

Troubleshooting the Trumpet Section

SOUND SOLUTIONS

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SECTION 1

SOUND

Common Problems

- Tight, Pinched sound
- Airy, fuzzy tone
- Dull, or excessively bright sound
- Improperly formed embouchure



Solutions: Tight, Pinched Sound

Minimize tension. Relax. Stop the squeeze

Breathing exercises to promote proper air use and less tension

Don't control the air with the lips

Consider occasional buzzing on trombone mouthpiece

Solutions: Airy, Fuzzy Tone

Flatten Chin

Less Cheek Puffing

Mouthpiece buzzing with piano or drone

Focus on centering the pitch

Solutions: Dull, or Excessively Bright Sound

Evaluate tension

Relax as increase volume. Tension causes the brittle, blatty sound.

Focus on proper use of air

Signs of an Improperly Formed Embouchure

The upper lip not staying inside the mouthpiece cup/rim

Too much upper or lower lip inside mouthpiece – the ratio is off

The corners moving or creating a "smile." The corners should remain set and in place.

Curling in of lower lip

Rolling the chin – or bunching the chin

Proper Embouchure Formation

Coffee straw to help set embouchure.

Maintain firm, set corners

A fixed, flat chin that points downward from the corners

Proper ratio of upper and lower lip (60/40 or 50/50 is ideal) The pink part of the lip should be inside the cup of the mouthpiece and as reasonably close to the center as possible

Important Points



NEXT TO PLAYING WITH MUSICAL EXPRESSION, **SOUND** IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF PLAYING THE TRUMPET (OR OF ANY INSTRUMENT FOR THAT MATTER).



MAKE GREAT **SOUND** THE FOCUS OF YOUR TEACHING.

Keys to producing a beautiful trumpet sound

- Clear mental and aural concept of desired sound
- Proper embouchure formation
- Efficient and correct use of air

Obtaining a proper mental and aural concept of sound



Find as many opportunities for students as possible to hear great trumpet playing. Some examples include visiting guest artists at local universities, regional or full-time orchestras, and invite university professors to work with your students.



Play quality recordings of the best professionals (Phil Smith, Allison Balsom, Tine Thing Helseth, Selina Ott, Christopher Martin, Håkan Hardenberger, Wynton Marsalis, and Sean Jones are some of many)



Encourage students to identify what adjectives describe their ideal sound (brilliant, rich, warm, sweet, vibrant, dark, resonant, thick, etc.). Then ask them to create that sound on their trumpet. It should be the preeminent goal in their music making.



Students have to hear it to be able to emulate it – they need good models

SOUND

Dr. Keith Johnson (Emeritus Regents Professor of Trumpet, University of North Texas) observed:

"to attempt to play without a good sense of how one wishes to sound is akin to attempting to learn to speak a language without having heard the language. The principal reason so many young players sound poorly is that most of them have only heard each other."





SECTION 2

AIR

Common Problems









Wah

Weak air flow

Insufficient inhalation

Shallow, tension filled breaths



Solutions: Wah

Pervasive problem.

Note shapes matter. Think brick, not egg.

Longer phrases instead of musical individual notes

Sustain notes and forward direction to the line.

Solutions: Weak airflow

Air flow should mirror phrasing. Song and Wind.

Practice air flow patterns

Horizontal instead of vertical direction

Focus air on a distant point

Solutions: Insufficient Inhalation

Breathing exercises

Breathe in time and connected to the music

Teach accurate details about how body functions

Create healthy and proper breathing situations



Important Points

Deep, relaxing breaths are essential. Strive to create the breath one takes while visiting a doctor.

Air flow should always be pervasive and flowing

Focus on air connecting each note. Direction

Relaxed throat

Section 3

ARTICULATION

Common Problems

Tongue stopping the air.

Improper tongue placement

"Huffing"

Difficulty with multiple tonguing



Solutions



Ask for more length to the notes. More music!



Hoo-Doo articulation exercises

Play on leadpipe only

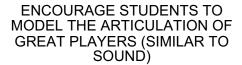
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Understand proper tongue placement. "tu"



Important Points







GOOD ARTICULATION IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO PROPER AIRFLOW



IN GENERAL, THE TONGUE SHOULD TOUCH AT THE TOP OF THE MOUTH WHERE THE TEETH AND GUMS MEET. THE USE OF A "TU" SYLLABLE WILL HELP ACHIEVE THIS.

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