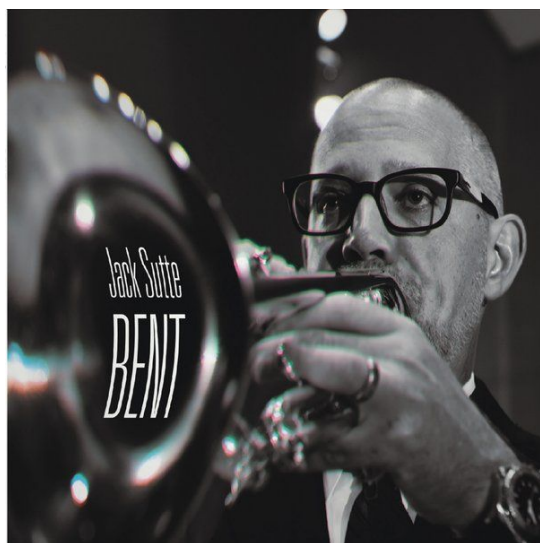


**CD Review —**  
**Jack Sutte: *Bent***

by Daniel Hathaway



Jack Sutte's second album of solo trumpet music, *Bent*, follows *Fanfare Alone* and continues his passion for discovering new repertoire in that genre. After exploring various possible meanings of the album title in his liner notes ("images of metal, tubing, sound waves, refracted light"), Sutte writes that "solo works for trumpet are bent for the performer and listener; each requiring a willingness to fully participate in the unusual musical format."

*Bent* presents short works by ten composers, including four pieces by Sutte himself. The performer, who sits second trumpet in The Cleveland Orchestra and plays in the Factory Seconds Brass Trio with his Orchestra colleagues Jesse McCormick (horn) and Rick Stout (trombone), brought a number of Schilke instruments to the recording session at Baldwin Wallace University in June of 2016.

He uses all of them in turn in Violeta Dinescu's *Sieben Rosen*, based on Bertolt Brecht's poem *Love Song III*. Cornet, B-flat, C, D, and piccolo trumpets, and flugelhorn, each represent a different rose. Though intended for flute, the composer suggested that the pieces could be played by other instrumental voices, and Sutte translates multiphonics and different styles of vibrato beautifully to the trumpet family. Later in the playlist, Sutte offers a meditative performance of another Dinescu miniature, her *Abendandacht* ("Evening Prayer").

Originally written for a Chinese zither-like instrument, David Loeb's *Romanza e Due Scherzi* proved to be more idiomatic for the lyrical voice of the trumpet. Among those pieces specifically intended for the instrument, Nathan Pell's *Miniature* is one in a series the composer tailored for various orchestral instruments, and Margi Griebing-Haig's *Archetype*, described by the composer as "one brief but strange

little arch,” explores the trumpet’s capacity for contrasts (staccato vs legato, loud vs soft, muted vs non-muted) while traversing its entire range from low F to high C#.

Zach Albrecht’s title track considers the idea of limitations, pushing the physical boundaries of the trumpet while using only a small amount of material. Brian Fennelly’s multi-movement *Tesserae VI*, written for Rolf Smedvig, takes its inspiration from the mosaic patterns of the Scoria, or red rocks found in the American West, and demands “red-hot virtuosity” from the performer, who is required to make quick mute and plunger changes. Sutte delivers on all counts.

Two enigmatic works defy easy description. Hans Werner Henze’s *Sonatina*, written in 1974 when the composer noted that he no longer knew whether he was sleeping or dreaming, considers linguistic, mythic, and mystical elements of music. And Vincent Persichetti’s *Parable XIV* is one of 25 such allegorical works composed between 1965 and 1986 that contain a single, germinal idea and make reference to other Persichetti pieces without revealing their hidden meaning.

Not mysterious at all are the three movements of Louis Andriessen’s *Very Sharp Trumpet Sonata*, a birthday present for Oliver Knussen that together last only a minute.

Sutte’s own pieces are charming musical snapshots of his family. *The Creative Juggler* was inspired by his son juggling a soccer ball in the backyard, *Happy Song* by his daughter helping with garden work — both tuck in what his children would instantly recognize as his “signature warm-up riff.” *Musings* considers how the muses spark creativity. The final track, *Song*, is an expansion of an earlier love song to his wife.

Robert Friedrich and Thomas Moore of Cleveland’s Five/Four Productions are behind the masterful recording, mastering, and editing of *Bent*, and Sutte’s Cleveland Orchestra colleague Lyle Steelman produced the album.

Two caveats about the disc have nothing to do with the music or its performance. The designer of the liner note booklet has gotten carried away with the idea of “Bent” to the point where distorted text blocks — in tiny type to begin with — are annoyingly illegible. And the playlist of the physical CD became hopelessly garbled when the disc was imported to iTunes. I ended up having to download the content from CD Baby to be able to accurately identify the content of the 27 tracks.

I discovered the music of Violeta Dinescu in 2014 while looking for new solo trumpet works following my *Fantare Alone* project. I came across Violeta's *Abendandacht* ("Evening Thoughts") and reached out to her for additional pieces. Composed for flute or other instrumental voices, *Sieben Rosen* ("Seven Roses") is beautifully written for trumpet. Violeta was thrilled with the idea that each movement be performed on a different instrument of the trumpet family (cornet, B♭, C, D, and piccolo trumpets; flugelhorn). Each color change of trumpet represents a "rose" as being unique, yet related — all part of the whole and like each movement similar, yet different. Each of the Rose movements is sincere and moving, austere and loving. A breadth of song, texture, and freedom rise in each of the Rose movements. Beam notation (indicating an approximate duration of note length), detailed rhythmic gestura, varied grace notes, multi-phonics, and differing vibratos offer the performer a framework of precision within the flexible and beautiful chaos of rubato and choice, wholeheartedly encouraged by Dinescu. The idea, composed score, and performer are symbolic of the earth, plant, and flower of the rose bush — and thus have a direct connection to Bertold Brecht's poem "Love Song III," which inspired the composition. I gave the first performance of the trumpet version as well as the U.S. premiere of the work at the 2015 International Trumpet Guild Conference in Columbus, Ohio.

**"Love Song III" by Bertold Brecht**

Seven roses are on the bush  
Six belong to the wind  
But one remains, so that  
I may yet find one too.

Seven times I call you  
Six times stay away  
But the seventh time, promise me  
You will come when I call.

"The *Very Sharp Trumpet Sonata* is indeed very sharp," commented composer Louis Andriessen. "It was a challenge to make a complete sonata for trumpet solo for Oliver Knussen. There are three very short movements: the first has two themes and a very short development, the second part is slower and more beautiful, and the last part consists of festive signals for Olke's birthday. The whole thing lasts exactly one minute." (Published by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers, Ltd.)

The exact date of the premiere of Vincent Persichetti's fourteenth Parable is unknown; however, we know that Richard Gianpullo made the first recording (Crystal Records CD230). Persichetti wrote 25 Parables between 1965 and 1986. Except for his opera *Parable XX*, the source, or secret meaning behind each Parable remains undiscovered. In an attempt to decipher *Parable XIV*, we look to Persichetti's own words: "Parables" are a series of one-movement pieces for various mediums. Very often they are for solo instrument. A Parable is a misstated story that avoids a truth in order to tell it. Parables are always "again" even when they are new, but they are never "was" or old. They are non-programmatic musical essays, sometimes short, sometimes long, but always about a single germinal idea. "Parables" convey a meaning indirectly by the use of comparisons or analogies. My Parables are usually concerned with ideas of other works of mine." Each Parable contains some compositional material from earlier works. For example, in the trumpet Parable, Persichetti quotes his Parable II for brass quintet.

Extrapolating the idea of a "single germ" and Persichetti's term autogenesis (compositional variety without direct repetition), we connect to the biblical parable of the seed, as in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8. We first observe the initial and incomplete seed motif: C-E♭-G-B. Throughout this dramatic musical commentary to the episodes *With rhythmic pulse*, where descending lines work in whispering and stentorian opposition with the seed motif, and *Capriciously*, where a lighter, more fluid and unpredictable *dance occurs*. Despite the narrative chatter in chromatic, rhythmic, and descending arpeggiated groupings throughout this Parable, we observe that the initial and final notes comprise a major second. The seed-motif pitches sound at the beginning, climax, and conclusion, giving the impression that the "seed," or message within the parable (word of God), has grown and successfully taken hold. Through autogenesis, the seed motif connects the initial C to the final D, completing the narrative.

*Abendandacht* ("Evening Thoughts"), by Violeta Dinescu, is composed with a traditional rhythmic notation, though repeated sections are determined by the performer. Similar to Dinescu's *Sieben Rosen*, *Abendandacht* is written for trumpet or other instrumental voice. I imagine the work's phrases, which are crafted within a range of one octave, as evening thoughts to be offered by a voice in song, simple, reiterative and beautiful in melancholy expression. Ms. Dinescu revealed that, "The idea of the piece is to transmit a special atmosphere of meditation; that's why the construction of the melodic contour has a circular structure. It is possible to begin again and again and also to multiply the voices in a kind of elastic canon."

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