

***Help for Your Horn Players:
Guiding Your Young Horn Players to Success!***

The Midwest Clinic: An International Band and Orchestra Conference

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McCormick Place West, Meeting Room W184

Ideal Beginners or ...

“How to Avoid a Lot of Headaches Later”

- Confident and able to focus & concentrate
- Strong work ethic
- Good student-above average reading level
 - Check standardized tests if possible
- Piano experience (2+ years) or choir
- Average to thin lips
- Straight teeth
- Little or slight overbite
- Produces buzz easily (no puffing or leaking corners)

Body Position

- Left leg directly in front of student, knee facing music stand
- Right leg set to the right of the body at a 45 degree angle
- Left arm aligned with left leg
- Left elbow dropped and relaxed
- Shoulders level, back slightly arched
- Lead-pipe should be a 45 degree angle down from face.

Hand Positions

- Left palm below the valves
- Left fingers resting flat on the keys
- Right hand flat or slightly curved with all fingers touching (fish hand)
- Right hand pressed against far bell wall-no further in than knuckles.
- To lower pitch-close right hand slightly

More fun with the right hand...

- Characteristic tone
- Lowers pitch by 1/4 step
- Closing lowers the pitch
- More hand contact produces darker color of sound
- Stopped Horn
 - right hand closes to produce brassy tone
 - gestopft, stopped, bouche, chiuso, +
 - play on only F horn-no trigger
 - play 1/2 step lower than written
 - use a stopped mute in mid or low range

Mouthpiece Placement

- Must always cover the top of the upper lip
- Must never go below the lower lip
- Center on mouth as it is most comfortable
- Leave the lips on the mouthpiece and breath out of the corners to increase accuracy

Embouchure

- Flat chin, Firm cheeks, Firm corners
- Center of lips should remain flexible(soft) enough for an even buzz
- Jaw must be dropped and pushed forward to align lower and upper teeth
- Teeth (molars) must be apart (mouthpiece test)
- The only range that calls for a noticeable difference in the appearance of the embouchure is the extreme low

Air Stream/Breathing

- Air = Tone Quality (60% air, 40% embouchure)
- Air : lip buzz : mouthpiece is the receiver : air in horn vibrates: horn amplifies the buzz
 - Low range-slower air/buzz, warm air
 - High Range-faster air/buzz, cold air
- Full, relaxed breaths (bottom-middle-top)
- Open throat with breathing exercises
 - mouthpiece breathing
 - breathing tube

Changing Pitches

- To play higher notes: blow colder air, faster buzz, increase firmness of embouchure from all four corners toward the center, raise back of the tongue (tee, kee), direct the air-stream, focus the air
- To play lower notes: blow warm air, slow down the buzz, push lower lip forward into the mouthpiece, focus on lower lip buzz, drop the jaw (toh)

Accuracy

- Practice hitting an isolated note correctly, remove mouthpiece from lips, repeat 10X
- Buzz note/interval-play-repeat
- Hum or sing note/interval
- Play in slow motion
- Correct embouchure and tongue placement
- Remove water from horn

Developing Tone

A characteristic tone is possible in a young player if they are given the correct tools!

Tools for Tone ~Loud Is Good!

You will have much stronger players if you encourage young students to always play loud. Make them understand that it must be with a good tone. It is impossible to play loud with a good tone and NOT use correct air. You can always turn down the volume... but you won't want to!

Buzz Extension & Resistance Piece

- Attaches to instrument (leave on at all times)
- Allows for feel of horn while buzzing
- Students should buzz all exercises or “licks” that are difficult (and even those that aren't)
- Buzz should be loud and strong and should be an actual pitch with tone
- Available from all music stores (\$20)

Tools for Tone

- Practice Mute
 - Opens throat
 - Removes tension/stiffness
 - Creates resistance for maximum air velocity
 - Increases accuracy by making the embouchure work for precision

More Tools for Tone

- Free Buzzing
- Embouchure Visualizer
- Mouthpiece Work
- Lead-pipe only w/ tuning slide removed
- Mirrors
- Create a sound with and without the tongue-”toh” vs ”pooH”

Range

- Low = written middle C & lower
- Middle = written middle C to C in staff
- High = C written in staff to C above staff
 - Year 1-low C-C in staff
 - Year 2-low C-E in staff
 - Year 3-low C-High G
 - High School-full range

Articulation

- Tip of tongue releases from the point where teeth and roof of mouth meet
- Drop the tip of the tongue
- Use only the tip
- The more use of the tongue, the more air needed
- Toh, doh, loh
- Isolate away from horn
- Crisp Tongue-lower in mouth, Soft tongue-higher in mouth

Multiple Tonguing

- Double Tongue: toh-koh, very far forward in the mouth-no “ga” sound
- Triple Tongue: toh-toh-koh
- Please do not push this until your kids are ready!

Starting Beginners

- Start on the single F horn (rather than Bb) for a more characteristic sound and a better development of muscle memory
- Body position is critical
- Lots of humming, buzzing, playing
- Students must hear models-use older students as needed!
- Develop the low range first-provides foundation to all playing (middle c & below)

The Double Horn-what’s the deal?

- Single F Horn
 - beautiful tone
 - warm sound
 - very “close” high notes
 - tight tone in high range
- Single Bb Horn
 - bright tone in middle range
 - “wider’ notes in high range
 - full tone in high range

The Double Horn!

- Combines F and Bb horns
- Thumb trigger enables both horns to be used efficiently
- F fingers: low G-middle G
- Bb fingers: Low F and down, middle G# and up
- Increased accuracy and better tone quality

Tuning

- middle C on F horn, upper C on Bb horn
- tune open pitches first, followed by 2nd valve (F#, B), 1st valve (Bb, F), 1&2 (A), 2 & 3 (Ab, C#)

- know which is the main slide for Bb and which is the main slide for F
 - the first valve Bb slide on Conn 8D's must be pulled out 1 1/2 inches min.

Muting

- Muted, mit dampfer, con sordino
- Humes and Berg stone lined straight non transposing mute (\$30)
- Engemann, Trumcor, Denis Wick, custom mute-from horn makers (\$100)
- Humes and Berg Practice mute (\$30)
- Tom Crown (Stopped Mute) polished brass (\$60)
- Hang mute from string around wrist
- Play louder than dynamics indicate

Section Set-Up

- Place the 1st horn on the right (conductor's right) side of the section so bell faces section
- Double the lowest parts when extra players are available (4th, 2nd)
- If 1st & 3rd/2nd & 4th have the same parts, place together
- 2 1/2 feet between each player

Where to place the horns in the ensemble

- Beg.- 8th grade
 - In front of Alto Saxes (or try mixing them)-they almost always have the same parts and the altos can help horns to hear the pitches, also allows for the easiest blend between the sections
 - Third row to the right of the conductor
- Advanced Players
 - To the back of the ensemble so the bell is clear of bodies
 - centered in the band
 - in orchestra, in the back row

Mouthpiece

- Good Basic Mouthpiece
 - Farkas medium or medium deep

Horn

When purchasing school horns **always** buy double horns

- Good Instruments
 - Conn 8D-the best for the money
 - Yamaha YHR 667 or YHR 668N
 - Holton H175, H190, H179, H180

Accessories

- Hard Case-discourage the use of a gig bag-usually leads to dented instruments
- Hand guard-extends the life of the finish & helps with grip
- Mutes
 - straight mute (either cheap or custom)
 - transposing brass stop mute
 - practice mute (**very** useful)

Care and Maintenance

- Slide grease –Schilke (monthly)
- Valve oil-Blue Juice (weekly)
- Keep body clean (daily)
- Bath (one a year)
- Removing Condensation: turn horn to the right and remove large slides or rotate until water comes out of the bell

Advanced Care

- Do not take valves apart unless experienced
- Learn to restring valves by looking at intact valves!
- Use Yamaha horn string
- Fishing line (18 pound test)-no nylon
- Mouthpiece brush & lead-pipe snake

Reference Material

“The Art of Horn Playing”, “The Art of Brass Playing” by Phil Farkas (the “Bible” of Horn Playing)

“Technical Studies for Horn”, Brophy

Transposition

Most Common is Horn in Eb

- play down 1 full step (G becomes F)
- change key to 1 step lower
 - (C becomes Bb) (F becomes Eb, D becomes C)
- very common with old march music

Transposition

- Horn in E: play down 1/2 step
- Horn in D: play down a third, change key to a third lower
- Horn in G: play up one step, change key to one step higher (C becomes D, Bb becomes C)
- Bass Clef: all notes are written a fifth above sounding pitch-the same as treble clef-some older music is written an octave too low.

Woodwind Quintet

- Horn must adapt to woodwind sound
- Huge amount of exposure
- Fairly light playing
- Must control volume
- Place strongest player in this group

Brass Quintet

- Horn must be a distinct sound from trombone
- Horn can play out much stronger
- Soloist but not as exposed

If you have additional questions please free to contact me:

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