

The  
**PERCEPTIVE**  
Trombonist

An Annotated Listening  
Guide to Orchestral  
Excerpts

SAMPLE

Volume I

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# The Perceptive Trombonist

## Volume I

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## Foreword

By

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**The Perceptive Trombonist** is a fresh approach to the study of orchestral material. The book includes background information and insights into the music, plus an exhaustive list of recordings—all accessible on the website: [www.TromboneExcerpts.org](http://www.TromboneExcerpts.org). The *Perceptive Listening Exercises* found throughout the book are especially interesting and thought provoking.

In combination with full score study and listening to complete recordings, this wonderful addition to trombone pedagogy by Dr. Seth T. Vatt will help the trombonist go beyond the notes. The understanding of style, concept of sound, and composer's intentions (along with the basics of playing the correct notes, in tune, and in time) will lead to success on the audition circuit and a musically satisfying career.

*Russian Easter Festival Overture, Op. 36*

Composed, 1888

by

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)

Six Excerpts for Three Trombones and Tuba

Premiered in St. Petersburg on 15 December, 1888

Orchestra of the Russian Public Symphony Concerts; Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, conductor

First complete recording in Philadelphia, 26 January, 1929 on RCA Victor label 78 rpm

Philadelphia Orchestra; Leopold Stokowski, conductor

## Russian Easter Festival Overture, Op. 36 Excerpt 1

N. Rimsky-Korsakov  
(1844-1908)

21 **B** **Maestoso**

Tenor 1  
Tenor 2  
Bass

*f* *dim.* *f* *dim.* *f* *dim.* *p* *dim. e smorz.*

*f* *dim.* *f* *dim.* *f* *dim.* *p* *dim. e smorz.*

Rimsky-Korsakov's unique life experiences undoubtedly influenced how he selected the inspirational material underlying his compositions. Just as his service as a naval officer in the Orient influenced the work *Scheherazade*, so too did his 1883 appointment as Mily Balakirev's assistant at the Imperial Chapel spur his interest in Russian sacred music. The liturgical songs inspiring this overture come from the *Obikhod* hymnal, and are listed as follows in successive order of appearance: "Let God arise," "Those who hate him will flee before his face," and "Christ is risen."

The inspirational dichotomy between sacred reverence and pagan celebration in this work is best summed up in the composer's own autobiography, *My Musical Life*:

*"This legendary and heathen side of the holiday, this transition from the gloomy and mysterious evening of Passion Saturday to the unbridled pagan-religious merry making of Easter Sunday, is what I was eager to reproduce in my overture."*

Stylistic interpretations in recordings of Excerpt 1 range from legato to marcato to accented, while some pre-1970s conductors and performers even prefer sharply punctuated accents. **Overall recommendations** on the following page feature stylistic consistency by presenting a unison sound within the trombone section. In addition, there is significantly less room for expression in this simple melody than in later, more prominent solo passages.

While some selections may sound dynamically conservative, the sacrifice in volume allows trombonists to maintain some idea of musical shape and phrasing. As you listen, contrast this idea with recordings that sacrifice musical shape in favor of playing loud, even to the point of overblowing and being out of tune. There is a time and place for trombones to drive an orchestra with "Russian angst" in their sound, but this is not it.

## Overall Recommendations

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Charles Dutoit – 2010 – CSO Live  
 Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Neeme Järvi – 1987 – Deutsche Grammophon  
 Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta – 1987 – CBS Masterworks  
 London Philharmonic Orchestra, José Serebrier – 1999 – Reference Recordings  
 London Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati – 1959 – Mercury Living Presence  
 Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Kees Bakels – 2004 – BIS  
 New York Philharmonic, Yuri Temirkanov – 1991 – RCA Victor Red Seal  
 Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy – 1959 – Sony Classical Essential Classics  
 Philharmonia Orchestra, William Boughton – 1988 – Nimbus  
 St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin – 1981 – Telarc

## Other Stylistic Interpretations

### *Accented Style*

Standard Symphony Orchestra, Pierre Monteux – 1952 – Music & Arts  
 Philadelphia Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski – 1929 – RCA Victor

### *Marcato Style*

Berlin Philharmonic, Sergiu Celibidache – 1945 – Audite  
 Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, David Zinman – 1980 – Philips

### *Legato*

New York Philharmonic, Yuri Temirkanov – 1991 – RCA Victor Red Seal  
 Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy – 1959 – Sony Classical Essential Classics

## Tempo Notes

### *Slower*

Halle Orchestra, Vernon Handley – 1988 – EMI Classics  
 New York Philharmonic, Yuri Temirkanov – 1991 – RCA Victor Red Seal  
 Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet – 1960 – Decca  
 Vienna Symphonic Orchestra, Heinrich Hollreiser – 1960 – Tuxedo

### *Faster*

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski – 1969 – RCA Red Seal  
 NBC Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski – 1942 – RCA Victor Masterworks

### Perceptive Listening Exercise

List three to five “character” words that describe emotional undercurrents shared by your preferred recordings. How can you sonically embody these emotions into your own ideal performance?

Tip: Character words like “sorrowful” or “hopeful” trigger a much stronger emotional response than mere descriptive words like “loud” or “big.”