



Taming Your Tongue: A backwards approach to proper articulation for brass players.

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ANATOMY of the ARTICULATION:

- Attack versus Release
- TA & DA and the problem of compression
- The “valve”
- Tonguing between the teeth: pros and cons
- LA & NA: the backwards approach
- THREE methods for improvement:
 - Reverse Tonguing
 - Placement Tonguing
 - Note Shape & the “Illusion of Staccato”

REVERSE TONGUING:

- RT is teaching the student to stop the sound with the tongue – yikes!
- By stopping to sound with the teeth, the student learns WHERE and WHAT part of the tip of the tongue can create a seal. Tactile referencing.
- A moment of “seal” is NOT a stop!
- The cupcake mold
- Inverted tonguing exercise
- Strangeness is Good
- APPLICATION

PLACEMENT TONGUING:

- THREE S's of tone production: the Starts, the Sustains, and the Stops
- "Starts" is especially difficult for brass players
- Coordination
- Eliminating complexity
- How to "place" the tongue
- It's all in the palm of your hand...
- Air pressure matters—don't over-do it!
- The water spout, or The whistle, or better yet, THE VOICE
- APPLICATION

NOTE SHAPE & the "ILLUSION OF STACCATO"

- NOTE SHAPE is everything in music: The bell-tone as a model
- Wave form
- *Kosmyna's 37th Law*
- There is no stopping of the air to get the proper note shape.
- MAINTAIN the SUSTAIN!
- Quickness of the tongue
- APPLICATION
- The STOPS & the Illusion of Staccato.
- The Brain/Ear as a filter
- ALL legato ALL the time
- Mother Nature has your back!

Q&A Session:

- Please share and questions or comments
- Please feel free to connect after the session
- Please feel free to reach out to me any time d-kosmyna@onu.edu
- PLEASE check out my Trumpet Doctor YouTube channel for complete recordings of the OMEA Class C list for Solo Trumpet!

EXERCISES:

1. Dr. Dave's Wonder Scales!

FOREWORD:

Dr. Dave's Wonder Scales aren't scales at all. They are a series of intervallic exercises to help you progress through the changing tessitura of a scale while still producing a consistently resonant and beautiful tone.

There needs to be some attempt at reckless abandon here. Too many young players over think! I try to encourage my students to just let go, listen, and play. I find it helps to remind the player to focus on the release of air OUTSIDE the body. Don't allow yourself to "feel" the air moving through you; just get the air moving at the lips—Mother Nature has perfectly built you to respirate without the need of your additional "help" by pushing the air to the lips...

SO...

Open up, breathe out and let the air seem to start at the lips and you'll notice these intervals being a lot closer than you thought. Master this and you'll really notice a terrific improvement in your ability to play consistently across your registers and through those octave scales.

Be sure to transpose these to distant keys and explore all of your registers – be adventurous!!!

Wonder Scale:

Go slowly!

- Keep same set and release for every note.
- Play each measure **4** times, more if you prefer.
- Try on trumpet or mouthpiece.
- Be sure to keep notes long and fill up during entire beat of rest.
- You may opt to reset before each attack or keep mouthpiece in contact with the lip. Approach this in whatever way gets you the result of the **SAME** method of attack.

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2. Dr. Dave's Setting up the Super SOLID Starts

FOREWORD:

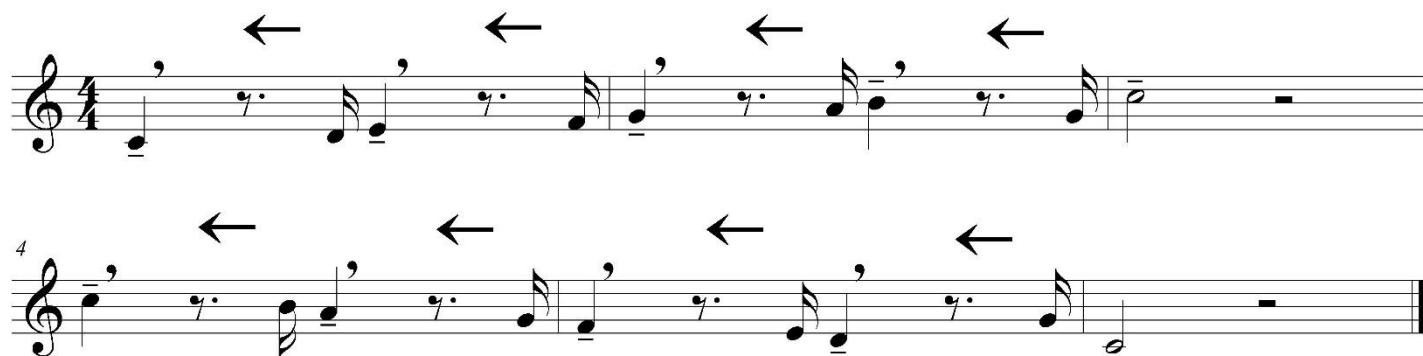
Coordinating well-moving air along with the good timing and clarity of the tongue is perhaps the BIGGEST issue on the Trumpet outside of simply producing a tone.

In the following exercise, try and confine your air movement to parallel the sensation of inhaling and exhaling air through a straw. This visualization does one VERY important thing...IT KEEPS ALL OF THE ACTION AT THE LIPS! Too often players waste energy where no vibration occurs. So, during this exercise I recommend you try to breathe through the mouthpiece to keep the back and forth movement of the air always travelling past the embouchure.

Some thoughts...

- Always keep the exhale LONG.
- Always keep the inhale LONG.
- Always keep the air moving either IN or OUT—there is NO stopping. You should be experiencing some invigorated breathing while doing this.

- Have the tongue VERY close to the teeth to get a LOUD 16th note. Rebound it into the long note.
- Transpose this exercise to all registers, keys, and dynamics that you want to sound good.
- The dash reminds you of LONG air out, and the arrow of LONG air in.



3. Dr. Dave's Crystal Clear Terrific Tonguing Exercise

FOREWORD:

If you have looked at *Dr. Dave's Note Shape Exercises*, you will see a very insightful diagram of a perfect note shape taken from the visualization of a sound wave—a strong entrance and a natural, resonant decay, much like a bell-tone. However, you will ALSO notice a small vibrational disruption at beginning of the waveform. This occurs in ALL players and nearly all sound waves. BUT a great player (on trumpet or otherwise) will minimize this disturbance by getting to the core of the tone quickly.

BUT HOW??!! You ask...

...SPEED of the tongue! That's the answer!

By developing a fast strike of the tongue in your articulation you reduce this disturbance at the beginning of the waveform and, therefore, increase the beauty and resonance of your sound. There is another important issue here as well...**PITCH!** You may not realize that every time you articulate a note, the pitch goes slightly flat. To combat this, we need healthy air movement to single proper pitch in the embouchure. If the tongue is lethargic and "In the WAY" both your note shape clarity and pitch will be greatly compromised!

SO...

- 1.) Practice the following exercise, going for a FULL sound on the grace note. Let the secondary note rebound.
- 2.) Keep the tongue moving VERY quickly, making the grace note as close as possible to the following note.
- 3.) Be sure the dynamic is correct on the FIRST note, not reversed!
- 4.) Articulate the final 2 measures with the same clarity achieved with the grace note.
- 5.) Transpose this exercise to all the registers and the keys that you want to sound better.

5 *Clean, crisp Single-Tongue!*

4. The PERFECT Note Shape

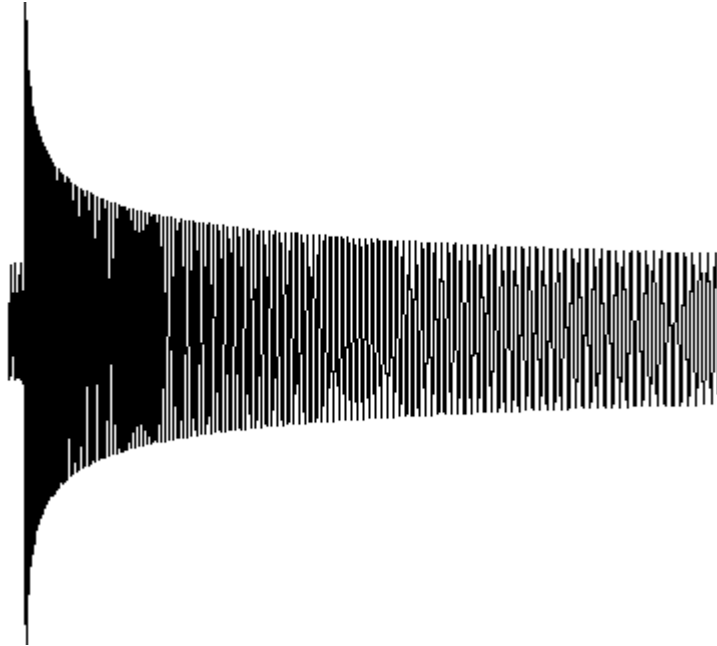
FOREWORD:

The **beauty** of a players sound is *VERY* much connected to the **shape** of their notes. The note shape is critical: it affects how volume is perceived; it affects how rhythm is perceived; it affects how intonation and balance are perceived; it affects how resonance is perceived. Perception is important; after all we PERCEIVE beauty! The sound of a bell, with its crisp beginning and gradual decay is perhaps the all-time best model for us.

Whether I was studying classical or jazz, my teachers would ask me to really listen to the note shape of the piano, how it attacks with such clarity and decays with such grace. Sometimes they would even make me put my ear as close as possible to the hammer to I could really HEAR how the sound emanated after it struck the piano string.

SO...

Here's the note shape I always ask my students to get, the bell-shape. This is an actual sound wave and it looks very much like a trumpet bell. There is a crisp and full FRONT to the note, and a decay that maintains a gradually diminishing BODY to the note.

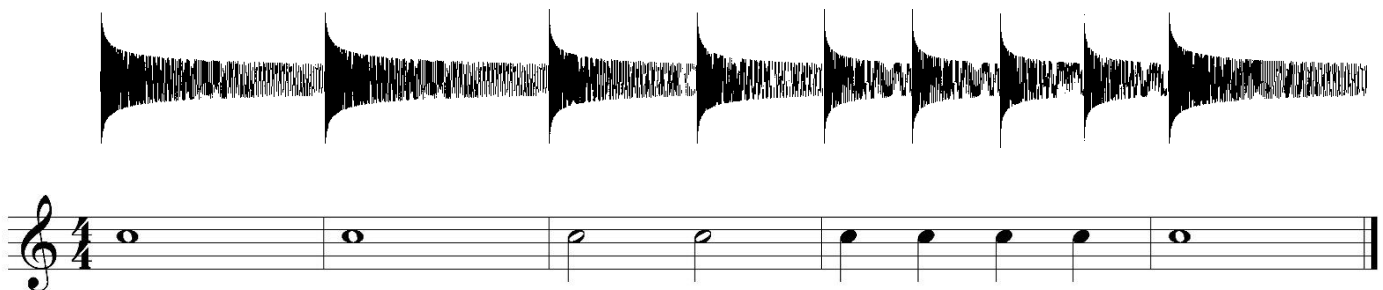


I believe the BEST players have hardly any disturbance at the beginning of the note, as seen in the above example. AND pay special attention to how much IMPACT the shape has, especially at the BEGINNING of the note. Now, most students can manifest some degree of success with this shape on slow passages and long tones. **HOWEVER, the biggest problem I find is the ability of a student to transfer this note shape to other tempi and repeated notes.**

The following exercises are designed to target just this problem...

Exercise 1:

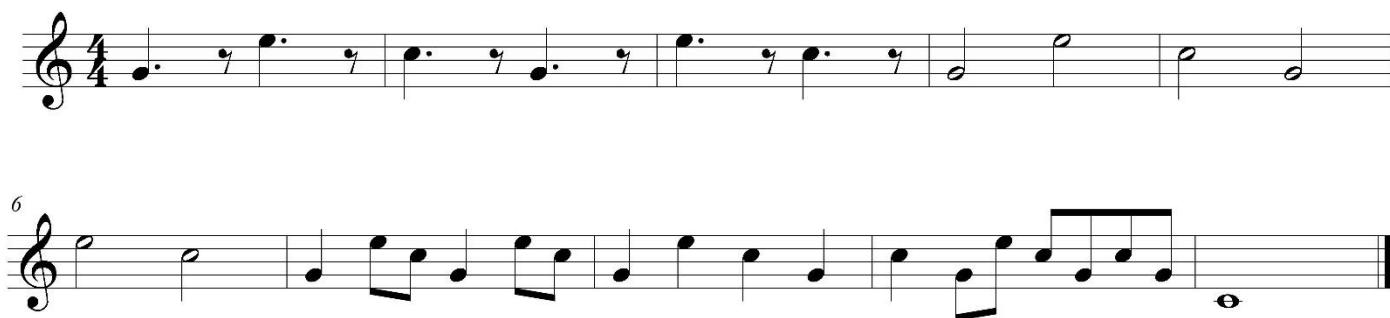
Play the following exercise using the visual aid of the note shape placed above the staff.



Exercise 3:

- In the first 3 measures breathe on the rests, if possible, and focus on a crisp, clear, and quick attack.
- Carry that clarity into the following 3 measures. By measure 7, really try to keep the speed of the tongue QUICK. —Get in and get out!—
- I often draw a comparison of the force and speed of the attack to a boxer. The boxer will strike a punch with incredible speed and, in a flash, whip the gloves away from the target. This produces an incredibly powerful impact. If you remember the dramatic spike at the beginning of the PERFECT note shape, you'll need a powerful device to execute it...excellent articulation!
- Strive for a concept my undergraduate trumpet teacher, Bernard Sanchez, used to call "Instant Sound". Bernie would say get the sound to just *start* – no imperfections, disruptions, or blemishes. It should sound like it is everywhere, suddenly out of nowhere.

Instant Sound....think about THAT one for a while!



KEEP PRACTICING!

-Dr. Dave