



JAZZ TRUMPET 101

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Jazz Trumpet 101: What is Jazz Trumpet Playing All About?

First and foremost, jazz trumpet playing is trumpet playing. The trumpet has been around for much longer than jazz, as have the methods and exercises we use to learn how to develop a solid foundation of brass playing. The aspiring jazz trumpeter would ignore these methods and concepts at their peril! Rather, what I try to do as a player and as a teacher is to combine tried and true concepts and exercises with the specific physical, theoretical and stylistic needs of jazz trumpeters.

The most important areas of jazz trumpet playing fall under the following categories:

1. Tone production
2. Flexibility
3. Range
4. Rhythmic precision and clarity
5. Articulation
6. Ear training
7. Stylistic maturity
8. Jazz piano skills and harmonic development
9. Equipment
10. Social skills

Clarity in these areas, especially clarity in how we want to sound, how we want to feel while we're performing, and what we mean to say lead to clear results that have impact on our audience and fellow musicians. Gaps in any area lead to vagueness and an incoherent performance, lacking in emotional impact.

I. Tone Production

Tone production is the definitive area of all brass playing from which all other skills progress. If the artist cannot produce a clear, resonant and reliable sound on every note in their range, none of the other skills will compensate. The trumpet was, is and forever shall be, at its root, a signal instrument. The trumpet conveys not only information, but also emotion! Trumpeters playing inspire people to feel and do things. We must keep that in mind at all times. Getting a high G seven times out of ten with the tone of a rusty gate does not inspire people to do anything good! Equally, the inability to play softly but with rich tone color limits the range of emotions a trumpeter can express. Imagine an actor who only plays shouting roles. I spent three years in graduate school studying with the legendary William Fielder learning to play the first few pages of the Arban book. There is a lot more there than most students think! (Other trumpet students who studied

with “Prof” Fielder and learned the value of a whole note include Wynton Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, Terrell Stafford and Sean Jones... A, I, R!)

II. Flexibility

Flexibility, simply put, is the ability to get from any one note to any other smoothly and musically. As my teacher Vince Cichowicz said, “You have to make music between the notes.” Flexibility includes everything from chromatic scales to intervals greater than an octave, in all registers and dynamics. My computer can do that easily, but when a live trumpeter connects notes into meaningful phrases, magic can and should happen. Flexibility training includes ease of negotiating the harmonic series as well as playing arpeggios and scales evenly, regardless of the harmonic content. Lightness and speed are crucial to being able to improvise or play arrangements at fast tempi. These are developed through massive repetition at a high standard of accuracy. I often adapt the exercise concepts of Herbert Clarke, Max Schlossberg and Earl Irons to jazz harmonic language to achieve these goals.

III. Range

Range is simply about making yourself useful. I do not know anyone who would buy a concert grand piano with less than 88 functioning keys (certainly not at full price!) so a complete trumpeter should have an equally complete and dependable range. This used to be an area of divergence between jazz and classical trumpeters, but no longer. The range requirements of jazz trumpet playing as well as modern classical playing extend well beyond the high C and occasional high Eb. A usable written high G is the standard and double high C, once a specialty, is now common. I have found that many, if not most trumpeters who have difficulty with the upper register are creating problems for themselves with excessive tension and effort, usually stemming from early associations between “high notes” and physical straining. The first thing I teach my students to do is destroy this “neural pathway” by blowing air through their instrument and listening to recordings of an open sound. (Sounds “hooky dooky” but it works!) Then we proceed to playing every note in their range with a clear picture of how we want notes to sound and how we want to feel while playing... over and over again. To improve one’s range, one must practice in the upper register--but doing so in a manner that causes damage is unsustainable and only leads to unreliable and ugly results. Practicing softly, without strain, using the speed of the airstream and a focused embouchure that keeps the lips from being mashed against the teeth to ascend leads to steadily improving results.

IV. Rhythmic Precision and Clarity

Rhythmic precision and clarity are about the most central aspect of ensemble performance: Swing. When I speak of “swing” that means more than just swing style music, but toward rhythmic agreement and intensity throughout the group. That counts equally for “Latin,” “rock,” or even classical styles as well. If a

trumpeter, whether a lead player, section player or soloist, is not playing in a manner that communicates not only the beat, but how the beat is subdivided, there will be no swing in the band. What a shame! One of the reasons people enjoy music is because they can all feel something together, in spite of all language and cultural differences, they can feel the time and the swing together. Hearing a trumpeter “get” the notes or “make” the changes with no sense of swing is like petting a dead ferret! (I suppose...) Learning to subdivide silently in your mind is the key to this. This means mentally vocalizing eighths, sixteenths or triplets between the notes you play (not literally counting 1 e & a etc...). You wouldn't buy a ruler that only marked inches! You want the quarters, eighths, and sixteenths of an inch as well. That creates precision! Swing is about relaxed precision throughout the band.

V. Articulation

Articulation is as important to music as spices are to food. Different styles demand different phrasing patterns that can be learned from playing well edited charts, but even better by hearing stylistically definitive bands (like the Basie or Machito Bands or Tower of Power) perform their essential repertoire. Attacks should be performed legato or highly marked depending on sonic realities, such as cutting through an extensive percussion section as in a Salsa band. Lead players, particularly, are expected to have a lexicon of stylistic phrasing models to draw upon and use to lead their sections and the band as a whole. This is essentially good taste, and lead players without it sound stiff and corny, no matter what their range. Most excellent players learn this aspect of performance playing in a section with a mentor. My mentors include Jon Faddis, (director of the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, who, in turn, learned from Snooky Young) and Victor Paz, lead trumpet with Mario Bauza and Eddie Palmieri.

VI. Ear Training

Ear training is a basic part of all musicianship, but especially so in jazz trumpet. We often play highly chromatic and intervallically complex lines. If one cannot identify the intervals at sight, playing is at best a crapshoot, especially when sight-reading, even more so when playing above the staff. So practicing and becoming familiar with all intervals is essential to confident and convincing performance. With practice, we can also learn to recognize all types of basic jazz chords, including double extension chords, like dominant 7th b9#5, for example. This is no different from learning to see the difference between pink and crimson, or learning to speak a foreign language. It stings a bit at first, but gets easier with practice. Hearing chords and progressions and being able to “pick up” a melodic idea quickly are basic to being a good jazz soloist.

VII. Stylistic Maturity

Stylistic maturity, as mentioned previously, is what differentiates an artist from a hack. The only way to get it is to listen and imitate the best and most stylistically defined performances of other great musicians. This means transcribing solos and

playing along with recordings. (This is a whole lot different from reading transcriptions from a book!) The aspiring artist learns by imitation the same way art students learn to paint by copying old masters. This does not mean we spend our whole lives as copycats! But to learn what goes into creating a cohesive and convincing style means to experience it and feel it, like trying on an expensive Italian suit, dining at a sophisticated restaurant, or driving a luxury sports car. Music without style is like boiled chicken and canned veggies with no sauce or seasoning. Boring! Having a clear picture of what you want a musical passage to sound like, beyond just making the notes, is perhaps the single most essential element in a successful performance. Focus on the exact musical statement you want and you are infinitely more likely to perform well, compared to just hoping not to make a mistake.

VIII. Jazz Piano Skills and Harmonic Development

Jazz Piano? Yes!!! The best jazz trumpeters in history have been competent and sometimes excellent pianists in their own right (Arturo Sandoval, Terence Blanchard, Bix Beiderbecke, to name a few). The trumpet is not visually useful in learning jazz harmony in the way a keyboard is. On piano, you can see, hear and touch the harmony. Many trumpeters learn “licks” with no clue as to the harmonic pathways that they pertain to--that’s like giving a speech on a subject you know nothing about! (That’s reserved for political candidates!) My students must be able to play blues, rhythm changes, and standards from a lead sheet at sight at the piano, plus cadential progressions with specific extensions and alterations, so they can “speak the language” of the music they are playing. Clarity is power!

IX. Equipment

First, your instrument and mouthpiece choices should reflect and facilitate, not constrain your artistic needs. Second, I once was told not to scrimp on shoes or mattresses, because we spend so much time in or on them. The same is true of an instrument. You will play it every day, so the cost difference between a cheapo horn and a well engineered and manufactured one is negligible over time. Third, make your own decisions on what you need. Another player’s choices may or may not suit yours. But clearly, if someone is playing the way you would like to, it makes sense to check out what they use and why. (Some players maintain websites with useful info or list their equipment on manufacturers’ websites.) And here is my “dirty secret”... I change equipment to suit the type of music I am playing! I play trombone and piccolo trumpet, so changing mouthpieces is a fact of life for me anyway. I play lead trumpet with Latin-fusion groups as well as classical chamber music. To get the sound I prefer in these diverse areas of performance, I change mouthpieces and instruments. I use a Yamaha Z for lead playing and my trusty heavyweight Zeno for just about everything else. I use a Yamaha 14A4A for lead playing and a 17C4 for my daily practice and most jazz solo gigs. Since I use minimal mouthpiece pressure, the changes don’t bother me in the least. In fact, playing different equipment has taught me a great deal about different approaches to brass playing. This may or may not work for you. But having the right tools for the job makes sense to me.

X. Social Skills

Last, but absolutely not least, are the unwritten rules of how to make music with other people. All of my colleagues in New York have their horror stories of knuckleheads who come to town, very full of themselves, thinking their ability to play a) double or triple high Z, b) fffff, c) Giant Steps in 13/8, or “the real thing” is impressive, original, and/or worthy of treating others as if they are lesser beings. Music is a team effort and players who crush everyone else’s groove through ego, selfishness or fear of others’ abilities usually don’t last long, even if they possess excellent skills. As they say, “the only thing new under the sun is the history you don’t know.” We all stand on the shoulders of the great musicians who came before us and humility is not just nice. It is intelligent.

This is especially important when playing in a trumpet section. Problem solving through teamwork makes for better performances and often more work for the section! This includes issues such as intonation, articulation, lengths of notes and phrasing. When the lead player is a respected veteran, it is usually wise to follow their decisions. At times, however, a section player may have an informed suggestion based on a) familiarity with a definitive recording, b) a technical understanding of the arrangement, or c) a creative idea. In these cases, their opinion may be worth consideration and discussion and not dismissal due to egotistical displays of “rank.” Women and gentlemen who are able to work together and make good music often create long-term friendships based on trust and mutual respect. One of my favorite trumpet sections is that of Jimmy Heath’s band, including Frank Greene, Tanya Darby, Terrell Stafford (sometime Sean Jones) and myself. We usually have a lot of laughs and trade the lead parts and solos. We enjoy each other’s musicianship and friendship very much, and learn from each other every time.

Michael Philip Mossman

Michael has performed as lead trumpet with the Machito Orchestra, with Toshiko Akiyoshi, the Lincoln Center Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, Jon Faddis Orchestra, Michel Camilo Bigband, Chico O’Farrill Orchestra, Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, the Mingus Bigband and Cubarama, among others. He has also performed and/or recorded with Out of the Blue (OTB), the Horace Silver Quintet, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, Gerry Mulligan Quintet, Ray Barretto and New World Spirit, Eddie Palmieri, Paquito D’Rivera and Soul con Timba. Michael has written for many jazz orchestras, including the Joe Henderson Bigband, Tito Puente, the radio orchestras of Cologne (WDR), Hamburg (NDR), Frankfurt (HR), Stuttgart, Zagreb (HGM), the Mingus Bigband, Mario Bauza’s Afro Cuban Orchestra and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. He has also written for the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Louisiana Philharmonic and composed a 40-minute ballet called “Beneath the Mask” (choreographed by Mayte Vicens) for the Chicago Jazz Band and the Deeply Rooted Dance Company. His film music can be heard on Academy Award winning director Fernando Trueba’s new film, “Chico and Rita.”

The Hal Leonard Corp. distributes Michael’s arrangements and he has long been a Yamaha artist. Both of these companies have given their generous support to make this clinic possible.

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I Long tones

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Blow air through trumpet before each note and imagine yourself playing the note. Then set, breathe and blow softly but with intensity and a clean, centered attack.

Each successive note must have a minimum of mouthpiece pressure and the least possible self-created resistance

mp < f > p simile

Stay "poker faced" so there are no visible signs of strain in your face or body

Continue higher and lower as long as you can do so without compromising quality or introducing strain...

On alternate days, use the notes of the Eb major scale

II Interval study (example M6ths)

Choose a different interval each day. Sing the interval before you play it.

Avoid closing your throat. Ascend by speeding up the air and focusing the corners of your mouth toward the center.

"Make music between the notes."

Continue through cycle of 5ths

mp

Keep sound open and airstream free. Ascend using airtspeed and compressing embouchure together lightly, not by raising the back of your tongue

III Lightness and Power

All 1-3 shake (clean and light)

Repeat in all valve combinations

mf

Speed up airstream and pucker embouchure toward the center. Maintain an open sound and stay in the center of the tone

IV Basic jazz chord study

Play in one breath with a light, centered and open sound

GMaj7 G7 G-7

Repeat in higher transpositions as far as possible with no strain or loss of tone quality

Gm7(b5) G°7

2 V Extended chord study (Play in all keys)

Major 7 and natural extensions 9, #11, 13

Dominant 7 and natural extensions 9, #11, 13

Minor 7 and natural extensions 9, 11, 13

VI Whole/half diminished flow-study (Transpose freely)

Play lightly, pulse the downbeats slightly and work up to a rapid tempo

VII Typical ii-V7-I flow study (unaltered) (Transpose to all keys)

VIII Typical ii-V7-I flow study (with tritone substitution) (Transpose to all keys)

IX Typical Bebop line and articulation - transpose to all keys

X Blues Progression Flow Study (Try to play in one breath)

65 C6 D-7 G7 C7 G^b7 (tritone substitution)

Play all slurred, then add upbeat articulation, then experiment with your own style, never stopping the airflow
When tonguing, use la or da, not ta. To develop legato tongue, try tonguing all the notes with a rounded tongue, not stopping the airflow

69 F7 F[#]7 C6 A7 E^b7 (tritone substitution)

simile

73 D-7 G7 E-7 A7(b9) D-7 G7 C6

XI Bop Phrasing "Blubop"

Note the articulations and phrase markings carefully. Unlike the flow studies, this one is about legato phrasing with pointed, syncopated accents and triplet embellishments, the essence of bebop style.

78 C6 F7 C7 G^b7 (tritone substitution)

82 F7 F[#]7 C6 A7 E^b7

(tritone substitution)

86 D-7 A^b-7 D^b9 E-7 A7(b9) D-7 D^b13 C6

XII Latin Jazz Phrasing

Rhythm, articulation and phrasing are all meant to correspond with and take advantage of the underlying rhythms of clave present in the rhythm section

91 C7 F7 C7 G^b7

2-3 clave

95 F7 F[#]7 C6 A7 E^b7

99 D-7 A^b-7 D^b9 C7 E^b9 CMaj⁷ A^bMaj⁷ G13 D^b13(#11) C13(#11)

Notice that in this style there are more articulated notes, (still legato). This helps the sound cut through the mass of percussive sounds and adds more "bite" to the phrasing. If the rhythmic phrasing seems similar to bebop, this is because Latin Jazz sprang from a fusion of Bebop and Afro-Cuban music.

4 XIII Clark Terry style embellishment study (Play in all keys)

Middle part of triplet is played as a lip "break" and is approximated

XIV Clifford Brown style grace notes and "surround tone" embellishment (Play in all keys)

Line approaches D from above and below, "surrounding" the note

XV 4th based lines ala Freddie Hubbard and Woody Shaw (Play in all keys)

Repeated notes with legato articulation

Line goes "outside" the changes and resolves convincingly

XVI Strength building study (Transpose as high as possible without strain)

Slowly and softly, speed up airstream while ascending, focus embouchure forward and keep sound open and free

XVII Extended arpeggio studys for strength and ear training (Transpose to all keys)

XVIII 11-V7-I-IV7 cadence using arpeggios and intervals (Transpose to all keys)

135 G-7 C13(b9) FMaj⁷ Bb9(#11)

The idea is to play the arpeggios lightly and without excess lip pressure and to hear the m 6ths before playing them

IXX Rhythmic study on diminished pattern (4 against 3)

139

Tap foot to feel the pattern against the pulse

141

XX Rhythmic study on whole tone pattern (5 against 2)

144

Tap foot to feel the pattern against the pulse

146

148

XXI Subdivision examples

Silently vocalize the rests (Choose your own syllable. The ones given here are chosen at random.) to accurately subdivide the pulse! This is how to create a groove!!!

Triplets

150

dabada badaba dabada dabada badaba dabada dabada badaba dabada dabada ba ba

Notated with all rests as 8ths in 1st bar. Even when 8ths are grouped into quarter rests you can vocalize the 8th notes.

Swing feel

154

chaka da chaka da chaka da ga chachaka cha chaka da ga daga

Rock Feel

158

kada da kada dakadaka da ka daka daka dakadaka daka ka ka ka dakadakada daka dakada dakadaka da

This is not as complicated as it looks. Just make a sound in your mind for every subdivision so you hit the notes exactly on time. Practice makes perfect. For long rests (or notes), just subdivide the last beat before you come in. Listen to the drums. The drummer should be playing these subdivisions as well.

Jazz Piano and Ear Training Skills for Trumpeters

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Basic ii-V-I cadences (to be transposed to all keys)

Cm^{i7} F^9 $BbMA7$ Cm^{i9} F^{13} $BbMA9$ Cm^{i11} F^7 $BbMA7(b5)$ Cm^{i7} $F^7(\#9)$ $BbMA7$

Cm^{i9} $F^7(\#9)$ $BbMA9$ Cm^{i9} $F^9(\#11)$ $BbMA7\flat/9$ Cm^{i9} $F^7(\#11)$ $BbMA7\flat/9$ Cm^{i9} $F^7(\#11)$ $Bb\flat/9(\#11)$

12 bar Blues "Comping" voicings (to be transposed to all keys)

F^{13} Bb^9 F^{13} B^{13} "tritone substitution" Bb^9 $B^{\flat 7}$

F^{13} $D^7(\flat 9)$ Gm^{i9} $C^{13}(\flat 9)$ A^m^{i9} $D^7(\flat 9)$ Gm^{i9} $C^7(\flat 9)$

(better voice leading takes you to C in the bass)

"I Got Rhythm Changes" (to be transposed to all keys)

A section

29 Bb^9 $G7(\#9)$ $Cm7$ $F13(b9)$ $D7(\#9)$ $G7(\#9)$ $Cm7$ $F13(b9)$

33 $Fm9$ $Bb9$ $Eb6/9$ $E07$ $Bb7/F$ $G7(\#9)$ $Cm7$ $F7(\#9)$ 2. $F7sus$ $B13$ $Bb9$

"Bridge" or B section

39 A^m9 $D7(\#11)$ $D7(b9)$ $G13sus4$ $G7(\#9)$ $Gm9$ $C7(\#9)$ $C7(b9)$ $F13sus4$ $Fm9$ $B9$ "tritone substitution"

47 $Bb9$ $G7(\#9)$ $Cm7$ $F13(b9)$ $D7(\#9)$ $G7(\#9)$ $Cm7$ $F13(b9)$

51 $Fm9$ $Bb9$ $Eb6/9$ $E07$ $F7sus$ $F7(\#9)$ $Bb9$

Learning to hear chords
3 Basic chord types

1st step Sing the root.
2nd step Sing up two steps to see if 3rd is major or minor.
3rd step Sing up 1 8va from root and down one step to see if 7th is major or minor

55 Cma7 C7 C-7

55

Next, find extensions by singing up or down from the 5th or 9th

58 Cmaj7(#11) C-11 C13 C7(#9) C13(b9) C7#9(#5)

58

Most basic jazz-related chords and their associated scales (Play on piano and trumpet in all keys)

64 Cma7 C MAJOR (IONIAN) C7 C DOMINANT (MIXOLYDIAN)

68 Cmi7 C DORIAN Cmi7(b5) C LOCRIAN (Db MAJOR STARTING ON C)

72 Cb7 C WHOLE / HALF DIMINISHED Cmi6 C JAZZ MELODIC MINOR

76 Cma7(b5) C LYDIAN C7(b5) C LYDIAN DOMINANT

80 C7(#9) C BLUES C7(b9) C HALF / WHOLE DIMINISHED

84 C7(#9) C "ALTERED" SCALE Cmi11 C MINOR PENTATONIC

