



Improving The Sound and Efficiency of High Register Brass Playing

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Introduction

- High notes!
- Good tone and efficiency

Range Goals for Brass Instruments

Trumpet: e to b-flat (highest notes in literature are around g''' to c''')

French Horn: low B-flat to high C

Trombone: low E to high B-flat (high D in the Gordon Jacob) for advanced high school or college students

Range Ability Is Affected By Technique

- Articulation and flexibility

Difficulties In Range

- Inefficient playing/getting tired quickly
- Relying on air more than embouchure
- Not enough air support
- Excessive mouthpiece pressure

Difficulties in Range (cont.)

- Unneeded tension
- Tone quality too weak or too harsh
- Can lead to injuries

Aequale

First 16 bars in original voicing

A. Bruckner

Trumpet in B $\flat$

Horn in F

Trombone

mf

B $\flat$ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

9

f

Everything Behind The Teeth

- Quality air intake
- Firm support for the air from lower abdominals, no matter the range or dynamic
- Role of the oral cavity: shape and size
- Arching the back of the tongue

Everything In Front of The Teeth

- Air gets funneled through the aperture
- The smaller the aperture, the faster the air stream
- Don't stretch or smile with the aperture/embouchure
- Try to keep the aperture round with both lips involved even as it gets smaller

Everything In Front of The Teeth (cont.)

- As the aperture gets smaller, more air support is needed to keep air moving through a smaller opening
- Also, more embouchure strength is needed to maintain the structure of the buzz
- Being able to play a high note softly can help a student find the proper balance and aperture setting and also avoid bad habits
- As an exercise, try playing with as little mouthpiece pressure as possible

Developing Strength

- Develop embouchure and breathing fitness
- Incremental with focus on sound
- Some recommended methods

Developing Efficiency

- Getting response at soft dynamics
- Reduce tension and excess effort

Developing Efficiency (cont.)

Use the mind and ears to develop good habits

- Develop the sound concept of what you're trying to play (listen!)
- Imitate greatness
- Pay attention to the tone quality
- When things aren't right, observe the physical for possible causes
- Don't try to change bad habits; work to form good habits

Aequale

Trombone in high range

A. Bruckner

Trumpet in B $\flat$

Horn in F

Trombone

mf

⁹

B $\flat$ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

f

Aequale

Horn in high range

A. Bruckner

Trumpet in B $\flat$

Horn in F

Trombone

mf

mf

mf

⁹

B $\flat$ Tpt.

Hn.

Tbn.

f

f

f

Aequale

Trumpet in high range

A. Bruckner

The musical score is for a section titled "Aequale" by Anton Bruckner. It features six staves, each representing a different instrument: Trumpet in B $\flat$, Horn in F, Trombone, B $\flat$ Tpt., Hn. (Horn), and Tbn. (Trombone). The music is written in 4/4 time. The first system (measures 1-8) starts with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The second system (measures 9-16) starts with a *f* (forte) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes, as well as dynamic markings and articulation marks.

Trumpet in B $\flat$
mf

Horn in F
mf

Trombone
mf

B $\flat$ Tpt.
f

Hn.
f

Tbn.
f

Concluding Points

- Pace yourself, take breaks, monitor yourself and chip away a little every day!
- If you approach it the “right” way the progress will be quicker and the results will be better!
- Conductor verbiage: How your verbiage from the podium can optimize development of good sound and efficiency in the high register
- Handout: Recommended books, literature, and videos

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