

Dispelling Brass Playing Myths

MIDWEST CLINIC 2016

Mystery to Mastery

WWW.MYSTERYTOMASTERY.COM

YAMAHA

The Psychology of Playing Brass and Wind Instruments

EFFICIENCY: The Key to Eternal Success

Taking on the *establishment* may be the price you have to pay in order to troubleshoot issues you or your students may be experiencing. An understanding of the body's relationship with the instrument, its mechanical working - *The Body's Concert Hall* - and its role in sounds production i.e. *aRRRtication*, can reset the psychology of playing. A small shift in mindset based on the *Mystery to Mastery* materials has helped players of all standards on brass and wind instruments - and even singers - refine their technique, enabling greater flexibility, endurance, range and sound.

INSTINCT: The All-Pressure System



What makes us pick up an instrument and instantly jump on the express train to *Chokeville*? Have we been taught, are we mimicking others or is it simply an association we make about the sound? Either way, instead of starting from a point of massive exertion, why not embrace flow and freedom from day one? *Play As You Would Sing* - the tradition of mouthpiece buzzing and blowing hard has produced amazing players across the globe BUT has sent many more into therapy. Be sure to watch the *BLUZZ* video at the MTM website. A healthy psychology in regards to sound production on wind instruments is very much a necessity for longterm improvement.

EXPERIENCE: Follow the Process and the Results Will Come!



Develop the sensation of how it should feel to play away from the instrument; grab a tissue and hum; add a decent dose of what it should sound like; then add an understanding of what is required, and you have all the ingredients you need to experience trouble-free playing. Practice is a process of trial and error; a process of elimination. It is experimentation based on perceptions and shared information. Experiencing the process of playing away from the instrument is a great way to develop healthy habits. Experimenting with strain and force *ARGH* can be fun too, in order to develop a point of difference. If you find you are choking, then really choke to reinforce the feeling of a bad technique to be avoided. If you are clamping your lips in or on the mouthpiece, then REALLY clamp! Then go to the other extreme of looseness; the optimum tension is somewhere in between.

HEARING IS DOING: Sound Muscle Memory Development



Let the sound drive the mechanics of playing. This can easily be developed with repetition. Start with just ONE note; your easiest best sounding note! Hear it...play it, hear it...play it over and over and over until the conscious mind lets go. It may take seconds, it may take months: Time does not matter. Slowly add complexity - play games - to see if you can disassociate from the process. Eventually you will develop a connection between the musical thought in the mind and the sound in the room. Learn to hear with your eyes and see with your ears. Use the *Progress Chart* and a metronome to monitor the development of your technical fundamentals. Ticking that box every day is a satisfying achievement keeping you and your students coming back for more.

