High Brass Notes: Don't be a Sourpuss

Midwest Clinic Handout (12/19/06)

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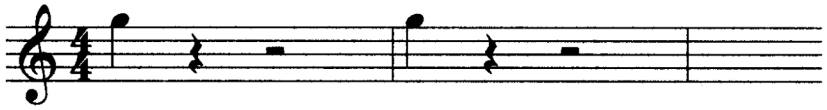
ABSTRACT: When asked how to play high notes, most young trumpet and horn players respond, "I tighten my lips." This seminar will focus on teaching strategies to relax that tension. Better release of the air, playing position, and embouchure strength will lead to easier high notes, better endurance and more playing enjoyment.

I. Release

a. Where it all begins
   1. Quiet Breath
   2. The Circle
   3. Rhythm!
   4. Blow Through the Horn

b. 10,000 Gs
   1. Why G?
   2. Sets of 10
   3. 100 x 100
   4. Play, Release, Set, Breathe
   5. Free yourself of the misses!!



II. Position

a. Posture
   1. Chest High
   2. Shoulders back
   3. "Hold the Ball"

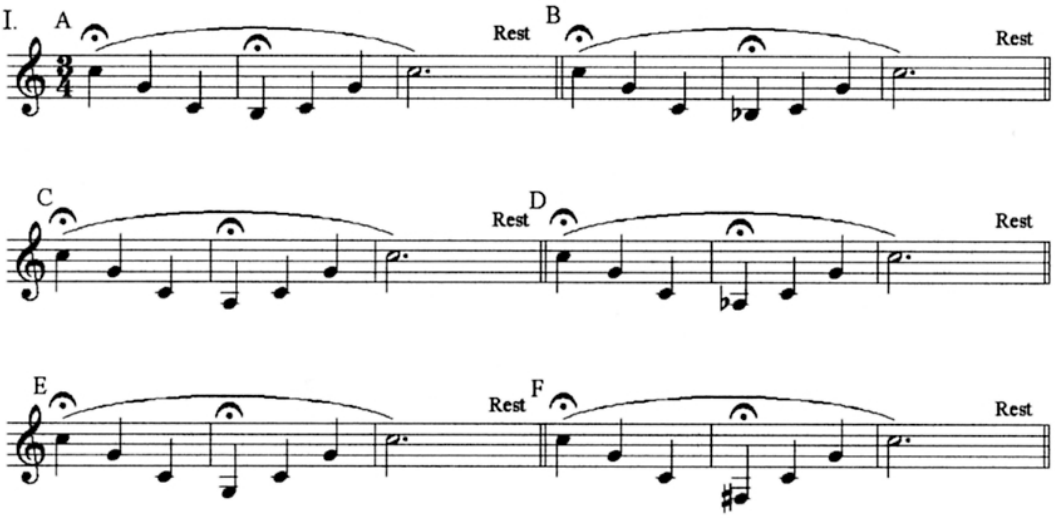
Gordon, Claude Brass Playing is No Harder Than Deep Breathing. New York: Carl Fischer, 1987.

b. Tongue Arch
   1. Find your own
   2. Sing it, Mute It
   3. Metronome

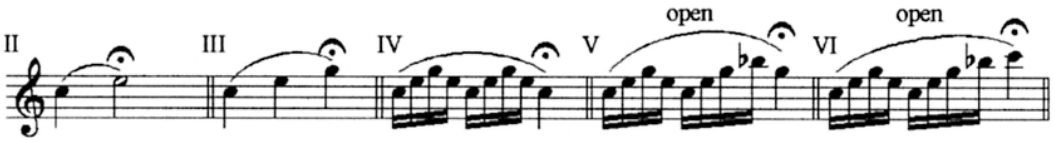
Tongue Position Exercises

Paul Morton

1. "EE" vowel on all notes, especially low.
2. Hold first note of each exercise. Feel the tongue up in the back as high as possible.
3. Hold low note. Feel the tongue in the same high contour.
4. Play through the upper notes with no hesitation or strain.



Repeat exercise I (A-F). Substitute measure 3 as follows.



c. Articulation (De vs. Ta)

1. Tongue for a Minute
2. Quarter = 120
3. Breathe as Needed
4. Anchor Tonguing

Gekker, Chris Articulation Studies: Exercises, Etudes, Duets. New York: Transition Publications, 1995.

d. Multiple Tonguing

1. Multiple Tonguing Routine
2. DG vs. TK
3. Double vs. Triple

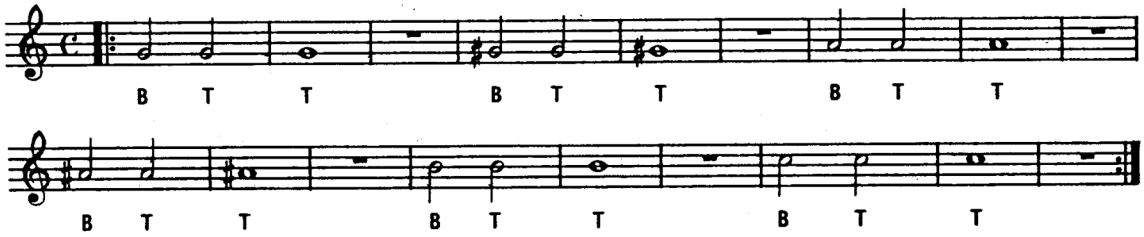
Salvo, Victor V. 240 Double and Triple Tonguing Exercises. Miami: Pro Art Publicatiions, 1969.

e. Embouchure
    1. Corners
    2. The Red
    3. Jaw Motion
    4. Pivot
    5. Wet vs. Dry

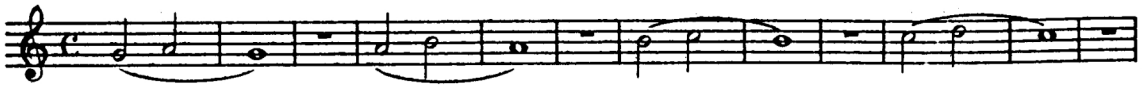
f. The Embouchure Change
    1. When: "Sea of Toil", and "The Promise"
    2. How: 4 Exercises for moving up the set

III. Strength

a. Caruso
    1. Six Notes and Seconds
    2. Rhythm
    3. Nose Breathing/Keep the Set
    4. MCFB: Emphasis on the C



. Camine Caruso Musical Calisthenics for Brass (Miami: Almo Publications, 1979), 9.



Ibid., 10.

b. Endurance Routine
    1. Etudes
    2. Twice as Slow
    3. Transpose

c. Concert and Recital Prep
    1. 4 to 6 Weeks Out
    2. Log It
    3. Time It