

WORKS FOR TROMBONE BY COMPOSERS OF THE  
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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## ABSTRACT

This project consists of a professional-level recording, accompanied by a written rationale for the works recorded. The recording consists of four compositions written for the trombone by composers of the twenty-first century, one of which is a new work commissioned by the author. This manuscript explores the historical background of the pieces, their composers, musical elements and aesthetics, and their place in the trombone solo repertoire.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this document to my loving wife, Christine Ballenger, whose continued love, support, and patience are a daily inspiration in my life.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank committee members Charles Snead, Jonathan Whitaker, Tanya Gille, Nikos Pappas, Stephen Peles, Kevin Shaughnessy, and Eric Yates for their time and guidance in creating this recording and document. Additionally, I would like to thank my advisor, Linda Cummins, for helping to facilitate the logistics for this project.

Thank you to those who helped in creating the recording: Hank Hirschert, Zach Lapidus, Kevin Chance, Dan Kolan, Christine Ballenger, and Jonathan Whitaker. Thank you to Pauline Oliveros, Alice Shields, and Susan Mutter for allowing me to record their works and providing me with insight along the way. To Monique Buzzarté for her unique insight in commissioning two of the four works recorded. Special thanks to Lisa Bost-Sandberg for writing an incredible piece for me and the rest of the trombone community.

I have had the opportunity to learn from many fine musicians who shared their passion for music with me as well as igniting and fueling my own passion for music. To Wesley Ballenger III, Dan Bochard, Peter Ellefson, Ian Bousfield, Karl Hinterbichler, and Jonathan Whitaker I offer my most sincere gratitude. An additional thanks to my mentor, Jonathan Whitaker, for your continuing guidance and friendship.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the realm of trombone literature, the same handful of pieces are continually performed and recorded. Although there is room for varying, unique, and individual interpretations, the lack of variety in the most often performed pieces of the trombone repertoire can lead students and professionals to struggle in finding examples of new or lesser-known works. The goal of this project is, through an exploration of several works written for trombone, to provide a resource for trombonists seeking out non-standard solo repertoire, written by prominent and emerging composers in the twenty-first century. The works include “The Gender of Now: There But Not There,” by Pauline Oliveros; “Glint,” by Lisa Bost-Sandberg; “The River of Memory,” by Alice Shields; and “Ages,” by Susan Mutter.

The following essay provides biographical information on the composers and a discussion of their pieces. For each of the four works, I discuss compositional and aesthetic qualities as well as which skills and techniques may be learned, or improved on, and experienced by the trombonist through learning and performing each of the works in this project. This document includes information from conversation and email with some of the composers as well as the trombonists who commissioned the works which I recorded. Musical examples will be referenced from the recording that accompanies this document in order to further understand the quality and techniques found in each work.

## PAULINE OLIVEROS: “THE GENDER OF NOW: THERE BUT NOT THERE”

Pauline Oliveros was born in Houston on May 30, 1932. In a *New York Times* interview, she has recalled an early interest in sound, beyond simply hearing music and shows broadcast on the radio. She stated that she had “a childhood fixation on the strange special effects she heard in “The Lone Ranger,” “The Creaking Door,” “The Shadow,” and other radio dramas. “I was paying attention to that,” she said, “and I was paying attention to my grandfather’s crystal radio, where he was trying to tune in the programs and would get all this static.”<sup>1</sup> At age nine, Oliveros began playing accordion, and took up tuba and French horn to play in school ensembles. As a student, she studied at the University of Houston with Willard A. Palmer, an accordionist, but left there in search of a compositional mentor. Oliveros went to California, drawn in part by the Bach festivals in Carmel and Monterey, and settled in San Francisco, where she completed a B. A. in Music at San Francisco State College.

In San Francisco, Oliveros listened to the Berkeley radio station KPFA-FM where she heard the new, cutting-edge electronic works of Stockhausen, Berio, and Pousser. Once she received a tape recorder for her twenty-first birthday, Oliveros began fashioning her own pieces. After graduating from San Francisco State College, she studied privately with Robert Erickson, the KPFA music director, and composer. Oliveros also taught lessons and played gigs to make ends meet.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Strange Sounds Led a Composer to a Long Career,” Steve Smith, accessed January 11, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/12/arts/music/the-composer-pauline-oliveros-stays-busy-at-80.html?\\_r=1& \(\)](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/12/arts/music/the-composer-pauline-oliveros-stays-busy-at-80.html?_r=1& ()).

<sup>2</sup> “Pauline Oliveros,” n.a., accessed January 11, 2015, <http://www.paulineoliveros.us/about.html>.

In 1957, Oliveros was first introduced to the idea of free improvisation during a film-scoring engagement with Terry Riley, the composer, and Loren Rush, bassist and koto player. After the film-scoring experience, the trio began playing together and recording the results. In describing their efforts, Oliveros stated, “We developed a method, which was, don’t talk about it, sit down and play, listen back, then discuss it. . . . It was really getting into it through the listening process, and I’ve used that method for many, many years. We discovered that if we tried to impose rules or structure of some kind on our playing, it would fall flat. It was much better to converse openly.”<sup>3</sup>

In 1962, Oliveros became involved in working with Ramon Sender and Morton Subotnick, who established San Francisco Tape Music Center, a place of creativity and musical technical advances. That establishment still exists today as the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College. The University of California, San Diego, and Robert Erickson—her former teacher—hired Oliveros in 1967 to teach at UCSD, and she remained on faculty until 1981. Since then, Oliveros has pursued a freelance career while also a Distinguished Research Professor of Music at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, and as the Darius Milhaud Artist-in-Residence at Mills College. In 2012, Oliveros received the John Cage award from the Foundation of Contemporary Arts.

Oliveros is the founder of “Deep Listening,” a concept she developed: “a way of listening in every possible way to everything possible to hear no matter what you are doing.”<sup>4</sup> The Deep Listening Institute (DLI) was created to promote Oliveros’s music and Deep Listening practice, while also working to “foster creative innovation across boundaries and across abilities, among artists and audience, musicians and non-musicians, healers and the physically or cognitively

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<sup>3</sup> “Strange Sounds.”

<sup>4</sup> “Pauline Oliveros.”

challenged, and children of all ages.”<sup>5</sup> The DLI is focused on emerging technologies as well, including the Telematic Circle, which allows musicians from distant venues to perform with each other in real time. Additionally, DLI, Oliveros, and the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute have created free software, called the Adaptive Use Musical Instrument (AUMI), that enables children with extreme physical and cognitive disabilities to play music and improvise with each other. Oliveros has published a large collection of books and journal articles in addition to her compositional output and work with DLI.

At age sixteen, Oliveros knew she wanted to become a composer. Early in her development as a composer, if she was stuck on an idea for a piece, Oliveros would record herself improvising. Improvisation was her way to get ideas flowing. In the 1960s, Oliveros was absorbed in electronic music and began teaching electronic music at the University of California San Diego in 1967. While at UCSD, Oliveros also taught a general music course, called The Nature of Music, where she wrote Sonic Meditations for students without musical training. These Sonic Meditations are ways of listening and responding and are based on patterns of attention. In 1988, while traveling with Peter Ward, aka Panaiotis, to California for a concert, Stuart Dempster invited Oliveros to stop in Seattle, then travel further north to visit a cistern in Port Townsend, Washington. Through recording and documenting their visit, they realized they had enough material to produce a CD, but did not have a title for what they had created. Oliveros came up with “Deep Listening,” which depicted both the large cistern where they recorded and the process through which this kind of music is created. Deep Listening became the term to describe the process of creating such music. In 1991, Oliveros led the first Deep Listening retreat

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<sup>5</sup> “Deep Listening Institute,” n.a., accessed January 11, 2015, <http://deeplisting.org/site/content/about>.

at the Rose Mountain Retreat Center in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Since then, Deep Listening workshops have continued to be offered and held around the world.<sup>6</sup>

“The Gender of Now: There But Not There” was commissioned in 2005 by pianist Sarah Cahill, to perform with the trombonist Monique Buzzarté, for the Feminist Theory Conference at the City University of New York. Cahill is an advocate for new music, consistently commissioning new works for solo piano. She also hosts a weekly radio show, a new music series at the Exploratorium in San Francisco, and curates a monthly series of new music concerts at the Berkeley Art Museum. Monique Buzzarté is a composer as well as trombonist, and also works to commission new works for trombone, specifically from female composers. “For Pauline’s piece, each of us had played her solo works and—after a few times of both our paths crossing along with Pauline’s in 2001 and 2002—Pauline remarked that she’d like to see us perform together[. W]e both liked the other’s playing quite a bit, so started looking around for some commission money.”<sup>7</sup>

As an avid proponent of new music, Buzzarté has commissioned and premiered many new works for trombone. In all of her commissions Buzzarté leaves up to the composer what to write, not promising a premiere of the work. “I feel that when that time comes, if the composer would rather have someone else play at that point, or I don’t think I’d be the best person to play the resulting work that there should be options.”<sup>8</sup> Buzzarté got to know Oliveros well in 1996, through her advocacy work with the Vienna Philharmonic. She then entered the Deep Listening Certificate program and later served on the board of Oliveros’s foundation. Buzzarté is also the

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<sup>6</sup> “Pauline Oliveros.”

<sup>7</sup> Monique Buzzarté, email by author, January 8, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Buzzarté, interview.

co-editor of the *Anthology of Essays on Deep Listening*, where twenty-three authors explore the influences of Oliveros and Deep Listening.

In Oliveros's book, *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice*, she distinguished the difference between "hearing" and "listening." "To hear is the physical means that enables perception. To listen is to give attention to what is perceived both acoustically and psychologically."<sup>9</sup> With this explanation of listening, Oliveros defined the meaning of Deep Listening.

Deep Listening for me is learning to expand the perception of sounds to include the whole space/time continuum of sound—encountering the vastness and complexities as much as possible. Simultaneously one ought to be able to target a sound or sequence of sounds as a focus within the space/time continuum and to perceive the detail or trajectory of the sound or sequence of sounds. Such focus should always return to, or be within the whole of the space/time continuum (context). Such expansion means that one is connected to the whole of the environment and beyond.<sup>10</sup>

The practice of Deep Listening involves a variety of training exercises, such as energy work, bodywork, breath exercises, vocalizing, listening, and dreamwork. These exercises are practiced in order to help calm the mind, bring awareness to the body, and create the ideal attitude for receptivity of sound, essential for this creative activity. A heavy emphasis is placed on repetition, which allows the opportunity to compare experiences from each session. Keeping in mind that the same exercise is never the same, each repetition brings new understanding and the development of Deep Listening skills.

Written for trombone and piano, "The Gender of Now: There But Not There" requires both performers to utilize these Deep Listening skills. Written, as many of Oliveros's works are, as a text score, the performers both have a written out set of "Identities." The "Trombone

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<sup>9</sup> Pauline Oliveros, *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice* (Kingston, NY: Deep Listening Publications, 2005), xxi.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Identities” and “Piano Identities” each contain a total of nine identities, eight of which are unique to the individual instruments. The ninth identity, given to both the pianist and trombonist, is labeled as “Free improvisation” (see Appendix A for a list of all identities). The Identities are prefaced with the following instructions: “The piece may begin with free sound or free silence or one of the nine given identities for each player. The identities are not necessarily to be synchronized. Each Identity may be used any time as an initiation of a phrase or a response to the other player. The list or order of the identities is entirely free and non-sequential. Duration is free.”<sup>11</sup>

As each performer has a choice between nine identities at any given time, a total of 81 permutations exist for how the identities might be combined to create a unique sound. In my recording with pianist Zach Lapidus, you can hear many unique permutations (Track 1, 7:33). I choose to “gliss with varying envelopes, shapes and sizes”<sup>12</sup> as my identity, while Lapidus chooses to play “sharp attacks – varying silences and textures”<sup>13</sup> as his identity. Oliveros has written, “I would like to know that the performers are listening carefully to each other and to the concert space and audience.”<sup>14</sup> It is important that the performers approach the piece without any pre-conceived idea of what or when they are going to play. This guarantees a performance that captures a unique and one-of-a-kind moment in time.

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<sup>11</sup> Pauline Oliveros, *Anthology of Text Scores* (Kingston, NY: Deep Listening Publications, 2013), 129.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Pauline Oliveros, email by author, December, 20 2014.

## LISA BOST-SANDBERG: “GLINT”

Lisa Bost-Sandberg was born on, January 10, 1982, in Lewistown, Montana.<sup>15</sup> Currently the Instructor of Flute and Composition at the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota, Dr. Lisa Bost-Sandberg is a graduate of the University of Iowa (Bachelor of Music), New York University (Master of Arts), and the University of North Texas (Doctor of Musical Arts). Dr. Bost-Sandberg is active as both an educator and performer, performing as a soloist and chamber musician in addition to teaching masterclasses, adjudicating competitions, and giving lecture-recitals and workshops at universities, conferences, and festivals both across the United States and in Europe.

Bost-Sandberg is currently serving as chair of the National Flute Association New Music Advisory Committee and is both an advocate for and performer of new music. She has premiered more than thirty pieces and actively commissions new works, particularly for alto flute. As a composer, Bost-Sandberg has had pieces premiered across the country, including pieces that have been selected for performance at conferences of the National Flute Association, World Saxophone Congress, North American Saxophone Alliance Conference, Society of Composers Inc., and Iowa Composers Forum. As a composer, her primary composition instructors include Andrew May, Christopher Trebue Moore, Robert Dick, and Lawrence Fritts.

Bost-Sandberg began composing while working on her Master of Arts at New York University. While preparing a solo recital program, Robert Dick remarked that “there needs to be

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<sup>15</sup> “Biography,” Lisa Bost-Sandberg, accessed January 11, 2015, <http://www.lisabost.com/about.htm>. All other information, unless otherwise stated, will be taken from this source.

something this program with your name on it,”<sup>16</sup> welcoming her to improvise, arrange, or compose a piece. Initially, Bost-Sandberg thought to arrange a piece for alto flute, but found that avenue uninspiring. Improvisation did not feel like the right choice, so Bost-Sandberg began writing down and editing improvised ideas on a piece of staff paper. After the next lesson with Dick, he encouraged her to keep going, and “Diandya” was premiered on the recital a few months later, on April 17, 2005. After that point, Bost-Sandberg states that composition became an integral part of who she is as a musician.

Improvisation was an avenue of expression that Bost-Sandberg explored before getting into composition while at New York University. Her main influence to begin improvisation came from Evan Mazunik while she studied at the University of Iowa. Mazunik had a Soundpainting group called *Gamut*, and Bost-Sandberg joined the group. While studying in New York, Bost-Sandberg continued her improvisational experiences, even learning improvisation styles found in world music.

Bost-Sandberg credits becoming a composer to heightening her listening skills, in hearing and understanding music, and in performance, through having a more firm idea of a composer’s goal while performing her or his music. As a musician, a performer, composer, or improviser, Bost-Sandberg believes that creativity “should be our trusty side-kick in problem-solving, in technical development, in sonic exploration, in teaching, interpreting music new and old, in deciphering tricky or atypical scores, in presenting music to the world, and so on.”<sup>17</sup>

Most of Bost-Sandberg’s compositions thus far have been written for flute and alto flute, but she has also written pieces for alto saxophone, string quartet, and a piece for solo trombone

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<sup>16</sup> “Interview with Lisa Bost-Sandberg,” Alana Jacobs, accessed January 11, 2015, <https://musicalcreativity.wordpress.com/2012/06/26/interview-with/>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

with trombone octet. “Glint” is her first work for solo trombone. Soon after I commissioned this piece from her, we met to discuss various timbral characteristics and extended techniques of the trombone. I demonstrated articulations, timbres, mutes, multiphonics, as well as a “tweeer” sound and “timbre slide” as Bost-Sandberg named the sounds. We discussed the potential of the trombone’s microtonal capabilities, and a few days later, she presented me with a microtonal slide chart (see Appendix B), with which she could transform a motive within a number of different microtonal permutations.

Bost-Sandberg completed the work in early January, 2015, and titled it “Glint,” referencing the idea of “something glancing off of something else, a reflection off of a surface, a brilliant flash, or a brief and faint appearance of something.”<sup>18</sup> The word “glint,” and its many uses, inspired Bost-Sandberg to attempt to portray the idea in a musical context.

Similar to Oliveros, Bost-Sandberg often relies on improvisation to develop ideas from her earlier works. This remains an important part of her identity as a composer, and we can see its influence in “Glint” where there is an extended improvisatory section for the soloist. “Glint” (Track 2, 0:00) begins with a lyrical section, with primarily long note values, and durations of silence. It is written without bar lines, however notes are given specific durations and a tempo marking indicates quarter note = 54. This section leads into an aggressive section with many mixed meters and timbral effects (Track 2, 2:10). The timbre constantly changes from ordinary (ord.) to brassy (brs.) to tweeer (twr.), and occasional slide vibrato interrupting on longer notes. Later in this section there are phrases of flutter tonguing and, at one point, a longer note combines slide vibrato and tweeer effects. This aggressive section ends on a loud pedal *forte*, followed by a pause.

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<sup>18</sup> Lisa Bost-Sandberg, email to the author, January 9, 2015.

Beginning in the third section of the piece (Track 2, 4:09) marked quarter note = 40, Bost-Sandberg has devised a diagram, placed underneath each staff of notes. This diagram consists of seven horizontal lines, each one labeled, from bottom to top, with numbers one through seven, which coincide with trombone slide positions. These positions are based on the microtonal patterns that Bost-Sandberg planned in the Microtonal Slide Chart (see Appendix B). Bost-Sandberg marks the section where this begins “floating” and with a *piano* dynamic. The diagram supporting the staff notation also includes indications of articulation and effects. Sometimes the diagram positions are connected by a straight line, sometimes as not connected with a dash, and other times the composer indicates articulations simply with dots.

In our collaboration Bost-Sandberg gained a good understanding of what kind of player I am through solo, chamber, and orchestral contexts before composing “Glint.” After the completion of the piece, we have gotten together to discuss and tweak a few things here and there, and both enjoyed a truly collaborative effort.

## ALICE SHIELDS: “THE RIVER OF MEMORY”

Alice Shields, the American composer and vocalist, was born in New York, New York, in 1943.<sup>19</sup> Shields received her three degrees from Columbia University: Doctor of Musical Arts in music composition in 1975, Master of Arts in music composition in 1967, and Bachelor of Science in music in 1965. While at Columbia University, she studied with Jack Beeson, Vladimir Ussachevsky, Otto Luening, and Chou Wen-Chung. She also served as Associate Director of the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center from 1978–1982, and as Associate Director for Development of the Columbia University Computer Music Center, from 1994–1996. In her graduate studies at Columbia, Shields took singing lessons in order to better understand how to write for vocalists in her compositions.

Shields was the first AGMA (American Guild of Musical Artist) Apprentice Opera Composer-in-Residence at the Lake George Opera Festival. She served in this position for three years, both as a composer and singer, where she conducted and produced her opera, *Odyssey*, and sang smaller roles in scenes from her earlier operas. Shields continued to sing and landed operatic roles with the New York City Opera, Metropolitan Opera Studio, Washington National Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and other national and international companies. As an Assistant Professor of Psychology, Shields has taught the psychology of music at New York University and the Mason Gross School of the Arts, at Rutgers. She has also presented lectures on the

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<sup>19</sup> “Biography,” Alice Shields, accessed January 11, 2015, <http://www.aliceshields.com/bio.html>. All other information, unless otherwise stated, will be taken from this source.

psychology of music at institutions, such as the Santa Fe Opera, CUNY Center for Developmental Neuroscience, International Society for Research on Emotion, American Psychological Association, and the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis.

As a composer, Alice Shields is well known for her vocal electronic music and cross-cultural operas. Shields uniquely combines vocal music, dance, and electroacoustic music in her works, creating large-scale dramatic works, including her opera *Apocalypse* and *Mass for the Dead*. Through her experience in performing challenging lead roles in operas, such as the Contessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Indamante in *Idomeneo*, and roles in Strauss and Wagner operas, Shields learned to write vocally taxing roles in ways that make them easy for singers to endure. In the 1990s, as a vocalist, Shields studied the South Indian Bharata Natyam dance-drama, and performed with the Swati Bhise Bharata Natyam Dance Company. As a result of her studies of Indian dance and music, all of her compositions since 2000 are heavily influenced by Indian classical music and drama.

“The River of Memory” is the second piece that Shields wrote for Buzzarté. There were three premieres of the work: Asbury Hall in Buffalo, NY on March 15, 2008; at Symphony Space in New York on March 19, 2008; and at the Conservatory of Music, Purchase College SUNY, on March 24, 2008. Buzzarté took Shields’s advice and performed “The River of Memory” from a balcony, the middle of the hall, and the back of the hall in her premiere performances. Buzzarté explained that due to the non-solistic nature of the piece, a non-traditional placement was more suitable.

Shields wrote “The River of Memory,” for trombone and computer music, in 2008. The work was commissioned by Monique Buzzarté through the Soloist Champions project of Meet

the Composer, and funded by a grant from the New York State Music Fund. In a performance note, Shields stated that the piece may optionally be performed with the trombonist in the back of the hall, and the speakers in the front of the hall. Shields also offers the following brief description of her work: “‘The River of Memory’ is a meditation, a reflection of memories in sound. The tempo is slow, like calm, deep waves flowing between minor and major tonalities, with little crests in major tonality, which soon subside into the next pool of mixed feelings.”<sup>20</sup>

Shields marked the tempo in trombone part as quarter note = 60, making it easier for the trombone part to line up with the seconds of the recording being played. Shields also provides written cues that coincide with sounds heard in the recording to help the trombonist enter in the correct place. Many written rhythms are accompanied by the phrase “approximate duration,” as no pulse is apparent in the recording. In some phrases in the piece (Track 3, 1:21), the trombonist is given an aural cue and given the direction to perform the written music with “approximate durations”<sup>21</sup>. Dynamics vary from *pp* to *mf*, with a fair number of dynamics swells. As Shields describes it, this work is meditative and does not move fast. The various sounds of nature and the slowly changing tonalities make the piece quite interesting to listen to as well as perform.

When I approached Shields about recording and writing about “The River of Memory,” she was very kind and supportive. She insisted that I record only the trombone part first, without the electronics, and send a file to her. She also insisted that she mix the trombone part with the electronics herself in order to achieve the desired effect of her piece.

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<sup>20</sup> Alice Shields, “The River of Memory,” 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

## SUSAN MUTTER: “AGES”

Susan Mutter was born on May 22, 1962, in Downers Grove, Illinois<sup>22</sup>. Ever since she was a child, Mutter has been playing both the French horn and the piano. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Indiana University in 1984 with a Bachelor of Music in Horn Performance. Her teachers include Dale Clevenger, Philip Farkas, Michael Hatfield, Karl Pituch, and Robert Elworthy. As an orchestral hornist, she has experience performing with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Columbus Symphony, Michigan Opera Theater Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Chicago Civic Orchestra, Flint Symphony, and Evansville Philharmonic. She has also performed with numerous chamber ensembles, including the New American Chamber Orchestra, Detoit Chamber Winds and Strings, Chamber Music at the Scarab Club, Detroit Brass Society, and Pentacle Brass. In addition to being a performer, she teaches theory, conducts, and composes. From 1988-1993 and from 1999-2001 Mutter was on the adjunct faculty at Wayne State University. As a trained Suzuki pianist, Mutter has been teaching Suzuki piano for over twenty-five years. In 2006, she began teaching piano to autistic and neuro-typical children and continues to do so today in Troy, Michigan.

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<sup>22</sup> “Susan Mutter,” Member Directory, accessed January 11, 2015, <https://suzukiassociation.org/people/?id=susan-mutter>. All other information, unless otherwise stated, will be taken from this source.

Mutter wrote “Ages” in 2008, when it was also premiered by the principal trombonist of the Detroit Symphony, Kenneth Thompkins<sup>23</sup>. Mutter dedicated the piece to her father, Howard VanValzah, her inspiration for the work. This piece is the most traditional of the four works which I recorded, in that it is written for trombone with piano accompaniment and does not utilize any extended techniques. “Ages” is written in five movements, each depicting a different age in a person’s life: Six, Fifteen, Thirty-four, Sixty-six, and Ninety-two. “I was inspired to compose ‘Ages’ when I contemplated how a man relates to the world around him so differently at various ages in his life. All six year old boys have something in common, as do all ninety-two year-old men! It is what is in common, that I have tried to capture here.”<sup>24</sup>

In the first movement (Track 4, 0:00) of this programmatic work, “Six,” Mutter depicts “a boy wandering aimlessly around his neighborhood in days of yesteryear, imagining whatever comes to him as he encounters various items he finds.”<sup>25</sup> The meter of the movement constantly changes, as if to represent the short attention span of a child this age. In “Fifteen” (Track 5, 0:00), he is the “rebellious teen – not giving a care what his parents think – wanting to do everything HIS way.”<sup>26</sup> The dynamics are extreme in this movement, with many crescendi, as well as extended passages of *forte*. The tempo gradually accelerates to the end of the movement, building tension and ending with a musical exclamation mark. “At Thirty-four (Track 6, 0:00), monotony has set in...he’s stuck in a repetitive job that’s relentless.”<sup>27</sup> A key change appears (moving from [say which keys]), where things begin to brighten up for the man, perhaps depicting time with his family or a weekend, but in the end it is back to work and the doldrums.

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<sup>23</sup> Susan Mutter, “Ages,” 1.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

“Sixty-Six” (Track 7, 0:00) is a slow and reflective movement and is “probably one of the most satisfying times in the man’s life.”<sup>28</sup> In the final movement (Track 8, 0:00), the man is “Ninety-Two” and in fading health. On his deathbed in a hospital, Mutter portrays a morphine drip in the piano accompaniment’s single notes. We hear the “Six” movement return briefly (Track 8, 0:37)—the man’s childhood flashing before his eyes—before he passes away.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

## CONCLUSION

These four works, along with many others, are rarely performed; none have been professionally recorded. This music potentially resonates with and would reach a wider audience, and this project aims to promote its greater distribution. Both “The Gender of Now: There but Not There,” and “The River of Memory” require the soloist to interact with the accompaniment while closely listening and adapting to the sounds produced, as opposed to only playing what is written on the page. “Glint” demonstrates the importance of performers commissioning new works, both to create new pieces for the trombonist’s repertoire, and to provide work for composers who might not otherwise compose repertoire for the trombone. “Ages,” due to its programmatic element, is perhaps the most accessible to an audience of these new works. Both the soloist and the listener can easily relate to the ideas presented – everyone has experiences with age, and can apply those experiences to the sounds they are hearing. Despite the fact that these four works were all written within a decade of each other (2005-2015) and that they were all composed by women, they are very different. These works, while challenging, are appropriate for college musicians and would add an element of diversity to student recital programs.

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## APPENDIX A

### *The Gender of Now: There But Not There for Trombone and Piano*

#### **Trombone Identities**

- Free improvisation

Facing the piano with trombone bell under the lid:

- Gliss with varying envelopes, shapes and sizes
- Sharp attacks with alternating mutes
- Long sustained tones with microtonal shifts
- Merge with the piano sound

Facing the Audience and varying the position of the bell:

- Fast Flurries of articulated notes varying high-low-middle, low-high-middle, middle-low-high, etc.
- Short tones with varying silences
- Melodies inside a half-step with and without mute(s)
- Voice and trombone speaking/singing

#### **Piano Identities**

- Free improvisation
- Hold Keys down silently until you hear the end of a sympathetic resonance
- Hold sustain pedal listening for reverberations to build
- Listen for resonances till they die away. Then play the tones you remember – (single tones or chords/clusters)
- Soft bass clusters with sustain pedal
- Non-diatonic ascending arpeggios with both hands
- Sharp attacks – varying silences and textures
- Non-pitched sounds
- On the strings alternating sustain pedal and dry or with half-pedal to no pedal

# APPENDIX B

## Glint: Microtonal Slide Chart

