

The Road Map to Developing Great Lead Players

This clinic is a detailed, under the hood look at what it takes to not only be a great lead trumpet player, but a great player on every part in the section. How do teachers develop their young players (at any level) to eventually access the upper register of the horn efficiently and build the kind of consistency and endurance that will make them a reliable leader of their ensembles? Bijon Watson will share the wealth of his expertise and experience to help us understand that process.

1. What is required to do what I do?

- a. Strength, flexibility, energized and efficient airflow
- b. Sizzle/Vibe in your sound. Your sound is your signature. Where is that concept coming from? Who are your heroes?
- c. Simple, but critical fundamental: "Sound Happens Because Air Is Vibrating."
 - i. Faster Vibration = Higher Pitch, Faster Air = Faster Vibration
 1. How does the embouchure work to facilitate (aperture focus, role of the corners, tongue and oral cavity shaping air flow)
 2. What role does tongue arch and abdominal support play?
 3. What other factors create the airspeed necessary to access the altissimo register?
 - ii. Effortless and relaxed airflow is important, but at some point you'll need some strength and it's critical that this strength or effort comes from the right place.
 1. Where is that place? What are some of the most common fatal traps that band directors and students fall into believing that they are "doing the work" when it's really counterproductive.
 - iii. Creating a point of "equilibrium" with the mouthpiece and embouchure
 - iv. Being "proactive" with the air and sound projection.
- d. Consistency is key!!!
 - i. Consistency of practice - it's a marathon, not a sprint.
 - ii. Consistency of results - If you can't do it 10 times in a row, you don't got it.
 1. The band is counting on you to deliver **every. time.** Don't accept less than this and you'll always be working!

2. What's the roadmap to success?

- a. What methods, exercises, routines will get me where I want to go?
 - i. There are many roads that will get you to where you want to go. The best routine is the one that you can do consistently over a long period of time. Rome was not built in a day.
- b. Building processes to achieve results
 - i. What are the specific ingredients of a good routine? Lip slurs, long tones, arpeggios, octave leaps, lyrical playing, sotto voce playing, technique builders (you can't play if your fingers are all tied up), method books (Arban's, Clarke, Charlier, Stamp, Cichowicz)
 - ii. How much time should it take? Basic builder level to the "Be Employable" level to "Be the next Bijon" level
 1. Any amount of consistent time will help (starting with 15 minutes per day), but the more time you put in, the greater the rewards.

2. Be careful to not over do it! Results can be regressive if you don't listen to your body and your lips.
 - a. "Rest as much as you play" approach
 - b. "Sprinkle it through the day" approach
- c. Insert specific exercises here as a possible routine that you could use, assuming you don't have one already.

3. It's Not All About The Dingers.

- a. High notes and a strong upper register are important and the most visible part of the job, but there is so much more to great lead playing than high notes.
 - i. Phrasing, musicality, a strong and clearly defined point of view, and confident leadership are essential.
 - ii. Do the homework - mark your parts with all of the details (articulations, effects, which parts of the phrase are going to get more weight, where are the arrival points, what's happening in the music, how are you going to lead the band to and through those arrival points?).
 - iii. Know everybody else's parts so you can unify the section
 - iv. Find a mentor to guide you