



Trombonly & Friends: A Review

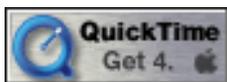
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Trombonly & Friends: Students of Prof. Heinz Fadle's trombone class perform music for eight trombones. Sonja Schöning, Laszlo, Csaba Rabi, Andreas Regeling, Chia-Jung Tsai, Chih-Weo Tong, Norbert Laczko, Manuel Morgenthaler, Hermann Bäumer, Dimitrij Bulkin, Ulrich Dieckmann, Sergey Fedyanon, Shawn Grocott, Rüdiger Konrad. *Variations for my Friends*, Robert Lamb. *Swing Low*, Trad./I. Wagner. *Variable Spirits*, F. Hidas. *March*, R. Lischka. *Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen*, J. Brahms/E. Williams. *The Chief*, J. Stevens. *Concerto Grosso*, J. Koetsier.



Prof. Heinz Fadle, well known trombonist, former President of the [ITA](#), and widely published author, has issued this recording from the Hochschule für Musik Detmold of works for eight trombones. The performers include current and former students of Prof. Fadle's at that institution.

The title "Trombonly" is a combination of the words "trombone" and "only," and serves as the name of the ensemble. Trombonly has performed extensively across Europe, including a performance at the 2000 ITF, at which Trombonly was honored with the Emory-Remington award. After listening to this disc, one will realize that this honor is richly deserved.

One of the more common pitfalls of trombone ensembles is falling into a monochromatic timbral palette. With eight of (basically) the same instrument, presenting a varied array of tone colors requires maturity, creativity, and a complete sense of the ensemble. This is in addition to the personal commitment to technique and execution that each member must have. Prof. Fadle has assembled an ensemble which exhibits both set of characteristics in an impressive fashion.

While every work on this disc is performed to high standards, two stand out as exceptional. The opening work, Irish composer Robert Lamb's *Variations for my Friends* is a striking new piece which puts the tonal control of this ensemble plainly to the fore. The three movements of this work; "Old Friends," "Absent Friends," and "New Friends," venture into musical and emotional spaces which Trombonly navigates deftly. This reviewer hopes that Mr. Lamb's new work is

added to the standard repertoire through frequent performances such as this.

The last work on the disc, Jan Koetsier's four-movement *Concerto Grosso* is at times a playful romp, and at others a technical mine field. Trombonly presents this colorful and just plain fun work with all the energy of a beginning trombonist who first learns that they can actually make music. It is joyous, spirited, and a fitting vehicle to showcase the soloistic abilities of several members of the ensemble.

The only quibble this reviewer might have with this disc is the inclusion of Irvin Wagner's setting of "Swing Low" on what is otherwise a musically stunning collection. Don't misunderstand, the ensemble performs the work very well, but given the considerable talents and ability of the ensemble perhaps a stronger piece would have been more appropriate.

Prof. Fadle and Trombonly have raised the bar for trombone ensemble performance. It is this reviewer's wish that other ensembles work hard to meet this challenge. Our instrument and literature will be the better for it.

Excerpts from "Trombonly & Friends"

- Robert Lamb: *Variations for my Friends I. Old Friends* (2.7MB MP3)
- Jan Koetsier: *Concerto Grosso I. Allegro Moderato* (1.4MB MP3)

This recording is available at [Hickey's Music](#). --Ed.

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