



Fennell, Drew *Concerto for Trumpet*. Trumpet and Orchestra.
Drew Fennell Publishing, 2004

Concerto for Trumpet by Drew Fennell was commissioned by the students of Anthony Pasquarelli to honor his retirement after forty-seven years of teaching trumpet at Carnegie Mellon University. The extensive program notes by Fennell give specific insight for the performer who may not have had the privilege of being a Pasquarelli student. Each movement was composed with a particular aspect of Pasquarelli in mind: the first movement remembers his career as a performer, the second movement is dedicated to his family, and the third movement gives testament to his teaching through the eyes of a student.

An energetic and spirited first movement is signaled by the heroic main theme (or “Trumpeter’s Theme”) that eventually evolves through playful variations throughout the entire concerto. Shortly after this initial statement, a brief cadenza paves the way for the second theme that is characterized by syncopation and muted trumpet. For further variety, Fennell incorporates a neo-classical fugue that adds a distinct style contrast by employing an altered version of the “Trumpeter’s Theme.” Using elements of both themes, Fennell rounds out the first movement with a flurry of activity, ending with a climactic showcase of technique for the soloist.

The second movement, largely influenced by elements of the “Trumpeter’s Theme,” calls to mind Pasquarelli’s tenderness and love for his family. From the warmth of the opening to the blissful conclusion, Fennell encapsulates humanity at its finest. While the echoes of the first movement are a bit redundant, the overall mood is a balancing contrast to the bravura of the first movement.

The final movement marks the dawn of the new day. “We begin mid-morning, hearing the young trumpet student preparing in a practice room for his lesson. Then we hear a fully-realized version of the ‘Teacher’s Theme.’” This theme is a transfigured with increasing and unrelenting difficulty until the exuberant conclusion. While the transformations and variations add to the complexity and rhythmic drive, they lack ingenuity, resulting in mere rhythmic permutations rather than melodic development. The concerto concludes with juxtaposed statements of the “Trumpeter’s Theme” and the “Teacher’s Theme,” signifying Pasquarelli passing the torch to his students.

The twenty-two minute *Concerto* is an audience-friendly work that is composed in the style of a modern classical film score. Fennell's masterful orchestration (also available with piano reduction) is precise and balanced, offering a myriad of emotions and colors throughout the work. The solo part is very idiomatic and attainable for the advanced college player. This concerto is a beautiful musical testament that will be equally enjoyed by performers and audiences alike. (Brian Shook, adjunct faculty, Towson University)