

## **Jeremy Greig**

*Jeremy Greig is a trombonist who graduated in 1995 with a Bachelor of Music from the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts' Jazz department, in which time he was a regular member of WAYJO, WAYO, The Perth Jazz Orchestra, and Jazz West Big Band. After moving to the USA he was a teaching assistant and completed a Master of Music from the University of Miami in 1999. During this time he performed and recorded in a group with multi-instrumental legend and Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers alumni Ira Sullivan, known as the Inter/Outer Continental Quintet. Whilst studying he received various Downbeat magazine awards, including Outstanding Jazz Combo performance (1999), Best Big Band –University of Miami Concert Jazz Band (1998) (1999), and Outstanding Big Band Performance – University of Miami Studio Jazz Band (1998) (1999). Performers that he has worked with include international Jazz musicians such as Maria Schneider, Jimmy Heath, Wynton Marsalis, Joe Lovano, Mannie Albam, Bob Mintzer, Dave Liebman, and Rick Margitza. Other International names he has performed with include Ray Charles, Natalie Cole, Barry Gibb, Don Rickles, Peter Nero with the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, Max Pelicano (Elvis to the Max), Steve Lawrence and Edie Gorme, Wayne Newton, and Thirsty Merc. Recording credits include internationally released albums Intercontinental Drift (Artists of the NY Trumpet Company 2007), Mischievous Girl (2005) and Hip Mo Toast Live (Hip Mo Toast Big Band 2004), Bread and Circuses (Graham Collier and the Collective 2004), and The Second Kumin' of Kev (Kevin 'Bloody' Wilson 2002). Jeremy works as a freelance musician playing in musicals such as the recent stage production of Dirty Dancing, a 20<sup>th</sup> Century ensemble known as The Collective, and is a regular member of the Hip mo Toast Big Band. He also co-ordinated a successful 6 week tour through Country Arts WA in mid 2008 with a show entitled Descarga and Dance which included performances in Christmas and Cocos/Keeling Islands. Jeremy is currently employed as a specialist lecturer in Brass and Musicianship - Jazz and contemporary music at the WA Academy of Performing arts. He teaches improvisation, Big band, Big Funk Band, theory, aural training, principle study, and takes various ensembles.*

## **The Big Band Trombone Section**

**1<sup>st</sup> (Lead) Trombone** – has the highest responsibility of the section. It is the lead player's job to phrase according to the lead trumpet and (where appropriate) the lead alto player at ALL times. This entails such things as note lengths, articulation, stylistic nuances when appropriate, and dynamics. Where there is a soli (trombone) section then it is up to the lead player to determine this information. The lead player has a responsibility to act (as the name suggests) as the section leader. The lead player should be able to advise the rest of the section as to how they want the music to sound should it not be clear from the rest of the band. Lastly, the lead player should also have the highest range of the section as they will be playing in the high register. Their range ability should allow them to play to high C's comfortably (one octave above middle C). Occasionally the lead player will play as a featured soloist or improvisational soloist.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Trombone** – must be able to blend with the lead trombonist, taking cues from them stylistically. The 2<sup>nd</sup> trombonist will also notice that they often play similar lines to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet and a tenor saxophone. They must always be aware of this fact and blend accordingly. The 2<sup>nd</sup> trombonist must remember that often enough they can hear the trumpet player behind them clearly but the trumpet player cannot necessarily hear them, so must be comfortable in a 'following' role! The 2<sup>nd</sup> trombonist is often the soloist in the section, but in my experience solos are often shared 50/50 with the lead player, and occasionally filter down to the 3<sup>rd</sup> trombonist. The range of the 2<sup>nd</sup> player is not usually too challenging.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Trombone** – Should be the part that gets ‘left out’ when a big band is lacking 4 trombone players. Even though it is important, there are often doubled voicings with the tenor saxophone and the 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet. The 3<sup>rd</sup> trombone chair is often the most difficult to play, as the range of the parts means that there is a lot of rapid slide movement happening. Also the 3<sup>rd</sup> player regularly needs to play louder than they think, as they are playing in the lower register of the instrument which can cause blending difficulties if too soft. This will ensure a nicely balanced section. This player should listen to the bass trombone for intonation and blend/balance accordingly. The 3<sup>rd</sup> trombone chair rarely solos but some writers have featured the 3<sup>rd</sup> trombonist as a soloist (e.g. the Toshiko Akyoshi Big Band often featured 3<sup>rd</sup> trombonist Conrad Herwig, hence many 3<sup>rd</sup> trombone solos in the repertoire).

**4<sup>th</sup> (Bass) Trombone** – is possibly as important to the trombone section as the lead (1<sup>st</sup>) trombonist. Where possible, a specialist instrument (Bass Trombone) should be used. This is easily distinguishable from a Bb/F (or commonly referred to as a *trigger*) trombone as it has 2 *triggers* and is generally larger. They must regularly practice on this instrument. The Bass trombonist must listen primarily to the Bass for phrasing and intonation. The player should also be aware that they are often playing unison with the Baritone Saxophone and frequently with the bass. They are occasionally playing different musical parts to the rest of the trombone section and should be rehearsed regularly with the bass and Baritone Saxophone. In order to maximise a musical balance with the rest of the trombone section the bass trombonist must often think they are playing louder in order to be heard properly. Lastly, the Bass trombone will often be playing the fundamental (root) of a chord, so MUST be able to play in tune with the Bass and Baritone Saxophone. Good intonation is paramount for this position.

**Summary** – It is essential for students performing and rehearsing in a big band to be exposed to the music that they are playing. Regular listening sessions even in rehearsal are encouraged. Swing and time feels can therefore be strongly conveyed. The written music is only responsible for a very small amount of style, whilst the lead players (and ultimately the director) of the band help to discern the musical flavour. Lastly, the trombone section should set up with the bass trombonist closest to the bass, followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> trombone, lead trombone (in front of the lead trumpet and behind the lead alto), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> trombone on the other end. Often bands line up with the bass trombone on the opposite side but in my experience the aforementioned setup produces best results.

**Big Bands to Listen to** – Duke Ellington Big Band, Count Basie Orchestra, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Big Band, Maynard Ferguson Big Band, Stan Kenton Orchestra, Maria Schneider Orchestra, Vienna Art Orchestra.

**Trombonists to listen to** – JJ Johnson, Curtis Fuller, Bill Watrous, Frank Rosolino, Carl Fontana, Robin Eubanks, Conrad Herwig, John Alred, Wycliffe Gordon, Adrian Meares.