him in the section. It was just so wide that the sound came out of the bell and went east and west. We needed a sound that came out of the bell and went northwest and northeast. It needed to come out and go into a cone shape, not just a great big wide 90 degree angle and that was what was happening and in order to focus it "this" way, to go straight out of the horn and go into the microphone, you had to put so much air into it that it would overblow everything and, essentially, there was no blend. So that's how we worked that out and in the meantime, we all ended up playing three .500 bore Martin Urbie Greens with a double trigger Holton (those were before Edwards). The Navy guys liked the big bass trombones (double trigger bass trombones) like the Bach trombones. Then people found the Edwards and the legit guys really liked the Edwards sound now. But when I was active duty, it was three Martins and one Holton and that seemed to be the "Section du jour". It was the best blend.

Author: So the same horns worked better because everybody was working with the same equipment?

DS: Yeah and even though the horns were Urbie Green Model 4501's, I played the Teagarden mouthpiece from Hollywood, Rick Lillard played a Giardinelli 5D and Gary Hall, the third player played a Bach 12C. So, you had mine which was a V-cup, the Giardinelli was almost a V-cup and the third was a bowl, which was, if you look at it on a scope, you have the first mouthpiece that is like a laser to a less laser second mouthpiece to a bowl sounding third mouthpiece into a bass trombone mouthpiece. It kind of went from narrow to wide. It wasn't something that we planned but it was something that was musical to our ears. Not only did it give the sound a good blend, but it gave the individuality of each guy liked and there is another important thing about this. It doesn't matter the bore size or what the mouthpiece is, you will eventually stick with the sound that your head hears and likes.

Author: When did you realize that you had a range that was higher than most trombonists can attain?

DS: This is going to shock you. I've never realized that. That may shock you. I had a nice range in high school until I broke my tooth out and then for some unknown reason, whatever that break was when I lost part of my front tooth, my range did increase about an octave but, all through that period of time, there were guys that were playing in that register. I just wasn't able to. My band director at Patrick Air Force Base, Herman Englert, showed me at eighteen years old on my equipment how to play a double B-flat. I had never witnessed that up to that point. I never had even heard it and here's this man who was an old guy (I'm eighteen and he's in his forties) who did that to me and that's what got me curious about it all. One of my favorite trombonists is Tommie Young on Jimmy Lundsford's "Margie" because he plays a high F-sharp on the end of his solo which playing around, that's high. It's not anymore because of guys like that and then I came along and took it to a level and people are saying "Wow this guy can do that..." and you get the curiosity seekers in the practice rooms saying "I can do that." and sure enough, they can. Now the trick is working at it to where it sounds like a natural thing to do. Not like you're choking a cat or something (and there are guys that do that). There are guys that do that and they're like "Hey, look at me..." The guy that was in the Airmen of Note with me, Rick Lillard, has an octave above me and it's LOUD. I just had one thing that I did that I perfected for myself and that was to be able to take normal solos that trombone players do and if I wanted to take part of it up another octave and come down out of the stratosphere, I would be able to do that.

Author: Which is your favorite style to improvise over: Latin, Ballads, Up-tempo Swing, Rock, and why?

DS: No...I really just love playing the horn. I think if you are going to ad-lib over something, then Latins are fun. I think that's why Bill Watrous just eats up Latin tunes because it falls in line with his tonguing abilities and his thought process. I just love to hear Bill do that. Then there's Dick Nash who I really love to emulate. Urbie Green was one of my mentors as far as where I wanted to be as a trombone player. Meeting these guys in later life was just a thrill and to meet Frank Rosolino (straight ahead beboper)....I would never classify myself as that. The one thing that I've always had problems with is being a straight ahead beboper. I don't have that facility because I don't have that thought process. There are guys who can play and there are guys who are innovators who think that stuff up. I'm not a thinker-upper, I'm a follower as far as that goes. Now, when it comes to playing lead trombone in a ballad concept, I've over the years used several people in it which would be Urbie Green, Dick Nash, and Tommy Dorsey. I'm sure that I'm leaving fifteen or sixteen other guys out but as you hear something that you like, you know instinctively as a player when you get to the level we've come to. Whatever fits your heart and you know when something touches your musical soul, you know that and it instantly goes into your memory bank and you don't

ever lose that. That was something that (saxophonist) Oliver Nelson said to me once at a jazz festival in Mobile, AL. I was asking him about how to ad-lib and he said to “learn everybody’s licks.” One day, you’ll be able to use it in a solo and it’ll come to you just like saying your ABC’s. It’ll be there and it’ll jump right out of your body.” And that I’ve kind of lived by. Just learn something that you like. (Such as) Carl Fontana with his ease of how he played and also the guy that I think is the most underrated jazz player in the world, Phil Wilson. I think that I’ve heard Phil over the last forty years and he is the most underrated trombonist on the planet and I will tell you this as a professional. I believe there is nothing that Phil can’t do with a horn in his hands and he does not use a trigger. He is absolutely phenomenal as far as being a player. I’ve also had the pleasure of playing with the Bill Allred Jazz Band here in Jacksonville, FL. Bill Allred is a trombonist from Rock Island, IL and Bill in my professional opinion is probably the best Dixieland trombone player on the planet. He has a son John that plays in New York and all over the country with performers like Harry Connick as well as his own group. He plays with Wycliffe Gordon a lot. I had the privilege of listening to John as a jazz All-Star at the Elkhart Jazz Festival in Indiana two years ago. I stood in the back of the room and watched John work and I could say without reservation that John is probably the best jazz trombonist alive now now that Frank Rosolino is gone and Carl Fontana is gone. This isn’t to say that there are some monster players out there. There are a lot of guys that can play very fast and there are guys that can play very high. John can do that plus sound like Carl (Fontana), he can sound like Bill Watrous, he can sound like Frank Rosolino, he can pick stuff out of the stratosphere, he is one of those guys that I mentioned earlier as an innovator of jazz. He had great influences in his life because his father is just a phenomenal trombone player. I classify him as a Dixie player because that is where his roots are but when he plays in a band anywhere, he can do stuff on trombone that’s phenomenal and he can do it all night long. He NEVER runs out of gas and you want to talk about soul? Bill Allred’s got a big heart and it comes out. That’s what I liked about Phil Wilson. He has a sense of humor and it comes out through his playing and that’s what you notice about trombone players. Usually you meet someone and then you hear them play and they usually play exactly like who they are. If they’re nuts and kind of crazy, then that’s exactly how they’ll play. If they’re dark, then that’s how they play [makes grunting noises]. Most of the guys that you meet are really happy type guys and that’s what trombone players are like anyway. We’re all nuts.

Author: So the names that you’ve mentioned previously, are they your influences on your style of improvisation?

DS: Yea along with J.J. Johnson whom I had the privilege of working with. When I start answering questions, I tend to leave people out but I don’t mean to. There are so many guys that I have had the privilege of working with and you learn from all of them. You draw a blank once you start trying to think of all of them. It’s just an amazing thing to be able to be put in a position to be able to work with any of the legends of jazz. Britt Woodman who was with Duke Ellington, Buster Cooper, Wycliffe Gordon, Jimmy Napier (Nepper), Wayne Andre, just monster people....They were the innovators and they brought really good stuff.

Author: I've noticed that on most of your recordings, you play the melody as a soloist instead of improvising over chord changes. Do you prefer playing the melody or improvising instead?

DS: I think that some of those things that you've heard (now that I'm thinking about this), that's how the arrangement came out. It wasn't necessarily that I didn't want to play changes over it but that's just what the arranger would do because usually some of the stuff that I think you've got was me playing melodies over stuff and the guitar player would take over because that was the way we were set up to do. Playing the stuff that I played with the Airmen of note Air Force was meant to be played in concert tours and when you're playing lead and jazz like that, doing 5 to 6 solos a night, that will kill you in an hour and a half to two hour show. Your chops go away in a hurry. Now it's easier to me personally. There are the guys that would rather play the jazz and bail on it. You can't bail on a ballad. Once that melody starts, you have to play the melody because invariably, the crowd knows what tune it is and if you miss something, they will know it. So, that's basically how those tunes worked out and there are tunes like Spring Can Really Hang You Up that Frank Mantooth did but that wasn't my job in the Air Force band. My job was to play the ballads and to play lead. I had Rick Lillard and Gary Hall to play all the jazz. Now since I've been out, I haven't had the opportunity. The Air Force offered me a lot of opportunity to record. It costs a lot of money to do that out here on our own. I don't have any backers. I didn't really need to solo that much as far as jazz. So for the last 17 years, I've had to learn the other side of that. That's why you don't hear me play jazz a lot because I never did. That wasn't my job. We all have jobs and that's what I was explaining especially in the Airmen of Note. Whenever somebody vacates the first trombone chair, that doesn't mean that the second chair will automatically move up to first chair. They hire to that chair. It's not about the chair and this is why I love to go the clinics because you'll see some kid with a long face because they're playing third trombone. Well guess what, we had a professional third trombone player who didn't want to play second or first. He didn't want to do anything. If you messed with his parts, he's get nasty and historically, the second chair player is the jazz player but that didn't mean that if somebody wanted to play a chorus on it, the third or the fourth player could do it or I could. We had a tough tune called "Twisted" in which we all played solos. But that's how that's all set up. In a professional group, it doesn't mean that you're a failure if you have to play second trombone. That's a hot seat in a pro band and fourth trombone is a specialty all by itself. You have to be a monster bass trombone player to play in a jazz band. If I couldn't play lead trombone, then the bass trombone chair is the chair that I would want. I would want the fourth trombone chair because it's got all the good notes.

Author: How would you describe your personal playing style?

DS: I'm just a good lead trombone player. I would consider myself a studio lead trombone player which requires that you don't make a lot of mistakes and you have to

play the same way every time so the other guys in the section know where you're going to be. That was the one good thing about the Airmen of Note trombone section. After they ran the section and they knew my style of playing, there was no guessing. They could look at a phrase and know exactly where I was going to start and stop the vibrato. They knew if I was going to even do a vibrato and I positioned myself in the section where guys on either side of me, they could always see the vibrato coming by the way that I would tip my slide. They would be right with me and we would match. The fourth trombone player was always next to me so he knew all the time. That's what I would consider myself. I wanted to go to Hollywood after the Air Force and play in the studios out there but in all honesty, I didn't think that I was good enough to do that.

Author: Who do you like in the younger generation of jazz trombonists and why?

DS: John Allred is my favorite. Conrad Herwig is excellent. Matt Niess and Harry Watters with the army band guys....They're all excellent players. They are from a different breed and come from a different thing. They play different types of music. I'm from a generation where guys soloed on standards and now it's mainly original stuff. I was on a cruise ship playing as an all-star with the lead player for the group Diva. She wrote some original stuff that she knew. I like to feel a tune, not just play a lick over a change...to me, that's just sterile. I don't like doing that. I wouldn't even accept a gig of people playing original music. I don't find that enjoyable because you are constantly searching for what they had in mind. I know what I get out of what I can do. I know my limitations and mine are great. I have a lot of limitations. Wycliffe Gordon is a great player. Those guys are going to be the benchmark real soon.

Author: Do you also arrange/compose for big band/combo?

DS: NO. I was self-taught and I've never had any formal training. I have done some sketches on Silent Night with the Air Force Band and I was the one that sketched that out how I wanted it and which instruments that I would want to use where and places that I wanted to use where. The arranger, Gil Crotty, put the people where they needed to be but other than that, I've never sat down.

Author: How do you mentally approach particular pieces that you know are extremely high?

DS: It depends on the tempo of it and it depends on what I'm doing prior to the high stuff. I'm not one for lying out to just do high stuff. I like to play stuff in continuity with the rest of the chart. I think that was part of your question a while ago about playing changes as opposed to playing the melody. I don't really think about it. Somebody's not going to write something that I can't play unless they go out of their way to write it a fifth higher than I play and then I just won't do it. I may think about how I would want to approach it stylistically (e.g should I do something fancy to it or do I just need to play the

melody or can I play an arpeggiated jazz lick into it) Other than that, I don't think about playing high. That's another thing about approaching what I do for a living and I tell other people that want to do what I do is I think in that register. I whistle high and I used to sing real high tenor and if you can hear up there than you can play up there. It must come natural to you and you have to be able to hear where you're going. If you can hear a note generally where you need to be, then you usually won't miss that note.

Author: How did you become a clinician for Leblanc Musical Instruments?

DS: Back in 1975, I had already met Urbie Green personally and he'd been a guest with the Airmen of Note and Urbie and I at one point were clinicians for King. King had some issues with money somewhere along the line and they wanted all their horns back since they were on consignment. People bailed. Now listen to this, here's something that you don't know. Back in the 30's, there was a line of Martin instruments (trumpets and trombones) called the Committees and anybody who was anybody or if they had big bands played a Martin. Jack Teagarden's band had all 4 trombones players playing Martins, no bass trombones. So Urbie remembering the old Committees which were "bulletproof" as we called them (you know, the slides were perfect, the bells were perfect, they were just great horns)... All the guys in the big bands loved them. So, Urbie met with Mr. Pascucci (that owned Leblanc which owned Martin) and he designed a horn, the 4501 which we talked about earlier, and when he came out with that, he was on tour in the Mid-Atlantic states. He called me up and told me that he was in Annapolis, Maryland which was only about 40 miles from where I lived so I went up to Annapolis to see Urbie one night and he says hey there's something that I want you to try. He had a couple of boxes in his room and there were these horns. I said, "What's this?", and he said, "It's a horn that I'm helping design with the engineers over at Leblanc and I want you to take one home and try it and tell me what you think of it." I took it home and called him up the next day and I told him that I loved it. When it came out, it was the Urbie Green 4501 and there was a gentleman by the name of Sandy Sandburg who used to work for Getzen and Conn but then worked as a sales rep. for Leblanc and Sandy had done a lot of stuff with the Airmen of Note over the years because of the flutes (The Gemeindharts) that Conn had. In fact, the Airmen of Note was one of the first groups to use the flugelhorns that Getzen came out with. We used all alto flutes and we were the first band to do that. We were the first band to use trumpets and flugelhorns in a section from Getzen. Sandy called up the band and said "Urbie said that you liked the horn. Would you like to try one for real and be a part of the group? Vito would like to see you. Would you fly up to Kenosha, WI (where the factory was) and we can talk about it." When I got there, I tried about 5 or 6 different kinds. Here's a little about Vito. The reason that he was particularly interested in me was that I was in the Airmen of Note which was the band that was formed for Glenn Miller. Well, Vito Pascucci, during the war, was Glenn Miller's instrument repairman back then and he was a kid. When Glenn passed away and was lost while the band ended up in Paris, Vito met Mr. Leblanc in Paris. That trip, Mr. Leblanc took a liking to him and gave him sole propriety of Leblanc Instruments in the United States after the war. Eventually, Vito, owning a lot of stock in



the company because Mr. Leblanc had passed away (he lived to be 90 I understand), was the owner of the largest solely privately owned instrument company in the United States and there you have it. He knew that I was in the Air Force's "Glenn Miller" band and so that was my tie to him. He had heard me play when the band was going through Milwaukee, WI and he said "How would you like to have an Urbie horn and be one of our clinicians?" and I said "That would be great." I went to Kenosha and they built the horn in two days for me. I watched it being built and that is something to see. It was really something to watch a trombone being built from scratch. They took me into Chicago and I got to hear Warren Vachez play some Dixie in some clubs. The next day I did a road test of it in their playing studio. They had a big party for me welcoming me into the company at the end of the day and sold the horn to me for \$200. I got back on the plane and the rest is history. I became a clinician for Leblanc and that's how I did it.

Author: Do you have any tips or exercises dealing with endurance?

DS: Not really. Being self-taught I don't have any methods to fall back on. Endurance, to me, is just practicing a lot, playing a lot and staying in the registers that you'll generally play in which lead trombone players need to play the entire length of the horn. That varies from guy to guy. These days I have a seven octave range that I can use if I need to. My ultra useable range is five octaves and the rest of the stuff is low pedals just for goofing around soloistically along with the double B-flat and above. It's all for show while the rest is what we call "money range". It's the range that you can rely on all the time. I've never had to worry about endurance until I got older and I played less. I don't have a playing job anymore so just to rely on myself to keep up my chops is quite hard. When we first started the interview, I was showing you a tune on the Aebersold record called "Spring is Here" and if there's one tune that will do it for you, it would be this tune because it requires you to play in 3-4 octaves. It's awfully hard to do and that's what I recommend when people come to the house and I put this on for them and just play it for them. I say don't do anything spectacular but just play the melody and if you can play it all the way through, then you've got pretty good endurance.

Author: Do you have any tips or exercises dealing with flexibility?

DS: Yeah...for flexibility, I don't double or triple tongue the Arban way. Since I didn't have anybody show me the proper way to do it, I only did it the best way that I could. I ended up automatically doodle tonguing and that helped with my flexibility. With that being said, I play on a cushion-rimmed mouthpiece which takes up a lot of space on my face and it's made for playing lead and staying in the high register a lot and that wide cushion takes away your flexibility so I've had to manufacture a light embouchure that will allow me to play with some flexibility. I've been trying to find a mouthpiece that would let me play with flexibility for the last 30 years that had the same characteristics as the mouthpiece that I normally play on but with more flexibility. There are several that I can play but once I get into the upper register, I get a darker sound and I don't like that in my sound. I'm not looking to be a total individual soloist when I'm trying to blend with

the section. I need to cut like the trumpet players so when I get these bowl mouthpieces that allow me to doodle-tongue like crazy, I still can't crank down and play like I want to. I can play high but the edge that my ears hear isn't there. The more air I put into the horn, the darker the tone gets.

Author: Do you stay with one embouchure or do you shift it to reach the higher pitches?

DS: I don't know. Again, being self taught, I have to analyze that I probably have two shifts between ultra low and ultra high but I had been working over the last 15 years to keep it to one shift. I don't have the equipment to contain one shift. I don't use a light buzz like some guys. Phil Wilson can use a light buzz and go all over the horn because the mouthpiece is barely on their face but their tones are adjusted due to the buzz. They won't get a solid core sound. It comes out but if you listen, it sounds fuzzy and it is hard to pick out. It's not that clear but when you notice that this guy jumped 4.5 octaves and by the time you figure that out, he's back in the middle register. Don't think that that player didn't practice how to do that but that's what soloists do. They do things that are signature to them.

Author: What is your personal general range on the trombone?

DS: I am comfortable from the pedal b-flat up to the double b-flat and I can do that anytime of the day or night. I asked Bill Watrous once when do you consider yourself to have good chops and he said at the end of a 3 hour gig, if you can play a double a-flat then you have pretty good chops. So I thought that I must have pretty good chops because I can play double b-flat and double c when I'm tired. I can even play above that when I'm tired but I have to set myself and think about it. Now would I want to go to a gig and play a double c, no!! Once you hammer in a big band for 2.5 hours and somebody wants to hear a nice pretty ballad, then I'm not your man because I have shot my chops. It's like weightlifting because I've set myself to pound and pound but after that, I have no finesse after that because the blood in my lips are so full and my chops are so fat, that I can't get the finesse buzz and sound. To do all of that, then you need to be able to get around on the lip that is not your "anchor" lip. This goes back to equipment because if you have a mouthpiece that's a cushion, then you're already starting off with a handicap. If you have a mouthpiece that's a bowl with a rounded rim or a standard trombone rim that can make you sound dark like Watrous, that might be cool but people need to understand that Watrous uses electronics to get that sound. People ask Bill to play louder and he'll say "Turn the knob up." That's as loud as he'll play and that's a fact. You've got to put him up for it because he knows what it takes to play at his maximum. He swallows the mic but I hate to see that when trombone players do that and they sound so muffled. Guys like to hear themselves over the speakers. It's almost like warming up in the gym before the band plays. The "toilet players" love it but you should try to play your horn with as little amplification as possible to get that nice pure sound.

Author: What advice would you give a student concerning the process of learning the art of jazz improvisation?

DS: Let's go back to what Oliver Nelson said. Being self-taught, I'm an advocate of using your ears for something besides keeping you hat from falling down over your face. You have to listen and pay attention to where the rhythm section is going. It's great and I advocate to learn your changes so you can go in and out of those but be aware of what's surrounding you, where the rhythm section is, what energy they're creating or an energy that you can create together. That's all important because at the end of it you aren't playing for yourself, you're playing for whoever is in the audience. You need to reach those people. If you're lucky enough to be in school to learn, don't pass up the opportunity and learn it the right way. Don't just pass off the theory behind it, learn the theory inside out and trust your ears. But then again, I learned to play by ear. I can tell instantly when someone is out of tune. Here's another thing for trombone players: Every horn you pick up is going to play differently. They are designed to do something differently but we all measure where our notes are by the brace that we hold in our right hand. The slide brace that we hold judges where our positions are. Like, I could play my Martin and all my positions are higher on the slide than on my Bach that I play so today when we were playing, I was like "Oh my gosh" and it sounds like an excuse but the infinite fine tuning we were talking about is just enough to where my lips won't let me correct that best when my hand is wrong and when you do that correct as you listen and your ears are constantly hearing stuff, then you totally change in that millisecond. There's where you get the "blip" because you're in a wrong position trying to tongue a note that doesn't exist there. The horn is saying NOPE, that's not where it is on me. You've got to go a little further out. So that's what I would say. Listen to what is going on around you. Learn where it should be. That's the only way you'll know if something is cheating you out of a few of the notes that you want to play. If there are some hip notes that you want to put over a change, and the rhythm section is playing a vanilla triad, that's not going work with you and you'll sound wrong. Also, if a piece of music does call for a vanilla (which is a term for a straight-ahead change) triad and you try to put substitutions over the top, then conversely you're going to sound wrong. There's a lesson for you. Play the job you're on, not the one you want to be on. Play what it requires and if you are on a gig and you're playing for a bunch of people who are of the WWII era or the Big Band era, you don't go around putting bebop solos in those tunes because they get angry at you. I learned that through the Smithsonian JazzMaster Works with David Baker and Gunther Schuller. Gunther Schuller wanted everything played exactly like Duke Ellington's band played it. David Baker, the Jazz Professor/Professor Emeritus from Indiana University, had a different approach. His approach was to play all the lines exactly like but when it came down to it, play what you want to play but play in the style of the period. Don't stick modern "Scooby-ooby" stuff in stuff in old swing settings because it doesn't fit and the guys around you won't like it.

Author: Do you have “perfect pitch”? If you don’t, then how can you tell which pitches you need to play when you are in the extreme “non-functional” range?

DS: I have a different idea as to what “perfect pitch” is. Some people say that “You played a double B-flat” and all they’re talking about is the B-flat 3 or 4 lines above the staff. That’s a high B-flat to me, not a double but there’s a lot of people who think that it’s a double B-flat. Perfect pitch is not going over and humming the same note. I saw this happen on the Mike Douglas show. Frankie Valli had perfect pitch and Tony Bennett went over and went to the piano and hit a note and Frankie Valli sang the note. That’s not perfect pitch just because you can duplicate it. What’s the note, name the note... I can come 98% to telling you the note. I really don’t know what the percentages are that would say “yes you are” or “no you’re not”. I have a better than relative pitch. As far as playing in the stratosphere, I just hear there. I don’t know about that pitch in the upper register because once you pass a certain point on trombone, there are no real notes, only notes that you manufacture and that just takes hours of practice to find where you are with your piece and your horn and hope that you don’t make a mistake. You can almost tell when you’re playing along with a band and you know if you’re flat it just sounds flat. You’re not in tune {laughs}.

Author: How come we as trombonists don’t hear and celebrate more trombonists that can play exceptionally in the higher ranges of the horn?

DS: I really don’t know. Over my career I ran into people that like to compare guys to each other. Like, this guy is much better than that guy and I think that that is the wrong approach. If you are lucky enough to have a God-given talent, then we should be supportive of each other. We are all in a great field and we play an instrument that is extremely difficult because there are no set notes and you must have a good ear in order to play it the right way just like violinists and fretless bass players. Playing the horn is 95% mental and some people are out there to cut others down because of their own abilities (or inabilities).

Author: Which non-trombone aspects do you incorporate in your lessons (e.g. keyboard skills, singing)?

DS: I don’t do a whole lot of that. Over my career, I started on piano and I did a lot of singing in gospel quartets and barber shop quartets over my career. I think it helps to be able to sing and like I said a while ago, if you can sing it, then you can play it. I think that helps with your relative pitch to be able to sing close harmony. We did a thing called Silent Night and the hardest part was (he sings a A-E-F# note progression) in a closed harmony and they couldn’t hear it because they were used to singing open choral but now they’re singing jazz voicings. It’s a hard thing to do. Listen to the NY, Los Angeles, or Manhattan Transfer voices. I did a Christmas show with the Manhattan Transfer last year. At first I thought that they were off the planet but they are out there singing their behinds off (the original members got back together) and it was just wonderful to hear

them singing like that. I fell in love with the group Take Six and that is the perfect venue for six trombones to do it because the lead voice is on a double D-flat or a double D and it would be so cool for the bass trombone to go (begins to sing low bass notes)... and you can voice the other five guys on top of that and that would be so cool. I'm surprised that no one has come out with those charts. A guy in the Navy band, Dan Drew, wrote "There is a Quiet Place" for trombone choir but he wrote it down because the guys couldn't play up there.

Author: How do You feel that your personal playing has evolved over the decades with the Airmen of Note AND since you've retired from the Airmen?

DS: Oh my goodness...I was 20 when I got in to the Airmen of Note and I grew up with them and it was like hanging on. I had never been anywhere. I was a kid from Jacksonville, FL. I went to basic training in the Air Force and I ended up back in Florida in Cocoa Beach. I stayed in what they called a numbered band and it was called the 20-piece Dance band that did gigs for the astronauts. I ended up in the Washington band and that was where I started to grow with the guys that were in that band. They had been around and an old sergeant told me that when I got to D.C., I should just listen, shut up, and play. Do your talking with your horn and that's exactly what I tried to do. With that band being as special as it was, it had roots to Hollywood. We got a chance to meet and play with all the stars of the day and I became a sponge whenever we came around any particular legend no matter the instrument. I tried to learn their licks and how to approach ad-libbing just by listening because if you feel like you know everything, then you just need to go do something else. I'm 62 and I'm still learning and I still have the desire to find a magic horn with a magic mouthpiece and that's what I tell guys that are 65 that are looking for horns that they still have a love for the business. The funny thing about that is whenever I tell people about that, at the end of the day, there still is no magic horn or a magic mouthpiece. It's just what you can make work for you. It is whatever works for you during that part of your life at that moment because your body changes every day. I don't have the elasticity in my face anymore that I had so now the muscles in the corners of my face deteriorate much faster than they did in my younger days. You have to stay hydrated; you have to make sure that you go to the dentist because you can't play without teeth.

Author: Have you found any technological music applications that have enhanced your own playing and writing?

DS: The Aebersold Play-Alongs. I've used Band-in-a-box before but now since I've been retired, I usually use the Aebersold books because I knew Jamey Aebersold from years ago. There's not much work these days and I just try to hang on by playing some of the standards.

Author: Do you have any nicknames?

DS: Yeah. In the Air Force, my nickname was “Stumpy” even though I was 6’5”. I was getting on a C-130 one afternoon to go fly someplace to play at a dance and climbing in the front of the C-130 on the pilot’s side (or the left side) of the plane through the hatch and somebody bumped me and I hit my head on the top of the door and it went WHAM and it really hurt because it of the metal. I came in and we had an old sergeant from the concert band and he saw us. He was stretched out a little bit from drinking all afternoon and he said “Slick move Stumpy” because I almost knocked my head off and they used to call me “Wilt the Stilt” up to that point because I was really thin in those days. But when the sergeant said “Slick Move Stumpy”, that name stuck all through the whole weekend of playing and on different Air Force bases, people would refer to me as “Stumpy”. It became so much of thing that this horn that I designed for Leblanc has “Stumpy” written on the side because that’s what I’m known as.

Author: What do you like to do when you’re not playing the trombone? In other words, do you have any hobbies?

DS: Well, these days, I like to play golf. In fact, I play golf a lot with a guy that I was stationed with in the Airmen of Note whose name is Buck McKenzie (great bass player who went to Indiana University). He’s the guy that got me started with golf in the 60’s. We go out here to the golf course and mess around a couple of times a week and then when I’m not doing that, I’ll mess around with my Corvette. I’ll clean it and drive it around and wave at people and it’s a lot of fun. My wife and I will occasionally go to St. Augustine, FL and do the “sight-seeing” thing. We also will go to the beach because we’re only ten minutes away from it. Yeah, there’s a lot to do here in Florida.

Author: How did you accumulate so many trombones, mouthpieces, etc?

DS: Well, over a 50 year career you tend to do that. A lot of the trombone stuff was just stuff that I was required to have from being a clinician. I have a few “test mule” horns for the models that finally came out. I have some extra slides with different lead pipes and some extra bells that aren’t finished. The factories would send me different things to see if I liked different sounds. The problem is that if it isn’t lacquered, then it will sound different than if it is lacquered because it deadens it. But, you just kind of do that over a period of years. I have a horn that I haven’t shown you yet called the Quadrobone because it has four slides. It has the regular trombone slide turned against itself. It goes down about halfway and then it comes back so that there are actually four slides so it cuts the positions in half. Originally Conn was trying to make one for Frank Rosolino to play and Frank hated it and when you play it, you’ll see why. If you could take the time to really learn it, you could play 800 miles an hr with it because the positions are so close. When you are trying to play Sentimental, second position is only a breath away from first position and if you’re not careful, you’ll bang the slide back into your teeth. But it’s something to see because it has a full-size bell on it. It really sounds nice. I played it first in Milwaukee, WI. A guy showed up to one of my clinics with it and I had seen one in NJ before. I tried to play sentimental with it and I knew not to go very far and I did so

well with it that he said that I could have it and he gave me the horn. I tried to give it back to him but a friend of his said that he'd been talking about giving away the horn for months because he just didn't want it. That's how I acquired it.

Author: Please discuss your tenure with the Airmen of Note as the lead trombonist as well as the band leader.

DS: I was a self-taught kid who got the world's greatest job. I auditioned for the lead trombone chair in 1965 and I retired from the band in 1989. The band when I got on it was doing a live radio show once a week. We had a show that came out every 3 months called "Serenade in Blue". We'd have to put out a big radio package. We would record with stars that were coming in through the D.C. area and 3 times a year, we'd fly out to Hollywood to work with the stars out there. Every now and then, we'd get a chance to go to RCA or Columbia (records) to work with the major vocal guys of the day. It was just an amazing job. We recorded in the Air Force studio 2-3 times a week and we constantly had arrangements coming in from our arranging staff. My strong point was playing the ballads and I ended up doing an album with the Air Force band when I first got there with strings and myself. It was kind of funny to hear my playing back then because I was so stiff. I could play all the notes right but there was no heart to it. On the other hand, people who heard it loved it because they never had a trombonist in that group who could do the things that I did. Over the years, we did an awful lot of traveling. We did community relations tours starting in 1966. We would go three weeks at a time twice a year. We would offer troop entertainment throughout the bases across the US. We'd also play on the Capitol steps for the Jefferson Memorial. In D.C., every Tuesday night was Air Force Night. The Navy had Monday, the Marines had Wednesday, and the Army had Thursday and it was a great thing for tourism because all of the headquarters bands were there from all of the services except the Coast Guard. That's basically what life was like and we were the premier jazz band. We changed the name from the Air Force Dance Orchestra to the Air Force's official jazz ensemble back in 1970. We were having some issues with being a dance band because the nostalgia base was changing. Modern times were coming and the WWII vets were all but gone throughout the services. So they formed a rock band called Mach 1 and that took the pressure off. But then we got into the IAJE (or the NAJE back then) so that people could finally hear us other than the Air Force people. As a package deal on the community relations tours, they packaged us with the Air Force Thunderbirds. But it got to be a little nerve-wrecking because while we would warm up our horns, they would warm up the jets and we couldn't hear. Over a period of time, we just kept evolving. We had series in Washington where guest stars would come in and play with us. In 1979, I took over the leadership of the band as temporary thing until they could find an officer to lead the band but they never found a replacement and I kept leadership of the band until I retired in 1989. The one thing that I did with the band was to put a bigger emphasis on recording because I felt that people needed to hear us. I went to a warehouse of memorabilia with Sergeant H. Miracle and we found an old WWII uniform that was sent to Globe tailoring in Cincinnati OH and they made duplicates and again we became that old WWII Glenn Miller Band. We used to do patriotic shows around the country playing the old Glenn Miller standards and

people just loved it. I felt that that was the one thing that a part of our musical heritage. We lost our radio show in 1975 and that was terrible because radio stations didn't want to fool with us anymore. We managed to go over for troop entertainment to Southeast Asia in 1972 as well as doing Johnny Carson's Tonight Show in 1972 before we went. We did local television shows. Mike Douglas had a show in Philadelphia and we used to do that. We worked with Tony Bennett, Joe Williams and Count Basie and we had a lot of fun with those people and we were there (supposedly) for troop morale. If I had to do it over again, I wouldn't change a thing. It was such a great opportunity to work with great people and that period of time will never exist again because the military has changed since those days from when it was formed in 1950 and it even changed in the 60's. In fact, Vietnam changed a lot for everyone. That war (or whatever they wanted to call it) was a mess for this country and it messed up a lot of things but we got some great players that came through the Vietnam era that didn't want to go fight so when they auditioned for the band, and then we took them in. It was a great period of time and the only place that you could actively play was in a military band but that's getting so tight now that it's not like it used to be. I came out of high school and into the military and now almost all of the military bands want at least a bachelor's degree. That's what they shoot for. I think that that's a mistake because if you're going to do that then you might as well do something else in the military like becoming an officer. Why would you want to be an enlisted guy? It is fun to play but you'd like to get paid for it too.



## Appendix C

## Transcription of Interview with Curtis Fuller

Author: Fuller, there are several questions that I'm sure you've answered before and there are some things that are already documented from previous interviews that you've given. I just want to make sure that I get everything from you, the source.

Curtis Fuller: OK.

Author: When and where were you born?

CF: I was born in Detroit, Michigan on December 15, 1934.

Author: Immediate Family?

CF: The only immediate family is my wife and three kids.

Author: Any pets?

CF: Yes, I have a Labrador that I've had for a while.

Author: Were your parents involved in music?

CF: Not that I know of.....I grew up in an orphanage but I was told that my sister was a musical child prodigy.

Author: Please discuss your childhood and how (when) you were introduced to music?

CF: As a young man growing up in an orphanage, I was very private. Once I decided to join the band and play trombone, one of the sisters in the orphanage took me to a jazz concert. There was when I saw J.J. Johnson and I decided that I wanted to do what he could do on the horn.

Author: Do you have any children and if so, are they involved in music?

CF: One of my sons is a rap artist. He has had regional success without degrading women or using profanity in his lyrics.

Author: Was the Trombone your first instrument?

CF: No, my first instrument was the violin. After that didn't work out for me, I ended playing the trombone because we received our instruments through donations and the trombone was all that they had for me to play.

Author: Who was (were) your primary teacher(s)?

CF: Mostly I worked with local guys in the Detroit area. One in particular was Claude Black. He was a pianist who played with Donald Byrd. If I didn't have a teacher, then I would listen to big band records and learn to play by learning the tunes. Another teacher that helped me out was "Cannonball" Adderly (who was also a trombone player) when I arrived in the Army band.

Author: What equipment do you primarily use?

CF: I had a William White mouthpiece that was given to me in the military but the first mouthpiece that I had was a Rudy Mook [sic.]. I was told that the standard for measuring a good mouthpiece was that if you took a quarter and it fit inside the cup and it was level with the rim, then you would have a good mouthpiece. My quarter was level with that mouthpiece and it worked for me. I never fished around with too many other mouthpieces. However, I did have a gold mouthpiece at one time but I gave it to a small girl when I went to play in Burma. The girl didn't have a mouthpiece and the only way that she played the horn was by blowing through the leadpipe with no mouthpiece. I didn't use that mouthpiece that much anyways because it darkened my tone more than it needed to be.

As far as trombones, back in the day, I played on a sterling silver Olds trombone but now I've changed for the first time in years to a darkish green-gold Yamaha trombone. I'm old fashioned in my horns and triggers just get in the way. I also can't play horns with triggers because of my lung operation in 1994 and those horns are just too heavy for me.

Author: Do you have any "rituals" or methods that you use to test equipment out when you play a new horn? Is there something that you do every single time?

CF: As I said before, I don't like to play on different horns. I tried that many years ago in Vegas at a concert with Sarah Vaughn and Al Grey. Al Grey had the crowd fired up for me to come on stage to play and I gave in and went on stage. That horn that Al had was so out of tune to me. Every position was off and I didn't like my sound so I said that I would never do that again.

Author: What is your personal philosophy on music?

CF: It has to swing. I'm an Ellington guy and I feel that music has to swing. Even ballads can swing, just listen to Miles Davis and Art Tatum. They'll make you start snapping your fingers even though they are supposed to be playing a slow tune. Music has to generally swing but in saying that, lots of things in music are judged incorrectly, like award categories that are made to conveniently place everybody in a certain area. How did we end up with so many jazz categories? Crossover, Passover, this and that, Free? What is "Free jazz"? Does that mean that there are no rules? What is civilization without rules? Your response?

Author: It's chaos.

CF: Exactly, it's chaos. Even in nature there are rules. The day that you see a mosquito making love to an elephant, then you know there's something wrong. Music has to be true but now it accommodates to everybody regardless of talent level. Personally, I like classical music and you can probably hear it in the background. It means a lot to me because I was very introverted but music helped me to come "out of my shell". It has taken the place of every other thing that I find enjoyable. I can listen to the music of a movie and have no idea when the love scenes occurred because I was listening to the music. I think of it as an artform and not just entertainment. Music is a language and we as players need to master speaking that language. It's a lifeline and the lifeline of players that I've been fortunate to work with have become my surrogate family.

Author: Do you like to be the leader of a combo or do you work better being a "sideman"?

CF: Being a leader is new to me. When I played with Benny Golson, he only performed his music. Sure he might perform "Arabia" (Fuller composition) every now and then but mostly, it was all his music. That's how most players are; if you're in their group, then you will play their music. Now being a leader, I have this new found freedom to play my own charts that I wrote years ago. I was asked this same question in Russia and when I gave this same answer, the crowd rumbled at the fact that I enjoyed being a leader. I asked the guy over the session, "Why did the crowd sound uneasy when I said that I liked to be a leader?" He said that it was because of the Communist mentality. It's always about the group and not the individual. Individual thought was seen as the wrong way of thinking.

Author: Which is your favorite style to improvise over: Latin, Ballads, Up-tempo Swing, Rock, and why?

CF: I really don't have a favorite style because I've played with so many artists who have so many different styles. I've played with John Coltrane, Benny Golson, Freddie Hubbard, Gil Evans, Lionel Hampton, Quincy Jones, etc. and they have different styles and approaches to their music. I can tell you that I like tunes with strong melodies to improvise over because I am a lyrical person.

Author: Who are your influences on your style of improvisation and why?

CF: First, there was J.J.(Johnson), because when I heard him play the way that he did, then I knew that that was what I wanted to do. I also liked Frank Rosolino. Without calling Frank a clown, he really knew how to clown around on the horn. But when he actually played, his sound was pure, clear, and aggressive and he had amazing technique. I also liked to hear Benny Green play swing style tunes. In fact, I like Benny's sound better than J.J. because it was so smooth.

Author: Who do you like in the younger generation of jazz trombonists and why?

CF: I like Delfayo Marsalis, Robin Eubanks, Steve Turre but, then again, they all acknowledge listening to me when they were younger.

Author: How would you describe your microphone placement when you play?

CF: The new way that I've played since 1995 (when I underwent partial lung removal surgery) is to play into the microphone. Before, I was told to stay back from the microphone because back then, there was only one microphone and I was too loud if I got too close to it because I was a strong player. Now I play close to the microphone because if you want fast passages to be heard especially in a club where people are talking, then you need to step to the microphone.

Author: Do you have any tips or exercises dealing with flexibility?

CF: I'm re-learning dexterity, how to breathe, and how to restructure my diaphragm to support my sound. Playing tritones (multiphonics) help with flexibility as well. I tell my students not to play across the grain because you are pushing air through there. Just go to the closest point on the horn to play something. It's just like mathematics in which the

closest point between two distances is a straight line and we have to see our horns in the same way. Use alternate positions and make sure that they're in tune because if you try a certain passage in which you have a lot of motion and you decide to try to play it using regular positions, then it's just not going to sound good. Individual players need to work this out on their own because it all depends on how you hear. If you can only function with playing a B-flat in first position and you have a phrase which would be easier to play if the B-flat were in fifth, then it would be harder to play if you used the first position B-flat and, it probably wouldn't sound too good especially if the passage is fast.

Author: Do you stay with one embouchure or do you shift it to reach higher or lower pitches?

CF: I stick with one horn, one mouthpiece, and one embouchure to play my horn with.

Author: What is your personal general range on the trombone?

CF: I can comfortably play a high C but it really depends on what I'm playing. One time, Dizzy (Gillespie) called me the "Master of the middle" because I tend to stay in that range. All I do is play to the sound of the tenor trombone which can be related to the sound of the male voice. The high register of the trombone bothers me especially if it is played out of tune because I have very good relative pitch. It's not perfect but it is very good relative pitch. I'd rather carry one mouthpiece and stay in the basic range of the horn. I just don't hear the upper range like that. Besides, if you stay in the upper register, you'll wear yourself out especially if you aren't used to playing there for long periods.

Author: What inspires you to compose? Do you have a particular topic that you compose to or do ideas just come into your head?

CF: They just come to my head. I've had writers' block and even some of the best writers (like Stevie Wonder) get it. Lots of ideas come to me in dreams and I'll wake up and write it down. In fact, I'll write a line and hear the counterlines kind of like hearing voices and tones in a choir. I have written tunes related to different things, like the birth of my baby, for instance. My wife and baby came on the road with me and while they were watching a program, I heard the tune of "Three Blind Mice" and I decided to write it out that morning. In Art Blakey's group, we would always write tunes in "non-familiar" keys (like B major) to keep things interesting. After I wrote the tune, I showed it to Art and he fell out laughing. He said to the rest of the band, "Ya'll learn that one quick!" I don't know how Art did it but we ended up recording it that night...LIVE!!!

Author: When you compose, do you write the melody first or do you start with chord structure?

CF: I start with the melody first because I am a lyrical writer. I come from the Charlie Parker school of writing. I'm not impressed by a lot of arpeggios in a melody. Lyricism means everything to me. I generally deal with one scale and stick to it. That is why I don't understand "Free jazz." Have people exhausted all possibilities that you can do with a scale to go away from the scale?

Author: What advice would you give a student concerning the process of learning the art of jazz improvisation?

CF: First, learn the structure of the song, and then learn the bass line. If you try to listen to chords in the piano part, you might not get it because pianists can color chords in interesting ways. I have my students play the arpeggios of the chords in a bass-like progression, and then I make them tell me the common tones between the chords. When you understand tonalities and harmonic neighbors, it helps everything. You should be able to hear major, minor, augmented, and diminished. You don't marry someone who's your second cousin. In music, we call the "second cousins" dissonances. Well, I guess you could marry your second cousin but you know with all that inbreeding... [laughs]... Besides, what's wrong with (scale degrees) 1-3-5?

Author: In sticking with that topic, do you think that players of today try to overcomplicate their improvisations?

CF: It's already overcomplicated as it is. For example, when we play a B-flat9 chord, we are actually playing with two chords at once, B-flat D F and F A C, but, of course, when soloing, the chords are broken up and used in the line. You could also use G minor within that B-flat chord. There are so many things that you can do with it.

Author: Have you taught on the collegiate level?

CF: I teach a variety of jazz trombonists at a summer jazz educational program at Skidmore College each summer.

Author: How did it make you feel when you were informed that you were a recipient of the IAJE award?

CF: It was a warm feeling of happiness. I'm honored to receive it but I put it up with other personal achievements like graduation or passing a major final exam or making a band and knowing that you're going to stay with the group for a while, special things like that. A week after receiving the IAJE Award, I received the "Living Legends" award and that was really something. There were a lot of old people and wheelchairs there but every single person deserved to be recognized and I'm glad that I'm one of them.

Author: Do you have any nicknames?

CF: No, not now. I had some names back in school that I hated, though.

Author: What do you like to do when you're not playing the trombone. In other words, do you have any hobbies?

CF: I am a recording fanatic. My wife hates that I took over the shelves in the library with my tapes. I've got tapes everywhere but I'll have to re-organize my library soon because of these CD's that are coming out.

## Appendix D

## Discography of David Steinmeyer-Main Albums

These albums were recorded during David Steinmeyer's tenure in The Airmen of Note.

These albums were never assigned a catalog number due to the fact that these albums were never for sale. These recordings were used for public service and educational use only. The Airmen of Note still uses recordings for the same purpose today.

Year	Album	Recording Location
1966	Surprising Sounds of The Airmen of Note	Bolling Air Force Base Recording Studios
1967	Christmas Radio Program w/ Nancy Wilson	Las Vegas, NV
1967	Big Band Sound '67	Bolling Air Force Base Recording Studios
1967	In Concert Sound	Vienna, VA
1968	Airmen of Note and Friends	Bolling Air Force Base Recording Studios
1968	Here Come The Airmen of Note	Pasadena, CA/Annex Studios/A&R Studios
1970	Rock Jazz	Edgewood Studios/Rodell Studios-Wash. D.C.
1972	With A Little Help From Our Friends	Rodell Studios-Wash. D.C.
1973	Two Sides Of The Airmen Of Note	Capitol Recording Studios/MGM-Hollywood, CA
1973	Come Out Swingin'	Live-Arlington, VA
1974	Airmen Of Note And Sarah Vaughan	Bolling Air Force Base Recording Studios
1974	Brothers In Blue	Bolling Air Force Base Recording Studios
1975	On The Air	Bolling Air Force Base Recording Studios
1977	New Spirit	Bolling Air Force Base Recording Studios
1978	Today!	Bolling Air Force Base Recording Studios
1978	Just In Time	Bolling Air Force Base Recording Studios
1979	Live From Mobile	Live-Mobile, AL
1980	Just The Way We Are	Bolling Air Force Base Recording Studios
1981	Noël	Bias Studios-Alexandria, VA
1983	Better Than Ever	Bias Studios-Alexandria, VA
1984	Bone Voyage	Bias Studios-Alexandria, VA
1985	Crystal Gardens	Bias Studios-Alexandria, VA
1986	Somewhere Out There	Bias Studios-Alexandria, VA
1997	Legacy	Bias Studios-Alexandria, VA



## Appendix E

## Discography of Curtis Fuller-Main Albums

Year	Album	Record Label	Catalog Number
1957	New Trombone	Prestige/OJC	PRP-7107
1957	Curtis Fuller with Red Garland	New Jazz/OJC	NJP-8277
1957	Curtis Fuller and Hampton Hawes with French Horns	New Jazz/OJC	NJST-8305
1957	With Hampton Hawes	Prestige	PRP 16-5
1957	The Opener	Blue Note	1567
1957	Bone & Bari	Blue Note	BST-1572
1957	Curtis Fuller, Vol. 3	Blue Note	BST-1583
1958	Two Bones	Blue Note	GXF3064
1959	Blues-ette	Savoy	SST-13006
1959	All-Star Sextets	Savoy	SJL-2239
1959	The Curtis Fuller Jazztet	Savoy Jazz	134
1959	Imagination	Savoy	MG-12144
1959	Sliding Easy	United Artists	UAS-5051
1960	Boss of the Soul: Stream Trombone	Warwick	W-2038ST
1961	The Magnificent Trombone of Curtis Fuller	Epic	BA-17013
1961	Jazz Conference Abroad	Smash	SRS-67034
1961	South American Cookin'	Epic	BA-17020
1961	Soul Trombone	Impulse!	13
1962	Cabin in the Sky	Impulse!	AS-22
1972	Smokin'	Mainstream	MR 370
1973	Crankin' and Smokin'	Mainstream	unavailable
1973	Crankin'	MRL	9396
1978	Four on the Outside	Timeless	124
1978	Fire and Filigree	Bee Hive	7007
1979	Giant Bones	Sonet	834
1980	Live at Bubba's	Who's Who In Jazz	21019
1992	Jazz...It's Magic	Savoy	MG-6055
1993	Blues-ette, Pt. 2	Savoy	SV-75624
1994	Images of Curtis Fuller	Savoy	129
1996	Together in Monaco	Amosaya Music	2531
2004	Up Jumped Spring	Delmark	550
2005	Keep It Simple	Savant	2062

## Compilations

Year	Album	Record Label	Catalog Number
1957	The Complete Blue Note/UA Curtis Fuller Sessions	Mosaic	3-166
1996	Soul of Jazz Percussion	Fresh Sound	unavailable
2001	South American Cookin'/Magnificent Trombone of Curtis Fuller	Collectables	6879

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