

WEIMANN

German Bb-trumpets

Instrument making is Alexander Weimann's passion – he is putting his heart and soul in it. You can feel his enthusiasm for his work over and over again, and his drive to try out new things and to improve and optimize existing things seems to be rampant. Within short time, his orchestral instruments have established in many national and international ensembles. We had the chance to test and assess two new models for the sonic-readers. The illustrious and promising names made us curious: "Passion" and "Classico".

"Classico" and "Passion" – craftsmanship with passion and precision

Whether it be musicians from orchestras, academies, music schools, theatres, associations, trombone choirs or brass bands – all of them walk in and out of Alexander Weimann's workshop and are mostly welcome. However, the ambitious instrument maker has made a name of himself worldwide, and he has established this name as a brand for excellent German trumpets.

In symphony orchestras from Dresden to Munich and Berlin, even in Japan and the USA they play German trumpets from the small idyllic village of Kapellendorf in Thuringia. Alexander Weimann has spared neither costs nor effort and has made his dream of his own successful manufactory come true within short time.

Showrooms in the historic building

In May 2010 Alexander Weimann can already look back at 15 years of successful work on his farm which had been restored under several conditions of the monument protection service. In this special atmosphere he really enjoys making new instruments, trying new things and working meticulously. With a view of the "water castle" he can realize his ideas, do repair work and fulfil individual wishes of his customers. He is supported by his two employees Andreas Lawrenz and René Kurth. In the showrooms of the historic buildings there are numerous brass instruments available for testing. The boss himself looks after customers and offers personal consultations. Each customer, no matter if it is a pupil, a student or a professional, can receive competent and sensitive consultation, everybody is paid the same attention. As an officially appointed and sworn expert for the brass-making trade at the Chamber of Crafts Erfurt/ Thuringia also authorities and insurance companies rely on his expert appraisal. "Within the five years of my opening in Kapellendorf a lot has happened and we have taken an important step in reaching our goal", says Alexander Weimann. Nowadays his instruments are played and appreciated in renowned orchestras and academies. It has always been his aim to provide each

musician with an instrument that allows them to realize their individual ideals of sound, which can be achieved by the various possible combinations. And this is where Alexander Weimann has succeeded!

New rotary valve trumpets in Bb

After an intensive development time of two years, now Alexander Weimann presents his new professional Bb-trumpets which have been excellently crafted. "Classico" and "Passion" are the promising and well-sounding names of the two instruments which only differ slightly. "But exactly these differences are relevant and decisive if you want to fulfil your customers' wishes", says Weimann. The difference between the two test candidates is the borehole. Whereas the Passion has a Zirnbauer valve with a cylindrical bore of 11.20 mm, the Classico was given a conical bore of 11.05 mm to 11.20 mm. "A moderate bore that feels and sounds bigger", says Alexander Weimann. "We have already sold quite a number of these new models, and they are already played in some orchestras, also in some of the big German ones." The advantages of the Zirnbauer-rotary valves in general, are the one-piece and seamless valve slide bows and transitions between the valve casings. This assures an optimal and unobstructed air flow, resulting in an agile response of the instrument as well as less blowing resistance. Connecting tubes and slide bows of the valve are made of yellow brass. High quality bronze ensures long durability of the valve change. The driver action consists of nickel-silver. Weimann's new trumpets come with a yellow brass bell with a diameter of 140 mm and a basic material thickness of 0.45 mm. Compared with the preceding model (sonic 03.2007) Weimann has optimized the measurements of the trumpet again, that is the proportions of the bell, valve and tuning slide. The removable lead pipe (size "D" has proved itself) has been made of yellow brass, as Weimann is used to doing, and it is inserted into a nickel-silver tube without being fixed. For our test we were given the Classico in its rough state, that is unlacquered, the model Passion in a classy silver-gold bicolour finishing (bell 24K gold plated, body silver plated).

For their use in orchestras so-called overblow-keys have proved useful for German trumpets. When being pressed, they sort of shorten the instrument acoustically and thus increase the accuracy in the upper register. The Passion has two of these auxiliary keys for C3 and A2, an additional H key is available, too. Our test version of the Classico did not have any overblow keys. Both trumpets come with a sophisticated trigger system, which allows operating the first and third valve slide at the same time by means of a trigger. The redirection is effected – how else could it be – by push rods with MINIBAL-joints. This construction requires handling the trigger lever a bit more sensitively, but in the end you need half the way for the trigger only! Great! Both instruments have been equipped with a removable bell as we already know from the preceding models. Two filigree braces fix the bell: one is placed at the lead pipe tube, the other one at the tuning

slide tube. The bell bow itself is not fixed. At first sight you would hardly assume that the braces are a screw connection. According to Weimann, the trumpets could also be equipped with a firmly soldered bell. For letting the water drain out the Passion has a water key on the 3rd slide, the standard water key on the yellow brass crook which serves as an overblow key too, can be found on both models. Of course, all these accessories and braces are hand-forged at Weimann's workshop with love for detail. Round cork pads have been attached to the trigger, to the water and overblow keys to dampen the stop. Rubber rings soften the stop of the trigger slides. As these slides are made as one piece, the Weimanns get along with a stop on one side. The well-known "Weimann-lettering" which has become a brand by now is on the upper surface of the bell. And there is another brand mark – the typical red water key screw. The quality craftsmanship of both trumpets is as precise as the work of a master clockmaker and accurately fitting down to the last detail! The Weimann-trumpets also convince by their unfussy purism. Nothing's too much – nothing is missing! "We are trying to meet the wishes of all our customers – regarding technical and visual aspects! The musician is to be given a trumpet that comes up to his individual expectations and wishes down to the last detail. Playing the trumpet is to be fun with our instruments", says Alexander Weimann.

Practical test – The new WEIMANN-trumpets in use

The feel of both trumpets is excellent. You hold them in your hand as if you have never held another instrument before: well-balanced and easy to handle. Your thumb will automatically find the finger plate, and the pressure point of the Zirnbauer mechanism is extremely pleasant. The machines of both trumpets can articulate very well: you will manage fast passages without much effort and exactly articulated. The lever system works very smoothly and elegantly. The advantages of the Zirnbauer valve become obvious from the response of both Weimann-models. Due to the unobstructed air flow both trumpets are characterized by a very free and open and also direct blowing feel with little blowing resistance. Both models "go off" easily, their response is excellent in all registers!

Sound and playing characteristics

The Passion with its bore of 11.20 mm sounds very free, brilliant and big. The Classico with its conical bore sounds just a bit darker, and has fewer overtones. With the Classico you can feel a slight blowing resistance towards the upper part, which results in a more muted trumpet tone. Regarding sound, both trumpets have the necessary core and they are stable in *pianissimo*. In all dynamic nuances the instruments remain well-balanced and stable and thus offer the player an excellent playing feel. In direct comparison the Passion centres a bit more. Its bright, but still not obtrusive timbre is characteristic for this model. Even in *fortissimo* its sound will neither become dull nor will it lose brilliance.

The Classico offers the unmistakable typical German trumpet sound, but the Passion in contrast has a sound spectrum that is richer in overtones. You can play it more freely, and it is a bit brighter in sound, which is more to my taste.

Overblow keys

The overblow keys on the concert trumpet can be compared with an airbag in a car: better have one and not need it, than need one “in case of an emergency” and not have one! In symphonic orchestras a C3 is not longer a rarity nowadays, more the opposite: contemporary composers demand even higher stresses and strains from the trumpet player at the first stand. Have these tones or the so-called “angst tones”, such as the G# been written in *piano* or *pianissimo*, you will be very happy to use these auxiliary keys. That is easy on the nerves, and it avoids embarrassing “cracks”. When using the overblow keys the tones are actually much more direct and better and there is no so-called overblowing. So, the keys will give you more security when playing, but also “mental” succour. The ratio of the bore hole and the tone hole, when the auxiliary key is pressed, is crucial for a clear tone. “In order to ensure that for each player we have made the keys adjustable in height. Besides that, it is important that they can be opened as far as is necessary to avoid side noise caused by condensed water”, says Alexander Weimann.

Vernier adjustment by means of a knurled screw

The stroke length can be adjusted easily and without any problems by means of the two knurled screws on the adjustment, and they can be height adjusted. One counter nut each secures the two screws. A rubber pad dampens the otherwise metallic stop noise.

Intonation

The intonation of the two test instruments could not be better. In all dynamic nuances the intonation of the Weimann-trumpets is well-balanced, steady and faultless, and thus convince all along the line. Throughout the whole range the tones are “in the green” and even often problematic tones (G#, A, C# and D) require only a minimum of balancing. On the one hand, this is due to the original good tuning, on the other hand it is the double trigger for slides one and three, which, by the way, works perfectly. Thanks to the easy response and the full-bodied sound, signals are extremely striking and concise. Also during lyrical passages both models can convince with a wonderfully flexible and rich sound – the Classico a bit darker, the Passion a bit brighter! In this case the players have to decide which sound corresponds better with their individual ideas. Both trumpets blend into the orchestra excellently, and they can also take the lead as a principal or in exposed passages without any problems and with great expression and sound depth.

Conclusion

At Weimann's place you will always get quality without compromise as our test has proved again. Besides the excellent craftsmanship, both trumpets convinced us by their outstanding sound and playing characteristics. It is a symbiosis of traditional instrument making, modern production methods and the knowledge of the specific requirements towards instruments for their professional use in orchestras and for principals. Both test trumpets have mastered these high requirements and expectations par excellence. The rotary valves from Zirnbauer proved to be very reliable and precise during our test. The effect of the bore size on the timbre of the trumpet was very interesting and surprising to us. At Alexander Weimann's workshop the customers are given the trumpets in their rough state for a blowing test, and if desired, adjusted to the ideas of the customer – regarding acoustics and look. Also after buying your trumpet you are in good hands with Alexander Weimann, who guarantees permanent service and maintenance for his products. You can read more information about Alexander Weimann's entire portfolio on his new website:

www.a-weimann.de

Model: German rotary valve trumpet in Bb "Classico"

Technical data:

Rotary valve from the company Zirnbauer; Conical bore 11.05 mm to 11.20 mm;

Meinlschmidt valve upon request;

Bell: yellow brass, made of one piece (diameter: 140 mm, material thickness: 0.45 mm), removable;

Double trigger on the 1st and 3rd slides;

Water keys: one on the crook;

Exchangeable lead pipe (yellow brass in nickel-silver casing);

Lead pipe size "D" (Standard);

Test instrument: rough state with a removable bell

Model: German rotary valve trumpet in Bb "Passion"

Technical data:

Rotary valve from the company Zirnbauer; cylindrical bore 11.20 mm;

Meinlschmidt valve upon request;

Bell: yellow brass, made of one piece (diameter: 140 mm, material thickness: 0.45 mm);

Double trigger on the 1st and 3rd slides;

Water keys: one on the crook; C and A overblow keys;

Exchangeable lead pipe (yellow brass in nickel-silver casing);

Lead pipe size "D" (Standard);

Test instrument: silver, gold (bell) with a removable bell

Prices:

Silver plating from 2,880 EUR

Gold plating 3,620 EUR

Lacquer 2,740 EUR

Overblow keys:

C key 140 EUR

A key 150 EUR

Appliance for removable bell 240 EUR

Double trigger 1st and 3rd slide 240 EUR

Additional bell 560 EUR

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Pro & Con

- + Great, lively and orchestral trumpet sound
- + First-class intonation
- + Excellent, faultless manufacture
- + Brilliant sound, response and playing feel