

## Allen Vizzutti Comments on Trumpet Study

### 1) Smooth and Steady Airflow: Key Factors for Beautiful Tone:

All trumpet technique, range, and endurance are based on the fundamentals of sound and consistent tone production. Fundamentals of tone production dictate one's ability to control the instrument well enough to play beautiful music which should be a musician's fundamental goal. Playing technically well but not beautifully is not acceptable.

### 2) Breathing for Success

Relaxed breathing in the most natural way is essential for health and consistent trumpet playing. The idea of forcefully breathing and blowing is antithetical to playing beautifully. Control over breathing technique is a matter of conscious technique that becomes more and more subliminal with practice. Successful improvement in breathing need not take years to learn. It is a matter of allowing your body and mind to work together to breathe deeply and in a relaxed way. Breathing correctly will lead to blowing correctly, smoothly and steadily. Let yourself breathe deeply rather than forcing yourself to breathe deeply.

### 3) Performance Anxiety

Experiencing performance anxiety is normal. Allowing the symptoms of being nervous to occur naturally will alleviate the tension caused by fighting them including hand shake, dry mouth and 'butterflies'. Don't try to correct the situation at all. Accept the symptoms of performance anxiety as part of the normal process and as indicators that you are ready to perform. It helps but takes some getting used to.

The more you allow the symptoms to happen without fighting them the less frequently they occur and the less severe they become. Staying in present time, that is, thinking only about playing the music of the moment as beautifully as possible will decrease the intensity of performance anxiety. Don't think too far ahead or analyze the music just passed. Breathe deeply and use 'Present Time' as your mantra to stay focused and in control. Remember, all great performers experience some level of performance anxiety.

**As you may have noticed all techniques of trumpet performance are as much about mental health and control as physical health and control.**

#### 4) Upper Register and Endurance

Predictably, range and endurance are based on one's fundamental success with the first 3 topics. I have written a high note book called, you guessed it, "High Notes" (available at [www.vizzutti.com](http://www.vizzutti.com)) and many issues are addressed concerning aperture control and breath control. My approach to high notes is one of control and finesse. Classical trumpet players need to play high notes with great beauty and control. Much can be learned by practicing high notes and related studies very softly. I do not view trumpet playing as an athletic event. Trumpet players often employ a forced and brutal approach to the upper register. The end result to me is not musical, can lead to embouchure stiffness and even injury. Playing high notes with great control and dynamic variation can be very artistic no matter what the musical style. Endurance improves as a direct result of playing high notes correctly. Other important factors to consider include reducing and limiting left hand and finger ring - mouthpiece pressure and NOT over-blowing.

**Organized daily practice is the only way to play trumpet well and with consistency.**

#### 5) Perspective

Playing music is an amazing thing. It makes everyone feel good and is a universal language. Music is healthy for the musician and the listener. It is an emotional outlet, creative nutrition for the soul and one of the wonderful things that make life special. Music sends electrical lightning bolts of joy shooting through the brain. It helps the world be a better place. Music promotes tolerance, something the global community could use more of. As soon as you realize you are valuable, valued and doing the right thing when you play your instrument, it will be easier to play well. You don't need to be a virtuoso or a star to enjoy and share music. You just need to be play from your musical heart!

## Warm Up Notes for Trumpet Playing

- 1) Warming up is essential in order to develop consistency and continual development in trumpet playing.
- 2) Warming up always helps you and never hurts you.
- 3) Conceptualize warming up as a time to get flexible and produce a beautiful sound.
- 4) Consistent steady airflow with a relaxed approach is a key element.
- 5) Find a group of studies that serves you well in warming up.
- 6) The more consistently you warm up the more concise it can be – (approx. 15 – 20 minutes)
- 7) Understand that there is no magic time frame for a warm up nor an exact time at which warm up becomes practicing.
- 8) Here is an example of my warm up based on “*The Allen Vizzutti Method Book*” as well as Allen Vizzutti’s “*New Concepts for Trumpet*”. For the actual studies refer to the books the books.
- 9) Play much of your warm up softly – practice softly often.
  - a. slide or play arpeggios on the mouthpiece, (until the sound is smooth or longer if you like. This may only be a minute or two)
  - b. play low and middle range repeated notes with varied articulations
  - c. create smooth long notes – not too long but very smooth (Stamp studies are is good)
  - d. pattern scales or technical studies such as Vizzutti and Clarke #2. (Don’t warm up on the ones that make you stiff by the end).
- 10) Routines that yield regular stiffness will not suddenly or magically help you. Change it up. Adapt. Experiment.

### Typical and common pitfalls that cause stiffness, poor response and general inconsistency in trumpet playing

Not warming up - 15-20 minutes - always. (Specific warm-up material is in the Allen Vizzutti Trumpet Method books).

**Practicing too many lip slurs** in the upper register top of staff and above.- not necessary

**Too many long tones** - not necessary. Stiffness caused by static mouthpiece / lip contact.

Concentrating and **working on embouchure and corner strength** - not necessary if you practice regularly.

The above 3 items make me very stiff so I don't practice them unless I need to brush up a technical move in which case minimal practice on lip slurs for instance does the trick.

Playing too loudly.

Not practicing enough softly.

Not taking frequent short rests / breaks

PLAYING A MOUTHPIECE THAT IS TOO BIG and it's inevitable result:  
TOO MUCH LEFT HAND OR FINGER RING PRESSURE.

Over blowing.

Leaving the mouthpiece on your chops too long without a lift-off or lightening of pressure.

Playing super heavy weight mouthpieces or trumpets - not necessary – this equipment creates artificial resistance and dead sound.

Not having an open mind.

Not being willing to experiment.

Bad hand position.

Not inhaling habitually in a relaxed and deep way.

Tongue placement too low in middle and upper range.

Not using common sense - if practicing XXX or YYY makes you feel terrible - don't do it.

### **Here's what you need to think about:**

The concept of efficient tone production, steady smooth airflow, relaxation and aperture control.

Practice shorter times but more than once a day.

If you sound terrible and can take a day off - do it. Go do home work. Hang with some cool people. Pick your friend's brains about trumpet - with a grain of salt.

Fundamentals never change but the interpretation of the techniques with which to establish sound fundamentals vary. There is no exact path for all players but great ideas and solid musical materials work well for most of us.

I have a book on my website called "*High Notes*" that has text and practical studies and etudes about much of this for the classical or jazz trumpet player. <[www.vizzutti.com](http://www.vizzutti.com)> The 3 "*Allen Vizzutti Trumpet Method*" books and "*New Concepts for Trumpet*" from Alfred Music Publishers have met with good feed back for over 25 years also. - FYI