

# Trumpet Mutes

The importance of owning good mutes cannot be stressed enough. Mutes serve many purposes including dampening volume and changing the color of an orchestration or solo.

As you practice these exercises, listen to your pitch and quality of sound. Each mute has different timbre (sound quality) characteristics and pitch issues.

Buy mutes that fit well in your bell and are of a high quality. Try different models of each type of mute to see what sounds and feels the best.

Below is a description of the most commonly used mutes. Most of the musical examples I have cited can be found on YouTube.

## Straight mute

The straight mute is arguably the most commonly used mute. When a piece of classical music has “Con Sordino” written above a passage, that is an indication to use a straight mute. Look for a terrific video of Steve Johns playing the same excerpt on numerous different straight mutes. This is a really great way to hear the difference in sound that each one produces.



Famous classical excerpts that feature straight mute include *Scheherazade* and *Pictures at an Exhibition* although there are hundreds of others. The *Kennan Sonata* and *Arutunian Trumpet* sections of straight mute playing.

Phil Smith, former first trumpet with the New York Philharmonic, recorded trumpet excerpts for Summit Records on which there are examples of straight mute playing. I highly recommend you pick it up.

Good examples of commercial music and the straight mute include Benny Goodman featuring Chris Griffin, Glenn Miller's *Moonlight Serenade*, and a cool clip on *Date Trumpet Section* featuring friends from my L.A. days; Chuck Finck, Churchville and Chris Tedesco. This is a good close-up look at a section of

## Harmon mute

Every trumpet player should own Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* harmon mute on *Blue in Green*, *Stella* Miles' use of the harmon mute has



Clark Terry was also a harmon mute, while circulating

For a fun listen, check out open and harmon mute on *Stompin' at the*

My dear friend Warren's beautiful harmon

Fans of Frank Sinatra: *Come Fly With Me* or *Cor* Edison. You can

Another example with



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# Diminishing Returns

$\text{♩} = 108$  straight 8ths  
Cup mute

The musical score consists of seven staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a tempo marking of 108 straight eighth notes. The first measure is marked with a dynamic of *mf*. The second staff starts at measure 5. The third staff starts at measure 9 and includes a 'Cup mute' symbol (a stylized 'S' with a vertical line) above the staff and the word 'Open' below it. The fourth staff starts at measure 14. The fifth staff starts at measure 19. The sixth staff starts at measure 24 and includes a 'Cup' symbol (a circle with a vertical line) above the staff. The seventh staff starts at measure 29. The eighth staff starts at measure 32.

*mf*

5

9

14

19

24

29 Cup

32



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# Doo Wah

♩ = 80 Swing 8ths  
Plunger

1  
5  
9

# No Resolution

♩ = 108 Straight 8ths  
Cup mute

1  
5  
9  
13  
17

opt



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# In and Out

$\text{♩} = 90$  Straight 8ths  
Harmon (no stem)

The musical score consists of eight staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a tempo of 90 straight eighth notes. The first measure is marked *mp*. The second staff begins at measure 4, with the word 'Open' above the staff and a dynamic of *f*. The third staff begins at measure 9, with 'Harmon' above the first measure and 'Open' above the fifth measure, with a dynamic of *f*. The fourth staff begins at measure 14, with 'Harmon' above the first measure and a dynamic of *mp*. The fifth staff begins at measure 17. The sixth staff begins at measure 21. The seventh staff begins at measure 25. The eighth staff begins at measure 27, with 'Open' above the staff and a dynamic of *f*.



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