

# *Henry Fillmore*



His Life and Music

## *Contents and Acknowledgements*

### *Study Guide Contents*

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The Four Elements of Music, definitions and examples, with special focus on form  
Listening Guide for "The Circus Bee" march by Henry Fillmore  
Listening Guide for "Military Escort" march by Henry Fillmore  
Listening Guide for "Rolling Thunder" march by Henry Fillmore  
Additional suggestions to extend learning in this unit



### Addressing the NYS Learning Standards in the Arts

The activities in this unit were designed with the Standards in mind. **The Listening Guides** are in line with *Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art*. **The Composition Activity** addresses *Standard 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts*.

### Acknowledgements

This Study Guide was created by Colleen O'Neil for the Rome Community Concert Band. Teachers receiving this guide may reproduce any part of it for educational classroom use. This Study Guide was written using the following resources:

Hallelujah, Trombone! The Story of Henry Fillmore by Paul E. Bierley  
Printed by Integrity Press, 1982

All About the Symphony Orchestra and What it Plays by Dorothy Berliner Commins  
Random House, NY, 1961

The following websites:

[www.hutchcc.edu](http://www.hutchcc.edu)  
[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)  
[www.answers.com](http://www.answers.com)  
[www.gabbf.com](http://www.gabbf.com)  
[www.af.mil/library/band/marches.asp](http://www.af.mil/library/band/marches.asp)

### ***SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!***

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## Fillmore Study Guide Activities

### *Suggestions for Use*

Most of this Guide is self-explanatory. Below are a few suggestions that might facilitate learning in this unit.

#### SPOTLIGHT ON TROMBONE

Try to bring in a guest trombonist (accomplished student or adult) to demonstrate the instrument for the class, especially the gliss technique.

#### FOUR ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

As the class goes through this page together, play each musical example on piano. Find recordings of marches that follow the basic march form and listen as a class, aurally identifying each section together.

#### LISTENING GUIDES

If CD recordings are not available, the following website has downloadable MP3 files for "Circus Bee," "Military Escort," and "Rolling Thunder."

[www.af.mil/library/band/marches.asp](http://www.af.mil/library/band/marches.asp)

#### "The Circus Bee"

Play the melodic excerpts on any instrument (understand that they may not be in the original key) before listening to the march together. Have students raise a hand when they hear the start of the melody in each new section.

#### "Military Escort"

Demonstrate the basic rhythms. Have students clap and count out loud with you. Have students mark the counting of the basic rhythms and rhythmic examples written for the march according to whatever rhythmic numbering system your class uses. As the class listens to the recording, tap or clap the written rhythmic examples for them.

#### "Rolling Thunder"

Play or sing several musical examples of your choosing to demonstrate the differences in tonality between major and minor. Decide on a class signal you'll use as you listen to the march to identify the tonality (i.e., thumbs up for major, thumbs down for minor.) Explain that the sections marked "major-sounding" or "minor-sounding" may not fully be in one or the other tonality (key) throughout the section but do possess that type of sound in general.

### **Henry Fillmore, American Bandmaster**

Henry Fillmore's musical career spanned over fifty years during the late 1800's and early 1900's. This period is sometimes called the "golden age" of band music, because it was during this time that concert bands, parade bands and military bands were extremely popular. Fillmore was well known as a band conductor and composer. As a composer, it has been estimated that Fillmore wrote or arranged more than 1,000 pieces of music! Most of these pieces were for bands.

Henry Fillmore was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1881. He was the oldest of five children, and his father was in the music publishing business. As a youngster, Henry studied flute, violin and guitar, and also was a wonderful singer. His most favorite instrument was the trombone, which he learned to play with great skill. Henry attended college as a music major at the Cincinnati Conservatory of music. Henry's wife, Mabel, was a dancer. Shortly after they got married, they both began careers with the Lemon Brothers Circus. After about ten years, Henry went to work for his father's music publishing business. He also taught trombone lessons and performed in some small musical groups to make extra money. In 1927, he organized his own professional band and served as its conductor. As a conductor, he had a very flamboyant and entertaining style! Audiences loved to watch him, and he loved to entertain an audience. Henry's showman-type conducting style helped to make his band very popular. Henry and Mabel had no children, but they did have a beloved pet - a dog named Mike. Mike was a popular guest with Henry's band on many performances, both live and for radio. Mike was a very smart dog, able to respond to Henry's questions as though he really understood!

In 1938, Fillmore developed heart problems and moved to Miami, Florida so that his health could improve in the warmer weather. Here he became involved with the University of Miami Band. Henry had great fun advising, conducting and traveling with the Band. He loved the students, and they loved him, often referring to him affectionately as "Uncle Henry." Between 1939 and 1942, Henry also helped to develop over thirty high school band programs throughout Florida. Henry Fillmore died in 1956, leaving a legacy that would benefit band musicians of all ages for many years to come.



### **Compositions of Henry Fillmore**

Fillmore began composing music when he was 18 years old. Throughout his career, he wrote under his own name, as well as several other names. For example, he used the name Harold Bennett when composing easy band music, and he used the names Will Huff or Al Hayes when composing band music of medium difficulty. For very challenging music, he used the names Gus Beans, Ray Hall, Harry Hartley, and others! Henry is very well known as a composer of marches. In all, he wrote 113 marches. His best known marches are *Americans We*, *Men of Ohio*, *His Honor*, *The Footlifter* and *Military Escort*. *Military Escort* has been called the "best easy march ever written." The great band composer and conductor John Philip Sousa once told Henry that he wished his name was on this march! Henry was a great trombone player. He had been fascinated with the trombone all his life. On the next page, there is information about the trombone and Henry's many pieces of music that featured it.

## Instruments of the Band

Concert bands contain woodwinds, brass and percussion instruments. Sometimes a string bass, harp or piano is seen and heard in a band to add musical color and more variety of sound. The most common band instruments are:

### Woodwinds

Piccolo

Flute

Clarinet:

*E flat*

*B flat*

Alto

Bass

*Eb Contrabass*

*Bb Contrabass*

Saxophones:

*Soprano*

*Alto*

*Tenor*

*Baritone*

*Bass*

Oboe, English Horn

Bassoon, Contrabassoon

### Brass

Trumpet

French Horn

Trombones:

*Tenor*

*Bass*

Euphonium

Tuba

### Percussion

Snare Drum

Bass Drum

Cymbals

Timpani

Mallet Percussion:

*Bells*

*Xylophone*

*Marimba*

*Chimes*

Accessories:

*Triangle*

*Tambourine*

*Woodblock*

*Much more!*



## The Trombone

### Fillmore's Favorite!!

Henry Fillmore was a fan of the trombone, and also a fine player of the instrument himself. He wrote many pieces which featured the tenor trombone, either as a solo instrument, section solo or just as a prominent part within the whole band. Henry became known as "father of the trombone smear" because he used it so much in his writing for trombone. A smear is also known as a gliss, or a slide, and it occurs when the trombone player moves his or her slide quickly and smoothly in one motion up or down to create the sound of the notes being connected together. Some of Henry's many pieces that included this technique are:

*Lassus Trombone*  
*Shoutin' Liza Trombone*  
*Miss Trombone*  
*Bones Trombone*  
and many more!

If you know someone who plays the trombone, ask him or her to demonstrate a "smear" for you, then try to find a recording of one of Henry's famous trombone pieces to hear this fun technique in action!

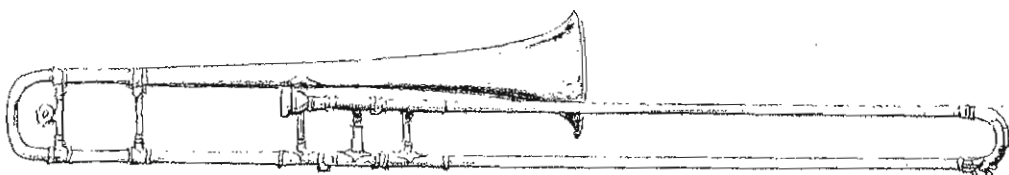


## Spotlight on The Trombone

An important member of the band's brass section is the trombone. Bands usually contain 2 or 3 tenor trombones and 1 bass trombone.

The trombone was invented in medieval times, and has changed very little since then. The trombone is made of a long brass tube which is wound around several times. The trombone's mouthpiece is cup shaped and similar to a trumpet mouthpiece, but larger. All brass instruments, including the trombone, need the players to "buzz" the mouthpiece (that is, vibrate the lips together while blowing) to create the initial sound. The various notes and tones on the trombone are made by stopping the trombone's slide at different points called "positions." The trombone is the only instrument of the band that uses a slide to make the notes.

The trombone is a versatile instrument, capable of playing complicated melodies as well as providing harmony and a rhythmic foundation for the band. Trombones are used in bands, orchestras, jazz ensembles, chamber music and other modern groups. The trombone is a wonderful solo instrument as well.



# Four Elements of Music

## Melody

The melody is the main tune of a piece of music or section of music. A countermelody is a tune played along with the main melody that compliments the main melody. Do you recognize the following melody?



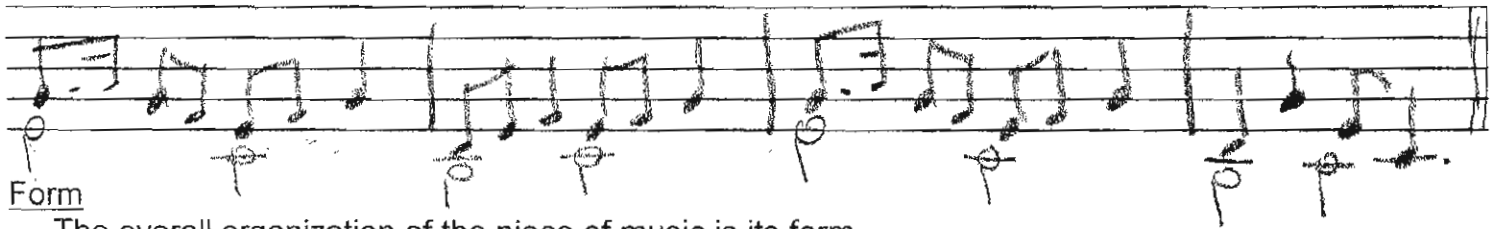
## Rhythm

The way notes are organized according to their duration is rhythm. Duration of notes refers to length of notes - how long the notes are played, given the time signature of the music. Listen to the melody that was played a minute ago, now played with a different rhythm.



## Harmony

The chords, the key signature (or scale on which the music is based), the tonality (whether the music is major or minor, etc.) - these things all contribute to the harmony of the music. Listen to that familiar melody, played with its correct rhythm, with some notes added for harmony.



## Form

The overall organization of the piece of music is its form.

### *Some other useful definitions:*

**Introduction** - a short opening theme that sets up the first melody

**First Strain** - First section of musical ideas, can be any length, is usually about 16 or 32 measures long

**Repeat** - A section or strain is played again, almost identically.

**Second Strain** - Second section of musical ideas, different from the first strain. It is also usually repeated.

**Transition** - A few measures that provide a link between sections

**Dogfight** - A section of music, usually shorter than the strains, that is very boisterous. It is meant to provide contrast going into the Trio section.

**Trio** - A more relaxed, melodic section of the march. Usually is played by some part of the band as the march nears its end.



## March Form

Most marches follow this basic form, but not always - composers use variations on this form depending on what they had in mind for a particular march.

**Introduction**  
**First Strain (with repeat)**  
**Section Strain (with repeat)**  
**Trio**  
**Dogfight**  
**Trio (to end)**



Form

**"The Circus Bee"**  
by Henry Fillmore

Melody

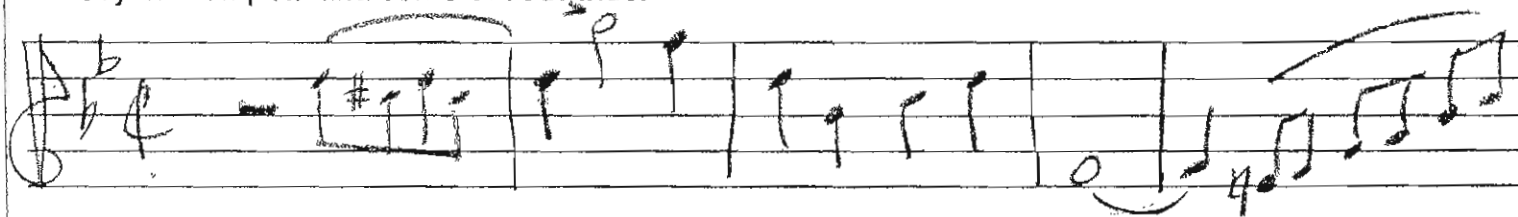
The "Circus Bee" is a circus style march written in cut time. Trombones have a prominent part in this piece, but not as much as in some of Henry's other marches. Other instruments of the band are brought out in this lively march, such as the bassoon, which leads the melody at the Trio section. Listen to this march and follow the guide below, especially noting the melodic excerpts written for the first strain, second strain and Trio.

**# of Measures**

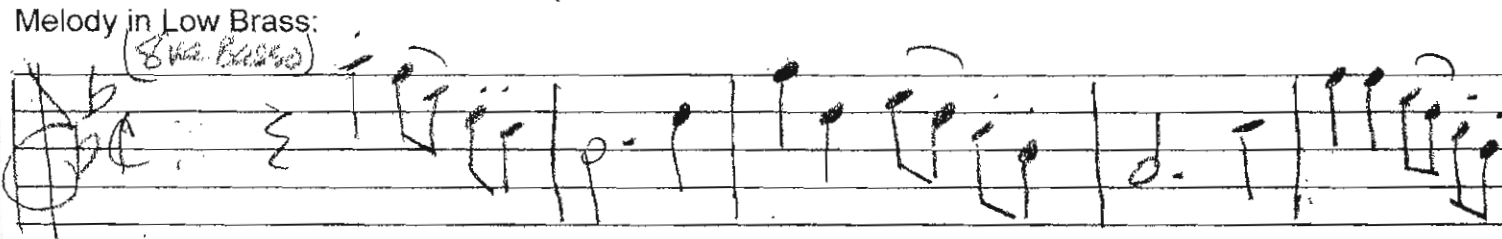
**Section**

4 Introduction

32 1st Strain  
32 1st Strain Repeated  
Melody in Trumpets and some Woodwinds:

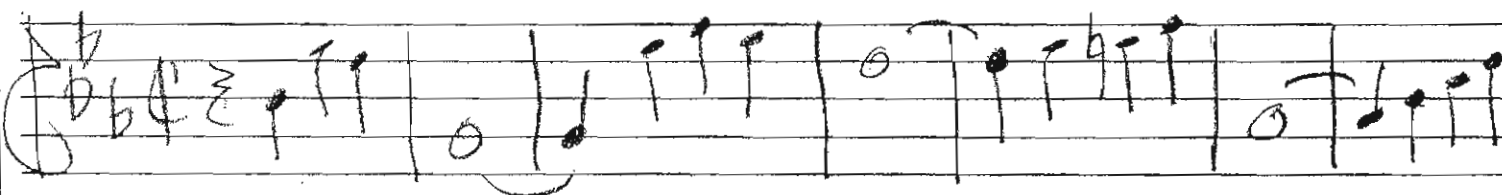


16 2nd Strain  
16 2nd Strain Repeated  
Melody in Low Brass:



4 Transition to Trio

16 Trio  
16 Trio Repeated  
Melody led by Bassoon:



12 Dogfight  
Trumpets lead in and carry melody

32 Ending  
Trio Melody returns in low brass. Woodwinds accompany with fast running notes.

Form

# "Military Escort" by Henry Fillmore

Rhythm

"Military Escort" is a military style march written in 2/4 time. It follows the basic march form, except there is no "dogfight" section. Trumpets and trombones, along with percussion, have the most prominent parts in this easy march. We hear basic rhythms throughout this piece, many of which are written below. Review these rhythms, then listen to the march and follow the rhythmic excerpts written for each section.

Quarter Notes



Half Notes



Eighth Notes



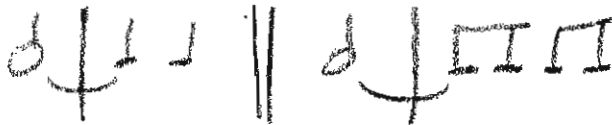
Eighth Notes & Rests



Eighth and Sixteenth Notes



Tied Notes

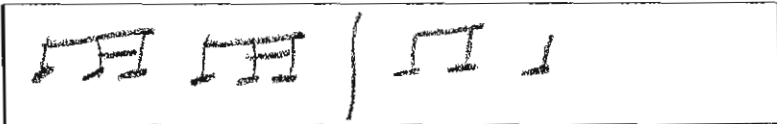


# of Measures

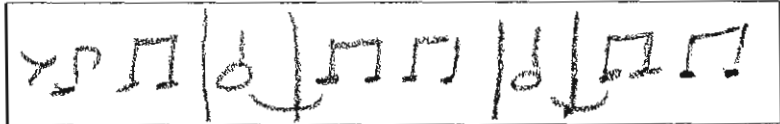
Section

Rhythmic Example

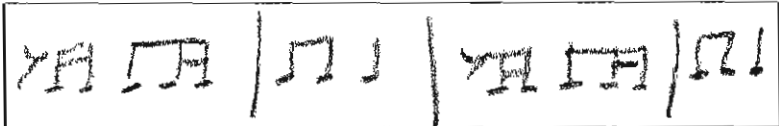
8  
Introduction  
Trumpet "Fanfare":



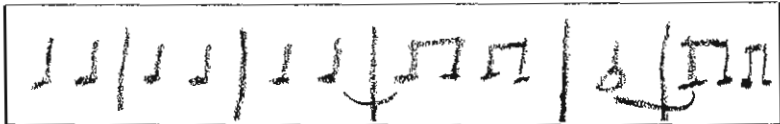
16  
16  
First Strain  
First Strain Repeated  
Rhythm of the melody:



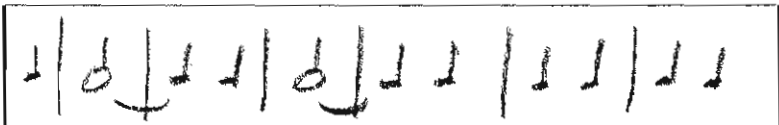
Rhythm of accompaniment:



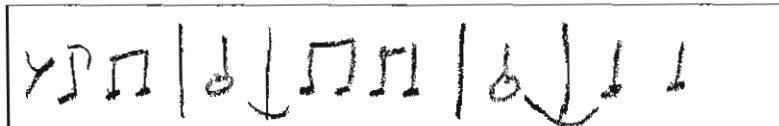
16  
16  
Second Strain  
Second Strain Repeated  
Rhythm of the melody:



32  
32  
Trio  
Trio Repeated  
Rhythm of the melody:



Rhythm of accompaniment:



Form

**"Rolling Thunder"  
by Henry Fillmore**

Harmony  
(Major vs minor)

"Rolling Thunder" is a circus style march and it features the trombone section throughout. The piece follows the form written below, which is a basic march form. The tonality of the music varies from section to section - first we hear playing in a minor key, then major, then minor, etc... Listen to the march as a class, with your teacher, and try to notice the changes in tonality.

<u># of Measures</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Tonality</u>
4	<i>Introduction</i>	minor
16	<i>First Strain</i>	minor
16	<i>Repeat 1st Strain</i>	minor
16	<i>Second Strain</i>	Major
16	<i>Repeat 2nd Strain</i>	Major
4	<i>Transition to Trio</i>	Major-sounding
16	<i>Trio</i>	Major
16	<i>Trio repeated</i>	Major
12	<i>Dogfight</i>	minor-sounding
32	<i>Ending</i>	Major

## Henry Fillmore Study Guide Two More Ideas To Extend Learning

### **RESEARCH PROJECT** **Famous Trombonists**

Henry Fillmore was a terrific trombone player, and genuine fan of the instrument. In light of his affection for the trombone, a short research project may help your students become more familiar with this fine instrument.

Assign students in groups, or individually to research famous trombone players of our time and the past. If desired, students can present their findings to the class or submit their research as a written project. Students can report on the trombonist's life, important performances, key pieces played, etc..as well as historical happenings reflective of the musician's life at the time.

Here's a list to start with, though it is certainly not exhaustive; you may wish to add other well-known trombonists.

#### Classical

*Joseph Alessi, NY Philharmonic*  
*Douglas Yeo, Boston Symphony*  
*Mark Kellogg, Rochester Philharmonic*  
*William Harris, Syracuse Symphony*  
*Arthur Pryor, The Original Sousa Band*  
*Eugene Watts, Canadian Brass*  
*Christian Lindberg, International Soloist*

#### Jazz/Popular

*Bill Watrous*  
*Steve Turre*  
*Tom "Bones" Malone*  
*Jim Pugh*  
*Tommy Dorsey*  
*Glenn Miller*  
*Slide Hampton*



### **COMPOSITION PROJECT** **Create a "Class March"**

Split the class into five groups of three students each. Assign each group to be in charge of composing one of the following sections in march form:

Introduction  
First Strain  
Second Strain  
Trio  
Dogfight

Within each group, assign each student to be in charge of composing one of the following for his/her group's section:

Melody  
Rhythm  
Harmony

Distribute one piece of staff paper and one pencil per group. Set parameters particular to your class' previous music writing knowledge, respective to setting measures, time signature, key signature, etc..., also whether instruments will be used in the composition process or not and which ones, and so forth.

Students assigned to create melodies should work first, placing whole notes on the staff. Students assigned to write rhythms work next, changing the melody with different note values of his/her choice. Last, students assigned to compose harmony add notes to the composition as they see fit.

Collect papers in order of march form, allowing for variations in the form as you see fit. Play the students' works on the piano as one full composition collaborated on by the class as a whole. Choose a name for the class march! Record it if possible. Add other instruments if desired. Publish all of the "marches" your classes create on a music writing program and display them in a book or on the walls of your classroom or hallway.