Two Trillion Triplets

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Two Trillion Triplets
for brass quintet

Teaching and Rehearsal Notes

Two Trillion Triplets is moderately difficult with a duration of about 3:00. Brass instrument teachers can use this energetic work to teach students with higher intermediate-level but progressing ensemble and musicianship skills.

The piece includes a whopping 180 16th-note, 8th-note and quarter-note triplets, including eight nested triplets, divided among all the parts. All the triplets add to the work’s brightness and playfulness, as do the dynamics, articulations, varied harmony and wide-ranging tonal colors.

Be sure to begin the piece at the indicated tempo--too slow or too fast and the mood is lost. Two Trillion Triplets is, of course, loaded with triplet motifs. Instruments sometimes play these motifs followed by other instruments playing those motifs in imitative passages. Throughout the piece, bring out instruments when they play a triplet motif. In this way, the piece achieves balance, and, as intended, each instrument contributes to the quintet’s sounding as one instrument.

Observe dynamics, hairpins and articulations carefully to enhance phrasing and heighten the piece’s lyrical quality. The hairpin swells in measures 3-5, 9-11, 25-26, 53-55 and 61-63 should be subtle with only a slight increase in volume at the middle of the phrases. These swells should be more felt than heard.

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