

Dotting the I's and Crossing the T's: Developing the Effectual Habits of an Intentional Trombonist

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Horn Maintenance: The Slide

- Cold Cream
 - Trombotine
 - Superslick
 - Any brand name cream (Conn, Bach, etc.)

- Liquid Cream
 - Slide-O-Mix: Lubrication System (dual set, red top)
 - Slide-O-Mix: Rapid Comfort Lubricant (black top)
 - Yamaha Slide Lubricant

- How to apply the cream to the trombone slide
 - 1) Spray the slide with water, then move the slide to spread the water.
 - 2) Wipe all debris from the slide with a cloth and respray the slide with water.
 - 3) Apply the cream/liquid cream on the “groove” of the slide (near 7th position) and the middle of the slide (near the bell).
 - 4) Move the slide back and forth to spread the cream.
 - 5) Spray water on the slide once again to prevent the cream from sticking in one area.

Horn Maintenance: The Rotor

- Lubrication for the F Attachment
 - The best type of oil needed for the rotor mechanism is **Rotor Oil!**
 - Stay away from applying valve, slide, or key oil on the rotor.

Proper Playing Posture

- Have your students bring the horn to their face instead of pushing their head/neck forward to meet it.
- Many embouchure and tone-production problems can be traced to tension in the upper chest and neck, which may be caused by stretching the neck or holding the head in an unusual position.

Establishing a Warm Up Routine

- Long Tones
 - Develops tone
 - Builds endurance
 - Emphasizes the slide speed/accuracy
- Lip Slurs
 - Emphasizes your flexibility
 - Strengthens embouchure
 - Exposes alternate positions
- Suggested Method Books
 - *Melodious Etudes* (Marco Bordogni/arr. Joannes Rochut)
 - *Selected Studies for Trombone* (H. Voxman)
 - *Lip Slur Melodies* (Brad Edwards)
 - *Complete Method for Trombone and Euphonium* (J. B. Arban)

The Secret To Producing a “Singing Tone”

- AIR!!! About 75% of what we do on the trombone is directly related to air – including tone, pitch, dynamics, and phrasing.
- Dropping the jaw will open the throat, which will enable more volume of warm air (the same effect as yawning).

The Vocal Approach and its Role in Trombone Performance

- It is essential to learn how to sing the way we play, and then play the way we sing.
- This means using the tongue when we articulate in the same manner we would on the trombone, and singing the same legato as we would on the trombone.
- Being a “great” singer is not a requisite for this approach, but rather a simple way of working on so many technical and musical aspects before we bring them to the instrument.
- Singing exposes us to proper airflow, phrasing, articulation, and emotion.

“Think Like a Valve...Move Like a Slide”

- Slide technique makes the trombone a more difficult instrument to play, in principle, than valved instruments.
- One of the plagues of a trombonist is that we must synchronize our air, tongue, and slide movement.
- To obtain the proper slide speed, a student must wait until the last possible moment before moving to the new position, and then make this movement with pinpoint accuracy.

The Dilemma We Face In “No Man’s Land” Positions

- Slide positions young trombonists tend to stay away from:
 - 2nd, 5th, 6th and 7th
- One way to combat this is by encouraging trombonists to focus on scales and keys that expose these slide positions.
 - For example, any sharp scale/key signature, or flat keys with five flats or more.

The F-Attachment and Its Corresponding Slide Positions

- When the F-valve is used, the instrument is too short to accommodate seven slide positions or seven different harmonic series.
- With the valve activated, the slide is long enough for only six positions when the entire length, including the stockings of the slide, is used.
- It is also important to note that the distance between positions increases as the slide is extended, and the greater distance required on the bass (or tenor with valve) makes it possible for only six positions.
 - Low F – 1st Position
 - Slide closed. If the instrument has a spring on the slide, it may be necessary to push it in to get the low F in tune.
 - Low E – Flat 2nd Position
 - Approx. 1 inch beyond the regular 2nd position
 - Low Eb – Flat 3rd Position
 - Approx. 2 ½ inches beyond the regular third position (this position may be thought of as a short fourth position if this is an easier approach for the trombonist).

- Low D – Sharp 5th Position
 - About an inch short of the regular fifth position (fourth position has been dropped).
- Low Db – Flat 6th Position
 - Approximately 1 inch below normal sixth position
- Low C – Flat 7th Position
 - As far as possible to reach. Likely the pitch will still be sharp.

Clef Studies

- There are four clefs a trombonist must be able to read: Bass, Tenor, Alto, and Treble.
- In an orchestra, you can expect to see:
 - 1st Trombone: Alto or Tenor Clef
 - 2nd Trombone: Alto, Tenor, or Bass Clef
 - Bass Trombone: Bass Clef
- Depending on the difficulty of a trombone solo, expect to see:
 - Bass, Tenor, Alto, or Treble Clef
- Suggested Method Books for Clef Studies
 - *Introducing the Tenor Clef* (Reginald Fink)
 - *Clef Studies for Trombone* (Ralph Sauer)
 - *Introductory Studies in Tenor and Alto Clef* (Brad Edwards)
 - *School for Trombone in Clefs* (Vladislav Blazhevich)

Interpretation of Articulation: Staccato vs. “Short”

- *Staccato* has more to do with playing *light and detached* than playing “short.” If we interpret staccato as the latter, the tendency is to play “pecky.”
 - When articulating, the air should always be the constant and the tongue serves as the variable.
 - The purpose of the tongue is to dictate the shape of the articulation.

Interpretation of Articulation: Tenuto vs. Legato

- If we were to take a poll and ask middle and high school students to define or perform both musical terms, we would likely conclude that their interpretation of both terms are to be performed in the same manner.
- While there may be a similarity, the articulations are performed differently.
 - Tenuto ≠ Legato
 - Tenuto = Accent Family
 - Accent (>): The front of the note is emphasized/stressed.
 - Tenuto (–): The end of the note is stressed.

Mastering the Legato Tongue (on the trombone)

- The Use of the Glissando Technique
 - When your student is trying to master legato tonguing on the trombone, instruct them to remove the tongue altogether.
 - Incorporating this technique will expose the delayed slide movement in your student's playing, help discover where natural slurs can be used, and reveal how efficiently the student is using air.
 - Once this is established, the student can gradually add the tongue into the mix. Incorporating this order reemphasizes the notion that the *tongue serves as the variable and the air as the constant*.

Maintaining Consistency of Articulation

- It is important to note that the tongue is best used in a forward, upward motion rather than back and forth. This will enable the tip of the tongue to be used when articulating, while the middle and base of the tongue remain relaxed.
 - Identifying this can assist your student in playing lighter and faster.
- Also, if the student is not careful, the length of the notes can fluctuate as they play on the staff and work their way up and vice versa.
 - This is due to the change in aperture size as they go from the upper register to the lower register.
 - A great way to troubleshoot this is for the student to record himself/herself and listen for the consistency of the length of the notes.

Multiple Tonguing

- Double Tonguing
 - Staccato: Ta-ka, ta-ka
 - Legato: Du-gu, du-gu

- Triple Tonguing
 - Staccato: Ta-ta-ka, ta-ta-ka
 - Legato: Du-du-gu, du-du-gu

Varied Tonguing Styles

- The “T” Syllable – Staccato, Marcato, and Accent
 - “Tee” – upper register
 - “Taa” – mid-register
 - “Toe” – low register

- The “D” Syllable – Tenuto (Long Accent)
 - “Dee” – upper register
 - “Daa” – mid-register
 - “Doe” – low register

- The “N” Syllable – Legato
 - “Nee” – upper register
 - “Naa” – mid-register
 - “Noe” – low register