

Instruments

Below are the instruments I play. With each recommendation, I include a brief description of what I consider to be the primary hallmarks of each. To any trumpet player, I would vouch for these; however I am certainly not so dogmatic in my support of these recommendations to say they are the only solution – or even the best solution for any individual musician. However, these instruments have worked for me all throughout my education and throughout my career. In the end – *and I believe these wholeheartedly* – it is the player and not the instrument that makes the difference. However, I have observed (in both myself and many others) that the stronger the player one may be, the greater difference the instrument can make. So, if you want to know what instruments I play and why, then read on. Perhaps this information will be useful.



Bb Trumpet



I play a **Bach Stradivarius Bb Model 43** with a lightweight bell (“starbell”). I find this to be a great overall instrument. It is *excellent* as an overall classical trumpet and a *very solid* commercial/jazz instrument. In particular, as a solo instrument, I don’t think you can do any better. Looked at more closely, it is possible it might

be called a “jack of all trades, master of none,” as there are (*very small*) limitations to its effectiveness, but these limitations come out only when you push the instrument to its very limits. As a commercial instrument, it is a little “tight.” The upper register doesn’t “pop” as much as some trumpets, and the horn doesn’t blow as freely as some. Similarly, when pushed to the limit in the orchestral medium, the instrument shows some weakness. It actually blows a little too freely to effectively play some of the particular orchestral passages requiring a Bb trumpet (specifically, I fought many times with the instrument in trying to play the long chorale in Wagner’s *Tanhauser* and the low excerpts in Bizet’s *Carmen*. I only mention these to lend a sense of objectivity, as I assert this trumpet is *simply the best all-around instrument out there*.

C Trumpet

Similar to my appreciation for the Bb Model 43 is my support for the **Bach Stradivarius C Model 239**. I got this instrument in my first year of college and it has served as my primary instrument ever since. As an overall instrument, it is very clean. The pitches slot very consistently and the sound is dark enough, but with a brilliance that gives the sound lots of life. In the orchestral medium, that radiance serves to very satisfactorily project the sound. If I have a single knock on this instrument, it is its tightness and the difficulty I have bending pitches. Because the pitches slot so well (theoretically a good thing), it makes it more difficult to affect the pitch without missing the pitch altogether. Still, I love this trumpet and have played few horns that even compare.



E♭ Trumpet



The E♭ trumpet is a very situational instrument. For many, the purpose of the instrument is for performing the major trumpet concerti: the Haydn, Hummel, Neruda, etc. For others, the major use is as an alternate orchestral instrument – and specifically for use playing the Baroque trumpet works – especially third trumpet parts. Some use the instrument in a brass band. As with the two instruments above, I prefer a middle-of-the road horn, useable in multiple situations; and as with the two trumpets above, my choice is a **Bach Stradivarius E♭ Model 189 Large Bore**. Certainly, if you are playing third trumpet on the Bach *Magnificat* or the *Christmas Oratorio*, a Schilke instrument – with its lightweight metal – will better match the smaller sound of the piccolo trumpets often used to play the first and second parts. But the weight of the sound produced with the Strad. E♭ makes for a much more effective performance of the aforementioned concerti.

B♭ Cornet

As with all my horns, the decision to buy a cornet was made with versatility foremost in my mind. I chose a rose-brass Getzen Eterna (rose brass referring to the red-tint of the un-plated metal, affected by a greater percentage of copper in the alloy), which has a very fluid sound, excellent pitch and pretty good valves. I like the warmth of the lower dynamics coupled with the ability to really light it up at higher volume levels. This makes it ideal for lyrical soloistic playing, as well as for orchestral cornet parts, which often require a pretty big sound.



B♭ Flugelhorn



The **Kanstul Flugelhorn** is a beautiful instrument with a sound that goes far beyond that of most flugels. The biggest drawback of most flugelhorns is that they are frumpy in terms of sound and clunky in terms of agility. While this instrument is not as able as any trumpet, it is passable technically, and the sound is full, but the sound has a sort of sparkling aspect to it that makes it, in my opinion, a much more attractive instrument than most flugelhorns I've heard.

Piccolo Trumpet

I chose my **Stomvi Elite Model Piccolo Trumpet** (with B♭ & A leadpipes) over a couple of very good Schilke instruments I tried. It had the best combination of good sound plus great pitch accuracy and response of any instrument I tried. To this day, I have not played an instrument I like any better. I would say this, pertinent to selecting a piccolo trumpet: it is probably more important to try before you buy than any other instrument. It seems to me that the tolerances are such that any flaws in the manufacture can make the horn much, much more difficult to play. I feel lucky to have found a good one.

