



Brass Instruments

Development of the Trumpet

Arnold

When the valve was first applied to the trumpet the design of instrument was similar to the natural trumpet, with a tube length of at least 6 foot. And this is the form of trumpet which was used in both orchestral and band music, more or less consistently until the end of the 19th century.

Sandy

With the largest trumpet the trumpet in F the notes are very close together so it feels much more difficult it is much more dangerous to play that I'd always feel just that little bit insecure, which at the same time is quite exciting.

Arnold

Smaller trumpets weren't greatly used until the very end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century. That's when instruments such as this B flat trumpet, which is now normally learnt in schools, became generally adopted.

However players still found the very high register on the B flat trumpet, a challenge to play reliably and with the advent of sound recordings and the increased expectancy of audiences for perfectly accurate performances every time, players have moved, where appropriate, to smaller instruments.

And in many cases players play baroque music parts on the piccolo trumpet. It's much easier to play on the smaller trumpets, on the piccolo trumpet in particular...

Sandy

That is because the notes in the harmonic series are fairly wide apart and there's less likelihood of splitting any of the notes. That is landing on the wrong note of the harmonic series.

Arnold

These short piccolo trumpets don't sound the same as the longer trumpets and many people say they don't sound as good in the Baroque repertoire.