

Andante et Allegro – J. Guy–Ropartz/arr. A. Shapiro
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Pat Stuckemeyer

What is it that defines the great teachers from the good? While I am a relatively young euphonium performer and educator, I find myself looking back into my own childhood when mentoring my own students. I try to remember what it was like when I learned a specific piece. What was I thinking while practicing the parts that were ‘too hard’? Some of my fondest musical memories were in private lessons, listening to my teacher play the various bits and I then trying to emulate him.

We all have a piece that is etched in our mind. The one piece that we had our first success on, or the one that we had to work just a little harder to perform. Since my formative education, I went on to perform hundreds of pieces, but none of them stick out in my mind more than the first piece that I performed in front of people. I don’t think I played entirely well on that particular day, but at such a young age performance doesn’t matter – simply performing is an accomplishment in itself.

As educators we have a responsibility to give our pupils the opportunity to succeed. It is our job not only to teach concepts to our students, but also to teach repertoire upon which they can use these concepts in performance. We, as teachers, must also pick repertoire that our students can succeed on. Too often repertoire is chosen that is simply beyond the student, effectively narrowing the window for a successful performance. This is not the fault of the student, but rather of

the teacher who has chosen the repertoire for them. We must understand every facet of a chosen piece to be able to evaluate it for consideration by the student. How can we teach a piece that we have not studied? You would not expect a young student to perform a piece that they have not practiced, so then why is it seemingly acceptable to teach literature that you might be looking at for the first time?

The first volume of this series talked about teaching ‘the list’, which is common for many professionals. Balancing old repertoire with new repertoire is at times difficult for any busy professional, but we must tread carefully. We must become versed with this repertoire **before** we begin to teach it – a common pedagogical problem amongst teachers. Evaluation of a piece is essential, but moreover critical analysis is crucial to your effectiveness as a teacher. The more you as the educator can pull from the pages, the easier it will be for your students to take the concepts to their active practice.

Background

French composer Joseph Guy-Ropartz (1864–1955) was born into an artistic family. He showed a remarkable talent for music and poetry at an early age, and was accepted into the Paris Conservatoire in 1885. He studied with Dubois, Massenet, and Franck. He composed for all types of musical ensembles, but is perhaps best known for his vocal and chamber works. The *Andante et Allegro* in C–minor was originally for Trumpet and

Piano, but has been arranged for a number of instruments including euphonium and tuba.¹

Headlines for the Teacher

Any piece of music that incorporates many musical styles is a great piece of literature for the novice learner. These shifts in meter, style, articulation, and tone color can be great teaching tools for even the youngest player. The ways that we as educators go about teaching these tools should be well thought-out and streamlined into the students 'daily diet' of drills and exercises.

A very wise euphonium educator once told me that as a performer you should always have at least one student – that way you are accountable for your teaching. Simply understanding a concept and performing it is easy – but being able to teach the concept to another is an entirely different process. As I have personally become more experienced with education, I find myself recognizing different types of learners that come through my studio. Some students learn visually – being that if the teacher simply marks extra-musical ideas in the music, they will retain them. Some are stimulus learners – they learn through knowing what the idea 'feels' like physically. Some students are aural learners, meaning that the teacher would need to model with their instrument or voice to actively engage the student. There are many different types of learners, and it is through experience that we as instructors can recognize and tailor our teaching for these various types.

In my opinion, this is what makes teaching difficult. The old adage, 'Those that can't do, teach' is simply not true. As musicians, playing is the easiest thing that we do. Putting your music into words is truly an art form that defines great teachers.

Ropartz's *Andante et Allegro* was the first piece that I learned as a young performer. The concepts that were highlighted for me by my teacher were that of lyricism, rhythm, and style. This is a great piece for teaching not only a slow lyrical style, but also teaching lyricism at a quicker pace. Rhythmic challenges are at the forefront of this piece, but through a little preparation can be overcome quite easily by the pupil.

It seems that style is always difficult to teach. Some learners can interpret style without much guidance, while other students will simply require more instruction. Why is it that some young performers have such a hard time with style? How can we as mentors make this more successful for them? In my own teaching I encourage the students to look elsewhere for stylistic interpretation. I model for my pupils, but I always have them put more of 'themselves' into the music. Meaning that while my guidelines are a basis for interpretation, the real musical moments need to come from their own experiences and ideas. They need to take ownership for their music making, and through a little study even the youngest scholar will be able to do this.

Referencing other instruments is a great way to teach style. Some of the finest stylistic interpreters come from outside of the brass world,

and even outside of the classical realm. Jazz musicians are a great model for style, as well as operatic vocalists. Encourage your student to look outside of their known area for examples. This will not only get them listening to other types of music, but will have them looking at music in a whole different light. All of sudden they are not simply a euphonium or tuba player, but they can start to think of themselves as a musician that uses the euphonium or tuba to make music. Don't pigeonhole the student into a predetermined mold! Let the student bring his or her own artistic brush to the canvas. I feel that my students teach me almost as much as I teach them. You as tutor will be surprised what your pupils bring to the table when you allow them flexibility to experiment.

Pedagogical Considerations for Performance

Range for Ropartz's *Andante et Allegro* is Bb2 to A4, which makes this piece a great choice for any student who has yet to develop a solid low register. The piece is divided into two sections; the shorter *Andante* section is expressive and generally lies in the middle register, while the *Allegro* section tends to be in the higher tessitura. There are many chances for the young player to excel with this piece. Besides the obvious tempo differences, there is a definite shift in style between the sections. Rhythmic difficulties are present, but are presented with many repetitions, thereby reinforcing them. A short return to the *Andante* section brings the original material back to the listener, followed by an extended codetta before a final *Allegro* to the end.

Tempo, articulation, dynamics, and expression will be difficult at first for the student to master. Take the instrument away at the early stages, and have them vocalize the various sections. This will not only instill confidence in their ability to make these various shifts, but will also engrain in them the need for practice away from the instrument. With a little preparation on your part, even the youngest of pupils can succeed with Ropartz's *Andante et Allegro*.

Guided Practice

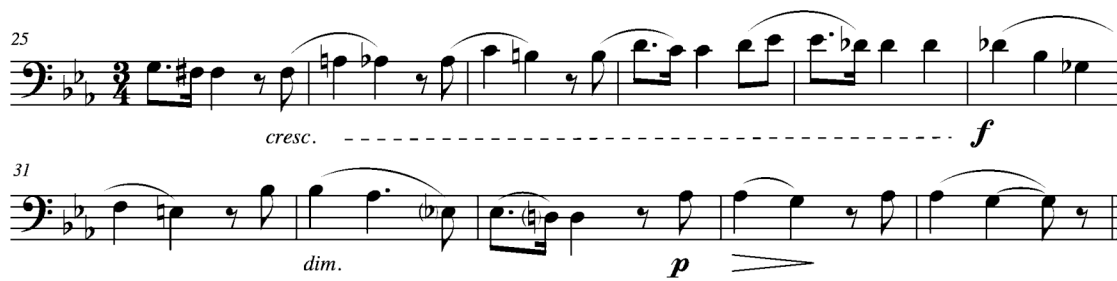
Andante

From the onset the student should concentrate on phrasing and getting the lines to flow as easily as possible. Take caution when preparing this opening section that the student does not start too slowly. With too slow a tempo, the phrases become much more difficult. A recommended tempo for the opening section is approximately 72 bpm. While there isn't too much in the way of marked dynamics and articulation, make sure that what is there is performed. The crescendi and decrescendi in this section should be gradual and not forced. The lines from m. 4–8 should be mirrored in m. 10–14. Use these two sections to instill the concept that even though a line is higher in pitch, it should still have the same tonal characteristics and timbre. A great way to practice this is through scales. Have the student play a Bb-major scale at any given dynamic. After that, have them perform an Eb-major scale

(a fourth up) and try to make that have the same warmth or resonance that the lower scale had.

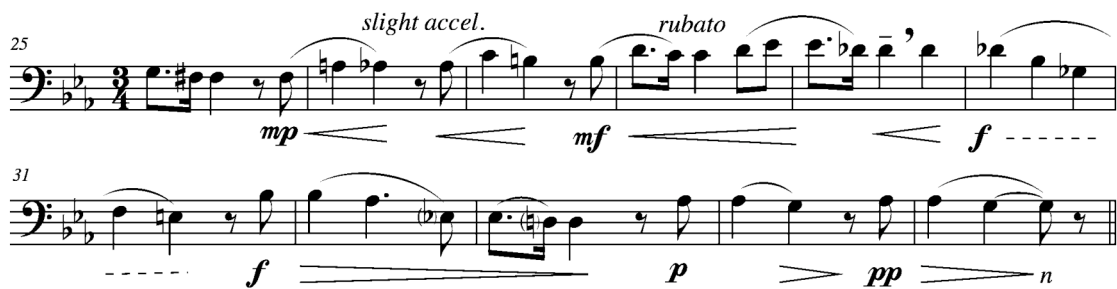
Repetitions should never be stagnant in our playing. When a composer repeats a phrase whether it's rhythmically or by pitch, there is usually a desired effect that he or she is looking for. Use the following as an example for teaching this in the opening section of the piece. Here is how m. 26–35 are written in the music:

(Figure 1.1)



There are many different places in this phrase where we can use dynamic and hairpin shaping emphasis to make the musical repetitions more interesting, thereby adding dimension to the musical phrase. I would teach the above phrase like the following:

(Figure 1.2)

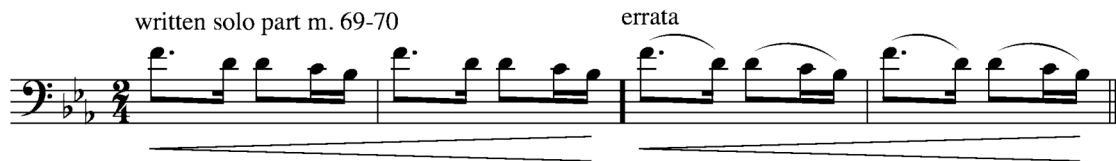


(Figure 2.2)



Editors do their best to eliminate all errors in works, especially after they have been played for many years. There is one error in Ropartz's *Andante et Allegro* that continues to be present in many editions, mine included. There are several slur markings in m. 69–70 that are included in the piano score, but did not make the transition into the solo part.

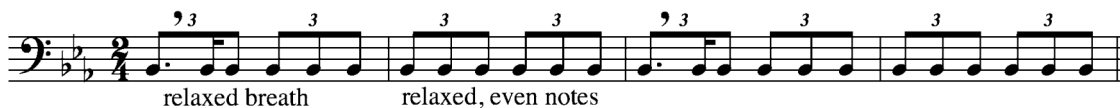
(Figure 3.1)



The following section of the *Andante et Allegro* is a triplet fanfare section, which is usually performed incorrectly by many students. The tempo does not change from the previous section, but should remain steady throughout. Since this is part of the Allegro section, pay close attention to the speed of this section. The speed at which this section is played can dictate how slow or fast to play the beginning of the Allegro. When preparing this section, immediately take the notes away, and perform a one-note version of m. 89–112. This is an excellent way to ascertain rhythmic stability as well as give the pupil an opportunity to succeed on this passage first. The biggest performance problem in this section is not the notes or the rhythms, but the breathing. The notes and

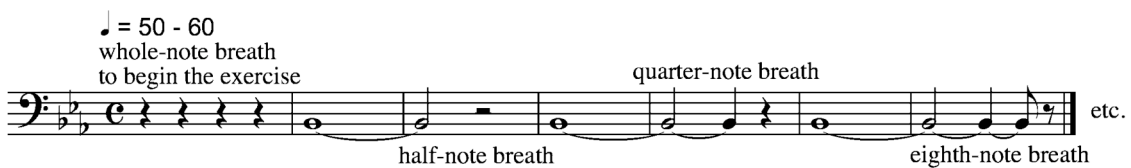
rhythms will suffer from lack of breath, simply because the need for a quick-breath is essential. Up until this point in the piece (or perhaps their playing career) they never had to plan quick-breaths. Here is a one-note example of the desired exercise.

(Figure 4.1)



With younger students I would use preparatory exercises leading up to Figure 4.1, because the student might not succeed on both the relaxed breath and the subsequent relaxed notes. There will most definitely be some body tension in some area of the line. Work out the tension with the following.

(Figure 4.2)



Once this breathing exercise (Figure 4.2) has been achieved with little tension, then you can institute the exercise in Figure 4.1.

When working with any pupil on this section, stress the need for a relaxed quick-breath. Make that the headline for their mental imagery. The notes will seem daunting for them in this section (m. 89–112), but steady concentration on their breathing can take away most of the angst with the multitude of arpeggios.

One of the great compositional properties of the *Andante et Allegro* is that all of the thematic material ties together and comes back later in the piece. There is a degree of continuity that the performer will need in these various sections. As the student prepares the opening *Andante* section, have them learn the return to the *Andante* at m. 119. This is a great way for them to learn about the form of the piece as well as why it's important for them to play the sections similarly.

The second *Allegro* at m. 129 should be prepared with care. Have the student reference m. 53 to remind them of the rhythmic characteristics of the line, this time presented in a slightly higher key. The first performance, the student will be struggling with the first four measures, as it is the highest pitch point of the entire piece. I often have my students prepare this portion down an octave so they can audiate the section first. If the student has a clear enough sense of where the notes are sonically, then placing them without tension will be much easier. Playing phrases by singing them is not a new concept, but might be new to your student. Encourage them to sing their phrases not only to get pitches into their head, but also so they can begin to add musical lines and shapes before the instrument is put into the equation.

In this same *Allegro* section, m. 138–140 is often confusing to many younger players. As marked, it appears like this:

(Figure 5.1)



Younger students will simply gloss over this section, and either play the notes staccato, or play them slurred. Which is correct? Experienced musicians will recognize this marking immediately, but how can you get a younger student to perform these notes ‘on the same bow?’ It is not a clear marking for many brass performers, but with a little explanation should be rather simple. In my teaching I talk about bowings all the time. As a euphonium performer, I often will use up-bow and down-bow marking in my music to put stress alongside my phrases. I don’t believe that any student is too young to understand this concept. I would teach this phrase like this:

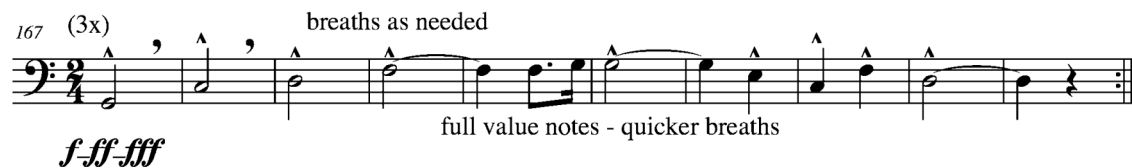
(Figure 5.2)



The ending of *Andante et Allegro* is a wonderful opportunity for the performer to shine, as it is technically not too challenging with a little arpeggio practice. The final *Brillante* section (m. 160 start) should retain the character of the previous section; once again pedagogically the teacher would want to correlate this section with the previous like section (m. 89 start). This time the triplet fanfare is presented at full-volume,

and leads us into the *largamento* at m. 167. These 10 bars can often be a struggle for younger performers. The problem with this section, like most is, it is often not given enough air support for the phrase. I would use some primer exercises on playing this section ‘low-and-loud.’ Have them take this phrase down one octave and play the phrase as loud as possible while still maintaining a sense of tone quality. When prepping this exercise, make sure to explain that the hardest you should work physically while playing is during this exercise.ⁱⁱⁱ Once you return to the written octave, performance should be free and without tension.

(Figure 6.1)



The final Allegro section should be performed either the same tempo, or slightly faster than the opening Allegro. Take heed not to get to frantic a pace because of the range that the arpeggios require in m. 177. Finally, make sure of the rhythm in the last three bars. Younger performers will often play the sixteenth notes preceding the longer notes as eighths.

Musical Gains Through Performance

The mark of a great teacher is having the ability to put their musicianship into words. This is a skill that is not inherent, but is practiced and honed. Just like all of the concepts that were discussed in

this article that you, the educator, would use with your students – the ability to portray these to your pupils might not come off correctly the first time. Proper planning on your part, as well as a diversified educational plan will instill these ideas in your students no matter which type of learner they happen to be.

<end article>

ⁱ Stuckemeyer, Pat. *Stepping Stones for Euphonium, Vol. 1*. CD-recording. Tempe, AZ: Potenza Music, 2006.

ⁱⁱ For more examples of a soft-touch articulation – Pilafian, Sam & Sheridan, Patrick. *The Brass Gym*. Chandler, AZ: Focus on Music, 2004–6.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pilafian, Sam & Sheridan, Patrick. *Breathing Gym & Brass Gym* pedagogy. Chandler, AZ: Focus on Music, 2004–6.

Fig. 1.1: Ropartz, J.-Guy. *Andante et Allegro*. arr. A. Shapiro. New York, NY: Carl Fischer, LLC, 1948.

Fig. 1.2: Ibid. Pat Stuckemeyer, ed.

Fig. 2.1: Adapt. Stuckemeyer from Ropartz, J.-Guy. *Andante et Allegro*. arr. A. Shapiro. New York, NY: Carl Fischer, LLC, 1948.

Fig. 2.2: Ibid.

Fig. 3.1: Adapt. Stuckemeyer from Ropartz, J.-Guy. *Andante et Allegro*. arr. A. Shapiro. New York, NY: Carl Fischer, LLC, 1948.

Fig. 4.1: Adapt. Stuckemeyer from Pilafian, Sam & Sheridan, Patrick. *Breathing Gym & Brass Gym* pedagogy. Chandler, AZ: Focus on Music, 2004–6.

Fig. 4.2: Adapt. Stuckemeyer from Guggenberger, Wolfgang. *Basics Plus*. Germany: Rundel Music, 2005.

Fig. 5.1: Ropartz, J.-Guy. *Andante et Allegro*. arr. A. Shapiro. New York, NY: Carl Fischer, LLC, 1948.

Fig. 5.2: Ibid. Pat Stuckemeyer, ed.

Fig. 6.1: Adapt. Stuckemeyer from Pilafian, Sam & Sheridan, Patrick. *Breathing Gym & Brass Gym* pedagogy. Chandler, AZ: Focus on Music, 2004–6.