

Just for Beginners

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PROGRAM NOTES

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The Joy In Being Able

(for trombone and piano)

Written in May 2000, *The Joy In Being Able* was inspired by a very special invitation from the *Online Trombone Journal* founder and webmaster, Richard Human, Jr. Over the past few years, we have been very interested in the proposition of composing music with meaning and greater musical possibility for musicians who have been playing for only a few years. And so, when Richard asked if Norman would be willing to compose a new piece, "a solo piece for trombonists in the third or fourth year of study which can be learned easily, but holds true music and meaning," we were instantly inspired. At that very moment, music began to flood into Norman's mind, and that same night, the melody for *The Joy In Being Able* was written.

It was specially encouraging to us that Richard himself requested not only simple music, but music with meaning, as we do not feel that in order to play such music, a musician need wait until he or she can play the horn (or any instrument) solidly! Rather, we believe that music with meaning and purpose can be played from the fullness of one's own life (which we refer to as being 'essencely connected') at any time during one's musical journey and is best fostered early, so that the 'young' player (of whatever age!) can experience the feeling and knowing that 'music is a living thing.'

In fact, we believe that this living engagement is the most vital ingredient in one's music making! We believe this 'connection' will uplift and inspire one's own life and the lives of others in truly unique and life-changing ways, as it reaches where words and technical skill alone often can not reach. This short piece, *The Joy In Being Able*, is about finding and feeling this great gift of living musical connection. And it is offered as encouragement to and in honour of those willing to try.

The title of this piece originally turned up during a musical adventure with some very special friends. Whilst we all were playing with a new musical experiment, one of us

suddenly caught the way of it and at that very moment, a wise friend quietly reflected, "There is a joy in being able." And we all felt it, because humans do.

Sometimes this joy in being able does not come right away. We then have the joy in being able to work for it, from the wish and want for it to be so.

As building skill offers our music making a foundation for being able to do more, this piece provides opportunities for technical development also, including the phrasing of long lines. As well, because the basic remains above middle Bb, it might offer endurance building to some degree. In this way, the player can also experience the joy in being able to make technical progress, from building upon what he or she 'can do.' But because this composition is not overly 'notey,' meaning there are not a lot of fast passages, the player should be encouraged to journey beyond the technical into the realms of joy in being able to connect to 'music as a living thing,' and to discover what this is and can be for one's own life."

The *Joy In Being Able* is available at the *Online Trombone Journal*:
<http://www.trombone.org/jfb/>