

## Introduction

Since starting to play the trumpet more than 30 years ago, I have considered a modern approach to playing. Over the years the styles of music that I have played has diversified and the expectations for a trumpet player have changed. Versatility is expected, so we must identify the areas of music we wish to perform and then learn the easiest way to adapt our technique. This is an exciting journey and one you can enjoy, using the Modern Approach to Playing the Trumpet (M.A.P.) to help you reach your musical destination. Whatever your trumpeting background, this book will help to improve your technique by: synchronising and developing an awareness of airstream, then adding an articulation approach with the use of breath accents and a soft, fast single tongue that can develop your rhythmic ideas, along with solidifying your consistent working range from bottom F# to top C. The most important focus is the co-ordination of all of these techniques, so that in time they all become one natural and gentle approach that requires little or no thought when improvising.

A trumpeter's goal is to play to the best of their ability with ease for a healthy amount of time every day. In this richly diverse time for making music, trumpeters are asked to cover a wide variety of styles and are often required to improvise. To reach a point where we can best serve the music, we must spend our lives developing the muscles and technical control that make playing the trumpet as easy and as painless as possible. The long term goal of control will lead to the development of strong muscles.

When improvising on the trumpet the technical focus can often be forgotten, as the musician is thinking of artistic issues; playing in style and expressing an original and personal approach to the music. When playing with ensembles containing drums and amplification, your technical control can change as the natural harmonics of the trumpet are harder to hear. Your excitement can build in a way that does not occur in the practice room and this can make you play louder than normal. With these technical and environmental hurdles to deal with simultaneously, it is not at all surprising that trumpeters sometimes develop an insufficiently supportive technique where brute force can replace control. Incorrect habits could be forceful breathing and tonguing too hard, thus stopping the airstream and leading to too much mouthpiece pressure, then bruising resulting in inconsistent playing ability from day to day.

We can protect ourselves by thinking of these issues and preparing ourselves in the practice room. If it does not sound good in the practice room playing at a quiet to moderate volume, then it will compromise your ability to develop if you only sound impressive playing at a loud volume with a loud drummer!

With good technique you can control the trumpet easily in order to realise your ideas and develop them further. Quiet playing will also enable you to play louder with more contrasting tone colours to choose from.

## Ideals of the Modern Approach

- The trumpet should become a legato airstream machine.
- Visualise that you have only one register
- Tonguing should be viewed as a nice start to the note and nothing more, with the airstream the main focus in attaining notes and providing rhythmic accents of varying strengths
- Work on dynamic control and develop a love of playing quietly and gently.
- Airstream focus is to develop the speed of your air, not the amount of air you use

## Warm Up

There are several methods that recommend singing in the process of playing development. We are not all great singers to start with, but please persevere.

### Exercise 1

Use a piano or keyboard when you are singing and playing on the mouthpiece. The intervals are not easy to hear and we have to be extremely careful to get them right. Make 3 repetitions of each key:

1st time: Sing

2nd time: Buzz on the mouthpiece using progressively slower glissandos between the notes as you become more familiar with the intervals. This is to strengthen the embouchure and will help you to control intonation with the airstream direction, speed, and tongue position.

3rd time: Play on the trumpet

It is not essential to play this in all keys, but if you wish, continue to ascend in half steps through all keys.

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## Exercise 4

### *Breath Accents.*

Here is a legato exercise to work on the specific placement of breath accents within the same chromatic phrase, directly taken from a Charles Colin book. Later we will return to this exercise with a diminished pattern coda section (Exercise 18).

We are aiming to develop a strong breath accent, as this can be used as a rhythmic accent. The use of breath accents with jazz articulation is effective for stressing notes off the beat whilst maintaining a gentle single tongue. They are also useful when single tonguing on the beat, as they can make your gentle single tongue sound strong, as though tongued very hard. The most aggressive articulation is to single tongue really hard, stopping the airstream and belting out the note, but using this approach, a trumpeters' facility deteriorates with brute force replacing good airflow. Different strengths for rhythmic accents exist in phrasing, as we will examine later with two jazz melodies.

In this exercise we are coordinating our fingers with breath accents in a legato phrase that creates a strong rhythmic control without the use of any single tongue. You need only tongue the first note of each key and then your breath accent launches you into the exercise. When playing with a drummer, you have to be able to connect with their beat to identify specific rhythmic placement and lock in your articulation with them. It can be done with power, which has dangers in relation to using unnecessary force, or you can use breath accents to make the single tongue sound more powerful. The idea is to use your airstream to create rhythmic accents to make the emphasis and then keeping the flow of air going at all times. The breath accent syllable to be used is "Ha", just and fast exhalation. Blow a small and steady stream of air through a small hole in your mouth and say a few fast "Ha's", but not in tempo.



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## Exercise 6a

*Flexibilities in a hurry!*

There are times where warm ups must be brief, either as we are running late or because we are saving our best for performance. The following exercise should not be used until Exercise 6 is very familiar and breath approach is consistent. The exercise still incorporates a "chops relaxer" in-between each flexibility to loosen your chops, clear your mind and move your tongue in a more relaxed manner, before jumping back into the flexibilities.

all false fingerings apply



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## Etude 1 & 3

Here we have isolated the chromatic enclosures and joined them together in the 9/8 metre. It is important in this metre to place a strong breath accent on the downbeat of each bar without the use of the single tongue. Rhythmic placement in an odd-metre without tonguing the downbeat will make rhythmic approach when playing over standard 4/4 time more focused also making sure the language we have absorbed is not in a set place.

### Etude 1

no gaps between notes

*mf*

### Etude 2

Play these arpeggios lightly and without power ·  
worry about maintaining a steady tempo.



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## Exercise 13

*Further Eighth Note Enclosures with Bebop Scale connections.*

In continuation of the previous exercise, we have an initial pattern based on a G7 chord. Breathe the exercise correctly with careful attention to the dynamics, then gradually increase the tempo and moderate the dynamics so that you can feel the same air control on the faster repetitions. After the third repeat, continue in tempo. In the etude, there is an added phrase to the original exercise that incorporates a harmonization process used by John Coltrane in his composition Giant Steps. Transpose through keys, either ascending in half steps or through the cycle of fourths.

use dynamic markings to start with, then moderate  
play three times, no gaps



### Etude

dynamics should be naturally applied in etude, no gaps



### Chops Relaxer



waru'



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## Exercise 16

*Intervals, odd metre & articulations of Clarke  
with attached arpeggiation of major pentatonic scale.*

Using jazz articulation with a scale harmony that is very close together in pitch with chromaticism and enclosures is fraught with intonation dangers caused by not breathing lines clearly enough when articulating so much, however gentle it might be. Jazz articulation can also be useful to execute bigger intervals with better intonation and rhythmic accuracy. In the following exercise we have a Clarke study with one note removed from the end of each bar to change the metre to 7/8.

The first time we play the exercise, it is legato and you must play strong breath accents on the bottom notes. On the repetition, we use the jazz articulation and here the breath accents provide strong rhythmic grounding. Finally we play an arpeggiation of a major pentatonic scale with a light staccato that can speed up a little. This exercise is transposed in all keys through the cycle of fourths.



no gaps

arpeggiated major pentatonic scale

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# Exercise 17

Clarke with new scales and articulations.

Here we use an old chromatic exercise template and introduce some new scales to be placed in the same technical approach as Clarke 1. Play this two times through, first time legato, second time with jazz articulation. The dynamics remain important and when using the jazz articulation ensure that there are no gaps between the notes. In improvisation it is often the case that we join scales together or use different ones in close succession. Transpose into different keys ascending in half steps or the cycle of fourths.

half step/whole step diminished      altered

lydian augmented      phrygian pentatonic

no gaps      half step/whole step diminished

lydian augmented      phrygian

no gaps

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## Rhythmically Displaced Exercises

As stated earlier, most of the exercises in this book are not required to be played in tempo. The following exercises are, and a metronome will be needed as the repetitions of the same exercise move across the bar. Ideally start the metronome at around 60 beats per minute. It is important to single tongue these exercises, but continue to use your softest tongue. By this point in the book, you should be able to place these notes where specified without tonguing too hard.

In these first four exercises, we are using a Phrygian pentatonic scale. As with other pentatonic scales, there is greater space between the notes and in places it feels more like an arpeggio. One could also use an arpeggio within this template, or other scales, perhaps try the whole-tone scale.

The fifth exercise based on the G major scale has short staccato notes; these need to be placed carefully, so try to do this quietly. Later on with the Bebop head arrangements, you can see that short eighth notes are typically used at the ends of phrases. Playing these off-beat syncopated eighth notes short and lightly, but not too hard, will create a clearer swing feel.

B Phrygian pentatonic



E Phrygian pentatonic



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# Bebop Head Arrangement 1

Gerard Presencer

Medium swing

# Bebop Head Arrangement 2

Gerard Presencer

Fast swing



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