

Rocco, Roger. Brass Pedagogy and Performance Practices (blog)

This site is dedicated to the memory of Arnold Jacobs. These concepts are published to fulfill my promise to "Jake" a few months before his death in 1998. "Your work will continue through your students." Harvey Phillips, "Arnold Jacobs is our national treasure."

Friday, April 19, 2013

THE PARALYZING IMPACT OF AIR AND EMBOUCHURE ANALYSIS

BRASS PLAYERS WORLDWIDE MOURN THE PASSING OF ADOLPH HERSETH ON APRIL 13, 2013. THOSE WHO WERE FORTUNATE TO SHARE A STAGE WITH "BUD" KNOW THE MAGNITUDE OF HIS GREATNESS AS AN ARTIST PLAYING THE TRUMPET AND HIS INSPIRATIONAL MUSICAL LEADERSHIP. BUD'S PROFOUND INFLUENCE WILL IMPACT MY WORK FOREVER.

BUD AND JAKE ARE TOGETHER AGAIN.

Adolph Herseth

There is nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up.

Paralysis by Analysis.

When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing (vocally) then buzz (mouthpiece). Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument.

Arnold Jacobs

I believe that it is best to be somewhat unconscious of our physical maneuvers but highly conscious of our musical goals.

We must not give dominance to the instrument or our various body parts. We must give dominance only to the music.

Roger Rocco

THE BRASS TRILOGY

1. There is no reason for success or failure other than our state of mind.
2. Sound motivates function.
3. It's just the singing.

Self-doubt is a self-inflicted wound that results from an expectation of failure. We always realize our expectations.

In over forty-five years of teaching, no inexperienced young wind player has ever asked me one question about air or embouchure. However, countless more experienced musicians have said that they have air or embouchure malfunction because someone told them so.

Much of my current teaching is directed to professional brass and woodwind players worldwide who have lost their ability to function. They have been told by other musicians, teachers, and the medical community, that they have Focal Dystonia, an incurable neurological condition. Sometimes they are needlessly prescribed injections into their embouchure.

With the exception of some woodwind players who experience paralysis in their hands, most wind players experience the symptoms of tongue, air, or embouchure malfunction. Often they are advised by teachers or the medical community that they cannot continue their career.

THE MORE A MUSICIAN CONSCIOUSLY ATTEMPTS TO CORRECT THEIR SYMPTOMS OF FAILURE, THE WORSE THEIR PARALYSIS BECOMES. IN EVERY INSTANCE, THEY HAVE CONSCIOUSLY ANALYZED THEIR TONGUE, EMBOUCHURE, AIR, OR HANDS UNTIL THEY BECAME PARALYZED. TRAGICALLY, PARALYZING SELF ANALYSIS IS PRESCRIBED AND ENCOURAGED BY MANY TEACHERS AND MUSIC SCHOOLS WORLDWIDE.

When giving a lecture or masterclass, I frequently ask attendees if they think they have air or embouchure problems or if they have been told they have problems. I'm not surprised that about one third of the musicians in the group respond affirmatively. I always assure them that there is nothing wrong with their malfunctioning body parts. Their physical symptoms of failure are the result of a problem with their conscious state of mind.

I HAVE NEVER ENCOUNTERED ANY WIND PLAYER WHO HAD ANYTHING PHYSICALLY WRONG WITH THEIR EMBOUCHURE, FINGERS, TONGUE, OR ABILITY TO EXPEL AIR. HOWEVER, I HAVE ENCOUNTERED MANY MUSICIANS WHO THINK THEY HAVE SOMETHING PHYSICALLY WRONG. THEIR PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF FAILURE ARE THE RESULT OF AN INEFFECTIVE STATE OF MIND.

Several years ago a professional trumpet player contacted me regarding his "embouchure dystonia". His first words just before his initial lesson were, "Roger, I have bad news. I have just returned from the doctor. He told me there is nothing physically wrong with my chops."

I replied, "That's the good news!"

A teacher once told me that if I could cut the tongue out of my mouth, I would be a good brass player. Yes, my tongue was not functioning well to articulate notes playing the tuba. However, I had no problems when I used my tongue to talk or chew food.

THERE WAS NOTHING PHYSICALLY WRONG WITH MY TONGUE.

Another teacher noticed that I was not breathing well so he told me to sit in front of a mirror and observe the expansion and contraction of my chest and stomach. A week later at my next lesson, I told him that the visual analysis he had prescribed, paralyzed me to the point that I could barely play. He angrily exclaimed that if I didn't do the visual analysis, I would never play.

I WAS QUITE HEALTHY, SO IT WAS OBVIOUS THERE WAS NOTHING PHYSICALLY WRONG WITH MY ABILITY TO INHALE OR EXPEL AIR FROM MY LUNGS.

Still another teacher told me that I had embouchure problems because there wasn't enough room between my upper lip and nose to shift the mouthpiece 2/3 upper lip-1/3 lower lip. He told me to cut the upper rim of my mouthpiece so there would be room to move it higher on my face.

THERE WAS NOTHING PHYSICALLY WRONG WITH WHERE I COMFORTABLY PLACED THE MOUTHPIECE ON MY LIPS WITHOUT SHIFTING UP OR DOWN.

There is plenty of air at your lips when you play cracked ("rejected") notes.

You are an expert breather. You have been breathing to sustain your life for a long time.

Arnold Jacobs

The key to playing well is found in speech.

No child studies their breathing, tongue manipulation, or vocal chords in order to say words. Their ability to speak is motivated by their awareness of the sound of words.

It's the conscious awareness of the sound of words that motivates the subconscious mind to execute all the physical mechanics that are required to speak.

THE DETECTABLE vs. THE UNDETECTABLE ELEMENTS OF PLAYING

We are all familiar with the "toys" many brass teachers use to detect air and embouchure. They include embouchure magnifying mirrors, clear plastic mouthpieces, embouchure visualizing rims, bags, balloons, tubes, respirometers, and other medical devices.

In all my years as a professional musician and teacher, I have never once observed a competent brass player using any visual or mechanical devices.

The only brass players I have seen using them are those who are struggling to play. These devices are useless because they attempt to substitute weak conscious awareness of playing mechanics for a powerful conscious awareness of sound.

The subconscious mind has complete awareness and command of all the mechanical skills that are necessary to play an instrument or do anything else. Those skills are motivated by sound not paralyzing analysis. To motivate complex mechanical function the subconscious reactive mind is much more powerful than the conscious intellectual mind. A flea has no intellect yet it can execute great mechanical skill in order to fly. Our subconscious mind skillfully execute thousands of commands to our various body parts to sustain life, walk, or talk .

Substituting weak conscious intellect for powerful subconscious function inevitably results in failure.

We must not bypass the immense power of the subconscious reactive mind by attempting to substitute with weak conscious intellect. We cannot detect

motion or pressure of air, muscular manipulations, or frequency of pitch using the sense of feel which is relatively weak compared to the senses of sight or sound.

To an extent, we can detect air flow and pressure away from playing by blowing on our hands or into a mechanical device. However, there is very little ability to detect air flow or pressure while playing. We have great ability to detect sound as we play. Awareness of sound is a powerful motivator mechanical function.

Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player.

Attempting to play by feel is like trying to empty a swimming pool with a straw.

When you try to play by feel, you are going the wrong way down a one way street.

Arnold Jacobs

We cannot motivate function through the use of sensory symptoms. We must motivate function through motor (muscular) systems.

The use of mechanical "toys" attempts to bring awareness of playing mechanics to the sense of sight. There is an important reason why there are no mechanical devices or mirrors in my studio.

WE CANNOT PLAY AN INSTRUMENT BY MOTIVATING THE SENSES OF SIGHT OR FEEL. OUR GOAL PLAYING AN INSTRUMENT IS TO PRODUCE SOUND. AWARENESS OF SOUND MUST BE THE MOTIVATING ELEMENT. WE HAVE GREAT POTENTIAL FOR AWARENESS OF SOUND IN OUR IMAGINATION.

THE SOUND THAT WE PRODUCE EXTERNALLY WITH AN INSTRUMENT MUST ORIGINATE INTERNALLY IN OUR IMAGINATIVE MIND. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE THE COURAGE TO FOCUS PRIMARILY ON THE SOUND OF THE INTERNAL INSTRUMENT.

IF WE ARE LISTENING TOO INTENTLY THE EXTERNAL INSTRUMENT, WE WILL ATTEMPT TO CREATE FUNCTION WITH SENSORY AWARENESS. FAILURE WILL BE THE INEVITABLE RESULT BECAUSE ONLY SOUND AWARENESS WILL MOTIVATE FUNCTION.

Some teachers use the sense of sight by using mechanical devices to distract the student from the paralysis resulting from their intellectual analysis. I have found that non-musical mechanical devices take the player further away from the sound rather than bring them closer to it.

All of the devices in my studio are instruments that function only to create musical sounds. Their purpose is not to become more aware of air or body parts.

Awareness of sound is the ultimate distraction from paralyzing analysis because it directly and powerfully motivates the mechanical skill required to produce sound.

Adolph Herseth

Think sound not mechanics.

Roger Rocco

Sound motivates function.

Imagination is much more powerful than intellect.

IMAGINATION vs. INTELLECT

Arnold Jacobs

We can have an intellectual understanding of the music but we must not be intellectual about how to produce it.

We must have the (non-intellectual) mind of a child.

Our minds must focus on telling a musical story.

The product is musical sound not mechanical function. Go for the product.

Roger Rocco

Computers were developed by powerfully imaginative minds to compensate for weaker intellectual minds.

Albert Einstein was an average student intellectually but he had a vivid conscious imagination. Imagination is a very powerful force because it motivates the power of the subconscious mind. When creating motor function, conscious intellect bypasses the power of the subconscious.

Robert Collier (The Secret of the Ages)

The conscious mind is the gateway to the power of the subconscious.

H. A. Vandercook

If you can sing it, you can play it.

Arnold Jacobs

I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lips feels or how I feel.

There are acoustical laws that must be obeyed. We must send frequencies to the instrument that it can respond to. We must sing the music in our head while playing.

IMAGINATIVE MENTAL SINGING vs. CONSCIOUS INTELLECTUAL ANALYSIS

Conscious intellectual analysis with mirrors and optical devises motivates the senses to transmit information from the external tissues to the brain (input). Since the brain is focused primarily on receiving weak information

through sensors, output diminishes so there is little mechanical function. Motor (muscular) function is motivated by the transmission of information from the brain to the muscle tissues (output).

Your subconscious mind will respond faithfully and powerfully to your conscious awareness of sound.

However, your subconscious mind will search for sound using the sense of feel if your conscious awareness of sound is vague or absent. Your subconscious mind already knows how to execute the mechanics necessary to play. Your conscious mind only needs to have a powerful awareness of the notes you want to play. When you only have a vague awareness or no conscious awareness of the sound, your subconscious mind will attempt to create a "feel" awareness of sound by converting your lips into ears. Lips have great potential to produce sound but they are very poor detectors of sound. We must prevent the subconscious mind from searching for the sound by feel in the lips. We only need to provide a vivid awareness of the sound in the conscious mind.

THE MOST VIVID CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF SOUND IS ACHIEVED BY MENTALLY SINGING WHILE PLAYING.

SING BUZZ PLAY

A number of years ago I observed a demonstration of which areas of the brain were active while playing an instrument. The brain of a violinist was scanned as she played. The part of her brain that was most active was the same part that is active in speech. She was speaking with sounds created by the violin rather than vocal chords.

Some sounds are labeled words and some are called music. It doesn't matter how we label them because all sounds originate as conscious thought in the same area of the brain. The messages of sound can be transmitted to any tissue. People who have had their vocal chords removed because of cancer learn to speak crudely using other tissues in their throat.

We all learn to speak without any conscious understanding of the mechanics involved. Over time our subconscious mind learns the mechanics necessary to realize to our conscious awareness of sound. We only need to allow a child the time and repetitions necessary to make it happen. Since a brass instrument has no sound of its own, the sound that emerges from bell is a direct reflection of the mind of the player.

Arnold Jacobs

There are two instruments. One in the hands and one in the head. The instrument in the hands is a mirror reflecting the one in the head.

Roger Rocco

You must be an honest musician because you have a lie detector in your hands.

(3:1) THE GOLDEN RATIO AND "THE LADDER OF AWARENESS OF SOUND"

We must have a powerful conscious awareness of the sound in order to produce a powerful resulting sound with an instrument. Vocal singing and mouthpiece buzzing are powerful tools that raise our awareness of sound. I advise students to sing and buzz, in any combination, three times to elevate their musical awareness. The sets of three should be repeated until the sound awareness has been elevated enough so that they can maintain conscious singing while playing.

Sound awareness must be powerful enough to overcome all distractions such as feel, the instrument, or the conscious analysis of mechanics. Once they have learned fingering and playing position, my elementary students only asked the following question.

HOW DOES THE MUSIC GO?

They never asked me how to play their instrument! They knew much more than me because they play them everyday. My success as a teacher and as a player has always resulted from my communicating the music to my students or myself. Yes, it's that simple. Any music therapist knows that music has a very powerful influence on the mind.

We must have a simplistic approach to motivate the complex mechanics required to play an instrument or do anything else.

H. A. Vandercook

Keep it simple.

THE HOT STOVE SYNDROME (PARALYZING NEGATIVE CONDITIONING)

Paralysis by Analysis inevitably results in a history of failure. Over time the physical discomfort and emotional pain the player experience becomes associated with and reinforced by the instrument. The instrument becomes a "hot stove" that the subconscious (reactive) mind rejects as harmful. The rejection results in paralysis of the embouchure, breathing, tongue, fingers, or any combination of those elements of playing.

The normal reaction to the paralysis, discomfort, and emotional pain is to consciously restore function and to feel good.

Feeling good when you play is a by-product of playing correctly. You cannot motivate correct playing by attempting to feel good first.

As the player consciously attempts to motivate the tissues and feel good, they create more failure resulting in increasing paralysis and emotional pain.

Paralysis (dystonia) is motivated by the subconscious mind in response to a history of failure. The process of restoring function can only occur if the player gradually creates a history of success.

Most of my teaching involves helping musicians recover or develop their playing skills that have been lost, or never achieved. They usually have

dedicated themselves to paralyzing analysis of their air, embouchure, and sometimes fingers. Most often the self-analysis was prescribed to them by well-intended teachers, technical method materials, and music schools.

My job is always very simple. I only need to alter the musician's state of mind by directing them to focus only on the music.

Self-analysis is not only unnecessary, it results in destructive paralysis. If children self-analyzed how to speak or walk, they would never be able to do either. Many musicians devote their lives to learning how to master playing an instrument but never do.

IF YOU MASTER THE MUSIC FIRST, MASTERY PLAYING THE INSTRUMENT WILL FOLLOW.

THE MUSIC TELLS US EVERYTHING WE NEED TO KNOW.

IT'S JUST THE SINGING!

THE BRASS TRILOGY

1. There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind.

2. Sound motivates function.

3. It's just the singing!

The brass player's conscious awareness must focus only on the sound they want to create with their instrument. Their conscious commitment to the sound will motivate the subconscious mind to do whatever is necessary mechanically to realize it with an instrument. The most vivid awareness is achieved by mentally singing the music as it is being played.

Roccoism

Your subconscious mind will respond faithfully and powerfully to your conscious will if you don't interfere with paralyzing self-analysis.

Adolph Herseth

It's amazing what the lips can accomplish if you get your mind out of the way.

Arnold Jacobs

I believe that it is best to be somewhat unconscious of your physical maneuvers but highly conscious of your musical goals.

H. A. Vandercook Keep it simple. If you can sing it, you can play it.

Arnold Jacobs I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lip feels or how I feel.

Adolph Herseth When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing (vocally) then buzz (mouthpiece). Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument.

Meredith Willson "The Think System" from "The Music Man"

Marion, the librarian, speaking to Harold Hill, the bandmaster.

Is it true that you have developed a revolutionary new method of teaching music called "The Think System"?

Harold Hill Yes, it's really quite simple. Nobody has to teach you how to whistle. You only have to think the tune to have it come out perfectly clear.

Roger Rocco

We must have a childlike simplistic approach to executing the incredibly complex mechanical skills that are required to play an instrument or do anything else.

SING BUZZ PLAY

THE FINALE ULTIMO

For those who require a book, you are welcome to print these posts and bind the pages. Please accept this information as a gift from Arnold Jacobs who blessed me with a career and life in music.

THE IMPERFECT PURSUIT OF PERFECTION, THE PARALYZING IMPACT OF SELF ANALYSIS
Roccoisms

Your determined pursuit of perfection will lead to greater imperfection if you cannot accept the inevitable reality that an element of failure is a necessary component of creating success.

You must celebrate your moments of success and accept your moments of failure so that you are joyful when you play rather than in despair.

Poor sound can be transformed into quality sound. Silence cannot be transformed into quality sound.

Focal dystonia is a symptom rather than a disease. Any physician understands that treating the symptoms of disease does not lead to a cure.

Your subconscious mind will respond faithfully and powerfully to your imaginative conscious will if you don't interfere with intellectual self-analysis.

Imagination is a much greater motivator of the power of the subconscious mind than intellect.

There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind.

Robert Carter (The Secret of the Ages, 2007 Wilder Publications)

The conscious mind is the gateway that allows access to the power of the subconscious.

Arnold Jacobs

If you cannot accept crudity, you cannot create quality.

Adolph Herseth

If I didn't miss any notes, I wouldn't have any friends.

Paralysis by Analysis

Maurice Andre

I expect the notes to be there.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

A brass player, or any musician, has no opportunity to test or modify their musical product before they present it to an audience. However, computer programmers or electrical engineers can fully evaluate and modify their work until they have complete confidence of its value. They rarely face consequences of failure unless their evaluations and modifications are incorrect.

Because of the precarious acoustical characteristics of brass instruments, a 100% expectation of success is not possible, even for the greatest players. A certain amount of failure is inevitable. Excessive failure over time is debilitating. The negative psychological impact of too much failure is not as great for an elementary musician as it is for a professional whose livelihood and self esteem depend on a high level of success. The negative consequences of failure are greater for the musician who is expected to produce.

The musicians who come to me most often for help are experienced professionals whose careers are in jeopardy. In time, their fear and anxiety becomes powerfully conditioned to and reinforce by the instrument in their hands. This powerful association, conditioned reflex, was first demonstrated by the Russian behavioral psychologist Ivan Pavlov in his well known experiments with a salivating dog. The instrument becomes an enemy rather than a friend.

THE PERFECTIONIST PERSONALITY

Roccoism

The perfectionist musician cannot not tolerate imperfection with a instrument in their hands. As a result, much of the time they are dissatisfied with their performance because perfection is not a realistic goal. As their dissatisfaction grows over time, the instrument becomes a powerful reinforcing influence motivating mechanical paralysis.

Parents celebrate their children's first intelligible words or first steps. The positive reinforcement encourages their continued development. If the child was scolded for their imperfections, paralysis would set in and all development would cease.

A personal friend, with a doctorate in psychology and works as a therapist, dreamed of becoming a professional pianist when she was a child. Her father, who was a fine pianist himself, was her teacher. When there were visitors to their home, she was always expected to perform for the guests. However, she was only allowed to play until she made a mistake. When she inevitably made an error, the impromptu recital was terminated and she was asked to leave.

Since she was not allowed to fail, the consequences of her inevitable failure eventually caused paralysis to the point where she could no longer even sit at the piano. The piano became a powerful factor reinforcing her emotional pain, anxiety, and personal disappointment.

There is a response in the subconscious mind that reacts to protect us from emotional or physical harm. When we touch a hot stove, are response is not a conscious intellectual event. We don't think to ourselves, "This is uncomfortable. I don't like it. What should I do about it?" Our subconscious mind reacts powerfully and instantly to remove our hand from the uncomfortable situation.

THE DOUBLE BARRELED SHOTGUN

The brass player has a double barreled shotgun pointed at them because they experience both emotional pain and physical discomfort when they fail to execute the notes they want to produce. If a pianist or violinist plays the wrong note, they may experience personal disappointment but they do not experience physical pain. The rejection of the air column within a brass instrument is quite uncomfortable. A friend once described it, "like trying to push a piano up the stairs."

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY - THE BARRIER OF FEAR

Roccoism

Most people never realize their dreams in life because they are paralyzed by their fear of failure.

Adolph Herseth

A trumpeters life is risky business. No greatness can be achieved if the player is paralyzed by fear.

When a musician fails in performance, deep emotional pain and fear of continuing failure come instantly. Their expectation of success weakens and their expectation of failure grows in an accelerating downward spiral.

Maxwell Maltz (Psycho-Cybernetics, 1960 Prentice-Hall, Inc.)

The mechanisms of success and failure are the same.

Rococoisms

We always realize our positive or negative expectations because our subconscious mind will faithfully react to satisfy our conscious will. The exception is if our will directs intentional or perceived self-inflicted harm.

The subconscious mind may respond independently if there is no conscious will.

Our expectations are usually the result of creating a history over time. If our legs function properly to get us out of bed everyday, we will expect them to function the same tomorrow.

Since the subconscious mind does not distinguish between fantasy and reality, it is possible to create an expectation motivated by imagination. I frequently use this technique in my private teaching. I will ask students to imagine that they are me or someone else whose playing they admire.

First Case Study

I worked with a fine oboist, who was completing her DMA at a major university. When she brought out the case with 20-25 reeds, I asked her to choose the best and worst ones. There was no hesitation picking the worst one, but she struggled to choose the best reed.

Finally, when the two reeds were removed from the case, I asked her to use the worst one. The anguish of her facial expression indicated that she did not expect to succeed. I asked who her favorite oboist is. When she replied, I said, "Do you think he could play the worst reed successfully?" Without hesitation, she replied, "Yes!" I instructed her to pretend it was him playing La Gazza Ladra. She immediately performed the solo beautifully. Her reed and oboe became inconsequential and the music was the only thing that mattered. Her commitment to the music allowed her to transcend her expectation of failure which was powerfully reinforced by the reed.

SECOND CASE STUDY

I received a call from a very fine professional flutist who I knew as an excellent high school musician. Sadly, she told me that for the previous fifteen years, her right hand has been somewhat paralyzed and she experienced pain while fingering. She also mentioned that she had been to flute teachers and medical professionals worldwide but no one has been able to help her.

I first asked if her hand functioned normally when she was not playing the flute. She said yes and added that the doctors could not find anything physically wrong. I immediately knew the physical malfunction was the result of her state of mind. Since her mind was causing the problem, I understood that her recovery must be to alter her state of mind. She had lost her mental commitment to the music and was now focusing on her right hand. She was desperately trying to eliminate the pain and to make her fingers function.

H. A. Vandercook

Keep it simple.

If you can sing it, you can play it.

Arnold Jacobs

I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lip feels or how I feel.

Roccoisms

The highest level of awareness of sound is achieved when we mentally sing the notes as we play them.

It's just the singing and buzzing no matter where your mouthpiece is located.

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

THE PROCESS OF RECOVERY

The most effective technique to bring her awareness back to the music was to have her vocally sing as she fingered and to mentally sing as she played.

Since I understood that the flute was reinforcing her paralysis and pain, the first step was to sing vocally without fingering. After several repetitions of vocal singing, I ask if she thought she could sing and finger the instrument while it rested on her lap. She replied affirmatively and was able to finger freely and without pain.

I asked her to alternate repetitions of vocally singing and fingering with singing mentally while fingering. She gradually brought the flute to playing position. I told her to mentally sing and play but only when she expected to succeed. She was able to play a short passage normally and without pain the first time she tried. It was her first moment of success in many years.

I wanted to know what had happened to cause her paralysis and pain fifteen years prior. She replied, "I started giving eighty flute lessons a week to make a living."

She was listening to so much low level performance that the elementary tone production dominated her awareness. Her subconscious faithfully responded

to realize the elementary level playing that she was allowing into her conscious awareness. As the physical symptoms of her failure became more severe, she became anxious and very unhappy. Her physical and emotional pain became associated with flute and her subconscious mind perceived it as a harmful object, causing paralysis as it erroneously tried to rescue her from harm.

Jay Friedman

After a day of teaching, I sound more and more like my students.

Because Adolph Herseth understood the negative impact of listening to low level trumpet playing, he only accepted very advanced students. When a student leaves my studio, I always play my horn to renew my awareness of sound. Jake taught thirty hours of lessons per week but never allowed the mostly dysfunctional playing he heard to negatively impact his personal playing. He always separated his teaching from his personal performance.

Adolph Herseth

There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up.

Roccoism

The music tells us everything we need to know.

Arnold Jacobs

We must give dominance to the music not the instrument or ourselves.

I believe that we should be somewhat unconscious of our physical maneuvers and highly conscious of our musical goals.

Adolph Herseth

Sound is the criterion for how we do this and that.

When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing then buzz. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument.

AIR AND EMOUCHURE ANALYSIS IS POISON NOT MEDICINE!!!

In over forty years of studio and classroom teaching, not one student has ever asked me anything about air or embouchure! Any music teacher is well aware of the question they hear most often.

"HOW DOES THIS GO?"

The students are constantly telling us what they need and most teachers ignore it. Instead, many teachers force feed students useless information that is very destructive to those who take it seriously. My students frequently complain about conductors and clinicians who instruct them to give dominance to paralyzing self analysis. Here are the worst examples:

FILL THE INSTRUMENT WITH AIR!

The instrument is already full of air. Since it has no sound, they should say fill the instrument with sound.

Roccoism

Sound motivates function.

IT REQUIRES MORE AIR TO PLAY SOFT THAN LOUD.

On a single breath, I can sustain a soft note with a tuba for 30 seconds but I can only play a very loud note for 1-3 seconds.

BREATHE FROM THE DIAPHRAGM (STOMACH).

Attempting to breathe only from the stomach will reduce the vital capacity by 50%! No one tells an athlete to breathe only from the diaphragm otherwise they would collapse from exhaustion.

Roccoism

It is not necessary to teach you how to breathe because you have been doing it very well for your entire life.

The list of erroneous comments is endless but the most destructive are about embouchure analysis and breath control.

DROP YOUR JAW.

TIGHTEN OR LOOSEN YOUR LIPS.

FAST OR SLOW AIR

DIRECT THE AIR UP OR DOWN INSIDE THE MOUTHPIECE.

USE MORE OR LESS MOUTHPIECE PRESSURE.

SHIFT THE MOUTHPIECE OR KEEP THE MOUTHPIECE STABLE AS YOU ASCEND OR DESCEND IN PITCH.

RELAX!

Roccoisms

It is not necessary to study air or vocal chords in order to talk. It's the sound of the words we want to say that motivates the mechanical function of speech. Nothing is different when we have an instrument in our hands. Our awareness of the music will motivate the mechanics required to play the instrument.

While playing, a wind instrumentalist has only a very vague awareness of air pressure or air flow. Since we cannot detect air, we should focus on what is detectable, SOUND!

THE ACCEPTANCE OF IMPERFECTION

Roccoisms

Your acceptance of failure will allow you to minimize the consequences. Your inability to accept failure will maximize the consequences.

You don't need to enjoy or celebrate your moments of failure, but you must accept the fact that they are going to occur as you strive for success.

Your response to failure must be to act in a manner that leads to success not more failure.

Shinichi Suzuki

We can teach a child how to play an instrument the same way they learned to talk.

"THE THINK SYSTEM" from The Music Man by Meredith Willson

Marion, the Librarian

Harold, is it true that you have invented a revolutionary new system of teaching music called THE THINK SYSTEM?

Harold, the Bandmaster

Yes, it's really quite simple. Nobody has to teach you how to whistle. You only have to think the tune to have it come out perfectly clear.

Roccoism

Your ability to speak is not motivated by intellectual analysis of breath and vocal chords. The mechanics of speech are motivated by the sound of words. In the same manner, your ability to play an instrument is motivated by "The Sound of Music".

Arnold Jacobs

The key to playing a brass instrument is found in speech.

THE VALVELESS TUBA

Arnold Jacobs

"I don't fill the instrument with air. I fill it with vibrations (sound)."

Adolph Herseth

"When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing (vocally) then buzz. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument."

"Practice entire sessions on the mouthpiece alone to avoid having problems creep into your playing."

Roccoisms

"I gave tuba playing a long time ago. Now, I play an 18ft. mouthpiece with valves."

"Play the mouthpiece not the instrument."

For many years I have demonstrated in master classes and lessons, that I play the mouthpiece inside the tuba rather than play the tuba. The tuba is just a very selective amplifier of the sound that I create in the mouthpiece. I call the demonstration, "The Valveless Tuba" or "Tuba Gymnastics" I tell the listeners that it looks and sound like I'm playing the tuba but I'm not.

I perform very rapid scales and chords, or a technical etude without using valves. I play the three octave "gymnastics" very fast to disguise the fact that many of the notes are inaccurate or out of tune. As I play, I remove the mouthpiece from the leadpipe so the audience can hear that I am sending the same sound to the mouthpiece that they hear coming from the bell.

Recently, I cleaned one of my piston valve tubas and began the process of reassembling the instrument. Before inserting the valves, I decided to play it. The buzzing sound did not come out the bell but emerged from the first valve casing. I buzzed fairly loudly and fingered all the empty valve casings for about 30 minutes before placing my mouthpiece in an instrument with valves. I was careful to be sure that I was on pitch by playing familiar music.

After my extended practice session playing the valveless tuba, the resonance that came from the bell of the tuba with valves sounded as though Jake was playing! I immediately knew that I had discovered a valuable tool. It was a real valveless tuba rather than the fake one that I had been using in my "tuba gymnastics" demonstrations. Playing the valveless tuba was very similar but yet somewhat different from playing the mouthpiece alone, using a BERP, or buzzing into a megaphone (tubaphone).

I was more willing and able to commit to sending a resonant and accurate sound directly into the leadpipe of the real instrument rather than just the mouthpiece alone or an external device. I suspect that the reason is I have a much longer history of playing the mouthpiece inside the leadpipe than outside somewhere. Also, the valveless instrument accepts inaccurate frequencies.

Since the valveless tuba did not provide any amplification of my mouthpiece playing, I provided it myself by buzzing fairly loudly. When I sent the same level of tone production to the tuba with valves, the effortless sound coming from the bell was very full and resonant. I was surprised and somewhat distracted because it sounded like someone else playing!

I soon realized that I was not fully transferring the same mouthpiece playing from the valveless tuba to the one with valves because the frequencies were not quite accurate. I was not transferring the same commitment to mental singing that was being achieved playing the valveless instrument.

I REMINDED MYSELF THAT I ONLY NEEDED TO TRANSFER THE SINGING BECAUSE MENTAL SINGING, NOT FEEL, MOTIVATES THE PRODUCTION OF SOUND THAT CAN BE ACCEPTED BY THE VALVE TUBA!

LIBERATION

My experience playing the valveless tuba completely freed me from the paralyzing negative influence of the instrument. There are no consequences of failure because the leadpipe accepts just about any frequency. It's very forgiving of inaccuracy because no single harmonic series is defined by one column of air. There are infinite air columns.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL PLAYING THE VALVE TUBA IS FOR IT TO BECOME A VALVELESS TUBA!

Arnold Jacobs

"There are acoustical laws that must be obeyed. We must send in frequencies that the instrument can accept. To do this, we must mentally sing the notes as we play them."

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them. I don't care how my lip feels or how I feel."

I have frequently thought that maybe having valves on a brass instrument is not a good thing, That's not true! Valves are wonderful tools.

HOWEVER, WE MUST FULLY UNDERSTAND THEIR LIMITATIONS! VALVES DO NOT PRODUCE SOUND!

The primary function of valves is to aid technical facility playing in various keys, extend lower range using less tubing, and to improve intonation. Because valves allow the brass tubing to be shorter, there is room for larger bore sizes which provide greater amplification with varied timbres.

I frequently coach brass players before a professional audition. I ask, "How would you feel (confidence level) about the audition if it was to be played on the mouthpiece alone?" They always reply, "Great" or "No Problem" My immediate response is always, "GUESS WHAT? IT IS A MOUTHPIECE AUDITION!"

It is very important to understand that what motivates tone production when playing the mouthpiece, no matter where it is located, is to mentally sing the music as you create it. This is not difficult to accomplish! I have seen pre-school children buzz melodies on a trumpet mouthpiece without instruction if they imitate what they see and hear someone else doing.

The primary mental focus of mouthpiece playing outside the leadpipe is mentally singing the notes (melody) that you want to produce.

THE BRASS PLAYER'S STATE OF MIND (COMMITMENT TO SINGING!) MUST BE THE SAME REGARDLESS WHERE THE MOUTHPIECE IS LOCATED.

THE HOT STOVE SYNDROME

If an instrumentalist develops a history of failure, the resulting emotional pain and physical discomfort will become closely associated with and influenced by their instrument. The instrument reinforces the player's expectation of failure. The subconscious mind will respond to the player's expectation of failure by creating physical conditions that cause even more failure.

Eventually, the instrument becomes a "hot stove" that triggers a paralyzing reaction in the subconscious mind.

We become sabotaged by a subconscious response that is supposed to protect us from physical and emotional harm rather than cause it.

Roccoism

"We always realize our expectations whether they are positive or negative."

I have only seen the Hot Stove Syndrome, when someone played the mouthpiece outside the instrument, one time. I have had hundreds of people come to me for help when their instrument was negatively influencing them to the point of paralysis. However, they always can play the mouthpiece beautifully when it's outside the instrument.

When a brass player comes to me for help, I always ask to hear their mouthpiece playing first. After briefly listening, my response is always, "Wonderful, there's nothing wrong with your playing." Usually, they are startled by my evaluation. Sometimes their body language tells me that they think I'm lying. I immediately ask, "How do I know there is nothing wrong?" The obvious answer is because, "You're playing sounds good!"

Arnold Jacobs

"I don't care if what you are doing (physically) is all wrong if it sounds good."

Sometimes, a player will respond, "It may sound okay but it feels lousy." I remind them that Jake tells us that it doesn't matter how it feels. I also tell them that if they want their playing to feel better they must commit to the sound by mentally singing first.

Roccoisms

"Feeling good is a by-product of correct playing. You cannot motivate correct playing by trying to feel good first."

"Sound motivates function, not the reverse."

"Feel and Fail are four letter words to a brass player."

Yes, playing the mouthpiece somewhere other than in the leadpipe of an instrument, feels different. SO WHAT!!! To be truly liberated from the paralyzing influence of the instrument, we must transcend our physical feedback by committing to the production of sound in the mouthpiece.

Are we mentally singing when we play the mouthpiece outside the leadpipe? The answer is absolutely, positively, YES! There's no other way to make it happen!

It's not difficult to do unless we are more committed to the feel of playing, or physical mechanics rather than sound we want to come from the bell.

Roccoism

"The instrument has no sound of its own. The only sound that will emerge from the bell is the sound that you produce in the mouthpiece which originates in your conscious mind."

Arnold Jacobs

"What you feel like (while playing) is not important. You should focus only on what you want to sound like."

"There are two instruments. One in your hands and one in your head. The one in your hands is a mirror reflecting the one in your head."

Adolph Herseth

"Think sound not mechanics."

Roccoisms

"Sound motivates function."

"There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind."

IT'S JUST THE SINGING!

The highest level of awareness of sound is achieved when we mentally sing the music as we play it. Our subconscious mind responds to the musical awareness by executing all the highly complex mechanics required play the instrument. The mechanics of playing are much too complex to be motivated by the conscious mind. This is the same process that we use for speaking. Our subconscious mind responds beautifully to our conscious thoughts of words without any intellectual understanding of how it's done.

IN THE ABSENCE OF A CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF SOUND, THE SUBCONSCIOUS BRAIN WILL ATTEMPT TO CREATE SOUND AWARENESS BY USING THE SENSE OF FEEL. IT WILL TRY TO CONVERT LIPS INTO EARS. THAT'S LIKE TRYING TO DRAIN THE WATER FROM A SWIMMING POOL WITH A STRAW.

Adolph Herseth

"It's amazing what we can achieve if we don't allow the (conscious) brain to interfere."

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

THE VALVELESS TUBA

The most important aspect of the valvesless tuba is not the transfer of imprecise resonance to the instrument with valves. We must transfer precisely tuned resonance. That can only be achieved by mentally singing. If we are only interested in transferring imprecise resonance, the instrument will reject the sound no matter how hard we work to impose it.

The real benefit of the valveless tuba is realized only when we are totally committed to the transfer of our mental singing. The valveless tuba reminds us of what that commitment is without the negative influence of the instrument. The motivation of that negative influence is our history of failure.

WE MUST TRANSCEND THE INSTRUMENT AND ALL OTHER DISTRACTIONS WITH OUR COMMITMENT TO THE SINGING OF THE MUSIC WE WANT TO CREATE. NOTHING ELSE MATTERS!!!

Adolph Herseth

"No greatness can be achieved if the brass player is paralyzed by fear."

Roccoism

"Courage is not the absence of fear. It's the will to function in spite of it."

IT'S JUST THE SINGING!

IT'S JUST THE SINGING!!!

IT'S JUST THE SINGING.....

I recently made a wonderful discovery about my four tubas. None of them have valves anymore!

IT'S JUST THE SINGING!

Arnold Jacobs - "I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lips feel or how I feel."

When several of Jake's students and I were in the process of contributing to his book, *Song and Wind*, I told Brian Frederiksen, author and publisher, that those words were the most important in the book. In that statement, Jake says nothing about air, embouchure, tongue, lungs, diaphragm, or any

other body part. However, he does strongly imply that those things don't matter at the conscious level of the brass player's awareness. He says that his commitment to mental singing is his most important consideration no matter of how his lips or the rest of him feels physically. Such simplicity is the secret of his success as a musician and teacher.

Roccoism - "We must have a simplistic approach to the intricate complexities of playing an instrument or doing anything else in everyday life."

Arnold Jacobs - "I want you to have the mind of a child, not that of an analytical adult."

"You may be analytical about the music but you must not be analytical about how to produce it."

"You must give dominance to the music you want to produce, not your instrument."

H.A. Vandercook - "If you can sing it, you can play it."

"Keep it simple."

Meredith Willson - "The Think System" from The Music Man

"Nobody has to teach you how to whistle. It's quite simple. You just have to think the tune to have it come out perfectly clear."

Robert Carter - The Secret of the Ages

"The real power of the mind is in the subconscious. The conscious mind is only a gateway to subconscious."

Roccoism - "Our approach to playing an instrument should be no different than the other things we do in everyday life."

Adolph Herseth - "Think sound not mechanics."

"Paralysis by analysis."

THE HOT STOVE SYNDROME

The subconscious mind is not intellectual it's reactive. If we touch a hot stove, it will react immediately to removed our hand. There are no intellectual considerations about whether the stove is harmful or uncomfortable or about how to respond. A powerful conscious will is required to override the reactive mind that wants to remove your hand from harm. It's not possible to consciously stop your heart from beating or to stop breathing for an extended period.

This subconscious protective response is much more powerful than the conscious will. Although the response protects us from harm in everyday life, it can sabotage us when we have an instrument in our hands.

CONDITIONED REFLEX

In time, our experiences, positive or negative, become associated with the instrument. If our playing history is mostly successful, the instrument will reinforce the continuation of the positive experiences. However, if we develop a history of failure, the instrument will have a powerful negative influence on the subconscious. That influence will motivate the protective reaction of the subconscious mind to prevent us from the continued emotional and physical harm associated with it. When the instrument becomes a hot stove, a variety of physical symptoms, from paralysis to uncontrollable shaking (dystonia), will make an ugly appearance.

THE DOUBLE BARRELED SHOTGUN

Brass players and vocalists experience the negative symptoms of failure at two levels. There is an anxious emotional response that all musicians experience when they fail and there is also physical discomfort. A friend of mine beautifully described the physical discomfort he experiences while playing the trumpet. "It feels like I'm trying to push a piano up the stairs." A horn player, who I have worked with recently, described physical discomfort in her entire face.

THE "FEEL GOOD" APPROACH TO BRASS PLAYING

Our natural response to physical or emotional pain is to eliminate it. We may take a medication to reduce the pain of a headache or we might remove ourselves from a toxic personal relationship.

Roccoism - "Feeling good is a by-product of playing correctly. We cannot motivate correct playing by trying to feel good first."

Most often, brass players respond to the physical symptoms of failure by trying to "fix" what seems to be wrong with their breathing, chops, tongue, or fingers.

Adolph Herseth - "There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

Malfunctioning body parts (chops, tongue, lungs, etc.) are the result of a problem in the brain, not the individual body parts. People who stutter have nothing wrong with their apparatus of speech. Many stutterers can easily sing lyrics with no malfunction. The problem and the solution to the problem is in the brain, not the vocal chords, tongue or lungs.

I remember the first lesson of the principal trumpet of one of the second tier American orchestras who was in serious jeopardy of losing his job. His first words to me were, "I just came from the doctor. The bad news is that there is nothing wrong with my chops." I responded, "That's the good news!"

RESPONSE TO FAILURE

Many brass players complain, "I was a better brass player in high school." or some earlier time in their lives. "What has happened to me?"

What has happened is that a history failure has developed and that history has become powerfully associated with and reinforced by the instrument in their hands. Why does anyone develop a history of failure? The simple answer is that some musicians never really learned how to be successful. Others alter their state of mind from what had originally brought them success.

Roccoisms - "Sound Motivates Function."

"Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

Adolph Herseth - "Sound is the criterion for how we do this and that."

"Paralysis by Analysis"

All musicians experience a certain amount of physical input when they play or sing. When that input becomes dominant over an awareness of sound, the musician has opened the door to a room of failure and misery.

Arnold Jacobs - "We cannot produce sound through sensory systems which provide input to the brain. We must stimulate the motor systems to produce output."

"Eighty to ninety percent of our consciousness must be devoted to an awareness of the sound we want to produce. Awareness of how we feel or of the external sound must be peripheral not dominant."

If a brass player, any instrumentalist, or vocalist gives dominance to "feel" (input), output (motor function) becomes greatly diminished or ceases completely.

THE SYMBIOTIC MIND

When there is a symbiotic relationship between the conscious and subconscious levels of awareness and function in the brain, wonderful accomplishments can be achieved.

Adolph Herseth - "It's amazing what we can accomplish when we get the interference of the (conscious) mind out of the way."

When the relationship is antagonistic, function ceases. The power of the imaginative and intellectual conscious mind can only be realized by an equally powerful subconscious response.

ROCCO'S LAW - MUSICAL RESPONSE = MUSICAL AWARENESS

Roccoism - "Climbing the ladder of musical awareness will bring you to the notes you want to play."

The subconscious (reactive) mind does not react independently of the conscious will unless there is no conscious will to react to. If you consciously think about lifting your right hand, the subconscious mind will not lift the left hand instead. When playing an instrument, the subconscious

mind will function to realize the conscious awareness of sound. The realized sound will always be at precisely the same level as the player's conscious awareness. The familiar phrase, "garbage in, garbage out", is an accurate description of what occurs.

When the conscious awareness of sound is vague or absent, the reactive but irrational subconscious mind, will react by attempting to create a more powerful awareness of sound in another manner. It will revert to the lower level sense of feel and will attempt to the player's convert lips (mouthpiece/embouchure) into ears.

Roccoism - "Playing by feel is like trying to empty a swimming pool with a straw."

Since the lips are capable of producing sound but not detecting it, there is no auditory information available to realize and no playing mechanics will be motivated.

INTELLECT AND IMAGINATION

Roccoism - "Imagination is a much more powerful force than intellect because imagination motivates the amazing power of the subconscious while analytical intellect attempts to by-pass it."

Robert Carter in his book, *The Secret of the Ages*, tells us that the real power of the mind is in the subconscious. Every moment of our lives, the subconscious mind motivates whatever is necessary within us to maintain life.

The father of one of my brass students is a computer engineer. I once asked him if all the computers in the world were linked together, could they provide the same life sustaining functions of our subconscious mind? He replied, "No, they couldn't keep an ant alive."

If the subconscious no longer provided life sustaining function, could the conscious intellectual mind substitute? The answer again is no. When we attempt to substitute for the power of the subconscious with conscious analytical intellect, we will fail. We don't have enough intellectual capacity or awareness of the internal body parts necessary to motivate the many physical functions necessary to sustain life. Computers were invented and developed to compensate for our intellectual shortcomings!

What motivates the incredibly complex mechanics necessary for the flight of a bird? It obviously cannot be analytical intellect since the intellectual capacity of a bird is quite low. It must be imagination. The bird has a conscious awareness of where it wants to fly which is usually to find food or escape danger. There is no conscious awareness of how to make it happen. Along with sustaining life, the mechanics necessary to fly are a function of the bird's subconscious. This ability is already present in the bird's subconscious from before the time it emerges from its shell.

THE LADDER OF MUSICAL AWARENESS

Every experienced school music teacher is aware of the question most often asked by their students after, "Can I use the bathroom?" In many years of teaching, no wind player has ever asked me about embouchure or air! Universally, the question music teachers hear most often is, "HOW DOES THIS GO?" The students understand that their ability to execute the notes is correlated with their musical awareness of the notes. Our ability to learn speech is based on the awareness of the sound of words, not an intellectual understanding of how to say them.

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

Adolph Herseth - "When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing (vocally) than buzz the mouthpiece. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument."

Herseth says nothing about air (fat, fast, slow etc.) or embouchure (tension, relaxation, or mouthpiece placement)!

The highest level of musical awareness is achieved by repetitions (sets of three) of vocalizing and buzzing away from the influence of the instrument. When we play the mouthpiece alone, we must maintain the same internal mental singing that is required for external vocalization. The only thing that is different when buzzing the mouthpiece is that we substitute lips for vocal chords.

Roccoisms - "I gave up tuba playing a long time ago. Now I play an 18ft. mouthpiece with valves."

"Play the mouthpiece, not the instrument."

THE COMMITMENT

Roccoisms - "The level of tone production on an instrument is equal to the level of the player's mental commitment to the sound of the music."

"The subconscious mechanics required to play an instrument are motivated by the musician's conscious musical awareness, not the reverse."

"The highest level of musical awareness is achieved while singing vocally or mentally singing when playing an instrument."

"Transcend your instrument with a powerful awareness of the sound you want to produce."

Arnold Jacobs - "I always believe that it's important to be somewhat unconscious of our physical maneuvers but highly conscious of our musical goals."

"The key to success, playing an instrument, can be found in speech."

FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

A high level of musical awareness is required to transcend all influences such as the feel of chops, or the negative conditioning associated with

the instrument. I have developed a very basic formula that elevates the musician's musical awareness.

Roccoism - "My students and I have failed to apply the SING, BUZZ, PLAY formula. However, when we did apply it, it has never failed us."

1. The Repetition of Three - Sing vocally and Buzz the mouthpiece in any combination of three repetitions. Familiar musical phrases should be buzzed loudly to encourage tone production. Midrange transposition may be used if the music is too high or low to achieve a resonant sound.

Example - Sing 1X - Buzz 2X; Sing 2X - Buzz 1X; Buzz 3X etc.

2. Repeat the sets as necessary until you are able to transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument. Sometimes only a single repetition of singing or buzzing is necessary.

3. The ultimate goal is maintain mental singing while playing without any preparatory repetitions.

4. The commitment to mental singing must be total, without any other considerations or concerns, such as air, embouchure, or fingering (slide).

5. Applying this formula, a history of success must first be achieved in the practice room. As the player experiences more success, their expectation of success will grow.

Roccoisms - "Your subconscious mind already knows how to play the notes. It only needs to be highly aware of the notes you want to play."

"We always realize our expectations, positive or negative."

"Ben Franklin said, "The only truths in the world are death and taxes. There is a third truth. SING, BUZZ, PLAY"

"There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind."

The Teacher
ROCCOISMS

"The primary job of a teacher is to create opportunities for success."

"The most important student of any teacher is the one they see in the mirror."

"A great teacher has an opportunity to influence other lives in a profound way."

"There are many who can play instruments very well. However, a great teacher is very rare."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I hope to be remembered for my teaching more than my playing."

As a young musician, I first learned of the great power of teachers to influence lives when they influenced mine. I was fortunate to have wonderful teachers in my early in my career. Jake was the most influential but there were many others. Some, like Adolph Herseth and Ed Kleinhammer, taught me by example. I never had a formal lesson, but I had profound opportunities to learn from them whenever I was in their presence.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I EVER LEARNED FROM JAKE AND THE OTHERS WAS MUSICAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY.

A student at Vandercook College of Music once asked, "Mr. Rocco, Why are you such a great teacher?" I responded, "Because I was lucky to have great teachers myself." I have always considered my work training teachers to be the most important of my career.

I once attend a lecture given by a teacher who was the recipient of "The Golden Apple Award" for his excellence in education. He spoke of the advice his mother, also a teacher, gave him when he was considering entering the education profession. She advised, "If you love history, become a college professor. If you love children, become a teacher."

ROCCOISMS

"There is a profound difference between the subject we teach and to whom we teach it."

"A great teacher must love their students more than what they are teaching."

We have all experienced learned scholars, who have extensive knowledge of their subject, but are poor teachers. Most often, that's because they love their field of study more than their students.

It is understood that someone who teaches music must love music. The challenges of trying to make a living in the music profession are a test of that love. However, it is a fact that some teach music because it's not possible for them to perform professionally. They may be highly accomplished musicians but the professional performance opportunities do not exist.

Sometimes, these unhappy performers become unhappy teachers as well. Unfortunately, they also end up with unhappy students.

ROCCOISMS

"Always remember that the students in your studio, classroom, or rehearsal room are not there for your benefit. They are in your care to receive the experience of music. When you provide that experience for your students, you will also receive a great benefit."

"As a teacher, you must continue to develop your personal performance skills. If you stop playing your instrument, you will forget why you have a career in music."

"Let the music be your most powerful guide in teaching. If you listen carefully, it will tell you everything you need to know."

"Sound motivates function."

"The question heard most often by any music teacher is, "How does this go?"

H.E. Nutt

"To teach is to learn twice."

In November 2005, The Instrumentalist magazine featured me in an article about a brass player who has success teaching string and woodwind instruments. I mention that, "My students know much more about their instruments than I do. However, I know much more about the music. That's all I need."

Everything I do as a teacher in a classroom, rehearsal room, or lesson studio is about helping my students develop a higher awareness of the music they are attempting to play. I consider my lack of technical knowledge to be an advantage because I'm not distracted from the music. Most importantly, I'm not distracting my students either.

Recently, one of the violinists in the Mother McAuley High School Orchestra asked, "Mr. Rocco, why don't you ever say anything about the violin? You only talk about the music."

I replied, "Be thankful because you already know a lot about the violin. It's the music that you need to know more."

ROCCOISMS

"If your heart is not pounding in your chest from the thrill of what you just played, you must see your doctor. There's something wrong."

"Take what you learned and experienced with you. Don't leave a single crumb on the floor."

"I know what it is like to be a suffering brass player. Fortunately, I also know the joy of playing well. Suffering is not a requirement in order to experience the joy, but it's an inevitable outcome for someone who does not know how to create success."

THE JACOBS LEGACY

Since his death in 1998, I have heard this remark on many occasions.

"I'm experiencing problems in my playing. I wish that Jake was still around."

Yes, we have lost Jake's personality and the twinkle in his eyes. However, his spirit and knowledge are still with us because it lives within the many devoted students he left behind.

If you need help, ask for it anytime! (rogrocco@aol.com)

"The Think System"

HAROLD HILL

"Nobody has to teach you how to whistle. It's really very simple. You just have to think the tune to have it come out perfectly clear. "

H.A. VANDERCOOK

"Keep it simple."

"If you can sing it, you can play it."

On several occasions, graduate students at Vandercook College of Music said, "Mr. Rocco, you are teaching "The Think System" from "The Music Man!" I was very familiar with the music, but I knew nothing about the plot.

Eventually, I had an opportunity to conduct "The Music Man" so naturally, I studied the libretto. When I discovered "The Think System", I almost fell off my chair! Yes, I had been teaching "The Think System" for years. Also, it was nothing more than the two most important mantras of H. A. Vandercook that I had known and encouraged with my students for many years.

I immediately knew that there must have been a link between Meredith Willson and H.A. Vandercook. I asked the school historian to do some research. An hour later, he very excitedly showed me a student registration form for Stanley Willson (horn, 1941), Mason City, Iowa. Bingo!

I also knew that eventually I needed to link Stanley to Meredith. However, I was positive "The Think System" was influenced by Vandercook.

As time passed, I repeated the story to many of my graduate brass pedagogy classes. One year, a student asked, "Mr. Rocco, Why don't we make the link between Stanley and Meredith a class research project?" I replied, "Great idea!" The next day, the same student reported that Stanley and Meredith were cousins. Bingo again!

Later, two of my students, now colleagues, presented me with an original program from the first production of "The Music Man". It is autographed by the entire cast, and Meredith Willson. WOW!

Recently, one of those students, who has won positions with two major American orchestras, sent me the following email.

In my years of playing and teaching horn, I have learned a few truths about auditions. Many are culled from personal experience and feedback from committee members, but others are learned from Arnold Jacobs and Roger

Rocco. None of these maxims are especially original, but they seem to be profound keys to success.

Audition truths

#1) Make it sound easy. Let them wonder what you can't do, so don't show them.

#2) Treat the audition like a performance. Be expressive and tell a story.

#3) Let insistence on great pulse frame your singing.

#4) Live in the moment, from your first waking moment that day Till your last note played. Don't look ahead or behind.

#5) Be a singer, not a horn player.

#6) It is vastly more essential to be mentally committed than physically prepared.

#7) Overcome distractions!

All of these proved themselves at the semis and finals of a recent major orchestra audition. Adversity and distractions came in the form of equipment failure. In short, I was forced to use three strange instruments, as my own horn had a sudden de-soldering of the thumb key early in the day.

I borrowed two horns from fellow hornists, and even one horn from a committee member as I walked onstage. I was able to perform at a high level due entirely to my state of mind. Roger had emailed me a day earlier with a mantra: "It's just the singing!" This phrase rang through my head as I walked onstage: "It's just the singing!" I picked up the strange horn, and right before I committed to the first E-flat of the Strauss First Concerto: "It's just the singing!" How the horn responded was entirely meaningless to me, as I was in what Jake called "storyteller" mode.

"It's just the singing!"

I didn't have the time to test the horn to know if it were a larger bore size, more or less resistant to mine, or even how loudly I could play without the sound edging out. These facts are always irrelevant, and more so on this day. I controlled what I could: my state of mind.

I am reminded of the story Roger tells of the man drowning in a pool. His friend holds two items: one a brick, the other a life preserver. He tells you the life preserver will save you, but you have never seen one. You have however seen bricks, as your house is made of them, and feel comfortable with them.

Which one would you choose? The bricks (history of feel) or the life preserver (singing)?

I had no choice, and in hindsight the horn breakdown was a blessing, as it forced me to focus and showed the committee I could deal with extreme adversity.

Made for a memorable day, one that ended in success that I can now draw on for future use. I must say, in hindsight, though, the distractions presented by foreign horns is nothing compared to the distractions of our history of playing by feel.

"It's just the singing!"

THE MUSIC MAN

Harold Hill, the main character, is a crook. He decides to swindle the people in a small town (Mason City, Iowa) by telling them that he's a famous professor of music. If they purchase instruments and uniforms, he promises to develop a band program. He has no intention of doing anything other than skipping town with their money.

However, he meets and falls in love with the town librarian, Marion. He decides that he wants to stay after all. As a result, he must order instruments and uniforms and teach the band how to play their new instruments. Since his educational credentials are false, he doesn't really know what to do. After the instruments and uniforms arrive, he comes up with a "revolutionary new method of teaching music called, 'The Think System'."

At the first band rehearsal, and all subsequent rehearsals, Harold only asks the band to vocally sing the familiar Minuet in G by Beethoven. The band members are never asked to play their instruments because he doesn't know how to instruct them.

In time, the parents become suspicious and investigate his educational credentials. They eventually learn that there is no Music Conservatory in Gary, Indiana and that he must be a criminal. Just as the townspeople are about to have him arrested, the band marches into the scene.

Harold instructs the band to "Think" as they play the same music they have been singing endlessly. What is heard the first time they play their instruments, is crude but the melody is recognizable. It proves that Harold is not a phony after all. Yes, "The Think System" works!

PSYCHO-CYBERNETICS by MAXWELL MALTZ

"The mechanisms of success and failure are the same."

THE SELF IMAGE

Maxwell Maltz was a plastic surgeon who discovered the self image by accident. He noticed that as he surgically altered the appearance of his patients, their reaction to the cosmetic changes could be categorized into one of three groups.

1. Some of the patients experienced life altering changes. Many became more successful in their careers or they found love and married.

2. Others experienced no life changes whatsoever.

3. Although their appearance had been dramatically altered, the third group could not recognize any physical change when they viewed themselves in a mirror.

His observations eventually lead to our understanding of the mind's ability to consciously create imagery or awareness of ourselves, any object, or sound. This imagery, commonly referred to as "Creative Visualization", is a powerful force because it motivates a powerful response from the subconscious mind.

Maltz describes how the power of visualization can be used to create accomplishment. He tells the story of a famous golf teacher who said, "If I concentrate only on where I want the ball to go, it will go there even if I'm doing everything wrong mechanically."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I don't care if everything you are doing is wrong if it sounds good."

The obvious response to Jake's statement is that if it sounds good, it can't be wrong.

ROBERT CARTER (The Secret of the Ages)

"Our conscious awareness is the gateway leading to the subconscious mind."

"The Secret of the Ages is in the power of the subconscious mind."

SHINICHI SUZUKI

"We can learn to play an instrument the same way we learned to speak language."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them."

"I want you to have the (simplistic) mind of a child."

ROCCOISM

"Playing an instrument, or doing anything else, requires complex physical mechanics. However, we must use a simplistic approach to create accomplishment."

BARRY GREEN (The Inner Game of Music)

"Wouldn't you like to function on your instrument with the ease of a six year old child?"

TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS

We exist in two different worlds. There is the external world that we are partially aware of through our senses. I say partially aware because we can detect only a small portion of the spectrum of light with our eyes and a very limited range of frequency with our ears. There is a lot going on around us in the external world but we have little or no awareness of its presence.

There also is a unique and powerful internal universe within our bodies. This universe provides the opportunity for us to live and function in the external world. At the conscious level, we have very little awareness of this internal world unless something goes wrong. We usually experience pain or some other discomfort.

However, the internal universe is masterfully monitored and controlled at all times by our subconscious mind in order to maintain life. It also allows our conscious mind to create accomplishments other than for life support. Although it can be argued that everything we do in the external world such as maintain a job, exercise, or acquire food is also to provide for our life support.

The subconscious mind developed immense power because the complexities of life support are much more demanding than what even the most powerful computers can achieve. The subconscious mind also has complete awareness and control over all the muscles within the body.

For instance, we understand that at all times, our heart is pumping blood, food is moving through our bodies, and we are breathing without any conscious direction. However, these functions are continuously being directed by the subconscious mind. Life support cannot be sustained without specific direction from the brain.

If we decide to move an arm and hand to pick up a glass of water, the decision of how to manipulate the body parts takes place subconsciously in response to our conscious desire to pick up the glass. It is not necessary to have an intellectual understanding of the complex motor mechanics involved in manipulating body parts.

ROCCOISMS

"When we attempt to bring a subconscious function to the conscious level of thought, we destroy our ability to function."

"Our approach to playing an instrument should be no different than the approach we use to do anything else like walking or talking."

"We must maintain a symbiotic relationship between the subconscious (reactive) mind and the conscious (intellectual) mind. If that relationship is corrupted by our conscious interference, we lose the ability to create any accomplishment."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Paralysis by Analysis."

"Think sound not mechanics."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"The key to playing an instrument can be found in speech."

"It is best to be somewhat unconscious of our physical maneuvers, but highly conscious of our musical goals."

THE LADDER OF AWARENESS

The subconscious mind is reactive not intellectual. It always responds honestly and precisely to the will of the conscious mind, which is intellectual. If the will of the conscious mind is powerful and vivid, the response of the subconscious will be precisely the same. The subconscious mind cannot react independently of the conscious will. We cannot consciously decide to lift our right hand and have the subconscious mind lift the left hand instead.

Problems arise if the subconscious vision of the conscious awareness is vague, confused, or non-existent. This motivates the subconscious mind to react by searching for sound rather than responding to a vivid awareness of sound. We must motivate the subconscious mind to respond through motor systems rather than search utilizing sensory systems.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"You cannot create accomplishments using sensory system. You must motivate motor (muscle) systems."

"The nervous system is a one way street. You cannot create function motivating sensors and muscles at the same time."

ROCCOISMS

"If you don't have a powerful conscious awareness of the sound you want to produce, your subconscious will react by searching for the awareness somewhere else. Since the mouthpiece is on your lips, it will attempt to create a feel awareness of sound by trying to convert your lips into ears."

"The most powerful musical awareness is achieved when we mentally sing the notes as we play them."

"Mentally singing as we play may seem like a complicated or difficult thing to do, but it's easy if you are highly aware of the notes."

If we ask a child to buzz the familiar tune, "Mary had a little Lamb" on a mouthpiece, they are singing the notes in their head as they play them. It requires no instruction or conscious understanding of how it's achieved. They just do it! If we ask them to buzz an unfamiliar melody, they don't

do it. The most common question any music teacher ever hears is, "How does this go?"

Instinctively, young music students know that they can play the music if they know how it should sound. When I'm working with young inexperienced musicians, most of what I do to create accomplishment is to communicate what the music should sound like. Once that awareness is powerfully envisioned at the conscious level of thought, their subconscious reacts by doing what is necessary mechanically to realize their musical awareness.

"THE THINK SYSTEM"

It's nothing more than creating and maintaining a high level of musical awareness in the conscious mind. The subconscious will react precisely to create the necessary playing mechanics rather than search for sound awareness by feel at the embouchure.

ROCCOISMS

"Attempting to play by feel is like trying to drain the water from a swimming pool with a straw."

"Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

"Your subconscious mind already knows how to play the notes. It only needs to know the sound of the notes you want to play."

TOXIC SELF ANALYSIS - BEWARE THE ANALYZERS!

Some people naturally have analytic personalities. Unfortunately, some students have analytic teachers as well. Occasionally, I have also noticed that some analytic teachers are not analytic players themselves. And, some analytic players are not analytic teachers. The most paralyzing situation is the combination analytic player and teacher instructing an analytic student. Disastrous!

Often, analytic students are drawn to analytic teachers because they are searching for false comfort rather than an opportunity for success.

ROCCOISMS

"When you have an instrument in your hands, trying to find a "The Comfort Zone" is ultimately very uncomfortable."

"Feeling good when you play is a by-product of correct playing. You cannot motivate correct playing by trying to feel good first."

I remember when I was teaching applied tuba and euphonium at a major mid-west university. Frequently, groups of other brass students (trumpet, horn, trombone) would camp outside my studio door to listen to what was going on in the lesson. Some of the analyzers did not credit "The Think System" for the success they were hearing through the closed door.

A typical comment was, "That's baloney!" "They have figured out what's wrong with their embouchure and air, and eventually I will too!" Tragically, I have also heard such comments from highly accomplished professional brass players who eventually lost their careers.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

"Sound is the criterion for how we do this and that."

"THE THINK SYSTEM" + EMBOUCHURE AND BREATH ANALYSIS + TONGUE + FINGERS?

I have also heard such critical commentary as, "Yes, you must hear the notes, but you must also have a perfect embouchure and air."

WHAT IS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY MANY BRASS PLAYERS AND THEIR TEACHERS IS THAT CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF SOUND MOTIVATES A PERFECT EMBOUCHURE AND AIR.

ANALYSIS OF BODY PARTS AND UNDETECTABLE AIR MOTIVATE PARALYSIS!

ROCCOISMS

"When you accept "The Think System", you must also reject self-analysis. Like oil and water, the two can never come together. If you try to combine them, self analysis will always dominate and you will fail."

"It is possible to have only one conscious thought at a time."

"FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD"

The path to achieving success in Emerald City is not green, blue, or red. When the true path to success is clearly understood, we only have to stay on that path. The process of searching for other paths always leads to "The Witches Castle!"

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

The SBP formula was develop in order to directly apply "The Think System" in a powerful way.

ROCCOISMS

"At times, my students and I have failed to apply the SBP formula. But the formula has never failed anyone when it was applied."

"If someone understands how to perform, they can play on any equipment. If they don't know how to perform, they can't play on anything."

"If you are not playing well, it's because you have stopped doing what you normally do when you do play well."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing then buzz. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument."

THE BRASS TRILOGY

1. There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind.
2. Sound motivates function.
3. It's just the singing!

The brass player's conscious awareness must focus only on the sound they want to create with their instrument. Their conscious commitment to the sound will motivate the subconscious mind to do whatever is necessary mechanically to realize it with an instrument. The most vivid awareness is achieved by mentally singing the music as it's being played.

Roccoism

Your subconscious mind will respond faithfully and powerfully to your conscious will if you don't interfere with paralyzing self analysis.

Adolph Herseth

It's amazing what the lips can accomplish if you get your mind out of the way.

Arnold Jacobs

I believe that it is best to be somewhat unconscious of your physical maneuvers but highly conscious of your musical goals.

H. A. Vandercook Keep it simple. If you can sing it, you can play it.

Arnold Jacobs I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lip feels or how I feel.

Adolph Herseth When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing (vocally) then buzz (mouthpiece). Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument.

Meredith Willson "The Think System" from "The Music Man"

Marion, the librarian, speaking to Harold Hill, the bandmaster.

Is it true that you have developed a revolutionary new method of teaching music called "The Think System"?

Harold Hill Yes, it's really quite simple. Nobody has to teach you how to whistle. You only have to think the tune to have it come out perfectly clear.

Roger Rocco

We must have a childlike simplistic approach to executing the incredibly complex mechanical skills that are required to play an instrument or do anything else.

SING BUZZ PLAY

THE FINALE ULTIMO

For those who require a book, you are welcome to print these posts and bind the pages. Please accept this information as a gift from Arnold Jacobs who blessed me with a career and life in music. Roger

THE VALVELESS TUBA

Arnold Jacobs

"I don't fill the instrument with air. I fill it with vibrations (sound)."

Adolph Herseth

"When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing (vocally) then buzz. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument."

"Practice entire sessions on the mouthpiece alone to avoid having problems creep into your playing."

Roccoisms

"I gave tuba playing a long time ago. Now, I play an 18ft. mouthpiece with valves."

"Play the mouthpiece not the instrument."

For many years I have demonstrated in master classes and lessons, that I play the mouthpiece inside the tuba rather than play the tuba. The tuba is just a very selective amplifier of the sound that I create in the mouthpiece. I call the demonstration, "The Valveless Tuba" or "Tuba Gymnastics" I tell the listeners that it looks and sound like I'm playing the tuba but I'm not.

I perform very rapid scales and chords, or a technical etude without using valves. I play the three octave "gymnastics" very fast to disguise the fact that many of the notes are inaccurate or out of tune. As I play, I remove the mouthpiece from the leadpipe so the audience can hear that I am sending the same sound to the mouthpiece that they hear coming from the bell.

Recently, I cleaned one of my piston valve tubas and began the process of reassembling the instrument. Before inserting the valves, I decided to play it. The buzzing sound did not come out the bell but emerged from the first valve casing. I buzzed fairly loudly and fingered all the empty valve casings for about 30 minutes before placing my mouthpiece in an instrument with valves. I was careful to be sure that I was on pitch by playing familiar music.

After my extended practice session playing the valveless tuba, the resonance that came from the bell of the tuba with valves sounded as though Jake was playing! I immediately knew that I had discovered a valuable tool. It was a real valveless tuba rather than the fake one that I had been using in my "tuba gymnastics" demonstrations. Playing the valveless tuba was very similar but yet somewhat different from playing the mouthpiece alone, using a BERP, or buzzing into a megaphone (tubaphone).

I was more willing and able to commit to sending a resonant and accurate sound directly into the leadpipe of the real instrument rather than just the mouthpiece alone or an external device. I suspect that the reason is I have a much longer history of playing the mouthpiece inside the leadpipe than outside somewhere. Also, the valveless instrument accepts inaccurate frequencies.

Since the valveless tuba did not provide any amplification of my mouthpiece playing, I provided it myself by buzzing fairly loudly. When I sent the same level of tone production to the tuba with valves, the effortless sound coming from the bell was very full and resonant. I was surprised and somewhat distracted because it sounded like someone else playing!

I soon realized that I was not fully transferring the same mouthpiece playing from the valveless tuba to the one with valves because the frequencies were not quite accurate. I was not transferring the same commitment to mental singing that was being achieved playing the valveless instrument.

I REMINDED MYSELF THAT I ONLY NEEDED TO TRANSFER THE SINGING BECAUSE MENTAL SINGING, NOT FEEL, MOTIVATES THE PRODUCTION OF SOUND THAT CAN BE ACCEPTED BY THE VALVE TUBA!

LIBERATION

My experience playing the valveless tuba completely freed me from the paralyzing negative influence of the instrument. There are no consequences of failure because the leadpipe accepts just about any frequency. It's very forgiving of inaccuracy because no single harmonic series is defined by one column of air. There are infinite air columns.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL PLAYING THE VALVE TUBA IS FOR IT TO BECOME A VALVELESS TUBA!

Arnold Jacobs

"There are acoustical laws that must be obeyed. We must send in frequencies that the instrument can accept. To do this, we must mentally sing the notes as we play them."

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them. I don't care how my lip feels or how I feel."

I have frequently thought that maybe having valves on a brass instrument is not a good thing, That's not true! Valves are wonderful tools.

HOWEVER, WE MUST FULLY UNDERSTAND THEIR LIMITATIONS! VALVES DO NOT PRODUCE SOUND!

The primary function of valves is to aid technical facility playing in various keys, extend lower range using less tubing, and to improve intonation. Because valves allow the brass tubing to be shorter, there is room for larger bore sizes which provide greater amplification with varied timbres.

I frequently coach brass players before a professional audition. I ask, "How would you feel (confidence level) about the audition if it was to be played on the mouthpiece alone?" They always reply, "Great" or "No Problem" My immediate response is always, "GUESS WHAT? IT IS A MOUTHPIECE AUDITION!"

It is very important to understand that what motivates tone production when playing the mouthpiece, no matter where it is located, is to mentally sing the music as you create it. This is not difficult to accomplish! I have seen pre-school children buzz melodies on a trumpet mouthpiece without instruction if they imitate what they see and hear someone else doing.

The primary mental focus of mouthpiece playing outside the leadpipe is mentally singing the notes (melody) that you want to produce.

THE BRASS PLAYER'S STATE OF MIND (COMMITMENT TO SINGING!) MUST BE THE SAME REGARDLESS WHERE THE MOUTHPIECE IS LOCATED.

THE HOT STOVE SYNDROME

If an instrumentalist develops a history of failure, the resulting emotional pain and physical discomfort will become closely associated with and influenced by their instrument. The instrument reinforces the player's expectation of failure. The subconscious mind will respond to the player's expectation of failure by creating physical conditions that cause even more failure.

Eventually, the instrument becomes a "hot stove" that triggers a paralyzing reaction in the subconscious mind.

We become sabotaged by a subconscious response that is supposed to protect us from physical and emotional harm rather than cause it.

Roccoism

"We always realize our expectations whether they are positive or negative."

I have only seen the Hot Stove Syndrome, when someone played the mouthpiece outside the instrument, one time. I have had hundreds of people come to me for help when their instrument was negatively influencing them to the point of paralysis. However, they always can play the mouthpiece beautifully when it's outside the instrument.

When a brass player comes to me for help, I always ask to hear their mouthpiece playing first. After briefly listening, my response is always, "Wonderful, there's nothing wrong with your playing." Usually, they are startled by my evaluation. Sometimes their body language tells me that they think I'm lying. I immediately ask, "How do I know there is nothing wrong?" The obvious answer is because, "Your playing sounds good!"

Arnold Jacobs

"I don't care if what you are doing (physically) is all wrong if it sounds good."

Sometimes, a player will respond, "It may sound okay but it feels lousy." I remind them that Jake tells us that it doesn't matter how it feels. I also tell them that if they want their playing to feel better they must commit to the sound by mentally singing first.

Roccoisms

"Feeling good is a by-product of correct playing. You cannot motivate correct playing by trying to feel good first."

"Sound motivates function, not the reverse."

"Feel and Fail are four letter words to a brass player."

Yes, playing the mouthpiece somewhere other than in the leadpipe of an instrument, feels different. SO WHAT!!! To be truly liberated from the paralyzing influence of the instrument, we must transcend our physical feedback by committing to the production of sound in the mouthpiece.

Are we mentally singing when we play the mouthpiece outside the leadpipe? The answer is absolutely, positively, YES! There's no other way to make it happen!

It's not difficult to do unless we are more committed to the feel of playing, or physical mechanics rather than sound we want to come from the bell.

Roccoism

"The instrument has no sound of it's own. The only sound that will emerge from the bell is the sound that you produce in the mouthpiece which originates in your conscious mind."

Arnold Jacobs

"What you feel like (while playing) is not important. You should focus only on what you want to sound like."

"There are two instruments. One in your hands and one in your head. The one in your hands is a mirror reflecting the one in your head."

Adolph Herseth

"Think sound not mechanics."

Roccoisms

"Sound motivates function."

"There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind."

IT'S JUST THE SINGING!

The highest level of awareness of sound is achieved when we mentally sing the music as we play it. Our subconscious mind responds to the musical awareness by executing all the highly complex mechanics required play the instrument. The mechanics of playing are much too complex to be motivated by the conscious mind. This is the same process that we use for speaking. Our subconscious mind responds beautifully to our conscious thoughts of words without any intellectual understanding of how it's done.

IN THE ABSENCE OF A CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF SOUND, THE SUBCONSCIOUS BRAIN WILL ATTEMPT TO CREATE SOUND AWARENESS BY USING THE SENSE OF FEEL. IT WILL TRY TO CONVERT LIPS INTO EARS. THAT'S LIKE TRYING TO DRAIN THE WATER FROM A SWIMMING POOL WITH A STRAW.

Adolph Herseth

"It's amazing what we can achieve if we don't allow the (conscious) brain to interfere."

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

THE VALVELESS TUBA

The most important aspect of the valvesless tuba is not the transfer of imprecise resonance to the instrument with valves. We must transfer precisely tuned resonance. That can only be achieved by mentally singing. If we are only interested in transferring imprecise resonance, the instrument will reject the sound no matter how hard we work to impose it.

The real benefit of the valveless tuba is realized only when we are totally committed to the transfer of our mental singing. The valveless tuba reminds us of what that commitment is without the negative influence of the instrument. The motivation of that negative influence is our history of failure.

WE MUST TRANSCEND THE INSTRUMENT AND ALL OTHER DISTRACTIONS WITH OUR COMMITMENT TO THE SINGING OF THE MUSIC WE WANT TO CREATE. NOTHING ELSE MATTERS!!!

Adolph Herseth

"No greatness can be achieved if the brass player is paralyzed by fear."

Roccoism

"Courage is not the absence of fear. It's the will to function in spite of it."

IT'S JUST THE SINGING!

IT'S JUST THE SINGING!!!

IT'S JUST THE SINGING.....

I recently made a wonderful discovery about my four tubas. None of them have valves anymore!

Thursday, April 28, 2011

IT'S JUST THE SINGING!

Arnold Jacobs - "I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lips feels or how I feel."

When me and several of Jake's students were in the process of contributing to his book, Song and Wind, I told Brian Fredrickson, author and publisher, that those words were the most important in the book. In that statement, Jake says nothing about air, embouchure, tongue, lungs, diaphragm, or any other body part. However, he does strongly imply that those things don't matter at the conscious level of the brass player's awareness. He says that his commitment to mental singing is his most important consideration no matter of how his lips or the rest of him feels physically. Such simplicity is the secret of his success as a musician and teacher.

Roccoism - "We must have a simplistic approach to the intricate complexities of playing an instrument or doing anything else in everyday life."

Arnold Jacobs - "I want you to have the mind of a child, not that of an analytical adult."

"You may be analytical about the music but you must not be analytical about how to produce it."

"You must give dominance to the music you want to produce, not your instrument."

H.A. Vandercook - "If you can sing it, you can play it."

"Keep it simple."

Meredith Willson - "The Think System" from The Music Man

"Nobody has to teach you how to whistle. It's quite simple. You just have to think the tune to have it come out perfectly clear."

Robert Carter - The Secret of the Ages

"The real power of the mind is in the subconscious. The conscious mind is only a gateway to subconscious."

Roccoism - "Our approach to playing an instrument should be no different than the other things we do in everyday life."

Adolph Herseth - "Think sound not mechanics."

"Paralysis by analysis."

THE HOT STOVE SYNDROME

The subconscious mind is not intellectual it's reactive. If we touch a hot stove, it will react immediately to remove our hand. There are no intellectual considerations about whether the stove is harmful or uncomfortable or about how to respond. A powerful conscious will is required to override the reactive mind that wants to remove your hand from harm. It's not possible to consciously stop your heart from beating or to stop breathing for an extended period.

This subconscious protective response is much more powerful than the conscious will. Although the response protects us from harm in everyday life, it can sabotage us when we have an instrument in our hands.

CONDITIONED REFLEX

In time, our experiences, positive or negative, become associated with the instrument. If our playing history is mostly successful, the instrument will reinforce the continuation of the positive experiences. However, if we develop a history of failure, the instrument will have a powerful negative influence on the subconscious. That influence will motivate the protective reaction of the subconscious mind to prevent us from the continued emotional and physical harm associated with it. When the instrument becomes a hot stove, a variety of physical symptoms, from paralysis to uncontrollable shaking (dystonia), will make an ugly appearance.

THE DOUBLE BARRELED SHOTGUN

Brass players and vocalists experience the negative symptoms of failure at two levels. There is an anxious emotional response that all musicians experience when they fail and there is also physical discomfort. A friend of mine beautifully described the physical discomfort he experiences while playing the trumpet. "It feels like I'm trying to push a piano up the stairs." A horn player, who I have worked with recently, described physical discomfort in her entire face.

THE "FEEL GOOD" APPROACH TO BRASS PLAYING

Our natural response to physical or emotional pain is to eliminate it. We may take a medication to reduce the pain of a headache or we might remove ourselves from a toxic personal relationship.

Roccoism - "Feeling good is a by-product of playing correctly. We cannot motivate correct playing by trying to feel good first."

Most often, brass players respond to the physical symptoms of failure by trying to "fix" what seems to be wrong with their breathing, chops, tongue, or fingers.

Adolph Herseth - "There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

Malfunctioning body parts (chops, tongue, lungs, etc.) are the result of a problem in the brain, not the individual body parts. People who stutter have nothing wrong with their apparatus of speech. Many stutterers can easily sing lyrics with no malfunction. The problem and the solution to the problem is in the brain, not the vocal chords, tongue or lungs.

I remember the first lesson of the principal trumpet of one of the second tier American orchestras who was in serious jeopardy of losing his job. His first words to me were, "I just came from the doctor. The bad news is that there is nothing wrong with my chops." I responded, "That's the good news!"

RESPONSE TO FAILURE

Many brass players complain, "I was a better brass player in high school." or some earlier time in their lives. "What has happened to me?"

What has happened is that a history failure has developed and that history has become powerfully associated with and reinforced by the instrument in their hands. Why does anyone develop a history of failure? The simple answer is that some musicians never really learned how to be successful. Others alter their state of mind from what had originally brought them success.

Roccoisms - "Sound Motivates Function."

"Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

Adolph Herseth - "Sound is the criterion for how we do this and that."

"Paralysis by Analysis"

All musicians experience a certain amount of physical input when they play or sing. When that input becomes dominant over an awareness of sound, the musician has opened the door to a room of failure and misery.

Arnold Jacobs - "We cannot produce sound through sensory systems which provide input to the brain. We must stimulate the motor systems to produce output."

"Eighty to ninety percent of our consciousness must be devoted to an awareness of the sound we want to produce. Awareness of how we feel or of the external sound must be peripheral not dominant."

If a brass player, any instrumentalist, or vocalist gives dominance to "feel" (input), output (motor function) becomes greatly diminished or ceases completely.

THE SYMBIOTIC MIND

When there is a symbiotic relationship between the conscious and subconscious levels of awareness and function in the brain, wonderful accomplishments can be achieved.

Adolph Herseth - "It's amazing what we can accomplish when we get the interference of the (conscious) mind out of the way."

When the relationship is antagonistic, function ceases. The power of the imaginative and intellectual conscious mind can only be realized by an equally powerful subconscious response.

ROCCO'S LAW - MUSICAL RESPONSE = MUSICAL AWARENESS

Roccoism - "Climbing the ladder of musical awareness will bring you to the notes you want to play."

The subconscious (reactive) mind does not react independently of the conscious will unless there is no conscious will to react to. If you consciously think about lifting your right hand, the subconscious mind will not lift the left hand instead. When playing an instrument, the subconscious mind will function to realize the conscious awareness of sound. The realized sound will always be at precisely the same level as the player's conscious awareness. The familiar phrase, "garbage in, garbage out", is an accurate description of what occurs.

When the conscious awareness of sound is vague or absent, the reactive but irrational subconscious mind, will react by attempting to create a more powerful awareness of sound in another manner. It will revert to the lower level sense of feel and will attempt to the player's convert lips (mouthpiece/embouchure) into ears.

Roccoism - "Playing by feel is like trying to empty a swimming pool with a straw."

Since the lips are capable of producing sound but not detecting it, there is no auditory information available to realize and no playing mechanics will be motivated.

INTELLECT AND IMAGINATION

Roccoism - "Imagination is a much more powerful force than intellect because imagination motivates the amazing power of the subconscious while analytical intellect attempts to by-pass it."

Robert Carter in his book, *The Secret of the Ages*, tells us that the real power of the mind is in the subconscious. Every moment of our lives, the subconscious mind motivates whatever is necessary within us to maintain life.

The father of one of my brass students is a computer engineer. I once asked him if all the computers in the world were linked together, could they provide the same life sustaining functions of our subconscious mind? He replied, "No, they couldn't keep an ant alive."

If the subconscious no longer provided life sustaining function, could the conscious intellectual mind substitute? The answer again is no. When we attempt to substitute for the power of the subconscious with conscious analytical intellect, we will fail. We don't have enough intellectual capacity or awareness of the internal body parts necessary to motivate the many physical functions necessary to sustain life. Computers were invented and developed to compensate for our intellectual shortcomings!

What motivates the incredibly complex mechanics necessary for the flight of a bird? It obviously cannot be analytical intellect since the intellectual capacity of a bird is quite low. It must be imagination. The bird has a conscious awareness of where it wants to fly which is usually to find food or escape danger. There is no conscious awareness of how to make it happen. Along with sustaining life, the mechanics necessary to fly are a function of the bird's subconscious. This ability is already present in the bird's subconscious from before the time it emerges from it's shell.

THE LADDER OF MUSICAL AWARENESS

Every experienced school music teacher is aware of the question most often asked by their students after, "Can I use the bathroom?" In many years of teaching, no wind player has ever asked me about embouchure or air! Universally, the question music teachers hear most often is, "HOW DOES THIS GO?" The students understand that their ability to execute the notes is correlated with their musical awareness of the notes. Our ability to learn speech is based on the awareness of the sound of words, not an intellectual understanding of how to say them.

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

Adolph Herseth - "When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing (vocally) than buzz the mouthpiece. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument."

Herseth says nothing about air (fat, fast, slow etc.) or embouchure (tension, relaxation, or mouthpiece placement)!

The highest level of musical awareness is achieved by repetitions (sets of three) of vocalizing and buzzing away from the influence of the instrument. When we play the mouthpiece alone, we must maintain the same internal

mental singing that is required for external vocalization. The only thing that is different when buzzing the mouthpiece is that we substitute lips for vocal chords.

Roccoisms - "I gave up tuba playing a long time ago. Now I play an 18ft. mouthpiece with valves."

"Play the mouthpiece, not the instrument."

THE COMMITMENT

Roccoisms - "The level of tone production on an instrument is equal to the level of the player's mental commitment to the sound of the music."

"The subconscious mechanics required to play an instrument are motivated by the musician's conscious musical awareness, not the reverse."

"The highest level of musical awareness is achieved while singing vocally or mentally singing when playing an instrument."

"Transcend your instrument with a powerful awareness of the sound you want to produce."

Arnold Jacobs - "I always believe that it's important to be somewhat unconscious of our physical maneuvers but highly conscious of our musical goals."

"The key to success, playing an instrument, can be found in speech."

FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

A high level of musical awareness is required to transcend all influences such as the feel of chops, or the negative conditioning associated with the instrument. I have developed a very basic formula that elevates the musician's musical awareness.

Roccoism - "My students and I have failed to apply the SING, BUZZ, PLAY formula. However, when we did apply it, it has never failed us."

1. The Repetition of Three - Sing vocally and Buzz the mouthpiece in any combination of three repetitions. Familiar musical phrases should be buzzed loudly to encourage tone production. Midrange transposition may be used if the music is too high or low to achieve a resonant sound.

Example - Sing 1X - Buzz 2X; Sing 2X - Buzz 1X; Buzz 3X etc.

2. Repeat the sets as necessary until you are able to transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument. Sometimes only a single repetition of singing or buzzing is necessary.

3. The ultimate goal is maintain mental singing while playing without any preparatory repetitions.

4. The commitment to mental singing must be total, without any other considerations or concerns, such as air, embouchure, or fingering (slide).

5. Applying this formula, a history of success must first be achieved in the practice room. As the player experiences more success, their expectation of success will grow.

Roccoisms - "Your subconscious mind already knows how to play the notes. It only needs to be highly aware of the notes you want to play."

"We always realize our expectations, positive or negative."

"Ben Franklin said, "The only truths in the world are death and taxes. There is a third truth. SING, BUZZ, PLAY"

"There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind."

The Teacher
ROCCOISMS

"The primary job of a teacher is to create opportunities for success."

"The most important student of any teacher is the one they see in the mirror."

"A great teacher has an opportunity to influence other lives in a profound way."

"There are many who can play instruments very well. However, a great teacher is very rare."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I hope to be remembered for my teaching more than my playing."

As a young musician, I first learned of the great power of teachers to influence lives when they influenced mine. I was fortunate to have wonderful teachers in my early in my career. Jake was the most influential but there were many others. Some, like Adolph Herseth and Ed Kleinhammer, taught me by example. I never had a formal lesson, but I had profound opportunities to learn from them whenever I was in their presence.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I EVER LEARNED FROM JAKE AND THE OTHERS WAS MUSICAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY.

A student at Vandercook College of Music once asked, "Mr. Rocco, Why are you such a great teacher?" I responded, "Because I was lucky to have great teachers myself." I have always considered my work training teachers to be the most important of my career.

I once attend a lecture given by a teacher who was the recipient of "The Golden Apple Award" for his excellence in education. He spoke of the advice his mother, also a teacher, gave him when he was considering entering the education profession. She advised, "If you love history, become a college professor. If you love children, become a teacher."

ROCCOISMS

"There is a profound difference between the subject we teach and to whom we teach it."

"A great teacher must love their students more than what they are teaching."

We have all experienced learned scholars, who have extensive knowledge of their subject, but are poor teachers. Most often, that's because they love their field of study more than their students.

It is understood that someone who teaches music must love music. The challenges of trying to make a living in the music profession are a test of that love. However, it is a fact that some teach music because it's not possible for them to perform professionally. They may be highly accomplished musicians but the professional performance opportunities do not exist.

Sometimes, these unhappy performers become unhappy teachers as well. Unfortunately, they also end up with unhappy students.

ROCCOISMS

"Always remember that the students in your studio, classroom, or rehearsal room are not there for your benefit. They are in your care to receive the experience of music. When you provide that experience for your students, you will also receive a great benefit."

"As a teacher, you must continue to develop your personal performance skills. If you stop playing your instrument, you will forget why you have a career in music."

"Let the music be your most powerful guide in teaching. If you listen carefully, it will tell you everything you need to know."

"Sound motivates function."

"The question heard most often by any music teacher is, "How does this go?"

H.E. Nutt

"To teach is to learn twice."

In November 2005, The Instrumentalist magazine featured me in an article about a brass player who has success teaching string and woodwind instruments. I mention that, "My students know much more about their instruments than I do. However, I know much more about the music. That's all I need."

Everything I do as a teacher in a classroom, rehearsal room, or lesson studio is about helping my students develop a higher awareness of the music they are attempting to play. I consider my lack of technical knowledge to be an advantage because I'm not distracted from the music. Most importantly, I'm not distracting my students either.

Recently, one of the violinists in the Mother McAuley High School Orchestra asked, "Mr. Rocco, why don't you ever say anything about the violin? You only talk about the music."

I replied, "Be thankful because you already know a lot about the violin. It's the music that you need to know more."

ROCCOISMS

"If your heart is not pounding in your chest from the thrill of what you just played, you must see your doctor. There's something wrong."

"Take what you learned and experienced with you. Don't leave a single crumb on the floor."

"I know what it is like to be a suffering brass player. Fortunately, I also know the joy of playing well. Suffering is not a requirement in order to experience the joy, but it's an inevitable outcome for someone who does not know how to create success."

THE JACOBS LEGACY

Since his death in 1998, I have heard this remark on many occasions.

"I'm experiencing problems in my playing. I wish that Jake was still around."

Yes, we have lost Jake's personality and the twinkle in his eyes. However, his spirit and knowledge are still with us because it lives within the many devoted students he left behind.

If you need help, ask for it anytime! (rogrocco@aol.com)

"The Think System"

HAROLD HILL

"Nobody has to teach you how to whistle. It's really very simple. You just have to think the tune to have it come out perfectly clear."

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"Keep it simple."

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Which one would you choose? The bricks (history of feel) or the life preserver (singing)?

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However, he meets and falls in love with the town librarian, Marion. He decides that he wants to stay after all. As a result, he must order

instruments and uniforms and teach the band how to play their new instruments. Since his educational credentials are false, he doesn't really know what to do. After the instruments and uniforms arrive, he comes up with a "revolutionary new method of teaching music called, 'The Think System'."

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His observations eventually lead to our understanding of the mind's ability to consciously create imagery or awareness of ourselves, any object, or sound. This imagery, commonly referred to as "Creative Visualization", is a powerful force because it motivates a powerful response from the subconscious mind.

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TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS

We exist in two different worlds. There is the external world that we are partially aware of through our senses. I say partially aware because we can detect only a small portion of the spectrum of light with our eyes and a very limited range of frequency with our ears. There is a lot going on around us in the external world but we have little or no awareness of its presence.

There also is a unique and powerful internal universe within our bodies. This universe provides the opportunity for us to live and function in the external world. At the conscious level, we have very little awareness of this internal world unless something goes wrong. We usually experience pain or some other discomfort.

However, the internal universe is masterfully monitored and controlled at all times by our subconscious mind in order to maintain life. It also allows our conscious mind to create accomplishments other than for life support. Although it can be argued that everything we do in the external world such as maintain a job, exercise, or acquire food is also to provide for our life support.

The subconscious mind developed immense power because the complexities of life support are much more demanding than what even the most powerful computers can achieve. The subconscious mind also has complete awareness and control over all the muscles within the body.

For instance, we understand that at all times, our heart is pumping blood, food is moving through our bodies, and we are breathing without any conscious direction. However, these functions are continuously being directed by the subconscious mind. Life support cannot be sustained without specific direction from the brain.

If we decide to move an arm and hand to pick up a glass of water, the decision of how to manipulate the body parts takes place subconsciously in response to our conscious desire to pick up the glass. It is not necessary to have an intellectual understanding of the complex motor mechanics involved in manipulating body parts.

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"Paralysis by Analysis."

"Think sound not mechanics."

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THE LADDER OF AWARENESS

The subconscious mind is reactive not intellectual. It always responds honestly and precisely to the will of the conscious mind, which is intellectual. If the will of the conscious mind is powerful and vivid, the response of the subconscious will be precisely the same. The subconscious mind cannot react independently of the conscious will. We cannot consciously decide to lift our right hand and have the subconscious mind lift the left hand instead.

Problems arise if the subconscious vision of the conscious awareness is vague, confused, or non-existent. This motivates the subconscious mind to react by searching for sound rather than responding to a vivid awareness of sound. We must motivate the subconscious mind to respond through motor systems rather than search utilizing sensory systems.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"You cannot create accomplishments using sensory system. You must motivate motor (muscle) systems."

"The nervous system is a one way street. You cannot create function motivating sensors and muscles at the same time."

ROCCOISMS

"If you don't have a powerful conscious awareness of the sound you want to produce, your subconscious will react by searching for the awareness somewhere else. Since the mouthpiece is on your lips, it will attempt to create a feel awareness of sound by trying to convert your lips into ears."

"The most powerful musical awareness is achieved when we mentally sing the notes as we play them."

"Mentally singing as we play may seem like a complicated or difficult thing to do, but it's easy if you are highly aware of the notes."

If we ask a child to buzz the familiar tune, "Mary had a little Lamb" on a mouthpiece, they are singing the notes in their head as they play them. It requires no instruction or conscious understanding of how it's achieved. They just do it! If we ask them to buzz an unfamiliar melody, they don't do it. The most common question any music teacher ever hears is, "How does this go?"

Instinctively, young music students know that they can play the music if they know how it should sound. When I'm working with young inexperienced musicians, most of what I do to create accomplishment is to communicate what the music should sound like. Once that awareness is powerfully envisioned at the conscious level of thought, their subconscious reacts by doing what is necessary mechanically to realize their musical awareness.

"THE THINK SYSTEM"

It's nothing more than creating and maintaining a high level of musical awareness in the conscious mind. The subconscious will react precisely to create the necessary playing mechanics rather than search for sound awareness by feel at the embouchure.

ROCCOISMS

"Attempting to play by feel is like trying to drain the water from a swimming pool with a straw."

"Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

"Your subconscious mind already knows how to play the notes. It only needs to know the sound of the notes you want to play."

TOXIC SELF ANALYSIS - BEWARE THE ANALYZERS!

Some people naturally have analytic personalities. Unfortunately, some students have analytic teachers as well. Occasionally, I have also noticed that some analytic teachers are not analytic players themselves. And, some analytic players are not analytic teachers. The most paralyzing situation is the combination analytic player and teacher instructing an analytic student. Disastrous!

Often, analytic students are drawn to analytic teachers because they are searching for false comfort rather than an opportunity for success.

ROCCOISMS

"When you have an instrument in your hands, trying to find a "The Comfort Zone" is ultimately very uncomfortable."

"Feeling good when you play is a by-product of correct playing. You cannot motivate correct playing by trying to feel good first."

I remember when I was teaching applied tuba and euphonium at a major mid-west university. Frequently, groups of other brass students (trumpet, horn, trombone) would camp outside my studio door to listen to what was going on in the lesson. Some of the analyzers did not credit "The Think System" for the success they were hearing through the closed door.

A typical comment was, "That's baloney!" "They have figured out what's wrong with their embouchure and air, and eventually I will too!" Tragically, I have also heard such comments from highly accomplished professional brass players who eventually lost their careers.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

"Sound is the criterion for how we do this and that."

"THE THINK SYSTEM" + EMBOUCHURE AND BREATH ANALYSIS + TONGUE + FINGERS?

I have also heard such critical commentary as, "Yes, you must hear the notes, but you must also have a perfect embouchure and air."

WHAT IS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY MANY BRASS PLAYERS AND THEIR TEACHERS IS THAT CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF SOUND MOTIVATES A PERFECT EMBOUCHURE AND AIR.

ANALYSIS OF BODY PARTS AND UNDETECTABLE AIR MOTIVATE PARALYSIS!

ROCCOISMS

"When you accept "The Think System", you must also reject self analysis. Like oil and water, the two can never come together. If you try to combine them, self analysis will always dominate and you will fail."

"It is possible to have only one conscious thought at a time."

"FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD"

The path to achieving success in Emerald City is not green, blue, or red. When the true path to success is clearly understood, we only have to stay on that path. The process of searching for other paths always leads to "The Witches Castle!"

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

The SBP formula was develop in order to directly apply "The Think System" in a powerful way.

ROCCOISMS

"At times, my students and I have failed to apply the SBP formula. But the formula has never failed anyone when it was applied."

"If someone understands how to perform, they can play on any equipment. If they don't know how to perform, they can't play on anything."

"If you are not playing well, it's because you have stopped doing what you normally do when you do play well."

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"The key to playing an instrument can be found in speech."

"It is best to be somewhat unconscious of our physical maneuvers, but highly conscious of our musical goals."

THE LADDER OF AWARENESS

The subconscious mind is reactive not intellectual. It always responds honestly and precisely to the will of the conscious mind, which is intellectual. If the will of the conscious mind is powerful and vivid, the response of the subconscious will be precisely the same. The subconscious mind cannot react independently of the conscious will. We cannot consciously decide to lift our right hand and have the subconscious mind lift the left hand instead.

Problems arise if the subconscious vision of the conscious awareness is vague, confused, or non-existent. This motivates the subconscious mind to react by searching for sound rather than responding to a vivid awareness of sound. We must motivate the subconscious mind to respond through motor systems rather than search utilizing sensory systems.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"You cannot create accomplishments using sensory system. You must motivate motor (muscle) systems."

"The nervous system is a one way street. You cannot create function motivating sensors and muscles at the same time."

ROCCOISMS

"If you don't have a powerful conscious awareness of the sound you want to produce, your subconscious will react by searching for the awareness somewhere else. Since the mouthpiece is on your lips, it will attempt to create a feel awareness of sound by trying to convert your lips into ears."

"The most powerful musical awareness is achieved when we mentally sing the notes as we play them."

"Mentally singing as we play may seem like a complicated or difficult thing to do, but it's easy if you are highly aware of the notes."

If we ask a child to buzz the familiar tune, "Mary had a little Lamb" on a mouthpiece, they are singing the notes in their head as they play them. It requires no instruction or conscious understanding of how it's achieved. They just do it! If we ask them to buzz an unfamiliar melody, they don't do it. The most common question any music teacher ever hears is, "How does this go?"

Instinctively, young music students know that they can play the music if they know how it should sound. When I'm working with young inexperienced musicians, most of what I do to create accomplishment is to communicate what the music should sound like. Once that awareness is powerfully envisioned at the conscious level of thought, their subconscious reacts by doing what is necessary mechanically to realize their musical awareness.

"THE THINK SYSTEM"

It's nothing more than creating and maintaining a high level of musical awareness in the conscious mind. The subconscious will react precisely to create the necessary playing mechanics rather than search for sound awareness by feel at the embouchure.

ROCCOISMS

"Attempting to play by feel is like trying to drain the water from a swimming pool with a straw."

"Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

"Your subconscious mind already knows how to play the notes. It only needs to know the sound of the notes you want to play."

TOXIC SELF ANALYSIS - BEWARE THE ANALYZERS!

Some people naturally have analytic personalities. Unfortunately, some students have analytic teachers as well. Occasionally, I have also noticed that some analytic teachers are not analytic players themselves. And, some analytic players are not analytic teachers. The most paralyzing situation is the combination analytic player and teacher instructing an analytic student. Disastrous!

Often, analytic students are drawn to analytic teachers because they are searching for false comfort rather than an opportunity for success.

ROCCOISMS

"When you have an instrument in your hands, trying to find a "The Comfort Zone" is ultimately very uncomfortable."

"Feeling good when you play is a by-product of correct playing. You cannot motivate correct playing by trying to feel good first."

I remember when I was teaching applied tuba and euphonium at a major mid-west university. Frequently, groups of other brass students (trumpet, horn, trombone) would camp outside my studio door to listen to what was going on in the lesson. Some of the analyzers did not credit "The Think System" for the success they were hearing through the closed door.

A typical comment was, "That's baloney!" "They have figured out what's wrong with their embouchure and air, and eventually I will too!" Tragically, I have also heard such comments from highly accomplished professional brass players who eventually lost their careers.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

"Sound is the criterion for how we do this and that."

"THE THINK SYSTEM" + EMBOUCHURE AND BREATH ANALYSIS + TONGUE + FINGERS?

I have also heard such critical commentary as, "Yes, you must hear the notes, but you must also have a perfect embouchure and air."

WHAT IS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY MANY BRASS PLAYERS AND THEIR TEACHERS IS THAT CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF SOUND MOTIVATES A PERFECT EMBOUCHURE AND AIR.

ANALYSIS OF BODY PARTS AND UNDETECTABLE AIR MOTIVATE PARALYSIS!

ROCCOISMS

"When you accept "The Think System", you must also reject self-analysis. Like oil and water, the two can never come together. If you try to combine them, self-analysis will always dominate and you will fail."

"It is possible to have only one conscious thought at a time."

"FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD"

The path to achieving success in Emerald City is not green, blue, or red. When the true path to success is clearly understood, we only have to stay on that path. The process of searching for other paths always leads to "The Witches Castle!"

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

The SBP formula was developed in order to directly apply "The Think System" in a powerful way.

ROCCOISMS

"At times, my students and I have failed to apply the SBP formula. But the formula has never failed anyone when it was applied."

"If someone understands how to perform, they can play on any equipment. If they don't know how to perform, they can't play on anything."

"If you are not playing well, it's because you have stopped doing what you normally do when you do play well."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing then buzz. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument."

The Myths of Focal Dystonia
FOCAL DYSTONIA (Wikipedia.org)

"A neurological condition that causes the involuntary contraction of muscles."

Focal dystonia is a common, but incorrect application of the term describing the paralyzing condition experienced by too many instrumentalists and singers. The condition is very rarely involuntary contraction of muscles. Most often, it's involuntary paralysis of muscles.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

I recall the time I first met a very fine professional trumpet player who came to me for help with the paralysis he was experiencing when he tried

to play. He was in danger of losing his job as principal of a second tier American orchestra.

His first words to me were, "Roger, I have bad news. I just came from the doctor and he told me there's nothing wrong with my chops." I replied, "That's the good news!"

In 1976, while I was a member of the Seattle Symphony, I personally experienced total paralysis when I attempted to play the tuba. The condition developed over a period of about two years. It took me two years to recover well enough to play again professionally. Like a person with a history of substance abuse, I have been in recovery ever since. However, recovery from such a devastating hell can be a wonderful learning opportunity! It's a life altering experience similar to someone who recovers from a near fatal illness.

Unfortunately, very few musicians recover because they don't understand the cause of the condition and they don't know what to do about it. Frequently, they are advised by the medical or educational communities to give up their careers because there is no treatment. I have heard of some ill advised treatments such as cortisone injections in the lips.

I have watched some of the finest musicians in the world give up their careers because they believed what they were being told. I have helped myself and many others resume their careers.

THE MYTHS

1. The paralysis is physical rather than psychological.
2. The paralysis is not treatable.

CASE STUDY

A few years ago, I received a call from a very fine flutist who I first met when she was as a high school student. She was in her forties and had a professional career for many years. She told me that she had seen doctors and flute teachers all over the world. She was told she had focal dystonia.

I asked her to describe her physical symptoms. She replied, "There is pain in my right hand and it is paralyzed. I can barely finger the instrument" I asked, "Are these symptoms present only when you play the flute?" She responded, "Yes!" I immediately understood that she did not have a physical problem with her hand. The problem was psychological.

I remember asking her two important questions:

1. How long have you experienced symptoms of pain and paralysis? She responded,
"Fifteen years!"
2. What were you doing professionally fifteen years ago? "I was giving eighty private flute lessons per week."

It became obvious that she was influenced by the elementary level playing she was experiencing endlessly.

JAY FRIEDMAN

"After a day of giving lessons, I sound more and more like my students."

As the quality of her playing deteriorated, she became anxious and unhappy. She tried to treat the symptoms of her deteriorating tone and technique. Eventually, the flute became a "hot stove". Her subconscious mind reacted to prevent further emotional pain by creating paralysis and physical pain in her right hand. The protective reaction was no protection because it greatly exacerbated the condition.

I brought her back to the music by having her vocally sing and finger the flute. Interestingly, she had no pain in her hand unless she fingered and played the flute.

Essentially, I applied the SBP formula without the buzzing. When she was able to maintain mental singing as she played, her hand functioned without pain. As she repeated the singing and fingering process, her playing returned to normal and she was able to renew her professional career.

Adolph Herseth understood that the lower performance level of students could have a negative influence on his playing. He always said that his first duty was as principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony so he limited his private lessons to a few select students.

SYMPTOMS OF INVOLUNTARY PARALYSIS

Since no one intentionally wills paralysis when playing an instrument or doing anything else, all muscle paralysis is involuntary. Most often, involuntary paralysis occurs in the hands of woodwind, string, and keyboard players, and with the embouchure, tongue, or breathing of brass players.

Most musicians and teachers make the mistake of attempting to treat the symptoms rather than the cause of paralysis. Misdiagnosis always leads to greater paralysis and more failure.

The first symptom of paralysis for woodwind, string, and keyboard players is usually pain in their hands or their inability to finger technical passages that were easy in the past. The first symptom for brass players is usually their inability to play initial notes in rhythm. Later, accuracy and range gradually diminish. I frequently notice that brass players, who have advanced stages of involuntary paralysis, can no longer function in their midrange or lower register. They may retain some function in their upper register.

Since this condition takes some time to develop, I have never seen it in beginners. It can be somewhat common in intermediate musicians, but the worst cases I have encountered are in highly accomplished professionals.

ROCCOISMS

"Most people never realize their dreams because they are paralyzed by fear of failure."

"Fear is motivated by an expectation of impending doom. It can only be controlled by altering the expectation."

"If you are fearful because you are standing at the edge of a 1000 foot cliff, step back from the edge of the cliff."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"A trumpeter's life is risky business. No greatness can be achieved if the player is paralyzed by fear."

"If you are fearful when you play the trumpet, you should consider not playing it."

BARRIER OF FEAR

The emotion of fear is a subconscious protective reaction to an expectation of physical or emotional harm. It cannot be controlled by the conscious mind. If we say to someone or ourselves, "relax" or "Don't be afraid", they usually become more aware of their fear and even more fearful.

CONDITIONED REFLEX

Physical and emotional experiences while playing eventually become associated with and influenced by the instrument.

PAVLOV'S DOG

Most people are familiar with the experiment of the salivating dog and bell by the well known Russian behavioral psychologist. He rang a bell each time he provided food to a dog. In time, a powerful association developed between food and the sound of the bell. Eventually, the sound of the bell alone caused the dog to salivate even though no food was present.

THE HOT STOVE

From experience, everyone eventually learns that touching a hot stove is a harmful and unpleasant experience. When it occurs, we don't have a conscious intellectual decision about what to do next. We don't think, "This is very uncomfortable and harmful, what should I do about it?"

There is a powerful protective reaction in the subconscious (Mark Douglas, Trading in the Zone) that immediately overrides the conscious will, causing the hand to move away from the hot stove. It's almost impossible to prevent this subconscious reaction from occurring.

NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE CONDITIONING

The instrumentalist's emotional and physical experiences eventually become associated with the instrument they are holding for endless hours. If the history is dominated by failure, they will develop an expectation of

failure. Unfortunately, a brass player receives a double dose of negative conditioning from their failure. They experience both emotional pain and physical discomfort. The protective reaction in the subconscious reacts powerfully to both in the same manner.

ROCCOISM

"We always realize our expectations."

SABOTAGE!

Unfortunately, the subconscious mind reacts to protect us from experiencing the emotional and physical pain of failure by causing paralysis. This is no different than the paralysis that prevents us from touching the hot stove. In time, the instrument becomes a hot stove!

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE CONSCIOUS WILL (INTELLECT) AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS (REACTIVE) MIND.

Consciously, the musician wants to create the mechanics necessary to play their instrument. Subconsciously, their mind wants to protect them from experiencing the emotional pain and physical discomfort of failure. This antagonistic relationship always results in increased failure and an even greater expectation of failure. The downward spiral eventually leads to total paralysis if the condition is not alleviated.

ROCCOISMS

"The subconscious mind is infinitely more powerful than the conscious will. If there is conflict between the two, the subconscious will always win the battle."

"When playing an instrument or doing anything else, we must always achieve a symbiotic, rather than an antagonistic relationship, between the conscious and subconscious mind."

ROBERT CARTER (The Secret of the Ages)

"The conscious mind is the gateway providing information to the subconscious."

CASE STUDY

I received a call from a very fine professional horn player in Chicago. He had been performing in the pit orchestra for a very successful show that had been running for several years. He said, "I have been on vacation from the show for the past two weeks. My playing has deteriorated to the point where I don't think I can continue."

Although we had never met, I immediately understood what was going on. Because he had been performing the same music eight times a week for several years, he began to play less mindfully. His playing became somewhat "automatic" or on "autopilot". As a result, he opened the door for failure

to make an appearance. The feel of symptoms of failure became increasingly dominant while his awareness of the music faded away.

ROCCOISM

"In addition to the poor sounds coming from the bell, the brass player also experiences physical symptoms associated with their failure."

A friend colorfully describes the physical symptoms. "It feels like I'm trying to push a piano up the stairs when I play my trumpet."

It's normal for us to try to alleviate such uncomfortable physical symptoms, which usually manifest themselves in the embouchure, breathing, and sometimes the throat.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Sound is the criteria for how we do this and that."

The horn player described the physical problems with his embouchure that he was trying to correct. Of course, I immediately understood that source of his symptoms was not in his embouchure. It was in his "state of mind."

We spoke in the phone for an hour. I explained his embouchure malfunction was only symptomatic of problems in his conscious mind. He needed to restore his dominance to musical awareness rather than "feel" awareness.

ROCCOISMS

"Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

"Playing by feel is like trying to drain a swimming pool with a straw."

"If your playing is not motivated by a powerful awareness of sound, you will attempt to motivate it with a weak sense of feel. Failure will be the only possible outcome."

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

I instructed him to apply the SBP formula in sets of three repetitions until he was able to restore his ability to execute playing mechanics normally. It is important to understand that I did not discuss playing mechanics.

ROCCOISMS

"Playing mechanics cannot be motivated by the conscious will because the motor skills are much too complex for the intellectual mind. Playing mechanics can only be achieved by the powerful subconscious (reactive) mind."

"Your subconscious mind already knows how to execute the notes. Your conscious mind only needs to be highly aware of the notes you want to play, not mechanics."

I ASKED HIM TO CONSCIOUSLY FOCUS ONLY ON THE MUSICAL SOUNDS HE WANTED TO PRODUCE.

The knowledge of how to produce sound was established in his mind many years ago. And, it was still present but it needed to be motivated by his powerful awareness of sound.

ROCCOISM

"It is sound motivates function, not function motivates sound."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"The seventh cranial nerve transmits my musical thoughts to my lips, but I don't know a thing about how it happens."

"I was a good brass player until my first analytical teacher came along and attempted to teach me how to play."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Think sound, not mechanics."

I'm happy to report the horn player did return to the show successfully. Over a period of three years, he had about six lessons. He is now performing at the highest level of his career.

TREATMENT vs. CURE

ROCCOISMS

"All our life experiences are stored in long term memory forever. Memory cannot be deleted like files in a computer."

"We cannot erase our past. It must be replaced."

"Being chased by a tiger is fatal only if you cannot outrun it."

"There is no cure for our bad habits. There is a treatment, which is to create new habits that dominate the old. However, if we discontinue treatment, without fail, the old habits will reemerge."

"The bad news is that there is no cure for your paralysis. The good news is that it's treatable and you will be able to continue your career. If you are highly motivated, you will emerge from this experience performing at new levels of excellence."

"If you want to understand what I'm teaching you, teach it to someone else."

H.E. NUTT

"To teach is to learn twice."

"THE FINALE ULTIMO"

1. The paralysis experienced by so many highly accomplished musicians is treatable.
2. The treatment does not involve medications or injections.
3. Playing skills that were present before paralysis occurred, are stored in long term memory.
4. It is not necessary to relearn our playing skills. We only have to understand how to access the skills that have not disappeared.
5. Playing mechanics are motivated, at the subconscious level of the mind, by a brass player's conscious awareness of musical sound.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"The brass player should be somewhat unconscious of their physical maneuvers but highly conscious of their musical sound."

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lip feels or how I feel."

"It's not what you sound like that's important. What is important is what you want to sound like."

MAXWELL MALTZ (Psycho Cybernetics)

"The mechanisms of failure and success are the same."

ROCCOISMS

"Climbing the 'Ladder of Awareness' of sound will bring you to the notes you want to play."

"Feeling good is a by-product of playing correctly. You cannot establish correct playing by trying to feel good first."

"Failure is permanent only if the brass player doesn't understand how to create success."

"Follow the yellow brick road."

The Brassaphone
ROCCOISMS

"I gave up tuba playing a long time ago. Now, I'm a mouthpiece player!"

"Play the mouthpiece, not the instrument."

"It's just a long mouthpiece with valves or a slide."

"Play the mouthpiece in the same manner no matter where it is, in your hand or the leadpipe."

I recall Jake commenting to me, "You have two different mouthpiece playing techniques. One technique when it's inside the horn and a different one when the mouthpiece is in your hand. You must transfer the same successful mouthpiece playing technique you use when it's outside the instrument to the instrument."

At the time, I didn't fully understand his comment. However, I knew that when I played the mouthpiece outside the instrument, my playing was always easy and I sounded good. However, I didn't always have the same experience when I placed it in the horn.

Later, I realized that I was forced to mentally sing the notes when I played the mouthpiece alone. There was no other way to realize different pitches. However, when I placed it in the horn, my forced singing was replaced with forced feeling because the singing stopped. Failure was the predictable result.

ROCCOISMS

"Feel and Fail are four letter words to a brass player."

"Playing by feel is like trying to drain a swimming pool with a straw."

"The instrument is just a length of brass tubing. It already has plenty of air but it has no intelligence or sound of its own. That can only come from the mind of the player."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing then buzz. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument."

"Practice entire sessions on the mouthpiece alone to avoid having problems creep into your playing."

As a young tuba player, I developed a virtuoso mouthpiece technique. On several occasions, people hearing me play in a hallway or a closed room mistook me for Jake. Wow! What a compliment! I routinely played the mouthpiece for 45-60 minutes a day.

I enjoyed playing along with my favorite Reiner-CSO recordings. Actually, there were no favorites. They are all wonderful examples of the finest art of orchestral performance!

While I was a music student at Roosevelt University in downtown Chicago, I frequently took long walks along the lakefront with my mouthpiece in hand.

THE KEY IN THE LOCK

THE MOUTHPIECE-INSTRUMENT DILEMMA

I'm always amazed that very few brass players or wind players understand the acoustics of their instrument. In my lectures, I frequently ask, "What is the resonating element of a brass instrument?"

The surprising responses usually range from blank stares to lips or lungs. I usually reply, "Do your vibrating lips sound like a brass instrument?" "Does an oboe reed sound like an oboe?"

The obvious answer is no because vibrating lips or a reed are only the catalyst that initiates the vibration of the air column within a length of tubing. Since the air is already present within the tubing, it is not necessary to "fill the instrument with air."

ROCCOISM

"The instrument already has plenty of air but it has no sound. Fill it with sound."

THE RESONATING AIR COLUMN OF ALL WIND INSTRUMENTS

Once I establish that the resonating element of a brass instrument is the vibrating air column, I ask students, "What method is used to vibrate the air column?"

Again, the responses range from blank stares, to "pushing air through the instrument". Someone usually mentions first vibrating the lips but they are unable to explain how that initiates the resonance of the air column.

I explain that the process is not like using friction to create resonance with a string instrument or concussion on a percussion instrument.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"There are acoustical laws that must be obeyed."

SYMPATHETIC RESONANCE

We must send a resonance through the mouthpiece to the air column that it can respond too, the partials of the overtone series. If the source frequency we are creating in the mouthpiece is identical (sympathetic) to a frequency of the overtone series, the air column will begin to vibrate at that frequency. If the two pitches are not sympathetic, the air column will reject the catalytic frequency, causing embouchure malfunction and resistance of breath. Unfortunately, traditional brass pedagogy is more focused on treating these symptoms of failure rather than the cause.

THE CUTAWAY MOUTHPIECE

I remember a cutaway mouthpiece Jake used with his students to encourage them to play the mouthpiece rather than the instrument. Most of the bowl material was removed leaving only the stem, which was inserted into the leadpipe, and the rim. We would buzz the rim while fingering the instrument.

This worked well if the brass player could transcend the unusual feel of playing on the rim alone.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"We must transcend physical strangeness while playing by giving dominance to music."

Later, Mario Guarneri and others developed a device (Berp) that allowed the brass player to use their normal mouthpiece in the same manner as the cutaway mouthpiece. The advantage of these devices was that playing "feel" became less of a distraction.

THE TUBAPHONE

A few years ago, I decided to create a simple instrument, without valves, by placing my mouthpiece in a small acoustic megaphone. I called it a "Tubaphone". The effect was wonderful because the cone amplified my mouthpiece playing, making it easier to buzz with a resonant tone. I now refer to the tuba as a, "Megaphone."

The Tubaphone sounds like an amplified mouthpiece rather than a tuba. However, it is the same shape as the bell of the tuba and more importantly, it dramatically illustrates the connection between playing the mouthpiece in the same manner inside or outside the instrument.

THE BRASSAPHONE (HORNAPHONE, BONEAPHONE, TRUMPAPHONE, EUPHAPHONE)

With the smaller mouthpieces, I suggest that my students go to a hardware store and find a funnel with an appropriate size opening. Some of my horn students, who use instruments with detachable bells, place the bell over the funnel for even greater amplification.

THE TRANSFER

TRANSCEND FEEL

Some brass teachers discourage external mouthpiece playing because of the strange difference in feel between playing inside or outside the instrument. Also, some trumpet teachers encourage their students to buzz their mouthpiece with a leadpipe in order to duplicate the "feel" of playing in the instrument.

ROCCOISMS

"When I use a megaphone to amplify the sound my lips, it's exactly the same process I use to amplify my vocal chords. I don't have any conscious knowledge of my vocal chords when I talk or sing and it's not necessary to have such knowledge when I create musical sounds with my lips. However, the powerful knowledge for singing and buzzing originates in the same area of the brain, but at the subconscious level of thought."

"We must not concern ourselves with how playing feels. We must transcend feel by having a powerful awareness of sound."

"Feeling good is a by-product of playing correctly. We cannot motivate correct playing by trying to feel good first."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"The key to creating success can be found in speech."

"It doesn't matter what playing feels like. What's important is what it sounds like."

SHINICHI SUZUKI

"We can learn to play an instrument the same way we learned to speak language."

I like to illustrate the use of the Tubaphone by playing the same music, without the use of valves, on both instruments. Sometimes, I'll even finger the Tubaphone as if it has valves. I refer to valveless tuba playing as a "Megaphone Concerto"

Another interesting technique is to personally finger the instrument for the player as they buzz their mouthpiece inside the instrument. Once they get past the strangeness of having me finger their instrument, they can focus only on their musical mouthpiece playing.

THE IMPORTANT ELEMENT I COMMUNICATE TO MY STUDENTS IS PLAYING EITHER THE CONE OR INSTRUMENT MUST BE THE SAME EXPERIENCE. I DO THIS BY HAVING THEM PLAY THE SAME MUSIC BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE TWO. THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IS MUCH MORE POWERFUL THAN MY WORDS.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lip feels or how I feel."

ROCCOISMS

"A brass instrument is nothing more than an extended cone with valves or a slide. The valves or slide have no function in producing sound and little function regulating pitch. They only allow the regulated sounds created in the mouthpiece to be realized outside the bell in a more technically efficient manner."

"In some ways, the invention of valves was not such a good occurrence. Too often, brass players think that valves are an important element of tone production. Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven wrote technically challenging music that was performed beautifully on brass instruments long before the valve came along."

"It's just the singing."

Master of Failure
ROCCOISMS

"I have personally experienced your worst moment of failure. I hope you never have an opportunity to experience mine."

"Failure is an opportunity to learn."

"We must accept a certain amount of failure as an element of creating success. However, we don't have to like it!"

"Although I never enjoyed what was happening to me during my worst moments of failure, I'm grateful they occurred. I now have a unique opportunity to help others."

When a student comes to my studio, they are completely transparent. There is nothing going on, either positive or negative, that I have not personally experienced. On many occasions, I have worked with brass players, who possess impressive academic credentials, but are unable to play their instrument.

For many years, Jake did not allow a doctoral degree program on tuba at Northwestern University.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"If you can play, you don't need an advanced degree. If you can't play, I refuse to allow a piece of paper as a substitute."

I frequently asked, highly credentialed but struggling students, what their former teachers said about their failure. I recall one particular response.

"He didn't understand why I couldn't play and he also didn't understand why he could."

In every instance, their former teachers were excellent brass players themselves, but they didn't understand the failure of their students.

EMBOUCHURE-AIR SYNDROME

Here is a question I commonly ask students of all ages and stages of development after we have created some success in a lesson.

"Has anyone ever said anything to you about air or embouchure?"

The reply is usually, "Yes!!!"

My response is always, "Have I said anything about those words to you?"

The replies vary from, "NO" to "I'm not sure." Sometimes they think I did, so they respond by explaining what someone else said to them. I quickly remind them that I said nothing about air or embouchure. I follow up with

the question," Was it necessary for me to discuss those words for your success?" The obvious response is always, "No!"

I NEVER MENTION A WORD ABOUT EMBOUCHURE TO ANY STUDENT!

THERE IS ONLY ONE THING I SAY ABOUT AIR.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

"Paralysis by Analysis."

ROCCOISMS

"Take in a large breath every time you breathe."

"Breath can only be motivated by the player's concept of sound,
NOT BY MINDLESS BLOWING!"

"Sound motivates function."

"While playing, we can only have a vague awareness of air at the conscious level. However, we can have a vivid awareness of sound."

"When you treat only the symptoms of failure rather than the cause, you will create more failure."

"Embouchure malfunction and breath resistance are only symptoms of a problem with the brass player's state of mind."

"There are many fine brass players in the world, but great teachers are rare."

"Too often, applied brass teachers are hired solely for their performance ability."

It is wrongfully assumed that if someone can play an instrument well, they will also be successful teachers. Teachers should be evaluated on the success of their students as well as their own playing ability."

SYMPTOM vs. CAUSE

The Double Barreled Shotgun

When the air column of a brass instrument rejects the vibrations that are being created in the mouthpiece, the player experiences emotional pain and physical discomfort. Rejection occurs when the air column cannot accept a non-sympathetic frequency.

The unpleasant physical symptoms of rejection are embouchure malfunction and breath resistance. Most often, brass players and their teachers attempt to correct their embouchure and air.

ROCCOISMS

"There is plenty of air creating the bad sounds coming from your instrument. If your problem was the lack of air, there would be no sounds."

"In all my years of teaching, I have never encountered any brass player with an embouchure problem. However, I have met many who think they have a problem."

I recall the time in 1973 when I found myself working daily with some very insecure brass players in the Honolulu Symphony. It was an unfamiliar experience because I was accustomed to playing with some of the finest brass players in the world in Chicago.

Gradually, I began to notice a deterioration of my tone, it was becoming more difficult to play, and I was losing accuracy. I also noticed that my chops didn't "feel right", tonguing was difficult, and I was no longer taking in large breaths.

My playing felt uncomfortable and insecure so I was not a "happy camper". Jake was five thousand miles away so I was on my own. Incidentally, the very same thing happened to my successor in the orchestra. Later, I was able to help him recover also.

Over the years, I noticed a problem that occurred with some of Jake's students, including myself. When we went off on our own, we tried to bring him with us! That would have been wonderful if we brought the "musical" Jake. But too often, it was "analytical" Jake. He always told his students not to analyze themselves when they played. However, we all new we were being analyzed by him.

As I began to analyze why my chops, tongue, and air were not functioning, everything began to work less and less until I could not play at all. I was not strolling down the "Yellow Brick Road" to Emerald City. I headed directly for the "Witches' Castle".

At age twenty-six, I was young and motivated enough to find my way back from total devastation. My personal process of recovery gave me exceptional insights into what causes failure and what is necessary to create success. If I had known then what I know now, there never would have been a crash.

ROCCOISMS

"It's normal for us to want to treat the symptoms of failure if we don't understand the cause."

"If we truly understood the cause of our failure, there would be no failure."

It's also normal for us to want to eliminate or prevent physical discomfort or emotional pain. There is a protective reflex in the subconscious mind that wants to protect us from physical and emotional harm.

Unfortunately the reflex which prevents us from touching a hot stove can eventually have the same reaction to the instrument in our hands. The negative conditioning increases in time as the player creates a history of failure. In time, they may become partially or fully paralyzed.

ROCCOISMS

"Once negative conditioning is established it cannot be undone. It must be replaced with positive conditioning."

"Positive conditioning, associated with playing an instrument, can only take place if there is a history of success playing the instrument."

THE DANGER OF SELF ANALYSIS

ROCCOISM

"Self analysis motivates the sense of feel which stimulates very weak input to the brain. As a result, playing mechanics are inhibited rather than encouraged."

To create successful note execution, we must encourage motor function which is the stimulation of output from the subconscious brain. Successful output can only come from the subconscious because the mechanics and awareness's involved are much too numerous and complex for the limited intellect of the conscious mind. It is possible to have only one conscious thought at any given moment.

Unfortunately, traditional brass pedagogy encourages self analysis. It is not necessary to study lips in order to produce sound just as it isn't necessary to study vocal chords to do the same. We don't study the mechanics of breathing in order to breathe and we don't study the tongue in order to speak or chew.

It is our desire for and awareness of accomplishment that motivates the mechanics necessary to achieve whatever we want.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I order products but I don't know a thing about how they are delivered."

"The key to playing successfully can be found in speech."

"I want you to have the mind of a child."

BARRY GREEN (The Inner Game of Music)

"Would you like to play with the ease of a six year old child?"

ROCCOISM

"When we play an instrument, we must use the same simplistic approach to creating the complex physical maneuvers that allow us to successfully do all other functions in life, such as walking and talking."

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

When we talk, it's our conscious awareness of the sound of words that motivates the mechanics necessary to realize speech. We are not consciously thinking about air, vocal chords, or the tongue. As children, we didn't learn to speak language by consciously studying mechanics. Given enough time, our subconscious mind figured out the mechanics based on the motivating awareness of sound.

We have all heard stories about very successful musicians and singers who never had a lesson in their lives. For example, I'm reminded of the great Cuban trumpeter and pianist, Arturo Sandoval.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I was a very successful brass player until my first teacher came along."

"We must give dominance to music, not an instrument."

RECOVERY FROM PARALYSIS

My personal recovery, and that of the many people I have encountered in the last forty years of my career, has been motivate by an altered state of mind.

That alteration was to become much less aware of how playing feels and the awareness of playing mechanics to becoming committed to the awareness of sound. That is how I created success in the past before I drifted into the abyss of mindlessly using the sense of feel as a motivator of playing mechanics.

ROCCOISM

"Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

"Playing by feel is like trying to drain the water from a swimming pool with a straw."

When I finally realized that there was nothing wrong with my embouchure, lungs, tongue, or fingers, I became liberated to focus all my energy on the sound I wanted to produce.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"The brass player should focus 90% of their intellect on the sound they want to produce. If they do, there will be only be a peripheral (10%) awareness of how playing feels and what we are doing (mechanically)."

"It is best to be somewhat unconscious of our physical maneuvers and highly conscious of our musical goals."

"It's not what you sound like that is important. What's important is what you want to sound like."

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lips feels or how I feel."

H. A. VANDERCOOK

"If you can sing it, you can play it."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing, buzz, then transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument."

"Sound is the criteria for how you do this and that."

"Think sound not mechanics."

H.E. NUTT

"The first teaching point is tone."

THE FORMULA

For many years, I have prescribed a formula of vocally singing and buzzing in sets of three repetitions. The sets are repeated until the awareness of sound is powerful enough to transcend all distractions, including feel and the mindless collection of brass tubing in our hands.

ROCCOISMS

"At times, my students have failed to apply the Sing, Buzz, Play formula, but the formula has never failed them when they did apply it."

"We must create a history of success in order to create an expectation of success."

"SOUND MOTIVATES FUNCTION."

"THERE IS NO REASON FOR YOUR SUCCESS OR FAILURE OTHER THAN YOUR STATE OF MIND."

SING, BUZZ, PLAY
POSTED BY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2010
The Internet Lessons
LIBERATION

You are right on track! Bravo! At the conscious level, you must be totally free of the influence of the instrument and how to play it. That allows your subconscious to be free to do what is necessary to execute the notes. It's how we function doing everything else in life.

ONE NOTE AT A TIME

Yes, I have been telling my students for years to play one note at a time. That's how you play the mouthpiece outside the horn.

SOUND MOTIVATES FUNCTION

There is no problem for you blending in with the traditional Chinese instruments as you play a non-traditional instrument if you compensate for tone in your personal practice.

In your personal practice, produce the sound that we usually associate with the horn playing Western music.

Remember that louder dynamic levels and full resonance are healthy for your playing. Balance is very important.

Herseth: "When I'm playing Mozart in the orchestra, I practice Bruckner. When I'm playing Bruckner in the orchestra, I practice Mozart."

Insecure playing in the pit can have a negative influence if you allow it. Herseth didn't teach very much because he knew that his student's playing would have a negative influence on him. Jay Friedman says, "At the end of a long day of teaching, I sound more and more like my students." It didn't seem to bother Jake.

RANGE

Don't baby yourself too much with the range studies. You can convert bad sounds into good sounds but you can't convert silence into good sound.

THE KEY IN THE LOCK

You don't have anxiety and expectations of failure on the mouthpiece alone because it's very forgiving of incorrect pitch. Instead of a single air column, there are infinite air columns. No rejection!

PLAY THE MOUTHPIECE!

When the mouthpiece is placed in the horn, the party's over. If your pitch is not very accurate, the air column will reject the notes you are trying to send to the horn. In time, the rejecting air column triggers protective reactions in the brain (fear, pain, anxiety, paralysis) that sabotage your ability to function. The instrument itself soon becomes a negative influence.

Just because the modern instrument has valves doesn't mean that it's any different from a natural horn or Alphorn. It is essentially a long mouthpiece.

I know you play the mouthpiece inside the funnel. Try playing it an inch outside the lead pipe of the horn. Gradually move the mouthpiece sound closer to and into the lead pipe. You will make the connection! It's a great liberating experience!

Jacobs and Herseth were completely free of the influence of the instrument. Brain would play on garden hose and funnel.

RR: "It's just a long mouthpiece with valves." "Play the mouthpiece not the instrument."

EXPECTATION OF SUCCESS

You need to remind yourself at all times and under all playing conditions. There is never a moment when you are not capable of doing what is necessary to succeed. It may be easier or harder at times, but you can always do it.

THE INSTRUMENT IN YOUR MIND

When you don't like the sound coming from the instrument, it's because you are listening to the wrong horn. Jacobs said we always have a peripheral awareness of the sound coming from the instrument but it should not dominate our awareness. He said 80-90% of the awareness must be internal (mental) rather than external (ear).

Giving dominance to the external awareness involves input to the brain through sensory awareness. However, in order to produce sound on an instrument, we must have motor function which involves output from the brain. It's always a one way street.

What is coming out the bell of the horn is an honest reflection of what is going on mentally.

Jacobs: The instrument in the hands is a reflection of the one in the head.

One of my students once called his trumpet a lie detector.

RR: There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind.

EXPECTATION OF FAILURE

Emotions can dominate the rational mind. The rational mind can control emotions by altering the conditions that are causing them. If you are fearful because you are standing on the edge of a cliff, simply step back. You can have the same control if you can use the power of CV to imagine that you are no longer in danger. The subconscious mind does not distinguish between reality and a powerful belief.

JEKYLL AND HYDE

Don't play the show in the pit anymore. Place yourself in the comfortable environment of your practice room at home.

I told you that I now longer play the tuba. I play the mouthpiece because I have always been a very successful mouthpiece player. I don't allow the tuba to influence my mouthpiece playing.

RR: "You cannot erase your past. You must replace your past."

The replacement must become dominant over time. Until that happens, you will find yourself in what I call the "Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome". Fluctuating between old and new habits. The old habits took a long time to establish so you have to be persistent to establish new habits.

CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

In the last email, I talked about creative visualization as a daily routine. Much of my personal practice is CV. That is I think about the state of mind necessary to play the instrument away from actually doing it. When I do pick up the instrument, I can perform immediately.

I noticed this with Jacobs, Herseth, Charlie Geyer, Dick Oldberg, and Dan Gingrich. Nothing prevented them from doing what they wanted to do.

The great violinist Fritz Kreisler was once asked, "Maestro, you play so beautifully. Why don't we ever hear you practice?"

His reply was very revealing. "Just because you can't hear it does not mean that I'm not practicing."

Creative Visualization is a repetitive form of communication with the subconscious based on the use mental awareness that can involve any of the senses (visual, auditory, touch etc.). Since sight is the most powerful sense, it receives the highest priority in the brain. We learned how to talk because of the auditory awareness (language) that was repeated to us as children. We learned how to walk because we repeatedly received visual images of others walking. It took some time for the subconscious to determine how to realize the awareness that were being received by the subconscious mind.

Creative Visualization is a powerful force to achieve goals by visualizing them mentally over time.

Three years ago, my goal was the hew house. I'm amazed that I was able to sell the old house and make it happen in this economy. I remember having a powerful vision of what I wanted to accomplish.

You should be thinking about your professional and financial goals for the end of the show.

Creative Visualization is the development of a state of mind to achieve a future goal. "Now" is the state of mind to achieve an immediate goal. Some goals are immediate, some are longer term, and some are both.

STATE OF MIND

Playing the horn involves a state of mind to produce an immediate result but you can also have long term goals to achieve a different result in the future. The important thing to have control over your state of mind to achieve anything.

Negative emotions (fear, anxiety) are powerful hindrances to achieving a state of mind that allows us to reach our goals. They evolved to take over our state of mind to protect us from pain or harm (fight or flight syndrome). The problem occurs when we allow these emotions to dominate us when there is no pain or harm.

I suspect that the physical pain that you feel in your lip is a subconscious reaction to an expectation of fear or anxiety.

Even though that expectation was in the past, it's still stored in memory and will emerge at times. I think you will find that it will diminish as your expectation of success grows over time.

Sometimes, players experience paralysis in the lip. Woodwind players experience pain or paralysis in their hands.

Keep everything simple. Don't over analyze anything.

It's just the singing!
It's just the singing!
It's just the singing!

NEED, DISCIPLINE, TIME

Even though you are competing with Dennis Brain, you don't have to expect to be there yet. Remember, everything requires time. Compete with him now, but accept the fact you are not there today. Try to be there tomorrow and the next day.

As a young player, I would compete with Mr. Jacobs everyday. One of the highlights of my career was a few times when people thought they were hearing him play and were surprised to learn that it was me.

One time when I was substituting for him in the CSO. Mr. Herseth told Jacobs, "You better come back or your 're going to loose your job!"

PERFECTION AND IMPERFECTION

Long term, don't strive to be perfect. Strive to be better.

Clevenger does not strive for perfection as a horn player. As a result, he's a very accurate horn player because the music is his dominant focus. It's the music that motivates horn playing. Most players think that horn playing motivates the music.

Jacobs: "We must give dominance to the music, not the instrument."

Jacobs was completely free of the influence of his instrument because he had a very powerful awareness of the music at all times.

When you missed notes, it was because you were either singing the incorrect notes or you stopped singing for an instant. You will produce the notes on the horn 100% of the time if you are singing them 100% of the time.

As you develop your awareness of sound by imitating others, have the courage to compete with them. Yes, you have the same potential capability. The only limitations to what you can achieve are the ones you create.

DISTRACCIONS

Forget about the air because you don't have conscious control. Think about the sound which you do have complete control. Your subconscious will respond to your commitment to the sound with an equal commitment to whatever is necessary to produce the sound, including air.

Nothing will work as long as you are trying to focus on the air.

RR: "Sound motivates function."

Do you remember the most important thing I have ever said to my students or myself.

"There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind." Your singing experience (everything!) was the result of your state of mind.

VISUALIZATION

Here is a similar experience of mine that I will share with you.

I was playing the second tuba part to Zarathustra with the CSO. Mr. Jacobs and me were warming up in the orchestra room just before an afternoon performance. He was sitting about 10 ft. away directly in front of me. Of course I was listening to and watching him.

He first began playing as a trumpet player as a very young boy. When he played the tuba, he would imagine that he was still playing the trumpet. As a result, he could play in the extreme upper register with the same ease and sound of trumpet even though the tuba is four times the length. Listening to him and watching made a powerful impression on me.

Later that evening, I had a rehearsal at orchestra hall. Warming up, I sat in the same place where I was in the afternoon. In my imagination, I could see and hear Mr. Jacobs again. I picked up my instrument and astonished to experience that I could play exactly the same in the extreme upper register. It was frightening because I didn't understand what I do now.

That was a glorious experience for you. You have the power to make it happen again with the horn or your voice.

You not only must transcend the horn but you must transcend everything that get is the way of your concentration on the music. This includes any awareness of how you feel physically or emotionally.

Jacobs: "I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lips feels or how I feel."

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

I want you to stop punishing yourself for your failure. Just accept the fact that you are not doing what you need to do to create success. Alter your state of mind and do what you need to do.

Punishing yourself is just as harmful to your state of mind as someone else punishing you. When you fail, respond with action that will create success. You know what to do.

It's very hard for you to be fully focused on your horn playing since there is so much other responsibility in your life. Don't be critical of yourself. Remember your progress requires patience.

You cannot erase your past, you must replace it. The replacement process requires time.

RANGE DEVELOPMENT

Remember to practice the Clarke starting in a middle key first. Then alternate the keys one higher and one lower etc. Gradually increase the speed and vary the articulations. In time, when you reach the limits of the printed keys, keep expanding your range by half step beyond the printed exercises by transposing to new keys.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

The singing comes from the same place in the brain if you are singing with your vocal chords or your lips. Also, the brain does not distinguish sounds we call music (singing) from the sounds we call language. It's the same.

Suzuki says, "We can learn to play an instrument the same way we learned to speak."

We learned language by becoming aware of the sound of words. We learn music by becoming aware of the sound of music. It's exactly the same process if we don't allow the mechanics of playing the instrument to infer with our dominant awareness of the music.

TRANSCEND THE INSTRUMENT

When speaking, we don't allow the mechanics of vocal chords to dominate the words. The mechanics is always subconscious. We must transcend the horn.

Regarding mouthpiece pressure or any other physical stimulus associated with playing the horn. You must transcend the feel. It means nothing and will continue create failure if you allow it to dominate your thoughts.

DISCIPLINE

You are a very disciplined person. You must discipline yourself to concentrate only on the music that you are creating in your conscious awareness. You must let everything else go!!!!

If you are having difficulty concentrating on the music, it's because your awareness of the music is not powerful enough to dominate your thoughts. You must ascend the ladder of awareness to Emerald City. Your tools are singing vocally and buzzing externally in sets of three. SING, BUZZ, PLAY

This disciplined approach takes time to replace the habits of your past. Take pleasure in every moment of your success. Don't be too disappointed by your inevitable moments of failure.

HISTORY

As you create a history of success, your expectation of success will grow. As your playing grows, you will be more willing to accept the risk to move to the next level. Always remind yourself what allows your success. It's always your state of mind. You are the master of your mind.

From the first time we began to communicate about a month ago, you showed me that you are troubled by the fact that you are starting the horn later in life and that you are inexperienced.

Let go of those thoughts. Your subconscious brain will be programmed to play like a beginner and you will be handicapped forever. Remember, the knowledge that you now have actually is a tremendous advantage. How fortunate you are!!!

Don't be so concerned about your breathing when you play. You are not concerned about when you aren't playing. Your subconscious will take care of your breathing if you want to produce a full sound.

RR: "Sound motivates function."

SINGING

Singing is your lifeline when you play the horn. If you are having trouble concentrating, it's because you are not in "Emerald City". Move up the ladder of awareness by repeating the external buzzing and vocalization in sets of three.

THE PROMISE

This is a promise that I make to all my students, including the one I see in the mirror every day.

If you sing the correct notes in your head as you play them, the notes coming out the horn will be a reflection of your singing 100% of the time. You can not fail.

There's the methodology for you to create an expectation of success.

Every week you tell me about your progress. Bravo!!!

The only limitations are the ones that you impose on yourself. Allow yourself to be free enough to experience the limits of the ability that's within you.

"Follow the yellow brick road."

THE ALTERNATIVE METHOD

The horn is a difficult instrument to play only if you don't know how to play it. The people who play well consistently either already have an unconscious instinctive ability or they have conscious understanding of how to motivate their instinctive ability. Players who are hit and miss have either lost their instinctive ability or they never really understood how to motivate it.

Instinctive ability is the ability to allow the subconscious, reactive mind to execute the mechanics of playing. This ability is motivated by a powerful commitment (mentally singing) to the music.

MOUTHPIECE PLAYING

Remember that playing the mouthpiece inside the horn is no more difficult than playing it outside the horn unless you make it so by allowing the instrument to interfere with your concentration.

THE SIMPLISTIC APPROACH

Playing any instrument is a very complex mechanical achievement. However we must have a simplistic, not intellectual approach to making music.

Vandercook: "Keep it simple."

Jacobs: "I want you to have the mind of a child."

Pay no conscious attention to your embouchure. Your subconscious brain is responding to your conscious awareness of sound. It will do whatever is necessary to realize the sound that you are singing.

As I mentioned before, I no longer play the tuba. I do not allow the mindless, soundless, piece of brass to influence me in any way. I have never been unable to play the mouthpiece outside the instrument. So it's very logical that I should play the mouthpiece the same inside the instrument.

BRASS PERFORMANCE

Thirty years ago, most of the world was behind the quality of American and British brass players. The reason is that in the UK there is a great tradition of industrial and youth brass bands. In the US, there has been a similar tradition of concert and marching bands. In the American educational system, they start playing as early as fourth grade.

However, the existing brass pedagogy in the educational system is very misguided. There are many fine players but there are far more who could play if the pedagogy improved. That may happen in time. Actually, I can see that it has improved some but there is a long way to go.

I mentioned my frustration over the existing pedagogy to a very fine German trumpet player who was studying with me. He had studied with sixty teachers from all over the world. Nobody could really help him until he came to Chicago.

He said, "Roger, it's a small but growing army".

PROMISE TO JAKE

My last words to Mr. Jacobs before he died in 1998 was that his work would live through his students. You may now consider yourself to be a student of Mr. Jacobs. That's a very big honor!

MOUTHPIECE PLAYING

Don't be too concerned about very precise intonation when you buzz the mouthpiece alone. The instrument will help you play more precisely when you place the mouthpiece in the horn.

The most important thing is to buzz accurate notes with a resonant sound. As your tone improves, your intonation will improve also.

RR: "Sound motivates function."

As you progress, others will hear the improvement. You will notice that your confidence is growing and playing is easier and more enjoyable for you.

NOW

You found yourself in an uncomfortable situation playing with the orchestra. You were (not now!) a beginning player being asked to play at a professional level. I remember feeling somewhat overwhelmed myself when I was very young.

I first played with the CSO when I was only 18 years old. As a result, I was asked to perform with many very fine brass players in Chicago. It was a great opportunity but I remember that I struggled to keep up with them. I was frustrated because I wanted to play at their level immediately. However, I never gave up. In time, it got much better.

"KEEP IT SIMPLE"

The secret of success playing the horn is to have a very simplistic approach to the complex task.

Walking and talking are very complex physical accomplishments. However, we have a simplistic approach to achieving these skills.

We learned to speak language by listening to words. We learned to walk by seeing others walk. It was our awareness of the end product that motivated our subconscious mind to learn how to realize the product over time. Nobody told us what to do with our vocal chords or legs.

The complex motor skills required to walk, talk, and play an instrument are beyond the abilities of our conscious intellect. However, our conscious mind can be highly aware of the end products of walking, talking, and playing. The conscious awareness will be communicated to the reactive mind which has the ability, or will acquire the ability over time, to realize what we want to achieve.

IMITATION

For three years, I imitated the sound of Mr. Jacobs and the rest of the CSO brass on my instrument. Nobody told me how to achieve that sound. I renewed it in my mind every day and worked to realize the sound on my instrument every day. When he first heard me play he said, "You sound like you already have been studying with me for three years".

RR: "Sound motivates function."

Focus on achieving the sound you want on the mouthpiece then transfer that sound to the horn. Remember that the horn has no sound of its own. You must fill it with your sound which will originate in your conscious mind and be sent to the mouthpiece if you allow it.

Yes, the funnel makes mouthpiece playing easier because of the amplification. The important thing is to understand that the horn is just a longer funnel. When you buzz the mouthpiece with the funnel, you are playing the mouthpiece not the funnel. When you buzz the mouthpiece inside the horn, you must continue to play the mouthpiece, not the horn.

Your goal is to play the mouthpiece the same no matter if it's in the funnel, Berp, or the horn.

TONE PRODUCTION

Remember that you must start by playing louder dynamic levels to encourage tone production. As your resonance (bigger, louder sound) improves, you can begin to vary the dynamics when the mouthpiece is in the horn. However, you should always play loud when the mouthpiece is in the funnel or Berp. The reason is that you will do things to discourage tone production that are detrimental to your playing. It's not necessary for me to explain further because it will cause you to over analyze your playing technique.

PROBLEM SOLVING

There is no need to give anything up, including the horn. You just need to realize that all problem solving takes time. That's what The Road Less Traveled is about.

The author says that the three components necessary to solve problems are need, discipline, and time. If your need to solve the problem is great, you will have the discipline to take the time to find the solution.

The development of your ability to play the horn will teach you things about yourself and problem solving that would not occur without that challenge. However, it's good thing that you have a profession which allows you to make a living while you are learning to play the horn.

THE FUNNEL

I'm happy to hear that you found a funnel and that your're using it when you play the mouthpiece. You might try slipping your detachable bell over the funnel to make an even larger funnel. Maybe you have an extra bell you can use.

When you play the mouthpiece with the funnel (bell), continue to play the mouthpiece the same when it's placed in the horn. Nothing is different.

RR: "Play the mouthpiece, not the instrument."

On the first Jacobs CD, he demonstrates this by first singing a few notes, then he buzzes them on the mouthpiece outside the horn. Finally, he buzzes the notes inside the horn which is just a larger funnel.

The horn is just a larger funnel!

STATE OF MIND

What is your state of mind when you play the mouthpiece outside the horn? If you are playing the melody on the mouthpiece, then you are singing the notes in your mind. The notes can only come from your conscious awareness.

It's really very simple and easy to do. You must commit only to the singing. Your subconscious will take care of the other things.

It's important that you not allow the horn to distract you from the singing when you place the mouthpiece in the instrument. That's why I don't really play the tuba anymore. I play the mouthpiece inside the tuba.

Playing an instrument is a very complex physical challenge. However, consciously we must have a simplistic approach so that we can leave the complexities to the subconscious mind. That's where all the power to execute playing the horn exists.

Jacobs: "We must be somewhat unconscious of our physical maneuvers but highly conscious of our musical goals."

Don't be hard on yourself about not being 100% disciplined. Just do some buzzing outside the horn. Yes it takes more air to buzz the mouthpiece alone or with the berp but that's good. Take in larger breaths!

However, if you follow my advice about getting a funnel for your mouthpiece, you will find that it's easier to buzz than with the berp or the mouthpiece alone. The funnel will amplify the sound so that you don't have to work so hard to produce a good tone. It's really fun. I have all my students (myself also!) use the funnel when they buzz.

It's just the singing no matter where the mouthpiece is. Your pitch accuracy, tone and technique will improve in time.

Here is another highly recommended reading for you.

The Road Less Traveled by Scott Peck

Don't feel that you have to read these books immediately. In the future, add them to your library. They will influence your life.

RESONANCE

Resonant means a full loud sound. Don't over analyze this. Just take in large breaths and play louder dynamics. No, never never blow air without making a sound. If you can't hear the music, play it louder. You don't have to buzz just with the music of horn players. Buzz along with anything you hear coming from the speakers.

The characteristics of low notes encourage tone production so they should not be neglected. They are the foundation of a good sound. Just be sure to play in the lower register some each day. The Clarke studies will have you play in the low, middle, and high registers.

The sweet spot is where the instrument resonates with the most sound. This occurs when the notes you send to the mouthpiece are precisely tuned to the correct pitch. Of course the pitch can only come from your mind.

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW YOU FEEL

You can continue to play if you are physically tired but if you are mentally fatigued, you should stop. Remember, playing the horn is 90% mental. If you are no longer singing mentally then you will be mindlessly blowing and attempting to play by feel. Your practice must be quality rather than quantity.

I think you should use the mute and the berp when you practice late in the evening. However, be sure to also have practice time when you use the berp and play the horn without the mute.

Have you heard the phrase, "Paralysis by Analysis"?

It means that you will be non-functional if you are consciously analyzing what you are doing. You must leave the analysis to the subconscious mind where the power to execute the notes really exists.

Some of the most troublesome students I have ever had were highly skilled professional (Doctors, Lawyers, Dentists) who brought their analytical minds with them when they played an instrument.

I know you are looking for a formula for success so here it is.

1. Always mentally sing the notes in your head when you play the mouthpiece inside or outside the horn.
2. Take in large breaths and play louder dynamics to encourage a full and resonant tone.
3. Challenge your technical and musical playing skills (speed, range, dynamics etc.) to new levels over time. You must allow yourself the time that is necessary to grow.
4. Keep your mind free to concentrate on the singing. You are over analyzing! Keep it simple by focusing only on the singing while playing with a big sound. You will allow your subconscious mind to deal with the complexities of playing the horn. This is no different than everything else you do in life all day long.

"Follow the yellow brick road"

Remember when you play the mouthpiece outside the horn, you are in the correct state of mind if the notes are the correct pitches and the sound is full and resonant. You are singing the notes in your head and it's not difficult to do.

Just transfer the mouthpiece playing to the horn. Nothing changes if you continue to play the mouthpiece while it's inside the horn. However, you must not allow the horn to interfere with your mouthpiece playing. Transcend the horn.

Do you remember the red megaphone that I used when I played the mouthpiece? It amplifies the sound and makes it easier to buzz. I suggest that you go to a hardware store and buy a funnel that your mouthpiece will fit into.

Dennis Brain would play the Mozart concertos by making a horn out of a hose and funnel. Think of the instrument as a very long mouthpiece like an Alphorn.

RR: "Play the mouthpiece not the instrument."

If it's too late in the evening to practice the horn loudly, use the Berp. Herseth advised practicing entire sessions on the mouthpiece alone. You must use a keyboard or piano to be sure of your pitches.

When you practice the studies, start in a mid-range key not the first key (lowest). Then expand your range by developing the next key lower and the next key higher from your starting key. Start slowly then gradually increase your speed. First slur as indicated but gradually vary the articulations.

I suggest that you begin by practicing the second and thirds studies first. Remember, you must mentally sing each note while playing. It's not just about fingering!

"Follow the yellow brick road."

MASTER OF FAILURE

I still do play professionally. However, there are very few opportunities for tuba players so I developed my teaching career because I needed to make a living. I am inspired to help others because I suffered so much myself. My knowledge about how to create success was the result of overcoming my own failure.

MASTER VS. SLAVE

No, don't allow anything to control your state of mind. You don't have to be a slave of your mind. You can be the master of your conscious thoughts. If you are capable of walking and talking, you are capable of playing the horn at any time.

Technical Studies for Trumpet by Herbert L. Clarke

FEAR

Fear is a natural protective emotion that the brain triggers to prevent us from physical or emotional harm. However, the part of the brain that triggers fear is reactive not intellectual. We cannot consciously cause it to occur and we cannot will it to go away unless we change the conditions that are triggering it.

The reactive brain will react the same if the triggering mechanism (harm) is real or imagined. You have fear when you play the horn because you expect to fail. When you have an expectation of success you will no longer experience fear when playing.

Stay focused on the singing and your expectation of success will continue. Remember that your goal is to create music not the elimination of fear. Elimination of fear will be a by-product of your successful creation of music but it will not motivate your ability to make music. Only your mental singing will motivate the music.

Also, you have the ability to create music in spite of your fear. You can actually use fear to bring you to a higher level of concentration on the music.

TRANSCEND THE HORN

Transcending the horn means to stay focused on mentally singing the music rather than allowing your emotions or the instrument to interfere with your mind.

READINGS

Here is a list of important books which will help you understand the mind.

Trading in the Zone - Michael Douglas (State of Mind and Fear)

The Secret of the Ages - Robert Carter (Power of the subconscious mind)
The Power of Now - Tolle (Controlling your thoughts)

It's just the mental singing of the music while you play.

There is no need to read the article. You understand that you can function in spite of your fear.

You have been very successful in every aspect of your life because you are highly motivated and you know what to do.

THE SYSTEM

In many ways you are fortunate that you don't have a background in traditional music education on the horn. The knowledge that exists is taught by people who became teachers because they could not play well themselves.

"Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach."

The traditional knowledge is grossly misinformed!!!

You have found yourself in a "Catch 22" situation with the horn. You are expected to perform at a professional level without the experience or knowledge to do so. This reality is causing you great stress because you are being asked to succeed at an unrealistic level. Your fear is a natural response to this situation.

DO NOT BLAME YOURSELF!!!! IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT!!!!

The important thing is what you should do now and in the future. Please follow my advice. I promise you continued success.

1. It's just the singing.
2. It's just the singing.
3. It's just the singing.
4. It's just the singing.

Listen to recordings of what good brass playing (not just horn) should sound like. Go on youtube.com find videos of great performers such as Wynton Marsalis, Raphael Mendez, Dennis Brain, Roger Bobo and many others. They are all just singing the notes in their head as they play.

THE BREATH

Exaggerate your inhalations of breath and play the mouthpiece outside and inside the horn with a louder sound. Do you remember my last comment about your playing on Friday? I said you finally sound like a horn player. I meant that your tone was a good characteristic horn sound.

"Sound motivates function." Read your list of "Roccoisms".

You have the knowledge to play successfully in your orchestra now. You must keep reminding yourself what you need to do. Be patient with yourself even

though others are not. You must allow yourself the time that is necessary to develop your skills.

RR: "MOST PEOPLE NEVER REALIZE THEIR DREAMS BECAUSE OF A BARRIER OF FEAR."

Do you get the Parade Magazine on Sunday with the newspaper? It probably comes with the Sunday NT Times or Daily News. If you don't already have it, you can still get it today.

There is an article in the magazine entitled, "Don't Let Fear Hold You Back" by the American actor, Kevin Kostner.

"Follow the yellow brick road."

Yes, my very honest talk to you on Thursday afternoon was a risk that I needed to take. My time with you was running out. I was willing to risk offending you with my honesty. I had no choice because your fear of failure was paralyzing you. Do you remember my first e-mail when I said that most people never realize their dreams because they are paralyzed by fear of failure?

With and instrument in your hands, both failure and success are exposed immediately. You can't hide behind the horn.

Nobody likes to expose their weaknesses to others. However in music and everything else, failure is an inevitable element of the process of creating success. You can achieve perfection in your professional work because you can test it before it's submitted. You cannot test your notes on the horn.

RR: "YOU MUST ACCEPT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF FAILURE BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIKE IT."

If you can accept the fact that some failure on the horn is inevitable, you will free your will to do what is necessary to be successful. The risks are to be taken in the practice room and in your lessons where the consequences of failure are minimal as long as you accept them. You do not have to enjoy your failure but you must learn to accept it.

If you don't find that acceptance, your subconscious mind will work against you by causing paralysis. Last week I saw the signs of paralysis already there. If you continue in this same state of mind, you will become completely paralyzed. You will lose all ability to function on the horn and your career will end.

Failure is an opportunity to learn. It should not become a barrier to learning.

I also learned from you last week. I was reminded that I also needed to be able to take risks. But without risk there can be no reward.

RISKY BUSINESS

I mentioned the name of the great principal trumpeter of the Chicago Symphony, Adolph Herseth.

"A trumpeter's life is risky business. No greatness can be achieved if the player is paralyzed by fear."

I will show you the path to success but only you can walk the "yellow brick road". However if you do, I promise you will find what you are looking for in Emerald City.

THE INFLUENTIAL INSTRUMENT

You are the master of your mind. Don't allow a mindless piece of brass to take that away from you.

You only have to concentrate on the mental singing while you play. Increase your tonal resonance by buzzing loudly on the mouthpiece outside the horn first. Then transfer that sound to the horn. Remember that the horn has no sound of it's own. You must fill it with sound!

If you don't know the music well enough then sing it vocally first, then buzz, and finally send the music to the horn. Repeat the singing and buzzing three times. Repeat the sets until you are in "Emerald City".

"Follow the yellow brick road."

PERSISTENCE AND DETERMINATION

Anything worthwhile in life involves risk. Most people do not realize their dreams because their fear of failure will not allow them to take the necessary risks. ... played 50 auditions before winning the Philharmonic. He failed 45 times but did not allow the failure to paralyze him. Each failure was an opportunity to learn.

I describe myself as a "Master of Failure". I have personally experienced all the failure that I have ever seen in my students. I have never enjoyed my failure, but it brought me to a new level of understanding about how to create success. First, in my own playing then in my students.

You are coming to Chicago because you want to experience the knowledge that has brought your friends success. You will return to New York with a new level of understanding about how to create your own success.

I promise you won't be disappointed.

THE WIZARD OF OZ

What did the four characters learn about themselves at the end?

"Somewhere Over The Rainbow" is my personal theme song.

Do you know the story of "The Wizard Of Oz"? If you have not seen the movie, rent it. What is the most important thing that is learned from the story?

LIBERATION

You won't be fully liberated until you can completely free yourself from self awareness when you play. It's just the singing! You already are a liberated mouthpiece player! The influence of the horn and your past experiences are powerful stimuli that want to dominate your awareness.

It's just the singing!

You are experiencing what I call the "Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome" (next post at rogerrocco.com). The conflict between old Marc and new Marc. Old Marc cannot be erased, he must be replaced. You have a powerful need to be successful. That's the most important element of problem solving. What must follow is discipline and time. (Scott Peck, MD. - The Road Less Traveled)

"Follow the yellow brick road."

COURAGE AND COMMITMENT

You have the knowledge and potential to achieve your goals. I promise if you continue on the path that we are showing you, there are no limitations to what you can achieve.

However, you must be able to commit to what we are telling you. Only your success will motivate you to do that.

Yes, people will not accept what you are experiencing unless they experience it themselves. The only thing any of us can do is to help others to become liberated also. I have been fighting for my beliefs my entire career. I will continue to do so as long as I can.

It's just the singing!
It's just the singing!
It's just the singing!

Trading in the Zone, Mark Douglas
The Secret of the Ages, Carter

CONDITIONED REFLEX

The instrument is influencing your mind because of negative association over time (Pavlov-conditioned reflex).

You notice that it's not difficult to maintain concentration playing the mouthpiece alone.

MOUTHPIECE PLAYING

You need to do 30-45 minutes daily of recreational playing on the mouthpiece away from the horn. Play along with recordings. When you place the mouthpiece in the horn, keep playing the mouthpiece rather than the horn. It's a wonderfully liberating experience to be free of the influence of

the instrument. I don't play the instrument anymore. I only play the mouthpiece. I don't care where it is!

Andre because liberated from the trumpet because he could only play the mouthpiece for months at a time while in the French Army. His expectation of success was the result of the history of success that he created. He was completely liberated from trumpet playing on the smaller instruments. I did notice that the unfamiliar Bb trumpet did distract him at times.

REALITY AND FANTASY

This is a quote from you I had written on a slip of paper, tacked to my stand:

"The subconscious mind cannot distinguish between reality and a powerful belief."

Therefore, sing.

EXTERNAL-INTERNAL MOUTHPIECE PLAYING

I have been thinking about your lesson yesterday. I suggest that you do a lot of external buzzing of the music. You are completely free when the mouthpiece is not in the horn. The procedure that I'm suggesting will allow you make the transfer to the instrument. It's really just a 17 ft. mouthpiece with valves. You might want to buzz near the opening of the leadpipe. Move the mouthpiece closer with each repetition.

I recall the advice I gave to a student at the end of his final lesson before the Falcone International Euphonium Competition. I said, "Do you have the discipline to follow what I'm going to suggest?" He responded, "Yes, Mr. Rocco."

I first advised him to buzz the music externally three times before playing the mouthpiece the fourth time inside the instrument. I asked him to repeat the sets until he achieved the level of performance he wanted.

I also mentioned that it was important to first buzz three times even though he might not think it was necessary in subsequent sets.

He followed the procedure precisely and ultimately won first prize in the week-long competition. You deserve the gig so do what is necessary to get it!

TRANSCEND THE HORN

Keep reminding yourself what is necessary to successfully execute the notes on the horn. You are a very fine musician but you must transcend the influence of the horn so that the music that's within you can emerge. Keep it simple. You are not in a continuing state of analysis when you walk or talk. You are free to say words and walk because you have no conscious awareness of how to do it.

You are free at the conscious level of awareness because you are leaving walking and talking to your subconscious brain. That allows you to consciously focus on the message of the words rather than the motor skills necessary for the realization of the words. You have a much richer message when you are free to function in this manner. Playing the horn is exactly the same. Jake says, "The key to success is found in speech".

You will transcend playing the horn when you are 100% committed to just the singing. If you find that, at any given moment, you are not making the commitment to singing, it's because your conscious awareness of the music is not powerful enough for your subconscious brain respond. Instead, your subconscious brain will try to seek an awareness of the sound by trying to make ears out of your lips.

Remember your tools to elevate your awareness of the music is vocalization and loudly buzzing. At first, practice the singing with music that's not audition repertoire. Practice singing Paudert, Galley, Kopprasch, and Arban first to establish your commitment to just the singing. Then transfer your commitment to singing when you play the repertoire.

You must master the singing first in order to master playing the horn. When you are able to do this, you will be free on the negative influence of the horn. The horn has no intelligence or music. That can only come from you.

I suggest that you print or rewrite this dissertation and read it several times a day to help remind you. You must have the courage to succeed in spite of your fear. Fear is a barrier only if you allow it to paralyze you. You can't control fear but you can control your response to it.

It's so simple! Just sing the notes in your head as you play them.

JOY

Bring yourself to the level of concentration where there is only the mental singing, the horn only exists on a peripheral level. Listen to the Jacobs CD where he talks about "singing in the head while playing" with only peripheral awareness of what you are doing.

Practice this by bringing the horn to playing position and mentally sing the notes while fingering. Do this in sets of three, then sing the same while executing the notes as the fourth repetition. Follow this procedure until you achieve a disconnect from the horn.

Listen to Jake discuss the problems of playing the horn versus focusing on the music of the horn. That's it! When you are free of the negative influence of the instrument ,as Jake says, "Playing is a joy!"

LIBERATION

The reason they came to me was, like almost everyone else, they were struggling at some point in their careers. They found liberation from the influence of the instrument in their commitment to the music.

Your liberation will also be based on your commitment to the music. Remember, you can't erase your past. You can only replace it with something new. The replacement (singing) takes time because you must transcend your history of playing by feel.

If you have the patience and determination to "Follow the yellow brick road", I promise you will be rewarded in Emerald City!

JEKYLL AND HYDE SYNDROME

Every day, I remind myself that I must mentally sing as I play. If I don't, the failure I hear coming from my instrument will be an unfortunate reminder.

There are two of you sitting in the same chair every night. The default (automatic) musician plays by feel and fails. The singing musician plays by sound and is successful. You have the power to decide which one is dominant at any moment!

THE AUDITION

Your evaluation of your audition experience is correct. If you are not singing, you will attempt to play by feel. Failure will always be the result.

"Playing by feel is like trying to drain the water out of a swimming pool with a straw."

The real test is your will to continue down "The yellow Brick Road." You can't erase your past. It will take more time to replace it.

"Failure is an opportunity to learn."

You have already proved your capabilities to yourself and others.

"Persistence is Omnipotent."

"PARALYSIS BY ANALYSIS"

H.A. Vandercook: "Keep it simple." "If you can sing it, you can play it."

How is your mouthpiece playing going when it's outside the instrument? I promise that you are mentally singing when you play the mouthpiece alone. Mental singing is very simple and easy. You must sing and play precisely the same manner when you place the mouthpiece in the leadpipe of your trumpet.

RR: "I gave up tuba playing a long time ago. Now, I play an eighteen foot mouthpiece with valves."

Adolph Herseth: "When encountering problems musically or technically, first sing (vocally), then buzz.

Transfer the singing and buzzing to the trumpet."

"Paralysis by Analysis."

I think you are too analytical about the singing. It's nothing more than transferring precise mouthpiece playing from outside the instrument to the instrument. Don't be concerned with how loud your mental singing is.

The true measure of your singing is the accuracy and quality of the sound coming from your mouthpiece when it's in your hand or in the trumpet. The trumpet is just an extension of your mouthpiece.

I strongly suspect that you are playing the mouthpiece well outside the instrument but you become distracted by the trumpet when you place the mouthpiece inside the leadpipe. This is a common problem for many brass players.

You must transcend the influence of the trumpet with powerful singing and buzzing!

Adolph Herseth: "Practice entire sessions on the mouthpiece alone to avoid having problems creep into your playing.

Try this practice procedure.

1. Play three repetitions of a musical phrase on the mouthpiece outside the instrument.
2. Transfer your external mouthpiece playing to the trumpet on the fourth repetition.
3. Repeat the 3:1 ratio in sets until you have achieved the same success when the mouthpiece is inside the trumpet.

If can let go of your self analysis and totally commit to the music, I promise you will experience success!!!

Read my latest post, "The Brassaphone" for reinforcement.

THE TRANSFER

Your transfer only lasts for a short while because you no longer continue playing the mouthpiece inside the trumpet. You stop influencing the trumpet with sound and it begins to influence you (feel).

RR: "Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

When you notice this is happening, take the mouthpiece out and buzz again (three repetitions).

Gradually, you will be able to sustain your mouthpiece playing in the trumpet for longer periods. Eventually, you will become liberated from the negative conditioning of the instrument and free to create sound.

It is very important that you no longer concern yourself with the mechanics of playing, air or embouchure. Focus all your attention on producing musical sound.

RR: "Sound motivates function."

"Follow the yellow brick road."

THE FORMULA

I just want to say - thank you!

The procedure 3:1 (buzz:play) you described works miraculously! I have to write it again - miraculously! Moreover, I practice on mouthpiece alone for 10 minutes and after that I take the trumpet up and I sound great! The general ease of playing is greater indeed. If I feel that I am not playing on my mouthpieces the same way, I do it when the mouthpiece is outside the horn I stop. I put the trumpet away and I play only on my mouthpiece. Every time it works!

You are right. I am sure that my problem is caused by the negative conditioning I experience when I bring the trumpet to playing position.

Can I play the mouthpiece alone for example a one week or more to liberate myself from the negative conditioning of the instrument? Is it dangerous to practice too much on the mouthpiece only?

THE REPLY

Practice 30-45 minutes sessions daily on the mouthpiece, then play phrases back and forth with the trumpet. It is not necessary to play the mouthpiece alone for a week at a time. However, doing so is not harmful. I take my mouthpiece along when I'm on vacation.

Keep me informed of your progress.

Follow the yellow brick road!"

FINGERING THE BRASSAPHONE

(student question)

Tell me why you like fingering the funnel.

I have to admit I was surprised by this idea. The brassaphone is intended to get us away from any influence of the instrument; to get us to focus on the singing alone. I don't focus on tone, volume, or intonation when I play the brassaphone. I just sing.

When I begin to finger along, I find it distracting. I start contemplating on and off about fingering, which, to my thinking, gets me away from the ultimate goal of liberation from the instrument. I don't want to think about the lips and I don't want to think about breathing either. I'm not sure what purpose fingering serves. I'd like to know how this helps you.

(RR reply)

I'm not consciously thinking about the fingering any more than if the mouthpiece was in the instrument. However, I noticed that my buzzing improved because the fingering seemed to distract me from the strange feel of the buzzing with the funnel.

It's also closer to what happens when I put the mouthpiece in the instrument. I'm buzzing and fingering. The Brassaphone is nothing more than an amplified Berp.

"THE THINK SYSTEM"; "IT'S JUST THE SINGING."

Today I proved beyond a doubt that the Think System works.

Long story, but basically after beating 12 other fine players, 3 long rounds, and playing on 5 different horns (my thumb key unsoldered itself right before the second round, and had to borrow three!), I am the new associate Principal of the St. Louis Symphony, starting in the Fall. Thanks as always to you!

I reminded myself of your last email (RR-"It's just the singing.") constantly today, as the Think System allowed me to overcome the strangeness of these horns.

"CREATIVE VISUALIZATION"

I suggest you visit rogerrocco.com and read the post, "Creative Visualization."

It's all about transcending the reed, instrument, mechanics, and feel with a powerful awareness of the music. When the music is dominant in your conscious awareness, you open the door for your subconscious mind to respond by executing everything that's necessary to realize the music.

The real power to play the oboe or do anything else is at the subconscious level of thought. It's no different than what happens when we do everyday things like walking or talking.

If you like to read, there are a couple of recommended books on the power of the subconscious mind (The Secret of the Ages) and how to achieve a state of mind dominated by music rather than feel or mechanics (Trading in the Zone).

ROCCOISMS

1. "There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind."
2. "Sound motivates function."
3. "It's just the singing."

SELF ANALYSIS

Oboe players become too concerned about having a perfect embouchure, reeds, and fingers just as brass players pay too much attention to air, chops, or tongue.

I have often thought about a former great principal oboist of a major orchestra. I probably could have helped him years ago. When I was invited to teach in his country, I learned that he was somewhat a national hero. The lack of understanding is tragic because the problem isn't focal dystonia. It is paralysis resulting from negative conditioning associated with the instrument. Too many great musicians have given up their careers because the medical or educational communities advised them to do so.

If you have an opportunity, read the latest post, "The Myths of Focal Dystonia"

FEEL vs.SOUND AWARENESS

I knew him from the days when we were on the audition circuit. The problem that many players run into later in their careers is that feel begins to dominate their awareness as they age. They begin a downward spiral of reacting to alter their feel which causes more failure and a greater awareness of how they feel when they play.

When self awareness dominates musical awareness, the result is always disastrous!

One of the most destructive developments in brass pedagogy, has been the "feel good" approach to playing. You commonly hear it in the trumpet players who think they must do a 45 minute warm-up routine before they can play.

ROCCOISMS

"Feeling good is a by-product of playing correctly. You can't motivate correct playing by trying to feel good first."

"Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

THE TRANSFER

It won't take years to replace your old habits with new ones when you play the trumpet. The new habits are already established when you play the mouthpiece outside the instrument.

Soon, the trumpet will have little impact on your ability to create sound and you will become liberated from it's negative influence.

"I gave up tuba playing a long time ago. Now, I play an 18 ft. mouthpiece with valves."

"Follow the yellow brick road."

SING BUZZ PLAY

Yes, I get the picture. Having to fight pitch issues is a major distraction that impacts your state of mind. Ultimately, you begin to experience physical symptoms. It's a no win battle trying to adjust to that chaos all the time.

As your playing becomes more confident, you can only hope that the other brass players begin to adjust to you.

RR - "We always realize our expectations."

Our expectations, positive or negative, are the result of a history of experiences. In time, the expectations become associated with, and influenced by, the instrument we are holding. The environment (performance stage) will also become associated (Pavlov, Conditioned Reflex) with our history and expectations.

RR - "If we want to alter our expectation of success, we must create a new history of successful experiences with an instrument in our hands."

"We cannot erase our past. We must replace it with something new."

Your new history of success, and resulting expectation of success, must first be created in the practice room over a moderate period of time (weeks and months). The history and expectation must be significant enough so that you will be able to bring it to the performance stage.

I suggest the following approach which will require discipline.

1. Begin with simple studies such as Getchell and Concone. Gradually progress to your most familiar Charlier etudes. Avoid the orchestra parts for a while because of your expectations.

2. Loudly buzz phrases externally three times for each time you place the mouthpiece in the leadpipe in a 3:1 ratio. If necessary, repeat the set on the same phrase. As you develop single phrases, repeat the process with two phrases etc. Your goal is to transfer your external mouthpiece playing to the horn. There is no difference between playing the mouthpiece externally or internally. Transcend the difference in feel.

3. Practice 30-45 minutes a day on the mouthpiece alone. Don't have the trumpet in sight. Leave it in the case or another room. I practiced by taking a walk or playing along with everything I heard on my favorite recordings (Reiner - CSO).

4. You may want to make a "Brassaphone" by finding a funnel that your mouthpiece will fit into. Buzzing is a little easier because the funnel provides amplification.

Let's start here and see how it goes for you. I want to know how you are doing!

MOTIVATING A LARGE BREATH

There is only one thing I say about air. "Take in a large breath every time you breathe."

As a shallow breather, you can play but it's harder and you never develop a resonant sound.

ROCCOISM

"Sound motivates function."

The ultimate motivation for taking in a large breath is your desire to produce a full, resonant sound. I never consciously think about taking in a large breath. However, I'm always consciously aware of the quality of sound I want to produce.

That awareness is mostly internal imagination rather than external listening.

However, the large breath must be conditioned to the big sound so you should spend a few (5-10) minutes daily following this procedure.

When you buzz and play the phrases from Concone etc., consciously think about sucking in enormous breaths and playing with loud (not forced) sound.
"Big breath=Big sound"

I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT AIR WHEN YOU PLAY. THINK ONLY THE SOUND BY MENTALLY SINGING EVERY NOTE AS YOU PLAY IT.

ROCCOISM

"When you are playing, air is not detectable, but sound is highly detectable."

HERSETH

"Think sound not mechanics."

Have the patience to continue to develop the new trumpeter. In time, he will begin to dominate old player more and more. You will be able to develop a higher level of confidence with more challenging music and on stage.

You are on the road to recovery. I want continued updates on your progress.

"Follow the yellow brick road."

"It's just the singing."

Avoid all other conscious awareness such as lips, breathing, or fingers by focusing only on mental singing. When you have a powerful mental awareness of the music, you communicate that awareness to your subconscious. It has the power to realize your conscious singing as you play the instrument.

ROBERT CARTER (The Secret of the Ages)

"The conscious mind is the gateway to the subconscious."

ROCCOISM

"It's just the singing!"

THE MOTIVATOR

You already know how to play your instrument at the highest level of performance. You just need to motivate that knowledge and skill that's within you right now.

"Your mind already knows how to play the notes. It just needs to be highly aware of what notes you want to play."

Mental singing is the highest level of conscious musical awareness that you can create.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lip feels or how I feel."

"Follow the yellow brick road."

FEEL AND FAIL

Congratulations! Bravo!

"It's just the singing. It's just the singing, It's just the singing."

You must constantly remind yourself, it's just the singing. As you experience more success in the practice room, your expectation of success on the stage will grow.

Write those words down and keep them on your stand to help remind yourself.

It's natural to respond to the physical symptoms of failure because playing feels so uncomfortable. However, responding to symptoms rather than cause, encourages the symptoms rather than eliminating them. The more you try to eliminate the symptoms, the worse they become.

RR - "Feeling good is a by-product of playing correctly. You cannot motivate correct playing by trying to feel good first."

FIRST LESSON

1. Loudly buzz phrases three times externally. Make sure your pitch is accurate but mostly focus on producing a big sound.
2. Play the mouthpiece inside the horn on the fourth repetition. Continue playing the mouthpiece even though it's in the horn. Do not play the horn!
3. Repeat the four repetition sets until you are satisfied with a noticeable result.
4. Move on to the next phrase and repeat the procedure.

5. Practice 30-45 minutes a day on the mouthpiece alone. Keep the horn in it's case or in another room. Take long mouthpiece buzzing walks or play along with your favorite recordings.

Adolph Herseth:

"Practice entire sessions on the mouthpiece alone to avoid having problems creep into your playing."

"When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing then buzz. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument."

Roccoisms

Sound motivates function.

Sing, Buzz, Play

It's just the singing and buzzing.

THE FULL BREATH

You only need to establish the full breath as a habit. This requires repetition over time.

Here is a procedure I recommend.

Practice simple music, such as Concone, Getchel, or Bordogni by phrase. Pause long enough between phrases to take in maximum breaths. If you practice this procedure for a few minutes a day, you will establish the full breath as subconscious conditioned response.

Follow this procedure for a few minutes each day. Don't be concerned consciously about regulating your inhalation. Once you have established the full breath as a habit, let your subconscious mind adjust your inhalation based on the tonal requirements of the music you are playing.

"Sound motivates function."

PLAY THE MOUTHPIECE NOT THE INSTRUMENT

The first thing I want you to know is that I promise I can help you!

RR: "I have personally experienced your worst moment of failure. I hope you never have an opportunity to experience mine."

You have been reacting to the uncomfortable physical and emotional symptoms of failure. It is normal to want to eliminate those symptoms. However, you must deal with what is causing such painful and paralyzing conditions in your playing rather than the symptoms.

Herseth: "There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

RR: "There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind."

The good news is that the doctors told you there is nothing wrong physically.

RR: "Sound motivates function."

Herseth: "When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing then buzz. Transfer the sing and buzzing to the horn."

"Practice entire sessions on the mouthpiece alone to avoid having problems creep into your playing."

RR: "I gave up tuba playing a long time ago. Now, I play an 18ft mouthpiece with valves."

"Play the mouthpiece not the instrument."

A history of failure has been established with the horn in your hands. A powerful negative association has been created over time. Your physical and emotional pain is triggering a protective response in your subconscious mind that is attempting to prevent further pain. However, the response is causing paralysis and even greater pain.

You must transcend the horn by creating an even more powerful awareness of the music.

Early in his career Herseth's mouth was severely injured in a car accident. He was in great pain. The doctors told him to take a year off from playing to heal. His strong character would not allow him to give up the horn for a year.

When he warmed up in his home studio, he could barely play because the pain was dominant. However, he had the courage to go on the stage anyway. He discovered that he could play because his awareness of the music was more powerful than the pain. Everyone says that he ultimately became a greater player because he developed a more powerful musical mind.

I suggest that you read "The Internet Lessons" at rogerrocco.com Especially focus on what I say regarding mouthpiece playing in general and the 3:1 ratio of playing the mouthpiece outside vs. inside the horn.

You must accept (You don't have to like it!) the fact that your mouthpiece playing feels uncomfortable and may not sound very good.

RR: "We can convert bad sound into good sound. We cannot convert silence into good sound."

Practice 30-45 minutes each day on the mouthpiece alone. Play along with recordings or take mouthpiece practice walks, playing melodies (Mozart Concertos etc.) not exercises.

When you transfer to the horn, have the discipline to buzz externally 3 times for every time the mouthpiece is in the leadpipe. Most importantly, when the mouthpiece is in the instrument, continue to play the mouthpiece. Do not play the horn!

THE TIGER

RR: "We cannot erase our past. We must replace it with something new."

Have the patience to continue on your path to success (Yellow Brick Road). As time passes, the new player will grow and the old player will fade. However, the old player will never be erased from your long term memory. All our life experiences are preserved forever. That's both good and bad news because your greatest experiences and your worst experiences can be revisited anytime.

RR: "Being chased by a tiger is fatal only if you cannot outrun it."

THE BRASSAPHONE

Tubaphone is just the name I give to the megaphone I use for tuba players. I use the generic term Brassaphone for all brass. Or I say Bonaphone for trombone and Euphaphone for euphonium etc.

It's nothing more sophisticated than a cone or funnel that the brass player can insert a mouthpiece into. However, the instrument is just a larger cone. We must approach playing the cone and the instrument in the same manner.

"Follow the yellow brick road."

SYMPTOMS OF FAILURE

Your physical symptoms are the result of your "state of mind" when playing the horn. The instrument has become a "hot stove" in your hands. You would experience trembling and paralysis if you were forced to touch a hot stove or do anything that was dangerous or very unpleasant.

When brass players experience too much failure, it's as though someone is pointing a double barreled shotgun at their head. We experience both emotional pain and physical discomfort.

There is a protective reaction in the subconscious that wants to protect us from emotional and physical harm. Unfortunately, while the subconscious is trying to protect you from experiencing anxiety and the physical discomfort associated with playing, it's sabotaging your conscious will. The result is causing even more anxiety, physical discomfort (trembling and pain), and paralysis (tongue).

Your natural response is to try to consciously eliminate the physical symptoms. Since they are a subconscious reaction to your playing experiences, you cannot make conscious corrections. Since your symptoms are the result of your state of mind, the recovery must be to alter your state of mind while playing.

RR "There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind."

While playing, your conscious awareness is dominated by "feel" rather than sound.

RR "Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."
"Sound motivates function."

You must discontinue the self analysis in a mirror or otherwise! If you can, stop the medications. They are not dealing with the cause of your problems.

Eventually, your "feel" dominated mind will cause your subconscious to completely paralyze you when attempting to play as I personally experienced in 1976. Read "A Brass Player's Story".

Since the instrument has become a powerfully negative influence on your subconscious, you must begin to create success away from it. Your dominant conscious awareness must be entirely focused on the sound you want to produce.

Your powerful tools to raise your awareness of sound are to sing vocally and mentally, and to play the mouthpiece outside the instrument.

Hereth "When encountering problems technically or musically first sing then buzz. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument. Practice entire sessions on the mouthpiece alone to avoid having problems creep into your playing."

RR "Sing, Buzz, Play"

I suggest you read "The Internet Lessons". I add to the post daily. You will see this posted enormously today. You must have the discipline to follow the SBP formula that I have suggested to others.

RR "My students and I have failed to apply the SBP formula. However, it has never failed us when we did apply it."

"Play the mouthpiece not the instrument."

"I gave up tuba playing a long time ago. Now I play an 18 foot mouthpiece with valves."

"Follow the yellow brick road."

MOUTHPIECE TRANSFER

RR "I gave up tuba playing a long time ago. Now I play an 18ft. mouthpiece with valves."

When you place the mouthpiece in the leadpipe of the tuba, you stop playing the mouthpiece. Do you have a Berp (brasswind,com \$20)? You can also tape a small tube to your leadpipe that you can insert your mouthpiece into.

Loudly buzz externally and finger the tuba several times before placing the mouthpiece in the leadpipe. Then loudly buzz and finger the same music in the same manner when the mouthpiece is in the horn. Don't be concerned about your cheeks, lips, air or anything other than the sound.

Another approach is loudly buzz and finger with the mouthpiece about a couple of inches from the end of the leadpipe. With each repetition (4 or 5), move the mouthpiece closer to the opening of the leadpipe until the mouthpiece is fully inserted in the horn.

THE DANGER OF SELF ANALYSIS

A couple thoughts regarding your lesson today. The student needs to be distracted from her analytical self. Her self analysis was imposed on her by other teachers. She's not to blame!

Of course, the distraction must always be the music. I suggest that you create a powerful musical environment by singing and playing along with her. She must experience success motivated by music in a powerful manner or she will continue to try to analyze her way to success. The Witches Castle!

SIMPLIFY AND TRANSFER

You don't need to buzz externally in the same register to have the same effect when you transfer to the horn. Often, I have students buzz an octave higher or lower externally because they sound better. The important thing is to transfer the same playing technique and quality of sound to the horn when you place the mouthpiece in the leadpipe.

RR: "Simplify and transfer"

If you have difficulty making the the transfer to the instrument, it's because your musical awareness (mental singing) is not powerful enough to transcend the "feel" influence of the instrument. Additional external buzzing repetitions are required. 3:1 ratio is very powerful.

It's very important that you stay focused on the the path that has brought you some success.

Herseth: "There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

"When encountering problems technically or musically, first sing then buzz. Transfer the singing and buzzing to the instrument."

RR: "Sing, Buzz, Play"

"It's just the singing and buzzing."

"Follow the yellow brick road."

IT'S JUST THE SINGING!

If you consciously sing the notes in your head as you play them, I promise that you will send them to the mouthpiece and into the horn.

Your concentration level must be at a higher level when playing the mouthpiece inside rather than inside the horn because you must transcend the negative conditioning that has been associated with the instrument.

Your external mouthpiece playing is fantastic! Now, it's just a matter of transferring it to the horn.

"It's just the singing."

"THE HOT STOVE"

It's not necessary to avoid performance commitments unless you are insecure about your chances of performing successfully. If you expect to fail then it's best to avoid putting yourself and your colleagues in an uncomfortable situation. The emotional pain and physical discomfort resulting from failure will become associated with the horn in an even more powerful manner.

There is a subconscious response in the brain that wants to protect us of from harmful or uncomfortable physical or emotional experiences. The response is usually in the form of paralysis or less often, involuntary muscle contraction (dystonia). The result is sabotage! The conscious mind wants to play the instrument but the subconscious, which is more powerful, wants to prevent the negative experiences associated with playing.

You don't need to give up playing the mouthpiece in the horn. I recommend that you play the mouthpiece without the horn for 30-45 minutes a day in a single session. To minimize it's influence, the instrument should not be in the same room.

Next, spend 30-45 minutes transferring the external buzzing to the horn. Practice short phrases, buzzing externally 3 times before playing the mouthpiece in the leadpipe. Your goal is to play the mouthpiece the same (singing and buzzing) when it's in the horn. Imagine that you are just playing a longer mouthpiece. Repeat the sets (3:1) until you have achieved success.

If you find that you are unable to play the mouthpiece when it's fully inserted into the leadpipe. Place it in halfway or one quarter. Many players, myself included, find that as soon as the mouthpiece is fully inserted in the leadpipe, the conditioned response associated with the instrument takes over. I promise that with more repetitions, you will be able to transfer your mouthpiece playing to the horn.

RR "I gave up tuba playing a long time ago. Now, I play an 18ft mouthpiece with valves."

"Play the mouthpiece, not the instrument."

The Lesson
ROCCOISMS

"The job of a teacher is to create opportunities for success."

"A lesson with Mr. Rocco is like an opera performance. There's an overture, a plot with acts, scenes, and the Finale Ultimo."

"The first lesson must be a life altering experience that is remembered by the student for their entire lives."

"When you leave your lesson today, take everything with you. Don't leave a single crumb on your plate."

"We are all teachers. Our most important student is the one we see in the mirror every day."

"If you want to fully understand what I'm teaching you, teach it to someone else."

THE OVERTURE

My first lesson with Jake, in September of 1966 when I was just a seventeen year old high school student, was a day that I will remember forever. I recall every aspect of it from walking past his ordinary house because I thought he must live in a mansion, to the smoking jacket he wore when he greeted me at the door.

The lesson was not very instructive because he mostly just listened. However, I'll never forget the incredible commitment he made to me at the end. He said, "I'm putting you in the Civic Orchestra and giving you a full scholarship to study with me."

Then he said, "The reason is that you sound as though you have already been studying with me for three years." WOW! At the time, I didn't fully understand the significance of his words. Later, I understood they were the most important words he ever said to me.

Generally, a student's first lesson with me is not the first lesson of their career. Most often, they come to me because they are still searching for the "holy brass grail." One of my students, a fine German trumpet player, previously studied with sixty teachers throughout the world.

Since these students are still searching for the reasons for their failure, my highest priority must be their liberation from that endless process. From their first experience, they must know that they have been freed and have finally discovered a new level of understanding of how to be successful. Their experience cannot be subtle, it must be dramatic. If it's not, they will continue to search elsewhere and our time together will have been a meaningless event.

It is never enough for a student to experience only successful performance in their first lesson. They must leave my studio with a thorough understanding of why it occurred. Without that understanding, they will

not be able to duplicate their successful experiences on their own. That will open the door for future searching. There will be no liberation, only a continuation down the path of failure. For those students who return for more lessons, everything we do is just a reinforcement of the first experience.

ACT ONE

SCENE 1, THE EVALUATION

Most of my lessons begin with a conversation. I realize the student may be distracted by nervousness, so I bring them back to creating music by reminding them what is necessary for their success. When they are assured that their success is probable, there is no longer a reason for anxiety.

With new students, I'll ask about their background and personal goals in music. I frequently ask, "Where are you five years from now." Sometimes they don't know and other times they tell me where they hope to be. In either case, I get a lot of information about their "state of mind". I remind them that I didn't ask where they hope to be, I ask where they are? There is a huge difference between the two states of mind.

ROCCOISM

"Carefully choose the words you think or say. They have a powerful influence on your state of mind and that of others."

THE VISION

I always discuss the importance of developing a clear vision of short and long term goals, and the need to mentally focus on them on a daily basis (Creative Visualization). Too often, students only visualize the reality of where they currently are on their journey of development. As long as they continue to see themselves as students, they will remain at the student level.

I encourage advanced brass players, hanging around the "Fantasy Land" of a college campus, to venture out to "Reality Land" to start taking professional auditions.

ROCCOISMS

"One danger of working on advanced music degrees is that while on campus, you will always be seen as a student by others and you will see yourself the same way."

"Once my students have developed a clearly defined vision of their future goals, I develop my own vision of what I need to do to help them."

SCENE 2, LET ME HEAR YOU PLAY!

Whether they are new or returning students, I always allow them to first play what they want. I know they wish to either demonstrate what they can

do well or in some cases what is not going well. I never encourage the latter!

ROCCOISM

"Pretend you are alone in a practice room. What would you play to begin your practice session?"

With a new student, I can evaluate everything about their playing within the first thirty seconds.

1. From their choice of music, I quickly learn about their range and technical development.

2. Their tone production is very obvious as is their overall musical character.

Most of the people who come to me for a lesson are experiencing failure at some level and have been doing so for quite awhile. They might be having problems with tone production, range, accuracy, articulation, or combinations of factors.

Frequently, they complain about their embouchure, air, tongue, or throat. I always listen carefully to their words because I am looking for clues to their present state of mind. Even if what they say is not truthful, I read between the lines. I also carefully observe body language for clues to the player's state of mind. They are transparent so can't hide anything from me. Sometimes, they try to do so.

ROCCOISMS

"I have personally experienced your worst moment of failure. I hope you never experience mine."

"You must me an honest musician because you have a lie detector in your hands."

"Your physical problems are only symptoms of a mental problem."

"My words are meaningless unless you personally experience what I'm saying."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"There are two instruments, one in your hands and one in your head. The one in your hands is a true mirror, reflecting the one in your head."

ROCCOISM

"The only mirror in the room is the one made of brass that you are holding."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"There is nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

I recall the first words I heard from a professional trumpet player who walked into my studio for the first time. He said, "I have bad news. I just came from the doctor and he told me there's nothing wrong with my chops." I responded, "That's the good news!"

He was hoping there was a medical reason for the paralysis he was experiencing. He soon learned that his problem was not in his chops but in his head.

SCENE 3

SUCCESS!!!

The student must experience significant success very soon in the lesson. From my initial evaluation, I completely understand what is going on. If things are going well, I motivate them to perform at the next level. Usually, that involves a more resonant sound or easier tone production by encouraging them to take a larger breath.

If the student is struggling to play at all, I motivate them to experience success at some level. I may ask them to play less complex music that does not challenge them beyond their ability to function at the moment. Sometimes, the success first comes with mouthpiece playing.

ACT TWO, SCENE 1

THE CHALLENGE

As the lesson progresses, I challenge the player to transfer their successful experiences to more difficult music. Frequently, I'll ask them to play something they think they have no chance of playing well. However, I always ask what their expectation level is; high, middle, low or, no chance.

ROCCOISMS

"I never allow a student to play unless they expect to be successful because I never want to motivate failure."

If a student tells me their expectation of success is at a middle or lower level, I ask them what they should do to raise their level to high. Most often, they say they want to buzz the mouthpiece. I allow them to buzz until they say they are ready to play the instrument. Most often, they will be able to execute the passage.

Sometimes, they require additional repetitions of buzzing. I encourage them by saying, "You are almost there." It's very important to patiently continue the process of singing and buzzing until success has been achieved. As a teacher or player, I have never failed to achieve success, applying the Sing, Buzz, Play (SBP) formula.

SCENE 2

FINALE ULTIMO

ROCCOISMS

"The lesson must not conclude until the student has achieved their highest level of success."

"It is very important for a teacher to communicate to the student that they expect them to be successful."

"I promise that if you do what is necessary to achieve success, you will be greatly rewarded."

"Tell me what you need to do in order to achieve success."

Finally, I ask the student what is their most insecure passage on an upcoming audition or recital. If they have trouble coming up with a response, I suggest one for them. If they mention something that I think is beyond their capabilities at the moment, I'll ask them to select something else. However, that's very rare. At this point in the lesson, they are usually ready to play anything but may not realize it.

For instance, I may ask an advanced horn player to perform Till or Siegfried. I always first inquire about their expectation level which most often is low. Then we raise their expectation level by raising their awareness of the music (SBP). It's only when they and I have a high expectation of success, that they are allowed to play. Bongo! Most of the time, they nail the passage and the lesson ends with a hand shake. Occasionally, another repetition or two is required before the hand shake. Frequently, I'll conclude by reminding them, "That's why you came here today."

THE EPILOGUE

In conclusion, I ask the student the following questions:

1. What was the most important thing(s) you learned today?
2. Did you achieve success?
3. Why did it happen?
4. When you failed, do you understand why?

What follows is time for clarification and reinforcement of the important questions.

Finally, I remind them to take all their new knowledge and experience with them when they leave. I also assure them that our time together was not a single event. They can communicate with me or return anytime.

THE WIZARD OF OZ

"Follow the yellow brick road."

The Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome
ROCCOISMS

"Old habits cannot be erased. They must be replaced with new ones."

"If a brass player does not play by sound awareness, they will attempt to play by the awareness of feel. That's like trying to drain the water from a swimming pool with a straw."

"Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

"Your mind is like a flickering candle as it fluctuates between sound awareness and feel awareness."

"Your ears cannot function like lips and your lips can never become ears."

"Two musicians are sitting in your chair. There is conflict between the one who is mostly successful when they perform, and one who usually fails. If either player is a possibility, the one who fails will always win the battle."

"The brain normally prioritizes the senses in the following order: sight, hearing, feel, smell, taste."

"Awareness of feel motivates sensory systems (input). Awareness of sound motivates motor systems (output)."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"We cannot create sound through sensory systems, only motor systems."

"Sensory systems and motor systems travel down a one way street."

From the beginning, if a brass player does not learn to play by auditory awareness, years will be wasted trying to substitute feel awareness. For the following reasons, the result will inevitably be failure

1. Feel is a lower level sensory input to the brain. Far less information is communicated by feel than with the senses of sight, or hearing. If only two of the five senses were available to us in our everyday lives, we would function very well if they were the senses of sight and hearing. Humans would be almost paralyzed if we only had the senses of feel, smell, and taste. Some animals do function well within the limitations of these senses because they are more highly developed.

If our inner auditory awareness is weak, the subconscious brain immediately reacts by seeking information (input) another way. The brain doesn't try to detect sound by sight (highest sense level) because that's impossible. It moves to the lower sense of feel by trying to detect sound with the lips. Because that's where the mouthpiece is. However, that never works

because the lips cannot detect sound anymore than the eyes, nose, tongue, or fingers can.

If we put our lips on the receiver of a phone, we could feel vibrations but we could not tell what someone was saying. The lips are very capable of producing sound but they cannot detect it.

2. When the subconscious brain is forced into the "feel mode" as a reaction to the lack of auditory awareness, it desperately tries to receive auditory information from the lips. But it fails to receive specific input. With no auditory awareness, all playing mechanics cease. When the brass player instinctively tries to restore playing mechanics at the conscious level of thought. Failure is inevitable because all the knowledge and awareness is in the subconscious!

3. At the conscious level of thought, there isn't enough intellect, awareness, or control of the mechanics of playing. It is no different than walking or talking. We don't consciously order the mechanics of either function. The mechanics are motivated by our conscious awareness of the words we want to communicate with our vocal chords and where we want to go with our legs and feet.

ROCCOISM

"When we try to bring a subconscious function to the conscious level of thought, we sabotage the powerful symbiotic relationship that exists between the two. That relationship allows us to function freely every moment of our lives."

Once playing by "feel" has been established as a habit, it cannot be eliminated. It must be replaced with something new, playing by sound awareness. However, the old habits will be dominant until new habits have enough time to establish dominance. Inevitably, the brass player will fluctuate between old and new habits. I refer to this condition as the "Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome". It creates anxiety, self doubt, paralysis, and eventually results in a high expectation of failure.

ROCCOISMS

"Inevitably, we always realize our expectations whether we want to or not."

"The longer an old habit has been established, the longer it will take to replace it with a new one."

We naturally want instant solutions to our problems, especially if they are causing deep emotional pain, physical discomfort, or both. However, Scott Peck, MD (The Road Less Traveled) tells us that finding solutions to our problems requires time. And personal need and discipline are necessary for us to allow the required time.

THE WIZARD OF OZ

In the well known story, The Good Witch of the West tells the characters to, "Follow the yellow brick road". In Emerald City, you will meet the

Wizard of Oz who will give you what you are searching for. Along the way, they are detoured and ended up in the Witch's Castle, where unpleasant experiences occur.

They eventually got back on "the yellow brick road" and make their way to Emerald City. They do find what they were looking for by discovering that it was within them all along. They were successful because they didn't look for a red or blue road, or some other incorrect path.

ROCCOISMS

"When you have found a method that brings you success, embrace it like you would a life preserver."

"A brass player can find success only when they finally liberate themselves from the powerful influence of the mindless tubing in their hands."

"The instrument has no intelligence or sound of its own. That can come only from the mind of a musician."

THE SEARCH FOR THE BRASS GRAIL

As a brass player continues to search for reasons for their failure, they will continue to fail. It is only when the searching ends that they can be free to focus all their energy in one direction. Without an effective method, there will be no history and expectation of success.

The frustrating fluctuations between success and failure of the Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome, is an unfortunate condition that causes anxiety, fear, and paralysis. Ideally, the syndrome should be avoided from the beginning, but it occurs much too often in most of us.

Unless, a brass player learns how to create and maintain the good Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde will dominate. Once a new history and expectation of success has been established, Dr. Jekyll will emerge as the dominate personality. However, Mr. Hyde may recede but he will never be completely dormant.

ROCCOISM

"Being chased by a tiger is fatal only if you can't outrun it."

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

For over forty years, I have found SBP to be an effective methodology to create success with my students and myself. I also learned that self analysis was not only unnecessary but that it is very destructive.

There are no mirrors or breathing devices in my studio. There is only the sound of music coming from vocal chords, a mouthpiece, or a brass instrument. The production of sound must always be our ultimate objective.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"Go for the product."

The product is never blowing, fingering, or feeling. It's musical sound.

ROCCOISM

"The most powerful element motivating playing mechanics is not a conscious awareness of mechanics. It's the conscious awareness of sound. The highest level of sound awareness is achieved by mentally singing as we play."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Transfer singing and buzzing to the instrument. Add words to enhance your singing."

"Sound is the criterion for how we do this and that."

ROCCOISM

"Sound motivates function."

"FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD"

Dynamics

ROCCOISMS

"Dynamics are the tone controls of sound production."

"The study of dynamics is not the analysis of air flow. It is the awareness of sound."

"Sound motivates function."

Although playing loud is a factor that encourages tone production, healthy tone production must also include developing a wide range of dynamics over a broad tessitura. As the brass player responds to the musical challenges of playing extreme dynamics, they provide themselves with an opportunity to develop control of their sound. They must not become distracted by trying to control undetectable air.

The most difficult technical challenge any brass player encounters is playing a very soft entrance on a very high note. There are three factors working against them; high frequency, soft dynamics, and attack. All three elements are factors that discourage tone production.

Like any playing skill, the ability to play a wide range of dynamics in any register must be developed methodically and gradually over time. The goal of lifting a 300 pound weight over your head cannot be achieved by

just turning it on like a switch. There must be proper development over extended time.

Attempting to execute any extreme technical challenge, without methodical and progressive development, will cause failure. A history of failure will create an expectation that leads to increasing failure. We always realize our expectations whether they are positive or negative.

SOUND vs. AIR

Many brass players and teachers think of playing dynamics as the study of air flow rates. Everyone understands that dynamics are created by adjusting the flow rate of air through the embouchure. Loud dynamics require a high flow rate and soft dynamics require a low flow rate. It's the same requirement a string player has with their bow. They must move the bow faster to play louder. I frequently hear teachers tell their students to use "fast air".

However, there is an important fundamental difference between telling a string player to move the bow faster and telling a wind player to move the air faster. A string player can have an awareness of their bow with the senses of sight and feel.

A wind player cannot see air and they only have a very vague awareness of it by feel. Air can be felt if we blow it on our hand, but that doesn't occur when playing a wind instrument.

Some teachers try to create detection of air by having their students imagine a moving object, such as a stream of water. However, that is a useless and unnecessary exercise that will not successfully motivate all the elements of tone production. There must always be a strong association between playing and a musical sound.

ROCCOISMS

"There can only be a vague awareness of air when we play. However, it is possible have a powerful awareness of sound."

"The brass player's awareness of sound motivates air and all the other elements of playing, not the other way around."

"Function motivates sound is weak methodology because self analysis results in paralysis."

"Technical development is the result of musical challenge, not playing mechanics."

MUSICAL CHALLENGE

What follows is a six exercise sequence of studies that develop the brass player's ability to play extreme dynamic contrasts over a wide range. To create and maintain development, each exercise must be played in a progressive order. Skipping exercises or moving through them too rapidly

will not allow enough time for development. These studies work equally well for individuals or with groups of instruments.

ROCCOISM

"Louder dynamics encourage tone production. Softer dynamics discourage tone production."

EXERCISE ONE, DIMINUENDO, LONG TONES

1. Six beat long-tones with fermata, single breath. ($f > pp$, fermata) (mm. quarter = 52-60)
2. First develop on mid-range notes then expand lower and higher. The fermata should be held for four beats and played as softly as possible and without interruption.
3. Exercise One should be practiced daily until the range has expanded to a minimum of two octaves, before moving to the next exercise. The estimated time of development is 4-6 weeks. The brass player will notice that their dynamic range has expanded on both ends of their dynamic range. They will also notice improvement in tonal resonance.

EXERCISE TWO, DIMINUENDO, LEGATO QUARTER NOTES

1. Practice exercise 1 substituting legato quarter notes for each beat of sustained notes before the fermata. Continue to sustain the fermata very softly for four beats. Expand the exercise to $2 \frac{1}{2}$ - 3 octaves.

EXERCISE THREE, DIMINUENDO-CRESCENDO, LONG-TONES

1. Nine beat long-tone with fermata, single breath. ($f > pp$)
2. Practice $2 \frac{1}{2}$ - 3 octaves

EXERCISE FOUR, DIMINUENDO-CRESCENDO, LEGATO QUARTER NOTES

1. Practice exercise 3 substituting legato quarter notes for each beat of sustained notes before the fermata. Sustain the fermata as long as possible on a single breath.

EXERCISE FIVE, SOFT ENTRANCE, LONG-TONES

1. Six beat long-tone with fermata, single breath ($f > pp$, fermata) (mm. quarter=60)
2. Brief pause. Start at the same dynamic level (pp).
3. Six beat long-tone with fermata, single breath (pp)
4. Practice three octaves.

EXERCISE SIX, SOFT ENTRANCE, LEGATO QUARTER NOTES

Repeat exercise five, replacing the long tone with legato quarter notes

There are benefits to be derived from developing only one or two of the six exercises in sequence. The entire sequence of exercises should be practiced over a period of about six months. They will require periodic reinforcement.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lip feels or how I feel."

Mouthpiece Design

ROCCOISMS

"Play the widest diameter mouthpiece possible."

"A general purpose mouthpiece is a compromise of playing characteristics."

"A mouthpiece can either limit or enhance high or low timber, dynamics, or range, but it cannot produce sound. Only the player is capable of that."

"A brass player should choose a mouthpiece for its playing characteristics, not to mask the weaknesses in their playing."

THE SEARCH FOR A PERFECT MOUTHPIECE

CASE STUDY

One of my lifelong friends is an excellent professional trumpeter. His playing credentials include performing with every major theater and symphonic orchestra in Chicago. He studied with Jake and drove him to and from his downtown studio for the last ten years of his life. Jake was almost totally blind from glaucoma which was the main reason he retired from the Chicago Symphony.

Early in his career, my friend was convinced that the key to his success would be to find the "perfect mouthpiece." He amassed a collection of thousands before he discovered that there was no perfect mouthpiece.

Later after studying with Jake, he learned that the mouthpiece could have some influence on timbre, dynamics and range, but it did not produce sound. Jake made him aware of the fact that the sound could only come from him and the he had the greatest influence on the sound not the mouthpiece.

THE CRUTCH

Too many brass players choose a mouthpiece in an attempt to disguise their inadequate range, endurance, or tone. They don't realize that the mouthpiece and instrument together make a "lie detector" that cannot hide anything.

ROCCOISM

"A musician should develop their playing skills to the limitations of a large mouthpiece rather than using a small mouthpiece to mask the limitations of their skill."

CASE STUDY

One of my former graduate students, from Vandercook College of Music, is a fine trumpeter and excellent middle school band director in the Chicago area. He starts his beginning trumpet students on a Bach 1C mouthpiece, the largest mouthpiece in the Bach catalog. He very challenges his students to develop their playing skills to the level of tone production associated with the 1C, rather than the much smaller 7C, which directors commonly use with beginners. He has had great success with this approach for many years.

I noticed that some trumpet players attending Vandercook College of Music, were still playing the same 7C mouthpiece they started on as beginners eight or nine years earlier. They still had the tone of a first or second year player.

There are four principal elements of mouthpiece design. Each element will have an impact on playing characteristics, timbre, or comfort, which is an important consideration regarding mouthpiece placement. There is no standard system of mouthpiece cataloging among manufacturers. Since each manufacturer has their own numbering and lettering system. The only way to determine the playing characteristics and size of a mouthpiece is by reading the description in their catalog.

THE BRASSWIND catalog has an index that attempts to compare the playing characteristics of mouthpieces among several manufacturers.

THE RIM

Wide vs. Narrow

A wide rim allows greater comfort when playing higher frequencies. Increased contact pressure is required to help maintain the shape of the embouchure. With a wide rim, the contact pressure is dispersed over a greater amount of lip surface. Trumpet and cornet mouthpieces have a wider rim relative to cup diameter than horn and low brass mouthpieces.

A wide rim will contact a greater amount of tissue, so it is more difficult to maneuver over a broad range. It is used primarily for specialized playing in the upper register and within a limited range.

A narrow rim, where contact pressure requirements are reduced, is more desirable for low register or low brass instruments. It allows easier maneuvering between registers.

Most trumpeters compromise by playing a medium wide rim mouthpiece. Horn, and low brass players tend to play more narrow rim mouthpieces.

Flat vs. Rounded

The contour of the rim can vary from almost flat to well rounded. A flat rim will maintain contact of lip surface securely but it may be uncomfortable if a brass player has braces or irregular teeth. It will also reduce flexibility making it more difficult to maneuver between registers.

A more rounded rim will allow greater flexibility and will be more comfortable for playing in the upper register.

Most trumpet players use a mouthpiece with a well rounded, medium wide rim. Most horn, and low brass players play a relatively flat and narrow rim.

Inner Transition, Well Rounded vs. Sharp

The transition from rim to cup can influence articulation and comfort. A sharp transition will be easier to play marcato attacks but smooth slurs will be more difficult. It may also be uncomfortable for a player with braces or irregular teeth.

A more rounded transition will be more comfortable playing in the upper register and it will be easier to play smooth slurs. However, sharp attacks are more difficult.

Most trumpet players play a mouthpiece with a rounded inner edge while horn and low brass mouthpieces tend to have a sharp inner edge.

Some manufactures provide changeable rims that can be screwed onto the cup.

THE CUP

DIAMETER, Wide vs. Narrow

Since the cup diameter determines the length of the embouchure, the largest size will have the greatest potential for tone production. A smaller diameter may make it easier to play high frequencies but there will be diminished resonance. Most brass players are not willing to sacrifice tone to make high notes easier.

A wide diameter mouthpiece requires a strong embouchure. Motivated young players, who start playing with small diameter mouthpieces, should be encouraged to gradually develop their embouchure strength for larger mouthpieces. They should transition to a larger mouthpiece every two years until they are eventually playing a professional size mouthpiece. For trumpet, that is a Bach $1\frac{1}{2}$ C or 1C. I recently encouraged one of my motivated 2nd year high school trumpet players to transition from a 5C to 3C. I expect her to be playing at least a $1\frac{1}{2}$ C by the time she enters college.

The transition to a larger mouthpiece must be gradual. I tell my students to gradually increase their playing time on the larger mouthpiece until they are comfortable enough to play it all the time.

DEPTH, Shallow vs. Deep

The depth of the cup determines how much the lower partials in the harmonic series are emphasized in the tone. A deep cup will emphasize the lower

partials and will produce a "darker" timbre. Conversely, a shallow cup will emphasize the upper partials and produce a "brighter" timbre.

It will be more difficult to play a shallow cup mouthpiece at very loud dynamics. The great Maynard Ferguson specialized in playing extremely high and loud on the trumpet. Interestingly, his mouthpiece has an exaggerated cup depth. It is a "V" or funnel shape like a horn mouthpiece but with a trumpet rim. Most trumpet players play a medium deep Bach "C" cup mouthpiece.

Since the horn is essentially a tuba playing in the upper register most of the time, the mouthpiece has evolved with an exaggerated funnel cup to produce a dark timbre. If the horn mouthpiece is too shallow, the instrument will sound more like a flugelhorn or cornet.

Most brass players playing symphonic music play deep cup mouthpieces. Jazz players tend to play more shallow mouthpieces for the brighter timbre and lighter sound more closely associated with their smaller bore instruments. The shallow cup mouthpiece also allows easier flexibility for complex Jazz solos.

Some low horn, euphonium, tuba, or bass trombonists like to use a shallow cup mouthpiece when playing technical passages in the extreme low register of large bore instruments. The smaller cup helps control the sound.

ADJUSTABLE CUP MOUTHPIECE

Jake frequently played an adjustable cup mouthpiece. A few manufacturers still make them but they are not widely used.

THE THROAT

The throat is the opening at the bottom of the cup leading to the backbore. It functions like a valve regulating air flow through the mouthpiece. There are various degrees of open.

The larger the throat opening, the less resistant the mouthpiece is to air flow and there is greater potential for playing very loudly. However, soft playing is more difficult and the mouthpiece will tend to fatigue the player if they don't have a strong embouchure.

Conversely, a smaller throat opening will be more resistant to air flow. It will be easier to play very softly but difficult to play loud. The general purpose mouthpiece will have a compromise opening that allows the playing of loud and soft dynamics comfortably.

Once the throat has been enlarged, the alteration can't be reversed. I know several trumpet players who experimented with opening the throat of their mouthpieces. In many instances, the mouthpieces eventually became expensive candle holders.

THE BACKBORE, Open vs. Closed

The backbore is the shape of the tube transitioning from the bottom of the cup to the end of the stem. A closed backbore will be a more cylindrical tube and an open backbore will be more conical.

A cylindrical backbore will produce a brighter tone with less amplification. The conical backbore will provide greater amplification and produce a darker tone. It may be more fatiguing to play if the player has a weak embouchure.

SCHMIDT BACKBORE (trumpet only)

The Schmidt backbore is a compromise between the open and closed backbore. It is cylindrical for only a short distance at the bottom of the cup. It becomes conical from there to the end of the stem.

MASS vs. TONE

Some brass players prefer to play massive mouthpieces machined from very large blanks that leave much of the outer material intact. They are very heavy and tend to help produce a darker, heavier, and more resonant sound, especially in the low register. The effect may be more psychological than acoustic.

Mouthpieces can also be machined from lighter materials such as wood or synthetics that will help produce a lighter or less resonant sound.

GOLD vs. SILVER

Some players are allergic to one metal or the other. I play both gold and silver mouthpieces and have not noticed that the plating had any impact on the sound.

MONET - MOUTHPIECE AND LEADPIPE COMBINATION

For acoustical reasons, Monet and some other trumpet manufacturers solder the mouthpiece and leadpipe together. I don't know if there is real physics involved or if the design is more psychological. The downside is the fact that the player must always use the same mouthpiece with the same trumpet. Interchangeable leadpipes are in common use on smaller trumpets.

For psychological reasons, I think of the tuba as an extension of my mouthpiece.

ROCCOISM

"The instrument is an extended mouthpiece with valves or a slide."

"Play the mouthpiece, not the instrument."

IN SUMMARY

Most brass players do not use a variety of mouthpieces for general playing. They find a mouthpiece - instrument combination that produces their desired sound. The primary reason for choosing a particular mouthpiece must always

be for its characteristic sound associated with an instrument. The choice should never be to disguise weaknesses. That will never happen!

A small mouthpiece has limiting factors. It is best if the brass player develops their skills to perform with the largest mouthpiece possible.

ROCCOISM

"You can make a large mouthpiece play with the characteristics of a small one. However, you cannot make a small mouthpiece play with the characteristic of a large one."

The Audition ADOLPH HERSETH

"A trumpeter's life is risky business. No greatness can be achieved if the player is paralyzed by fear."

Auditions are the most important performance opportunities of any musician's career. Yet, most spend too little time in advance preparation. As a result, the few opportunities that come along are wasted because they are practice sessions rather than performances.

THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Most brass players, who aspire to a career as a professional musician, have only a five to ten year period to win their first job. There are many more gigs for horn players than for the other brasses. A bass trombone, euphonium, or tuba player might have as few as ten opportunities in an entire career. However, the opportunity to prepare for auditions is unlimited.

Audition preparation must begin long before a musician first hears about an opportunity. A friend remarked, "My college trumpet teacher showed me how to play but he didn't show me how to win an audition. That's why I never had a professional career." Winning a professional audition starts with developing your musical and technical skills, but there is much more expertise must be acquired.

ROCCOISMS

"A career in music is a difficult challenge for those who have not developed their skills. For those who have, it is a wonderful life."

"Although hundreds may audition for the job you want, you are only competing with the small number of players who are capable of winning."

THE REPERTOIRE

When I first began playing professional auditions, there were no repertoire lists. The audition system was not standardized as it is today. You didn't know what you would be asked to play until you were in the audition room.

Yes, there is a general list of repertoire that is always on every audition, but sometimes there were unwelcome surprises.

Some audition opportunities were not widely publicized or came up suddenly at the last minute. Musicians were expected to be prepared at all times. It was not uncommon for a conductor or orchestra to call Jake, or other prominent teachers personally, and ask to hear one of their students.

Today, there are no surprises other than the acoustics of the audition room. Audition procedures are more or less standard throughout the United States. They include repertoire lists that allow enough time for the candidate to prepare. However, the audition system is not without flaws.

THE SYSTEM

The standard system in the United States evolved over the last forty years. It is primarily the result of union musicians who wanted to reduce the unfair practices of conductors who hired players for political, rather than musical reasons. The system has raised performance standards everywhere by gradually eliminating most incompetent players and providing a real opportunity for everyone.

In Europe, the entire orchestra votes for the final round of auditions. The conductor is considered to be a member of the orchestra and has a single vote.

There are many instances where highly accomplished musicians were unable to advance past the first round. For principal positions, major orchestras routinely audition and reject candidates for two or more years. They eventually invite well known players for the final round. Many of the finest players avoid playing preliminary auditions because they understand that the system is flawed.

A former principal oboist of the Chicago Symphony was rejected twice in preliminary auditions. Finally, the orchestra invited him to the final round. He was awarded the job.

Preliminary auditions are heard by a diverse group of the orchestra musicians. Audition committee duty, is usually not voluntary. And it is not something most orchestra members look forward to doing. Like jury duty, when your name is called, you reluctantly participate. I have served on several audition committees.

Recently some orchestras, including the Boston symphony, experimented with having candidates record their audition rather than have a committee hear it live. Thankfully, that practice never became widespread or standard.

A typical committee hearing a brass audition might be comprised of 12-15 orchestra members. Maybe only 2 or 3 members are brass players. In Europe, the committee might be the entire wind sections of a double orchestra! I once played for 50 members of a double opera orchestra in Germany.

Most of the committee members know very little about your instrument or even the specific repertoire for your instrument. However, they are all

very fine musicians and will be able to adjudicate based on the music they hear and see in front of them. They will have different opinions about tone color and stylistic interpretation but they all see the same scores. Understanding that common element is very important.

Too often, candidates think they are performing for a cadre of people who play the same instrument or even within the same family. Doing so, can be a major strategic error. If you play an instrument that has only one in the orchestra, such as bass trombone or tuba, there probably won't be one on the committee. Orchestras rarely ask the retiring player to participate in the selection of their replacement.

ROCCOISM

"It's the music that will unify an audition committee, not your instrument."

THE BELL CURVE

There is no safety in the middle of the group of players at any audition. You must be able to separate yourself from the others in a dramatic way. It is risky business but you must have the confidence and courage to perform at such a level that you are noticed and remembered by the committee. You are an anonymous person behind a screen, so you must deliver a powerful musical statement introducing who you are and what you can do.

ROCCOISM

"The audition committee is looking for reasons to eliminate you as a candidate. You must be proactive by immediately demonstrating you are the person who should be hired."

STRENGTH vs. WEAKNESS

ROCCOISMS

"There is no place to hide in the audition room."

"If there is weakness in your playing, it will be exposed and amplified in the audition room! Your weakness will dominate your strengths. Weakness will cause you to be fearful because you have an expectation of failure and your expectations will always be realized."

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

ADOLPH HERSETH

"If a trumpeter is fearful when they play, they have no business playing the trumpet."

Too often, I hear about brass players who try to control their audition anxiety with drugs or some other ineffective action. We have absolutely no conscious control over these emotions because they are subconscious reactions motivated by the possibility or expectation of failure!

However, there are two things we can do regarding fear.

1. Function in spite of it.
2. Eliminate the cause of it.

I read about the terrible anxiety the great tenor, Luciano Pavarotti suffered before every performance. Yet, he was able to transcend his anxiety when he was on the stage. He was anxious and fearful before the performance but not during it. It is important to understand why he suffered so much and how he was able to function anyway.

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

"It is only when I am completely committed to the music that I can move my audience."

EXPECTATION OF FAILURE vs. EXPECTATION OF SUCCESS

The only reason fear emerges from our subconscious is that we have an expectation of physical or emotional harm. Certainly, embarrassing ourselves with an instrument in our hands, qualifies as being an emotionally harmful experience. For a brass player, it's not pleasant physically either. Brass players receive a double dose of negative conditioning resulting from failure.

ROCCOISM

"We cannot consciously control fear but we can control what is motivating it"

ANALOGY

There are two ways to alleviate our fear of death if we are standing at the edge of a 1000 foot cliff.

1. Step back from the cliff.
2. Imagine that you have stepped back from the cliff.

CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

The subconscious mind responds in the same manner to fantasy or reality. Fantasy is how great actors become the character they are portraying. I frequently ask my students to pretend they are some other musical artist. When I ask my high school orchestra to pretend they are professionals, they sound different immediately. Musically, they don't sound like a very inexperienced group of young string and wind players.

Jake frequently asked his students to compete with him or some other great musician. I remember he would say, "Imagine how the music would sound if Bud Herseth played it on the trumpet."

The primary cause of performance anxiety is the brass player's expectation of failure. There is an involuntary reaction in the subconscious mind that protects us from experiencing physical or emotional harm. This reaction manifests itself by creating fear and paralysis.

MAURICE ANDRE

"I expect the notes to be there."

ROCCOISM

"A musician can only develop an expectation of success by creating a history of success.

Successful performance can be accomplished only if the player has a methodology that works for them."

Many brass players do not know how to create success on a consistent basis. The methodologies existing in the educational field are contradictory and ineffective. When lecturing at a music school, I always ask the brass players the following question. "How many of you have ever wanted to throw your instrument at a brick wall?" The response is universally affirmative no matter where I ask.

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

This formula is discussed elsewhere in this website.

ROCCOISM

"Without an expectation of success, failure is inevitable."

THE AUDITION ROOM

Since a candidate has no control of where their audition will be held, they must eliminate the elements of acoustics, lighting, and temperature from consideration. They must not allow themselves to be distracted from the music by any external condition.

CASE STUDY

The great British euphonium player, Robert Childs once told me how he prepared for the Brass Band National Championships in England. He was principal euphonium for the world renown Grimethorpe Colliery Band. From experience, he knew the performance hall would be very warm, his mouth would be dry, and his heart would be pounding in his chest.

To create these conditions, he dressed in layers of winter clothing, turned the heat up in his home, and ran up and down stairs to elevate his heart beat. Then, he played the important solos from memory. The audition environment can be intimidating and stressful no matter the physical conditions.

ROCCOISMS

"The audition room is not a place to practice. It's a performance hall."

"If you expect to win, your professional audition must occur as the final event in a series of 25-30 preparatory auditions."

THE TRUMPET PLAYER

A friend was auditioning for the fourth trumpet chair in a major American orchestra. He was a well known and highly respected free lance musician in Chicago. He also had several years experience playing with a German opera house orchestra. He wanted the gig more than the other candidates and was willing to do what was necessary to get it.

Here is what he did to prepare for the most important audition of his career:

1. He performed a solo every Sunday in different church around Chicago. He called music directors and offered to play gratis. There was no problem finding places to perform.
2. Since he was an active free lance trumpeter, he worked for all of Chicago's major orchestras and at one of the professional musical theaters downtown. At the intermission of rehearsals and performances, he asked a few of the musicians to hear his audition. He played it dozens of times.
3. He also teamed up with another fine trumpeter who was also auditioning for the same job. They regularly performed and critiqued each other.
4. Choosing different locations, he played the repertoire list for a tape recorder.

He and his partner both made the finals which included another fine trumpeter. On the day before the last round of auditions, he called and asked if he could play the repertoire list for me. Hearing him was an experience that I'll always remember.

When he took his instrument out of the case, I noticed that his hands were trembling. I thought his performance might not go well. I was wrong! At the conclusion I said, "If you play like that tomorrow, you will win the audition." He nodded his approval. The next day I received a call announcing that he won the job.

The two trumpet players who were not chosen for the job that day eventually became principals in other major American orchestras.

THE REPERTOIRE

ROCCOISMS

"You must ask yourself these important questions about the audition repertoire. Why is this music on the list? What are they looking for musically? Always give the committee what the music is communicating to you! "

"You must interpret the music precisely as it is notated. However, every element must be distinguished beyond what you expect will be heard from your competition."

"Most candidates at any professional audition will be able to play the correct notes. You must have the courage to elevate your performance to the limits of your ability."

"Your interpretation must be appropriate for the part. A principal part must be interpreted differently than playing a section part."

"No principal player wants to hire competition for their section."

"You cannot be an anonymous musician behind the screen."

"Most musicians realize music in shades of gray and black. Great musicians perform using all the bright colors of a rainbow."

From my experience on professional audition committees, I recall that most candidates don't do enough to distinguish themselves musically. Although they are politely allowed to play, they are usually eliminated in the minds of the committee members within the first few seconds. I could tell by their body language that most fellow committee members no longer listened after 30 seconds because their evaluation was over.

In time, a musician came along who commanded our attention immediately. The difference musically was striking. Because their musical skills were more imaginative, they had the confidence to do more technically as well.

The audition committee will judge a brass player on their tone, rhythmic accuracy, intonation, and most importantly, musical interpretation. Because the committee will be looking at the same scores as you, the interpretation must follow the notation precisely.

Avoid altering the score in any way. There may be accepted alterations that every trumpeter in the world knows, but don't count on every member of the committee knowing them. Very few orchestras provide copies of the scores to candidates. A candidate should be prepared if there are various editions of the music. Stravinsky published several editions of his ballet scores to maintain royalties.

CASE STUDIES

There is a well known story about an audition, performed for a major American orchestra, by one of the world's finest bass trombonist. Although he is quite well known, he was not automatically placed in the final round. He knew he needed to distinguish himself from the other players in the preliminary rounds by demonstrating something extraordinary.

All candidates were asked to play a simple Bach choral. It had a mid-range tessitura and a compass of about two octaves. In a well planned but very risky maneuver, he decided to expand the range to four octaves. He is a

great player and pulled it off beautifully. As a result, the committee could not ignore him and was eager to listen further. He was won the job.

A tuba player recently won a job with a different major American orchestra. Although he is a somewhat older player, it was the first successful professional audition of his career. After years of failed attempts, he knew his "window of opportunity" was closing fast and that he needed to take some risk.

In the preliminary rounds, the candidates were asked to play the first movement cadenza from the Vaughan Williams Tuba Concerto. The range is slightly more than three octaves. He decided to expand it to four octaves, up to double high C. He played it brilliantly. The highly impressed committee could not ignore the effort.

In a professional audition, no one should ever "show boat" specific orchestral or solo repertoire. However in cadenzas, it's commendable if what you do is musical and you can pull it off. Sometimes, the orchestral parts alone don't demonstrate the limits of your capabilities. You must find a way to communicate all your skills in the very limited time available.

ANONYMOUS

"Persistence is omnipotent"

One of my former students, now a colleague, is a well known artist and teacher of the horn. He played fifty professional orchestral auditions in his career but he won jobs only five times. On forty-five occasions, he walked away without a contract. However, he did acquire very valuable experience.

ROCCOISMS

"Experience is your most influential teacher."

"Failure is an opportunity to learn."

"We must learn to accept failure as an inevitable component of the process of creating success."

"If we cannot tolerate imperfection, the resulting paralysis will never allow us to achieve greatness."

"With each audition, a musician's ultimate test is the level of their need to persevere."

With continued experience, the horn player learned more about his personal strengths and weaknesses. He also gained valuable insights into what is required to win a job. However, he would not have acquired that knowledge and experience if he had abandoned his efforts. He eventually reached his ultimate goal of playing with a major American orchestra. He would not allow the emotional pain of failure to deter him.

THE MIND GAME

CASE STUDY

While a member of the Honolulu Symphony, I scheduled an audition for the Seattle Symphony. I had to leave for Seattle immediately after returning to Honolulu from a five day tour of the outer islands. There was no time to go home from the airport. I waited five hours for an overnight flight to San Francisco and a connecting flight to Seattle. It took about eighteen hours to arrive at the concert hall for my audition. I was a little late but the committee was willing to wait for me.

In the warm-up room, I recall that I was so exhausted I could barely play. I began to experience a feeling of panic because I didn't think I could function on the stage. I knew the committee was waiting only for me because all other candidates had been heard.

Finally, they called me to the stage. I refer to this time as "The Walk". It's when you leave the warm-up room and walk to the audition room. The rooms are always far apart with a long corridor between them.

As I walked the corridor, I began to remind myself that "nothing mattered but the music". As I repeated that phrase mentally, I began to notice that my anxiety diminished and my confidence began to build. As I proceeded closer to the stage, the phrase became more intense like the long crescendo of "Bolero".

When I reached the stage, I was completely focused and confident. My despondent state of mind had been dramatically transformed.

After playing the first excerpt, I knew I could win the job. I remember having only a peripheral awareness of where I was and what was going on around me. I starred holes through the music because nothing else mattered. I played well enough to be awarded the job.

IN SUMMARY

The first step in any musician's audition preparation must be the development of their playing skills far beyond the requirements of the repertoire. A player's comfort zone must exist well within the limits of their ability, not at the limits of their ability.

The brass player's understanding of the repertoire must exceed the particular part they are preparing. They must understand the interpretative elements of entire score. I always prepared as if I were the conductor as well as a member of the orchestra. I frequently asked myself, "What is the conductor looking for at this moment?"

A horn, trumpet, or trombone player must understand the musical difference between playing a principal part and within a section. If you are auditioning for second trombone but they ask you to play first trombone solos such as Bolero, you must play like a principal. If they ask for a second trombone solo, such as the Tuba Mirum from the Mozart Requiem, you must perform like a principal player.

However, if you are playing the second horn part from the second movement of the Tchaikovsky 4th Symphony, you are accompanying and supporting the principal part. You must interpret the music appropriately.

There aren't enough opportunities to afford the luxury of practicing for the audition in the audition. We must have the courage and determination to play as many "mock" auditions as possible. Play these auditions for anyone. They don't have to be players of your instrument or even brass players.

Most importantly, the musician must persevere through the inevitable failures. I only know of a couple brass players who won every professional audition they played. Occasionally, a committee may give the candidate useful feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of their audition. However, too much diverse feedback can cause the player to become somewhat paralyzed. Ultimately, the player must be the most important judge of their performance.

Audition committees will vary but you will always be the constant. You cannot precisely conclude what a committee is looking for because often they don't know themselves.

CASE STUDY

For two years, a major orchestra listened to hundreds of trombonists to fill a vacancy for the second chair. Although many highly qualified players performed in the preliminaries, the committee rejected all of them.

A member of the orchestra's trombone section realized that the committee did not know how to properly evaluate the candidates. He decided to educate them by personally demonstrating what they should hear from a qualified tenor trombonist.

Shortly afterward, the committee was finally able to make a decision. Fortunately, they chose one of the finest players in the world who was previously rejected in the preliminary auditions.

It is important to have some prior knowledge of the musical style of the orchestra and its conductor. But the brass player must have the conviction to rely mostly on their own musical instincts.

ROCCOISMS

"The audition committee does not have a universal opinion of what the music or your instrument should sound like. You must guide them with a convincing performance."

"Listen to what the music is communicating to you. It will be your guide to success."

Articulation
ROCCOISMS

"The tongue serves no purpose in tone production other than to interfere. We must minimize its interference with precise diction."

"Articulation must be thought of as way to manipulate sound, not body parts."

"The first procedure to establish precise articulation on a wind instrument is to vocalize."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Tonguing is 5% consonant and 95% vowel."

When I first began teaching Jake's concepts of "Song and Wind" at Vandercook College in 1979, I added "Diction" as a corollary to "Wind". I did so because the tongue, both front and rear, can be a major source of interference of tone production.

I once had a teacher say to me, "If I could cut the tongue out of your mouth, you would be a good tuba player." I wasted many years of my life trying to determine what was wrong with my tongue and what I needed to do to fix it.

Eventually, I determined that my malfunctioning tongue was only a symptom of my state of mind. The more I focused on trying to correct my tongue, the less I focused on music. The inevitable result was an increasing paralysis of my tongue and all the other mechanics necessary to play. As I drifted further away from my awareness of music, the mechanics of playing weakened until I was completely paralyzed.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Paralysis by Analysis."

In everyday life, the tongue has three functions; to talk, to chew, and to taste. Accept for an occasional mishap when we bite our tongue, it functions beautifully in response to our everyday needs. The tongue is motivated by conscious need but it is controlled by the subconscious brain.

If we had to consciously think about the motion of tongue, vocal chords, and air in order to talk, we would be speechless. We normally pay no attention to the tongue except when there is something uncomfortable like a canker sore.

ROCCOISMS

"We don't consciously think about our tongue when producing the sound of words. We should not be thinking about it when articulating musical sounds."

"No one wastes their time trying to control all the mechanics required to sustain life. If that was necessary, we wouldn't be able to do anything else."

A fourth use for the tongue is to articulate sound with a wind instrument. However, it is not necessary to learn a fourth skill because we simply transfer the skill that has already been established for language.

Just as they don't think about fingering, no accomplished wind player consciously thinks about syllables when they play. Experienced string players don't consciously think bowing direction when playing specific articulations.

If I ask a violinist about the specific bowing for a passage, they usually must move an imaginary bow to tell me how it would be done. The needs of the music dictate bowing not the other way around.

In the beginning, there must be conscious awareness of these motivating elements until the playing skills are established subconsciously and associated with sound. Ultimately, it's the awareness of musical sound that motivates the mechanical skill.

However, if sound awareness is not stressed as a motivating factor, the player will attempt to substitute an awareness of mechanics and the sense of feel. This alternate approach has never worked for me or any of my students.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Play by sound, not mechanics."

ROCCOISMS

"Feel and Fail are four letter words to a brass player."

"Your instrument is already full of air, but it has no sound. Fill it with the sounds you want your audience to hear."

What follows is only a brief dissertation of methods I have used to motivate proper articulation among students of all levels. However, the procedures use the precise pronunciation of syllables only as a starting point in the development of good articulation skills. The ultimate goal must be the player's awareness of the sound of precise articulation, rather than syllables, as the primary motivating factor.

VOCALIZATION (DICTION)

The syllables used for the basic marcato style of attack consist of a consonant and an open vowel (AH, OH, OU). Any of the open vowels are acceptable, but AH is the most commonly used because it's the most open of three syllables. When we say the syllables OU, OH, AH, the tongue is forced further down in the mouth with each syllable.

Since the consonant represents the point of closure where no tone production is possible, it should receive little emphasis in the diction. Conversely, the vowel creates an open inner oral cavity which provides an opportunity for air flow to the embouchure. When I'm working with inexperienced students, I illustrate the syllable with a very small consonant (t) and a

large vowel (tAH). Softer sounding (less marcato) consonants are (nAH) (dAH) (rAH) (lAH).

I never encourage the use of a closed vowel, such as EE. Some trumpet methods encourage the use of EE in the upper register. This illogical methodology purposes that a smaller air stream will vibrate a shorter embouchure. And a shorter embouchure (length) will make it easier to play high notes. I disagree! Encouraging resonant tone production will make it easier to play in the upper register!

ROCCOISM

"We should never sacrifice tone quality for any technical reason."

H. E. NUTT (founder Vandercook College of Music)

"The first teaching point is to encourage tone production."

MARCATO ATTACK

I never discuss the motion of tongue and air with any wind player. However in the developmental stage, I do encourage the precise vocalization of syllables. Proper diction will motivate the correct motion air and tongue since this skill has already been established in language.

To encourage diction, I ask young brass players to carry on a one word conversation, using the word tAH. I explain that I want to hear tAH while they play as though they were speaking with their voice.

For the basic marcato attack, I use the first studies in Arban, Schlossberg, and Kopprasch with more advanced players who have developed good tone production and range. Diction should also be introduced early to an elementary level player in the beginning stages of developing mechanical skills.

To reinforce the syllable, I ask brass players to vocally sing their music using tAH. Next, they mentally sing the syllable while playing. I add further reinforcement by singing the syllable with them as they play.

When working with a mixed group of wind players, I always use an articulation syllable when singing to them. Diction must be reinforced repeatedly until the appropriate sound has been established. With less experienced brass players, it is necessary to reinforced diction over an extended period.

ROCCOISMS

"Ultimately, it is the brass player's powerful awareness of the sound that motivates diction, fingering, and every other mechanical element of playing."

"The most powerful awareness of sound is achieved when mentally singing."

"When you play the mouthpiece outside the instrument, you are mentally singing. If you play the mouthpiece in the same manner when it's placed in the leadpipe, you will maintain the singing."

"Play the mouthpiece, not the instrument."

"The instrument is just a long mouthpiece with valves or a slide."

"I gave up tuba playing long ago. Now, I play an eighteen foot mouthpiece with valves."

"The mouthpiece has become my instrument so I pay little attention to the extra tubing on the end of it."

"Since the instrument has no intelligence or music of its own, it honestly reflects the intellect and music I send to it through the mouthpiece."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"There are two instruments. One is in your hands and one in your head. The instrument in your hands is a mirror reflecting the one in your head."

Jake once remarked to me, "You have two different mouthpiece techniques. You must learn to play the mouthpiece the same way when it's in the tuba."

I was a very successful mouthpiece player when it was not in the instrument. There were absolutely no mechanical problems. However, when I placed it the leadpipe of the horn, immediately all sorts of mechanical problems paralyzed me. I could actually feel the paralysis begin as I moved the mouthpiece closer to the leadpipe. I could also feel the paralysis diminish as I moved the mouthpiece further away. Later, I understood that the instrument was powerfully influencing my state of mind in a negative way.

ROCCOISM

"If we don't influence our instrument with a powerful awareness of music, the instrument will influence us in a manner that destroys our ability to function."

"We waste too much time and energy trying to master playing our instrument. We must master the music before we can become masters of the instrument."

"If you don't master the music, you will become the slave of your instrument."

ARTUR SCHNABEL

"I never sit at the piano until I have first learned to play the music in my mind."

NICOLO PAGANINI

The great violinist was once asked, "Maestro, you play so beautifully but why don't I ever hear you practice?" His insightful response was, "Just because you don't hear a violin does not mean I'm not practicing."

Jake shared a story about a situation he experienced as a young man when he was hospitalized for an extended time. A tuba mouthpiece was brought to his hospital room. This gave him a lot of time to practice the mouthpiece alone. He remarked that his playing was much improved after the hospitalization.

The highly accomplished French trumpeter Maurice Andre, was an officer in the French army. There was a period of several months when he did not have access to a trumpet. However, he did have a mouthpiece that he could play. Later, he remarked, "I discovered that I was a much better trumpet player when I finally had an opportunity to play one."

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Practice entire sessions on the mouthpiece alone to avoid having problems creep into your playing."

"Sound is the criterion for how you do this and that."

H. A. VANDERCOOK

"If you can sing (buzz) it, you can play it."

PURE (LIP) SLUR

All forms of articulation must be vocalized before executing with the mouthpiece or instrument. To encourage tone production, Initial notes should be played in the mid-range and at a louder dynamic level, such as poco forte.

For the initial attack, the consonant is maintained but for subsequent notes only the vowel is retained (tAH-AH-AH-AH etc.). For easier execution, slow descending slurs using small intervals should be taught first.

Since the sound of slurred notes is sustained, I always use long tones to create an awareness of how slurred notes should also be a continuous sound. Then, we transfer the same sound to slurred notes.

Slow ascending slurs, using small intervals, should encouraged imitating the sound of the descending slur. I prefer to use the same notes, but in reverse, to minimize the distraction of playing unfamiliar notes. I never discuss air flow or changes of embouchure. Gradually the interval and velocity between slurred notes should be increased.

Brass players who do not follow a methodical development of slurs, become distracted by their low expectation of success. The result will be failure when playing ascending slurs over a wider interval.

I always remind my students that they do not have to be concerned the mechanics necessary to slur notes. However, they must be able to commit to mentally singing and buzzing the notes into the instrument.

If the brass player is unable to make a commitment to mentally singing, it is because their awareness is not powerful enough to transcend the distractions of the feel. The Sing, Buzz, Play (SBP) formula will always elevate their musical awareness to a point where they can maintain their concentration.

ROCCOISMS

"Don't be concerned about the mechanics necessary to play slurs or any other form of articulation. If you mentally sing the notes as you play them, I promise they will emerge from the bell exactly as you sang them."

"Without creating a history of success, there can be no expectation of success."

"Great physical strength is not required to play a brass instrument. However, we must have a powerful mind that can focus on the sound we want to send to the mouthpiece."

I have been asked to explain the reason for Jake's incredible success as a tuba player. He was able to compensate for his lifelong physical weakness with a powerful musical mind. He always said, "The only physical strength required to play the tuba is carrying it to the stage." I brought the York to him on several occasions.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"(Physical) strength is your enemy. Weakness is your friend,"

"We should be somewhat unconscious of our physical maneuvers but highly conscious of our musical goals."

LEGATO

Legato is an articulated form of pure slur. It's used stylistically in jazz and other musical genres and to imitate the sound of pure slur on the trombone. A softer consonant, such as dAH, lAH, nAH, or rAH is used to substitute for the marked t sound. The open vowel (AH, OH, OU), following the consonant, must be maintained and emphasized in the sound.

Since legato is an imitated form of slur, the pure slur should be developed first. This can also be achieved on the trombone by playing intervals within a single harmonic series. Some trombone players also use pure slur to play notes that move in the opposite direction of the slide. There will be no glissando, however there may be a "false" articulation. For this reason, many trombonists prefer to use legato whenever there is motion of the slide.

Legato should first be played on a stationary pitch, imitating the sound of sustained notes, without interruption of the tone. The first note usually

begins with the basic marcato attack which is followed by the use of the softer consonant. (tAH-dAH-dAH-dAH etc.) Vocalization, with slide motion, must always take place before playing.

After the trombonist has achieved a good legato without motion of the slide, it can be introduced with slide motion. Too often, trombonists are first asked to play legato requiring large motions of the slide. The result is usually failure, because they are distracted by the slide. The slide motion should be one position (half step) and the direction should be descending. Gradually, the slide motion can be increased and ascending legato introduced.

The element of time is very important when coordinating the motion of slide and tongue. They must occur simultaneously. When I'm working with a group of players, I have them face each other in a circle so they are aware of each other's slide motion just as string players are aware of each other's bowing in an orchestra. I also have them subdivide quarter notes into duple and triple eighth notes for more precise rhythmic accuracy. I also like to simplify legato phrases by first playing them on a single note and to use alternate positions to minimize slide motion.

ROCCOISMS

"Imitation of others is an important procedure to ascend the Ladder of Awareness."

"SIMPLIFY AND TRANSFER is a learning process that allows a higher level of achievement. We progress from simple to complex musical challenges in an imitative manner."

MULTIPLE ARTICULATION (double and triple tonguing)

The study of multiple articulation cannot begin before the brass player has achieved good tone production with the basic marcato attack. The player must have also achieved a fairly advanced level of technical facility.

I always challenge brass players first with triple, rather than double tonguing. The primary reason is the 2:1 ratio of the front of the tongue (tAH) to the back (kAH). For double tonguing, the ratio of front to back is 1:1 so the kAH syllable intrudes into the inner oral cavity more often. The (k) consonant is the new element in the syllabic pattern (tAH, tAH, kAH). It can be a major factor discouraging tone production.

Some brass and woodwind players prefer to apply the (k) consonant to the second syllable (tAH, kAH, tAH) rather than the third (tAH, tAH, kAH). There is nothing inappropriate about using this syllabic pattern. I prefer to place the (k) consonant on the third note for the following reasons.

1. The most widely used method for brass (Arban) places the (k) consonant on the third note.
2. The (tAH, tAH, kAH) syllabic pattern is distinctly different from the duple pattern (tAH, kAH, tAH, kAH). Applying the (k) consonant to the middle note means that we are essentially double tonguing the triplet. I

found that when we perform multiple articulations in combination, duple and triple, it's easier to distinguish the two syllabic patterns if they are different.

Any syllabic pattern, including a wide variety of consonants and open vowels, will work well if it can be vocalized first. I never recommend the closed vowel (ee) because it forces the tongue into the inner oral cavity, discouraging tone production. Since the tongue intrudes so much into the inner oral cavity, any

Since multiple articulation can be a major factor discouraging tone production, trumpet and woodwind players sometimes prefer to use softer consonants (dAH). Other open vowels (tOU, tOH) may also be used. For greater clarity, I always encourage the (t) consonant with the low brass.

It is very important that vocal singing be rhythmical and not too fast. The pitch should remain constant in order to transfer the articulation to the mouthpiece and instrument without valve or slide motion.

Here are some procedures I have used to develop rhythmic singing of multiple tonguing syllables.

1. First sing the figures using the same syllable for all three notes.

tAH tAH tAH tAH tAH tAH

2. Next, imitate the same rhythm and diction but introduce the new third syllable.

tAH tAH kAH tAH tAH kAH

3. Another procedure is to eliminate the third syllable entirely by singing only the first two in strict triplet rhythm.

tAH tAH rest tAH tAH rest

4. Then the kAH can be precisely placed in the eighth rest.

tAH tAH kAH tAH tAH kAH

Once the syllables have been developed vocally, they should be transferred to mouthpiece playing at a fairly loud dynamic. Since the tongue is intruding so much into the inner oral air space, we must play loud to encourage and maintain toneproduction. I may also place a sustained note before the triplet to create good tone production that can be immediately transferred to the triplet.

Loud Half Note tAH tAH kAK tAH tAH kAH Loud Quarter Note

The final step in the procedure is to transfer the mouthpiece playing to the instrument without changing valves or slide motion (same notes).

VALVE (SLIDE) TONGUE COORDINATION

The multiple tonguing exercises in Arban are not organized progressively. I pick and choose the studies in the following order.

1. The same pitch within the triplet for the entire measure.

2. The same pitch within the triplet but pitch levels change within the measure.

3. One pitch changes within the triple.

4. All three notes change within the triplet.

Each study should be single tongued first at a moderate tempo. It is important to maintain a resonant tone with precise rhythm and tempo. The use of a metronome is recommended.

Triple tonguing should imitate the single tongue precisely. There should be no difference in sound between the two. Gradually, the tempo should be increased beyond the player's ability to single tongue comfortably.

I frequently challenge myself by double or triple tonguing technical etudes that are normally slurred such as the 13th Characteristic Study in Arban.

Once the player has achieved success in triple tonguing, I apply the same procedures to double tonguing. Finally, I challenge my students with combination double and triple tonguing studies and repertoire.

(triplet eighths, tAH tAH kAH four sixteenths, tAH kAH tAH kAH)

ROCCOISM

"Musical and technical development is the result of musical and technical challenge."

IN SUMMARY

Proper articulation is a necessary skill used to regulate good tone production. However, the tongue does not produce sound. Poor articulation can be a major factor inhibiting tone production. The player can never achieve good articulation skills if they have not also achieved good tone production. Articulation and tone production are not separate. They must be thought of as equal components of a healthy brass technique.

Since the tongue is not involved, the pure (lip) slur is a factor encouraging tone production. Because of the interference of the tongue in the inner oral air cavity, any other form of articulation must be considered to be a factor discouraging tone production.

Diction is only a tool used to motivate the proper motion of breath and tongue. Ultimately, the player's awareness of sound must become the primary motivating factor.

Brass players should practice the same technical exercises with a wide variety of articulated patterns. The goal is always to maintain good tone quality and musical style regardless of the technical challenge.

ROCCOISMS

"There is no reason for your success or failure other than your state of mind."

"Sound motivates function."

"SING, BUZZ, PLAY"

Technical and Musical Development
ROCCOISMS

"A career in music is tough business for those who are not highly accomplished artists. For those few musicians who develop their skills, 'It's a wonderful life'!"

"We must develop our playing skills beyond any challenges that will be encountered on stage."

"It is important to perform well within the limits of our ability, not at the limits of our ability."

"Musical and technical development is the result of musical and technical challenge."

As a young tuba player, I recall a comment made by a very fine professional horn player, regarding some technical exercises he heard me practicing. He said, "Why are you practicing that stuff? You will never encounter it in any orchestral parts." He was correct about not seeing the Arban, gruppetto studies I was practicing, anytime on stage. However, he was incorrect about my need to develop them anyway.

When I first began playing in a school band in the late 1950s, there was very little original music except for traditional Sousa, Goldman, and King marches. Most concert band music was in the form of orchestral transcriptions. The technically challenging orchestral string parts were played by woodwind and brass instruments.

I remember that transcriptions, such as Glinka's Overture to Russlan and Ludmilla, technically and musically challenged almost every instrument in the band. As a result, there were many very fine clarinet, saxophone, cornet, and baritone players in most high school bands. Today, few concert bands play orchestral transcriptions.

As a result, the numbers of technically developed players has diminished dramatically because of the diminished challenges. I also notice that many of the orchestral transcriptions available are simplified arrangements.

A few years ago, I had an opportunity to conduct the Georgia Allstate Band in Savannah. I requested that they acquire a challenging original orchestral transcription that I knew was no longer published. The officials searched the entire state and eventually found a complete set of parts. Every rehearsal, the students asked me to play the music faster!

Until the emergence of the brass quintet by the New York Brass Quintet in the 1960s and the Canadian Brass in the 1970s, tuba playing skill was

confined to the level of an accompanying rather than a melodic instrument. Players were not challenged technically so they did not develop beyond the simple music they were asked to play.

Harvey Phillips is credited with changing the image and musical expectations of tuba players with his artistry and numerous challenging solo commissions.

Before the 1980s, brass playing in Europe was generally less developed than in the US and UK. European players mostly developed their technical skills to the level of the orchestral music, which is generally not challenging technically.

The brass band movement in the UK and military style concert bands in the US are credited with the development of higher performance standards for brass instruments. Many American players went to Germany to fill vacant orchestral jobs in their concert halls and opera houses. They also brought American brass pedagogy.

Today, brass performance in most European countries has developed to international standards. With the assistance of American and European brass players, the same transformation is taking place in many Asian countries.

CASE STUDY

One summer in the late 1990s, I invited a young French trumpeter to audit my graduate brass pedagogy class at Vandercook College. At the time, she was studying with a very prominent French artist-teacher.

When I first met her, she was in tears. Naturally, I asked why she was crying. She replied, "Because I can't play!" I confidently promised that before she left Chicago in the next week, her tears would turn to smiles.

She attempted to perform the last movement of the Concerto for Trumpet by Hummel. I could tell immediately that the technical challenges of the music were beyond her skill level. Execution was impossible. There were other playing issues beyond her technical limitations, but I could not ignore her technical weakness.

I knew we first needed to develop some technical skill apart from the concerto. I asked her to retrieve her Arban, Complete Conservatory Method book. I was astonished to hear her say, "What is that?"

She knew nothing about the world's most important brass method book, authored by Jean Baptiste Arban of the Paris Conservatory! To her and obviously to her trumpet teachers, the challenges of Arban had no relevance to Hummel. I had my copy but I strongly suggested that she soon acquire her own.

ROCCOISM

"We must develop and condition a high level of technical virtuosity to avoid musical limitations in our playing."

It was important that she first master the less technically challenging solos with variations in Arban. I introduced SING, BUZZ, PLAY and she was able to create significant success immediately. Throughout the week, I challenged her more technically until she was ready to transfer her developing skill to the Hummel.

Yes, her tears turned to smiles long before the end of her week in Chicago.

THE CHALLENGE

It was the final tour of the internationally acclaimed Philip Jones Brass Ensemble. One of their last performances was at Northwestern University, where I was teaching applied tuba along with Jake.

Philip Jones planned to retire soon after the tour. However, he would not allow his name to be associated with the group after his retirement. I was very disappointed to hear him say the brass ensemble would soon be disbanded.

The ten member ensemble had a very unique sound that featured several virtuoso members as soloists. One such member was the great British tubist, John Fletcher.

John was a converted horn player. Interestingly, Phil Farkas was a converted tuba player! Early in his career, John realized there were many very fine horn players in London and not enough tuba players. In the 1960s and early 70s, John came to Chicago to study with Jake.

The Northwestern concert was an inspiring experience! As an encore, they did a funny bit with John playing the Canadian Brass arrangement of "The Flight of the Tuba Bee." Since it was only scored for brass quintet, five players had no parts.

Those players created havoc as John played his virtuoso solo part. Among other things, they pretended they were looking for their missing music in the bell of his tuba. It was very funny! However, John didn't let any of the hilarity distract him from a single note. I was stunned at his artistry! His virtuoso performance left a powerful impression on me and the others who heard it! I knew I had to get the music and challenge myself.

Soon afterward, I did acquire the music and eventually developed it to a high level. I performed it with numerous brass quintets and also arranged it for tuba-euphonium ensemble. In my imagination, I could hear and see John playing but I was the one with an instrument in their hands.

My ultimate goal was to challenge the trumpet players in the quintet to the point where they complained about my tempo. I'm proud to report that they complained most of the time! I'm also pleased to say that these fine players always accepted and met my challenge.

Tragically, six months after the Northwestern concert, John had a fatal stroke that left him in a coma for six months. He was only 46 years old when he died.

THE PLAN

Most young brass players are not prepared for the technical challenges of difficult music. Preparation in a practice studio must come long before an appearance on the stage.

MULTIPLE ARTICULATION (double and triple tonguing) This subject will be covered more thoroughly in a future essay.

Words have a powerful impact on the conscious and subconscious mind. As a result, I avoid using the word "tongue". The instant the word is spoken, the brain begins to analyze the tongue both with mental imagery and by feel. We never create this distracting analysis in speech or when chewing food. Frequently, I found when I lectured about "tonguing", I would become aware of my own tongue and begin to stutter.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Overlap single tonguing speed with double and triple speeds."

"Tonguing has to be 5% consonant and 95% vowel. Use no more tongue than in normal speech.

"When practicing etudes, first develop them slowly. Then speed them up."

"Practice various ways of articulating everything"

"Whenever you have difficulty technically, think of the passage more musically."

It is very important to understand that any advanced articulation skill, including multiple articulation, must be developed on a solid foundation of excellent tone production and basic articulation. We can never substitute multiple articulation for inadequate single articulation. We must transfer the skill first developed in single to multiple articulation.

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

ROCCOISM

"Your subconscious mind already knows how to play the notes. However, it must be highly aware of the notes you want to play."

"Nothing you attempt to play can be by mindlessly blowing and fingering. Every note, regardless of range, dynamic, or speed, is only motivated by a vivid conscious awareness of the sound."

"The most powerful awareness sound is achieved by vocally or mentally singing in a musical style."

"There is no such thing as technical playing without it being musical also. Imaginative musical playing will motivate your technical playing. It's not the other way around"

H. A. VANDERCOOK

"If you can sing it, you can play it."

If we accept Vandercook's statement, then logic dictates that if we can't sing it, we can't play it.

CASE STUDY

One of my students was preparing to audition for the Leonard Falcone International Euphonium Competition. The repertoire list consisted of numerous solos and technical etudes that test every element of the player's musical and technical development.

At the end of his final lesson before the competition, I asked him if he had the discipline to do what I was going to ask of him. He replied with a very confident voice, "Yes, Mr. Rocco, I do!" Yes, I believed him!

Included on the repertoire list, were several of the Characteristic Studies from Arban. The compass of the fourteen studies is only two mid-range octaves. However, they challenge the player both technically and musically.

I asked the student to develop the etudes one or two measure at a time, using the following procedure.

1. Play sets of four repetitions, starting slowing and increase the speed with each repetition. Repeat sets until you have achieved the ability to play at least 15 beats per minute faster than the required tempo.
2. First buzz and finger the sets, using a BERP. Then, play and finger with the mouthpiece in the leadpipe. Alternate buzzing and playing with continued repetitions of the sets.
3. After you are satisfied with your development, repeat the process with the next measure. When you have developed the second measure, repeat the process playing both the first and second measures together. Then, master the third measure. Repeat the formula playing three measures together. Master the fourth measure and apply the formula playing the four measures together.
4. Repeat this process four every four measures. Each time you master a group of four measures, go back to the beginning and play the four measure groups together until you have mastered the entire etude. If you experience weakness with any particular measure reapply the formula to that measure or group of measures.

This process may seem tedious but it actually works very quickly because it's "success oriented". Most players take the approach of starting at the beginning and playing to the end to see how many notes they can execute. Unfortunately, there is mostly failure associated with that approach.

ROCCOISMS

"A history of success creates an expectation of success. A history of failure creates an expectation of failure."

"The function of a teacher is to create opportunities for success."

The student won first prize. Today, he is recognized as one of the finest euphonium players in the world.

I also apply the same formula of repetitions when I'm working with groups of instruments. I usually substitute vocally singing for the buzzing when working with strings or woodwinds.

IN SUMMARY

Technical and musical development are combined elements of producing sound with an instrument. They cannot be thought of as being separate because musical playing motivates technique, and technical development allows the player to be more musical.

All technical skills, such as fingering or tonguing, must be developed methodically over time. If a player attempts to perform beyond the limits of their ability, they will create a history of failure. That history will cause a self perpetuating expectation of failure.

We must develop our playing skills well beyond any challenges we expect to encounter on a performance stage. Any playing skill must be motivated by challenge. The development must take place gradually to mostly allow for success rather than failure.

SCOTT PECK, M.D.

"Solving life's problems requires NEED, DISCIPLINE, TIME."

The following is a list of recommended advanced method books for brass instruments. All brass players, especially euphonium, trombone and tuba, should learn to read in two or more clefs.

ARBAN - COMPLETE CONSERVATORY METHOD (pub. Carl Fischer) (treble and bass clefs)

KOPPRASCH - SIXTY ETUDES (pub. Carl Fischer) (all brass)

SCHLOSSBERG - DAILY DRILLS AND TECHNICAL STUDIES (pub. Maurice Barron) (treble and bass clefs)

CLARKE - TECHNICAL STUDIES (pub. Carl Fischer) (treble and bass clefs)

BONA - RHYTHMICAL ARTICULATION (pub. Carl Fischer) (treble and bass clefs)

PARES - SCALES (pub. Carl Fischer) (all instruments)

ROCHUT - MELODIUS ETUDES (three volumes, pub. Carl Fischer) (bass clef)
The original Bordogni vocal etudes are available in treble clef and with piano accompaniment.

POTTAG AND ANDRAUD - SELECTED MELODIOUS PROGRESSIVE AND TECHNICAL STUDIES
(two volumes, pub. Southern Music) (treble clef)

CHARLIER - ETUDES TRANSCENDANTES (pub. Leduc and Carl Fischer) (treble clef)

ROCCOISM

"No etudes or technical studies should be merely thought of as exercises. They should receive the same attention and development of any other repertoire."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I sing the notes in my head (regardless of range, speed, or dynamic) as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lip feels or how I feel."

"Creative Visualization"

ARNOLD JACOBS

"When I play, I'm telling a musical story."

SHAKTI GAWAIN (Creative Visualization, Nataraj Publishing)

"Use the power of your imagination to create what you want in life."

Jake was an imaginative musician not just a virtuoso tubist. It would not have mattered what instrument was in his hands. He could have been a great pianist or violinist. He became a highly accomplished string bass player simply by placing chalk marks on the finger board!

In his personal playing and his teaching, Jake always emphasized musical imagination over mechanics. He thought of playing as an "art form" rather than a technical skill. When he was a student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, he attended a performance class taught by Marcel Tabuteau, principal oboist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. He credits Tabuteau with giving him a strong background in phrasing and musical interpretation. Jake's vivid musical imagination was expressed very powerfully.

He never allowed anything to distract him, including his instrument or how he was feeling, from his imaginative awareness of the music. He inspired his students to elevate their artistic standards to compete with the levels of any great musical artists, not just brass players.

I remember a performance of the Symphonie Concertante by Prokofiev. The great Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich was soloist with the CSO. The powerful tuba part was frequently a duet with the soloist. Jake matched the incredible musical level of Rostropovich. At the end of the performance, he gave Jake a solo bow and ran back stage to give him a "Russian Bear" hug. It was one of his most astounding performances with the orchestra.

ROCCOISMS

"Some people have a musical imagination that can be expressed in shades of gray and black. Others hear music expressed in bright vivid colors."

"Emerald City is a bright shade of emerald green, not dark green, gray, or black."

I recall that the most satisfying moments in my lessons with Jake frequently occurred at the end. He would assign several horn etudes by Gallay or Paudert. Then he would say, "Let's try them now." He sang along as I sight read the music. Jake was an imaginative singer and master solfege artist. I was astounded at how easy it was to play the etudes so well. It was as if he was playing them rather than me. I could never play the etudes as well on my own, even after practicing them for years!

Jake learned about the power of visualization from his wife, Gizella. When they met, she was a professional dancer. She told him about the visualization techniques that dancers used. They imagine dance movements before and while they execute them. Athletes and business people commonly use visualization techniques as well.

CASE STUDY

We were playing Stavinsky's, "The Rite of Spring Ballet" with Solti and the CSO. In those days, the orchestra played Friday afternoon concerts that were attended by "shoppers" (Solti called them "bag ladies"! He despised them so much, the CSO eventually eliminated Friday afternoon concerts!) and music students, who sat in the gallery.

I remember warming up in the basement of Orchestra Hall before the concert. Jake sat in front of the black shipping trunk next to his locker. I sat facing him about fifteen feet away.

He began as a trumpet player before playing trombone and later by accident, the tuba. He enjoyed imagining that the tuba was a trumpet. He would shift his mouthpiece upward to form a trumpet player's embouchure, and play in the midrange of a trumpet on the tuba. However, he was playing two octaves higher than the midrange of the tuba! It sounded like a resonant trumpet playing with the same ease a clarity of an instrument 4.5 ft long rather than 18 ft. This demonstration made a powerful impression on me both aurally and visually. I was completely astonished! I'm sure he intended the demonstration to be a powerful lesson.

Later that afternoon, the Civic Orchestra had their biweekly rehearsal in Orchestra Hall. For my second warm-up of the day, I sat in the exact same spot in the basement dressing room where Jake and I played a few hours before. I remember mentally visualizing Jake sitting in front of his trunk and hearing him do his "trumpet" impersonation. What happened next was almost frightening!

I picked up my tuba and duplicated what I heard him play earlier. I was amazed at how easy it was. I had no thoughts of shifting my embouchure or any other mechanics.

Interestingly, I was never able to duplicate the experience in a different location, only where we sat in front of his shipping trunk. It was the combination of a powerful visual and aural awareness that allowed me to experience that level of performance.

ROCCOISM

"Let me paint the picture for you."

When I'm working with young or inexperienced musicians, I frequently use imagined visual imagery to elevate their musical awareness. I call the technique "painting the picture". Sometimes, I'll make up a story, or if it's program music, I'll describe the real story.

Recently, I conducted the Brandenburg Sinfonia by Bach with my high school orchestra. Because of their inexperience, they had no idea of the Baroque style of the music. I painted the picture by describing how Bach would lead the orchestra from the harpsichord. I was using a harpsichord in the orchestra so I asked the student to play the first eight measures of her part. The harpsichord plays block chords (continuo) in a somewhat detached style. It was the style I wanted the strings to imitate. Even though their parts indicated that they play in a detached style, those words meant nothing to them musically.

I explained that the harpsichord was leading the orchestra and that they should imitate what they heard coming from the instrument. Needless to say, they immediately sounded like a different orchestra. I said nothing about bowing technique or any other playing mechanics!

"The Pirates of the Caribbean"

When the first "Pirates" movie came out a few years ago, I decided to perform the score at our spring concert. I was astonished to hear how well they could play the music immediately. With such inexperienced players, it usually takes a long time for them to learn new music.

I soon learned that most of the students had seen the movie several times. They loved the music as much as the movie. They already had a vivid awareness of the music and how it visually fit the movie. As a result, they could perform at a much higher level than their inexperience should allow. I soon noticed that they readily transferred the higher performance level to the other music on the concert as well.

Everything I do, as an orchestra director, is to communicate the music aurally and visually to the students. Musically, they never sound like an inexperienced high school orchestra because that's not the sound I'm communicating to them. They would sound like an inexperienced high school orchestra if I didn't influence them from themselves.

ROCCOISMS

"My string and woodwind players know much more about their instruments than I do. The reason for my success as their director, is that I know much more about how their instruments should sound and the music than them."

"I'm convinced that what separates musicians has little to do with anatomy or equipment. However, it has everything to do with 'state of mind'."

MUSICAL IMAGINATION

ARNOLD JACOBS speaking to RR.

"I wish I could put my brain in your body. What a combination that would be!"

Bud Herseth, the greatest orchestral trumpet player of all time, played an ordinary Bach trumpet with a stock 1C mouthpiece. Dennis Brain's horn was in such poor condition that he filled in holes in the tubing with matchsticks.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"There are two instruments, one in your hand and one in your head. The instrument in your hand is a mirror reflecting the instrument in your head."

"IMITATION IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF FLATTERY"

Because Jake opened the doors of opportunity for me at such a young age, I found myself working with some of the greatest brass players in the world by the time I was eighteen. In addition to the CSO, I was on first call at the Grant Park Symphony, Lyric Opera, and in all of Chicago's recording studios. I played in five professional brass quintets and brass ensembles.

I was a music student at Roosevelt University where Reynold Schilke taught trumpet and directed the brass choir. Great brass players from all over the world would frequently come to Chicago to study or perform. Schilke would routinely organize a group of brass players to play ensemble music with the visitors on Saturday mornings at his downtown trumpet factory. I was very fortunate to be the invited tuba player!

I survived by imitating what I heard around me. I didn't have enough experience to make it on my own, but I was smart enough to go with the musical flow.

I credit one brass quintet in particular for my personal musical development. The trombonist (bass) was a natural musical genius who I also sat next to in the Civic Orchestra. He was only a year older than me but his musical imagination and playing level was that of a fully seasoned professional in a major orchestra. He was a powerful influence on me and everyone else in the quintet. He was considered to be the "heir apparent" to replace Ed Kleinhammer in the CSO someday.

One day, someone told him he should consider changing his embouchure to increase his endurance. Tragically, that was the beginning of the end of his career. He eventually gave up the trombone and became a fine recorder player.

As a high school student, I collected records and frequently went to the library in downtown Chicago to listen to recordings and read scores.

Very few musicians have an opportunity to experience music performance at such a high level, at such a young age. It was a very fertile environment in which to grow my musical imagination.

THE AGE OF COMMUNICATION

Because of the internet, there is a tremendous opportunity to access the highest levels of musical performance in the world. iTunes and youtube allow us instant access to recordings and videos from the past and present.

The highest level of musical awareness can be achieved when we vocally and mentally sing. Jake was a beautiful singer who highly recommended the study of solfege to his students.

He also advocated playing vocal music, interpreting it like a great singer.

ROCCOISM

"The sound that comes out the bell of your horn is precisely the same level as the awareness of sound in your head. Neither you or the instrument can lie."

"You must be an honest musician because you have a lie detector in your hands."

LADDER OF AWARENESS

Jake tells us to create an imaginative mental awareness of the music we want our audience to hear. He talks about his studio practicing at Curtis. He knew that Leopold Stokowski or Fritz Reiner might be walking by and hear him play. Whether they were actually there or not, he always tried to play at the level he wanted them to hear. His playing was always mindful, never mindless.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"Never practice, always perform."

When Jake says, "Tell a story", he asking us to communicate musically to an audience just as if we were speaking to them. However, it's very important to have something special to say.

When I coach brass players in preparation for an audition, I tell them to amplify everything they are trying to communicate musically. If they separate themselves musically from their competition, they will also separate themselves technically as well. This requires courage and the willingness to take risks.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"A trumpeter's life is risky business. No greatness can be achieved if the player is paralyzed by fear."

CASE STUDY

When I played my audition for the Honolulu Symphony, the conductor was on the stage with me. He was a marvelous cellist who played in the NBC Symphony with Toscanini at the age of sixteen and was formally principal cellist of the CSO.

As he selected the excerpts, I sensed his awareness of what he wanted to hear from me. He gave me powerful visual cues which strongly influenced my ability to execute the music. He helped raise my musical awareness level which was honestly expressed by the sound coming from the bell of the tuba.

CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

"Creative Visualization" is the mental awareness (aurally, visually or both) of anything, including the sound of music. Shakti Gawain says that if we maintain any conscious mental awareness for enough time, our subconscious brain will react powerfully to realize that awareness. She recommends renewing the visual and (or) aural imagery several times a day.

For brass players, I recommend the repetition of the SING, BUZZ, PLAY formula in sets of three.

ROCCOISM

"Moving up the ladder of awareness will bring you to the notes you want to play."

Mouthpiece Placement

The "E" Word

MAURICE ANDRE

"Brass players are much too concerned about their embouchure and not concerned enough about their sound."

Along with "Air", the "E" word (embouchure) is overused in traditional brass pedagogy. Too often, teachers make the assumption that the reason their students are failing, is because there is something wrong with their embouchure or use of air.

When we hear poor tone production coming from the bells of our student's instruments, there is malfunction of embouchure and air. But most often, those malfunctions are symptoms of something else that's wrong.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

ROCCOISMS

"There is no reason for your success or failure other than your 'state of mind'."

"Sound motivates function."

"There is plenty of air to support the poor sounds coming from the bell of the instrument."

Throughout my career, I have heard horror stories about students who had "dreaded" embouchure changes imposed on them by well meaning, but misguided teachers. Some players survive this unnecessary and potentially destructive imposition, but for too many, their careers are ruined.

In all my years of association with him, Mr. Jacobs never said one word to me about my embouchure!

CASE STUDY

I have taught brass pedagogy and instrumental performance at fifteen colleges and universities. I recall an incident that occurred at one of those schools.

At the end of his first semester, a freshman trumpet player requested to register for his applied trumpet lessons with me the second semester. He had made no progress working with his assigned trumpet teacher and was being denied an opportunity to play with the band. He was almost completely unable to function. I mentioned that if he had permission from his regular trumpet teacher, I would accept him for one semester. I knew it would be enough time to show him how to play.

From the beginning of his first lesson, it was obvious that he never understood how to play the instrument. I also noticed that he had a very unorthodox placement of the mouthpiece on his lips. His upper lip curled over the top of the mouthpiece rim. However, I said nothing to him about his embouchure.

We began his first lesson by applying the SING, BUZZ, PLAY formula, and were able to create some success immediately. At the end of the lesson, he was very relieved to know that he could play the trumpet.

Finally, I asked, "Has anyone ever mentioned your unusual mouthpiece placement?" Showing his frustration, he almost fell off the chair. He replied, "For years everyone, including every director or private teacher and my father." I asked, "Where's your father?" He said, "Sitting out in the hall!" I told him to invite his father to come into the studio. I was determined to have at least one person get off his back about his embouchure.

His father, an oboist, was a graduate of the same college. I proceeded to explain to the father that his son's performance problems had nothing to do with his embouchure. Then the father told me an astonishing story about his first lesson with the principal oboist of the Chicago Symphony.

He said the first hour of the lesson was about making reeds and orthodox oboe embouchure. At the end of the two hour lesson, the teacher placed the reed in the corner of his mouth, ignoring everything he said about proper embouchure, and played beautifully. He was stunned! He never understood that demonstration until our discussion.

ROCCOISM

"You can give your worst mouthpiece (reed) or instrument to an advanced player and they will still sound like an advanced player. Conversely, if you give the finest equipment to an elementary player, and they will still sound like an elementary player."

The trumpet player progressed beautifully over the next four months. He planned to play the last movement of the Hummel Trumpet Concerto for his jury. The lesson before the jury went very well. However, his jury performance was not a success.

When he arrived in the performance room, he found himself in the presence of the same people who hounded him about his incorrect embouchure. As a result, he began to think about his chops rather than the music.

Later, I asked him what they said about his very poor performance. Their response was predictable.

"Your embouchure is incorrect."

The student was able to transcend the negative comments and continue his college career without having someone impose a change of embouchure.

THREE GUIDELINES FOR MOUTHPIECE PLACEMENT

COMFORT

Most brass players will place the mouthpiece in the most comfortable place on their lips. However, some teachers insist that the mouthpiece be precisely centered or in some other position. Because of the player's teeth, braces, or some facial structure, an imposed mouthpiece position may be uncomfortable and will distract the player from the music.

ROCCOISM

"Feel and fail are four letter words to a brass player."

"A change of embouchure is a needless imposition of pain that will cause increasing failure. Unless the brass player is highly motivated to transcend the discomfort with a powerful awareness of sound, they have no chance of success."

"We must do things that will prevent, rather than encourage us from going into the "feel mode" when we play."

Feel involves input to the brain from sensory tissues. However, in order to accomplish any physical function, there must be output (motor function)

from the brain to the muscle tissues. If we allow input to be dominant over output, the result will be paralysis.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"We must give dominance to motor systems, not sensory systems. It is impossible to make sound or create any accomplishment using sensors."

We should not be concerned about having the contact of the mouthpiece "feel good" when we play. But there cannot be excessive discomfort for any reason.

In a previous essay, I mentioned the story of Bud Herseth transcending the pain from his car accident when he performed with the CSO. In his studio, embouchure pain was so dominant he couldn't play. But, he had the courage to perform with the orchestra.

On the stage of Orchestra Hall, the music was dominant and he could play. The challenge of the music altered his state of mind. There was another interesting element of his recovery experience.

About six months into his recovery, he happened to glance into a mirror while playing and noticed that his mouthpiece placement had shifted slightly from center. He never made a conscious decision to move the mouthpiece but his subconscious mind changed the placement in order to alleviate pain.

ROCCOISM

"Brass players who experience discomfort because of their mouthpiece placement, should be allowed to move the mouthpiece anywhere necessary to alleviate pain."

Students who have irregular teeth or are expected to wear braces for an extended period can alleviate some discomfort considering the following.

The characteristics of air pressure and air flow encourage tone production at low frequencies. Air pressures (resistance) are low, thus flow rates are high. As a result, less contact pressure is required to maintain the embouchure at low frequencies.

1. Lower register playing requires less contact pressure on the rim.
2. Wider rim, larger diameter, or cushioned (well rounded rim) mouthpieces disperse contact pressure over greater tissue surface.
3. Low brass instruments have larger rim mouthpieces and require less contact pressure to maintain the embouchure.
4. Upper register playing requires increased contact pressure on the rim. A wider rim mouthpiece will disperse rather than concentrate contact pressure.

Because the brain is capable for sending a musical message to any of the lip surfaces, it is not necessary to center the mouthpiece. Farkas mentions

that it is also possible to play well by placing the rim of the horn mouthpiece on the interior surfaces of the lower lip. Jake frequently mentioned how "the seventh cranial nerve" transmits the musical message from the brain to the lips.

Jake also enjoyed doing a very amusing demonstration. He played a melody on his mouthpiece as he grotesquely distorted his embouchure and moved the mouthpiece all over his lips. During the demonstration, the resonant melody could be heard without interruption.

EQUALIZED CONTACT PRESSURE

The contact pressure of the mouthpiece on the player's lips should be about the same at all points around the rim. It is also important to understand that the pressure is not minimal, nor should it be excessive.

Phil Farkas (The Art of Horn Playing, The Art of Brass Playing, Southern Music Co.) took numerous photos of brass player's embouchures while playing on a mouthpiece rim. It is very clear to see by the, lips bulging inside the rim, that the contact pressures are not minimal.

As noted in a previous essay, excessive contact pressure is a symptom of weak chops.

If there is not enough contact pressure on either the upper or lower lip, there may be a lack of support when playing very loud.

Because all facial structures are different, the brass player's playing angle is an important consideration. The brass player must establish and maintain equalized contact pressure. The playing angle will not be uniform for all players.

Brass players with an overbite (most common) will tend to have a downward playing angle, while those with an under bite will play parallel to the floor or may point their mouthpiece slightly upwards. The best way to determine the proper playing angle is to play on the mouthpiece and then bring the instrument to the angle of the mouthpiece. This is easy to accomplish with a trumpet or trombone. It can be tricky for horn players, if they rest the bell on their thigh or hold the instrument off their thigh.

Too often, I see young horn players resting the instrument on their thigh in such a way (bell pointing into their stomach) that the leadpipe is approaching the embouchure at a severe downward angle. This causes too much pressure on their upper lip and not enough on their lower lip.

Euphonium and tuba players, requiring a severe playing angle, have a difficult time achieving the proper angle with large instruments. In that event, I recommend bending the mouthpiece at the throat. This must be done by a competent instrument technician so that the throat and stem are not reduced in size. In most cases, euphonium and tuba players will adjust the angle of their head instead of trying to adjust the instrument.

During my years spent in Chicago's recording studios, the number of microphones available was limited by the number of tracks that could be

recorded at one time. Usually, it was just eight tracks, but later, sixteen track machines became available.

Three trumpet players had to play into a single microphone. I recall one fine player who had a severe under bite. It was impossible for him to play at the same angle at the other two players so he used a bent mouthpiece.

Since the microphone for my tuba was stationary, it was important that my bell always point in the same direction with as little motion as possible. I took a cue from the trumpet player and had Reynold Schilke bend one of his number 67 tuba mouthpieces to compensate for my minor overbite. I still use that same mouthpiece and horn combination today.

As a brass player changes registers, the playing angle (pivot) continuously changes with the shifts in the embouchure. Most players will make these adjustments with movement of their head. Pivots are necessary to maintain equalized contact pressure. Excessive motion is a sign of the player's limited technical facility and embouchure development.

Motion of the head and embouchure are the brain's subconscious response to create the conditions necessary (equalized contact pressure) to execute the sound. They can only be motivated by a vivid awareness of sound not by studying ourselves in a mirror.

Some misguided methodologies prescribe precise head angles (pivot) in various registers. We cannot create sound by consciously studying motion of air or any body part.

ROCCCOISMS

"It is sound that motivates the subconscious mechanics of air and embouchure. We cannot use conscious awareness of mechanics and air to motivate sound. The mechanics are so complex that our limited intellect will allow little or no awareness of sound."

"At the conscious level, we can only have a single thought at any time. At the subconscious level, thoughts and awareness are unlimited."

Normal motion of the head and embouchure should not be exaggerated. Since excessive motion is a symptom of an undeveloped embouchure and limited technical facility. I prescribe slurred velocity exercises (scales and chords) that challenge the player over two or more octaves. In time, the brain will learn to minimize shifts of the head and embouchure to satisfy the facility requirements. Since there isn't time for exaggerated motion of embouchure and head, the subconscious brain learns how to efficiently execute the notes in velocity with less motion. Ultimately, smooth slow slurs played over wide intervals, become much easier to execute.

ROCCCOISMS

"I do not recommend visual analysis in front of a mirror to develop any musical or technical skill."

"In all my years of performing with some of the finest brass players in the world, I never once saw anyone studying themselves in front of a mirror."

"It is sound that motivates function, not function that motivates sound."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"Breathe to expand, rather than expand to breathe."

EMBOUCHURE LENGTH

Logic tells us that it would be an advantage for tone production to utilize the longest embouchure possible. If we compare an oboe reed with that of a bassoon, the bassoon reed has much greater potential for resonance because of its greater size. If we were to place an oboe reed in the bocal of a bassoon, the sound of the bassoon would be very thin.

On a brass instrument, the greatest length of embouchure is achieved when the lips come together to form an aperture (space between lips) at the diameter of the circular rim of the mouthpiece.

Today most brass players, except for horn, place the mouthpiece on their lips in this manner. However, many very successful brass players, including horn players, shift the mouthpiece up or down so there is a difference between vibrating surface areas of the two lips. If the mouthpiece is shifted so the ratio of upper lip to lower lip is 2:1 (most common), there will be a corresponding ratio of surface area set into resonance.

URBAN LEGEND

There is a myth that the reason for the traditional shifted placement is because only one lip vibrates in the mouthpiece. It's not possible to vibrate only one lip when both lips are inside the rim and air flows through the aperture between them.

In *The Art of Horn Playing* (Southern Music Co.), Farkas photographed the embouchures of 30 professional horn players. Interestingly, their mouthpiece placement varied wildly. Some players had almost no lower lip in the rim while some used almost no upper lip. A few players had no shift at all. Farkas said that all the players were very successful professionals.

It must be deduced that mouthpiece placement was not the most important factor determining their success.

One theory for the use of the shifted mouthpiece placement is an advantage to playing in the upper register of the instrument. Before the invention of valves in the 1820s, brass instruments were required to be much longer to access the smaller intervals of the upper partials.

It becomes increasingly difficult to resonate the air column in the upper partials of the overtone series. Except for the Sackbut (early trombone), brass players were required to play in the upper register of their trumpets and horns most of the time. The F horn is the same length as the modern F

tuba. Horn players are essentially playing high notes on a tuba most of the time. Baroque trumpeters (without valves) are playing high notes on a Sackbut most of the time.

As a result, the standard mouthpiece shift, before the invention of valves was, 2/3 upper lip-1/3 lower lip. Some very effective brass players retain the shift today. It is standard mouthpiece placement for horn players. However over many years, I have asked hundreds of directors if they have their horn players shift the mouthpiece. I estimate that 95% don't !

Today, most trumpet and low brass players do not shift their mouthpiece. Does it really matter where the aperture occurs within the mouthpiece rim?

CASE STUDY

I received a request for a lesson from a tuba player who had recently graduated from a major university with a DMA in performance. However, she was having problems with her playing. I gave her an appointment for a late Friday afternoon.

Yes, she was having great difficulty playing, especially in the middle and low registers. I noticed that the top of the rim of her mouthpiece was cut off. Naturally, I asked about it.

Several prominent teachers told her that the reason she was struggling was because of the need to shift mouthpiece placement. If she cut off the top of the mouthpiece rim, she could shift it even more!

I said, "Is that working for you?" The boxing gloves came on!

When a student begins to fight me, I ask them, "Why are you here?" You wouldn't come to me if everything was working well for you!

Sometimes students want to find out how to make their dysfunctional method work. They are not interested in a new approach. This credentialed tuba player was one of those people. She resisted everything I said to her for more than six hours!

Finally, I said, "Are you busy this evening?" She replied, "No". I replied, "I can't let you leave until you experience some success." She agreed to stay.

I knew her career was in serious jeopardy if she did experience some success that evening. She would never return and would continue to try to make her shifted mouthpiece placement work. I knew it would never work because her cut off mouthpiece had nothing to do with the fact that she couldn't play!

We spent the next five hours (with breaks) in a boxing match. Finally, at 10:00 she experienced success. I asked her what caused the change. She said, "I finally decided to listen to you because I want to go home!"

She eventually enrolled as a graduate student in music education at Vandercook where she continued to study with me. She played a very successful graduate recital, without the cut off mouthpiece!

CASE STUDY

One summer, I received a call from a mother regarding her seventh grade daughter who had been playing a cornet in her middle school band. The daughter's band director wanted her to convert from cornet to the horn over the summer.

Since she had been playing cornet for several years, I said nothing to her about using a shifted horn embouchure. Had I imposed a standard 2/3-1/3 shift, she would have experienced a great deal of discomfort in her embouchure. That pain would have needlessly distracted her from the music and cause her to fail. I knew that Barry Tuckwell and many other fine professional horn players, did not shift their mouthpiece.

By the time she went to high school a year later, she was an excellent horn player. She attended a high school that has one of the finest instrumental programs in Illinois. She was awarded first chair in the wind ensemble as a freshman, playing the instrument for only one year!

In Illinois, you cannot perform at All-State until your junior year. She won principal horn in the Honors All-State Orchestra both her junior and senior years. She established herself as the finest high school player in the state. No one ever said a word about mouthpiece placement until she attended a major university. The result was a career ending disaster!

Even though she already was a very successful player, the horn professor told her that her embouchure was incorrect and insisted that she must shift the mouthpiece. As a result, he ruined her very promising playing career and, as I learned later, the careers of many other players.

Unfortunately, this story is more common than not. I have heard the arguments, from some instrumental teachers, that their imposed embouchure changes "worked miracles" for their students.

Yes, it is possible to transcend the discomfort and develop one's playing with a different mouthpiece placement. In most cases, the players became even more highly motivated to focus on the music. If their playing improved after the embouchure change, it's because they transcended the pain with a greater awareness of the music, recalling Mr. Herseth following his automobile accident.

It's possible for the brain to send a musical message to any surface tissue around the mouth. The mouthpiece does not have to be confined to a narrow area of tissue.

When I'm working with beginners or non-brass instrumentalists, I motivate them to produce excellent sounds on their mouthpiece immediately. They have no embouchure development but I immediately give them musical awareness. They are able to realize that awareness immediately.

H.A. VANDERCOOK

"Keep it simple."

With inexperienced brass players, I use very familiar melodies (Mary Had A Little Lamb) or simple terms like "loud", "high", or "low" to create an immediate musical awareness.

CASE STUDY

Several years ago, I attended the Texas Bandmasters Convention held in San Antonio. Christian Lindberg performed as trombone soloist with the Army Band. Following his magnificent performance, the thrilled audience immediately rose to award Mr. Lindberg well deserved accolades.

I remember a comment that I overheard from one of the directors standing near me. He said, "Wow! Can you imagine what his embouchure looks like?" I was totally disheartened because I knew it didn't matter what his embouchure looked like. What was important was what it sounded like! The director didn't understand that fact and far too many others don't understand as well.

Mr. Lindberg had absolutely no concern about the appearance of his chops or what they felt like. He was totally committed to just the sounds that he wanted to communicate to the audience!

CASE STUDY

One of the finest students of my teaching career is a euphonium player who first came to me as a sophomore in high school. At the age of sixteen, he won a competition to appear on a live telecast as soloist with the Chicago Symphony. At seventeen, he won first prize in the Leonard Falcone International Euphonium Competition.

Upon graduation from high school, I told him that he already had all the knowledge required to play his instrument well. He should continue his college studies, working with a euphonium artist-teacher. I suggested teacher "A". He was thrilled because he had always hoped to study with him someday. He scheduled a lesson with teacher "A". I asked him inform me about the lesson.

I received a distressful call soon after the lesson. He said, "Mr. Rocco, I can't study with teacher "A"! He said my breathing and embouchure were all wrong. Then, he put me in front of a mirror to have me visually analyze my face and chest. By the end of the lesson, I couldn't play anymore. What a disappointment!

I mentioned that I was sorry for his experience and I was sure he would be satisfied with artist-teacher "B". He enrolled at the major university where teacher "B" was on the faculty.

Periodically during the school year, I received progress reports. I could tell he was not happy. He was receiving the same old analytical trash! At the end of the year, he mentioned he was leaving teacher "B".

I saw him for a lesson the summer following his first year in college. I was dismayed to see that his playing had deteriorated. I confidently mentioned the name of artist-teacher "C".

Teacher "C" (tuba) was a wonderful student of Mr. Jacobs. "A" and "B" are not Jacobs students. I had hoped the two artist-teachers would focus only on the music. In the fall, the student enrolled at the major university of teacher "C". From the beginning, he was very happy.

I told him that if a gig ever came along before he finished school, he should drop out and accept the opportunity. He soon won a job playing with one of the major DC military bands. Today, he is one of the most prominent brass players in all the military bands.

Most college teachers are hired because of their performance ability not for the success of their teaching. As a result, many very fine performers are somewhat poor teachers if their students are experiencing playing problems.

I have had many students, with impressive college credentials, come to me because they can barely play.

I once asked a horn player, who had recently received her Master of Performance degree from a major university, what her artist-teacher said about her severe playing problems. He said, "I don't understand why you can't play anymore than I understand why I can."

ROCCOISM

"We cannot motivate our embouchure by observation. It can only be motivated by our vivid awareness of sound."

IN SUMMARY

The embouchure is created by the subconscious brain in order to realize the player's conscious awareness of sound. It's the quandary of the chicken or the egg. Which came first?

Traditional brass pedagogy says in order to create the perfect sound you must first create a perfect embouchure. Mr. Jacobs (Herse, Rocco and many others!) tells us that it's the awareness of sound that must come first. The development of the embouchure will follow gradually just as the ability to say words with vocal chords gradually followed our awareness of words.

ROCCOISMS

"A child learns how to speak because of the sound of words rather than the study of vocal chords."

"Because there are no standard facial structures there cannot be a standard mouthpiece placement."

If the brass player is musically motivated and given enough time, they can realize their awareness with almost any mouthpiece placement.

Brass players and teachers should be aware that if standards of mouthpiece placement are imposed, failure may result because the standard may not fit the player's facial structure. The brass player must be free to place the mouthpiece comfortably and with equal contact pressure on their lips. If this doesn't occur, they will become distracted by the discomfort and will fail.

MINDLESSLY BLOWING THE INSTRUMENT

Some teachers complain that the poor performance of their students, is the result of "puffing cheeks", "puckered lips", "tight lips", "loose lips" etc. They give them "embouchure magnifying mirrors" in order to study their face. Other teachers have their students play on glass mouthpieces so they can visually analyze their chops when they play. Where is the player's concept of sound when they are analyzing their face in a mirror?

When a brass player is "mindlessly blowing" into their mouthpiece, there is no musical message to motivate the subconscious formation of an embouchure. There are certain principals of mouthpiece placement as outlined earlier in this essay.

Self analysis must be kept to a minimum. Concept of tone should be the dominant.

I am aware of many very successful brass players who "puff their cheeks" or have some other unorthodox mouthpiece placement. Does it matter if they are successful brass players?

CASE STUDY

I recall attending a brass quintet concert of an excellent group from Boston. I was invited by the very fine tuba player who had studied with me on occasion in Chicago. I immediately notice that one of the excellent trumpet players severely puffed his cheeks when he played.

Following the concert, I had an opportunity to meet with the members of the quintet. I knew that the quintet performed many educational concerts and gave numerous brass clinics in schools. I said to the trumpet player, "I'll bet the directors make you crazy asking why you play so well when you puff your cheeks." He replied, "Yes, I just tell them I'm a freak of nature."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I don't care if what you are doing is all wrong if it sounds good."

We must conclude that if it sounds good, it cannot be wrong!

ROCCOISM

"Embouchure is created by the brass player's subconscious mind in order to realize their vivid concept of sound. We must not care what it looks like, only what it sounds like."

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2009
Range Development

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Playing high is no different than playing low."

"Think sound, not mechanics."

The first consideration any brass player should have when they want to expand their range is the quality of their sound in the mid-range. Proper playing technique and a good quality of tone must be established there first. Then, we must transfer the mid-range quality sound to the upper and lower registers of the instrument. The same approach to playing quality mid-range notes will work beautifully in the upper or lower register.

I frequently ask a new horn student a "loaded" question. "Are you a high or low horn player." That question is meaningless to someone who really has developed their performance skills. If someone really considers themselves to be one or the other, then they are only half of a player.

Although there are physical changes in the embouchure and the use of air as we move from the mid-range, those changes must always be motivated by an awareness of the sound we want to produce. We cannot consciously analyze how to manipulate our lips or air. We don't have the knowledge, intellect, or physical awareness at the conscious level of thought to make that happen.

The subconscious mind has the ability to create the sound and will learn the mechanics if given enough time. Like the development of any skill, experience is the most important element of the learning curve. We must provide our subconscious mind an opportunity to acquire the knowledge. And we must provide time for the development of muscle tissues through the experience of playing. That experience must be gradual and two directions.

Too many ineffective brass teachers discuss the conscious manipulation of embouchure and air. "Tighten your lips to play high notes. Drop your jaw to play low notes."

"Blow downward"

"Blow upward"

"Curve your upper over the lower lip"

"Play with fat, fast, or slow air."

Since we cannot detect fat, fast, or slow air, such comments are ineffectual. However, we can have a vivid awareness of a fat sound and loud and soft dynamics.

ROCCOISM

"Sound motivates function."

"When the brass player's awareness of body parts is primary and music is secondary, there will be no mechanics of playing or music."

HIGH AND LOW FREQUENCIES

It is very important that range expansion take place gradually and in both directions. The characteristics of air pressure and air flow for low frequency notes are beneficial for tone production. Conversely, the characteristics of air pressure and air flow for high frequency notes are detrimental for tone production.

The embouchure is less resistant to air flow at low frequencies so air flow rates are high. As we ascend in frequency, the embouchure becomes more resistant to air flow. Greater air pressure is required to move the air through the embouchure so air flow rates drop.

If we don't expand our range simultaneously in both directions, the brain will begin to interpret the characteristics of air flow and air pressure in one register or another as the norm for all registers. This is not harmful if the norm becomes the characteristics of low notes. However, if the characteristics of high notes become the norm, the subconscious brain will create those characteristics in the middle and low registers where they are not normal. The only way that can happen is for the subconscious brain to create a resistance to the flow of air somewhere before the embouchure.

Although I never had an opportunity to discuss it with him, I always thought that one important reason Maynard Ferguson played the valve trombone (Superbone) was to balance the negative playing conditions of high notes with the positive playing conditions associated with low notes. Playing the Superbone was therapeutic for his trumpet playing as well as his wonderful musicianship

ROCCOISM

"I divide the history of range development on brass instruments before and after Maynard Ferguson. He showed the world that we can expand our range by several octaves and still maintain the musical integrity of mid-range playing."

FOUR POINTS OF RESISTANCE OF BREATH

Jake measured air flow rates and air pressures required to produce specific frequencies on all brass instruments. He discovered that air pressures were about the same for any brass instrument at specific frequencies. Air flow rates were not the same because the different length of embouchure for various size instruments.

The air pressure required to play middle C (256 c.p.s.) on a trumpet and tuba is about the same for both instruments. The note is relatively low for the trumpet and relatively high for the tuba. The actual pressures Jake

measured were quite low even in the extreme upper register of the trumpet. He said they were much less than the air pressure created and released by a cough.

If we compare air flow rates for the two instruments, playing at about the same dynamic level, the air flow rate for the tuba is much higher than the trumpet. Primarily, the reason is difference in length of embouchure associated with mouthpiece size.

Playing at about the same dynamic level, differences in bore size and type, conical vs. cylindrical, would also have some impact on air flow rate.

Because of familiarity, the subconscious brain may want to duplicate the characteristics of high notes (high pressure-low air flow) in the middle and low registers where those characteristics are not normal.

The subconscious brain can accomplish this only by resisting the air somewhere before the embouchure (throat, tongue etc.) Resistance created before the embouchure will cause the embouchure to collapse because of the lack of breath support. The air pressure will increase behind the point of closure, but at the embouchure, it will drop like a rock. These playing conditions are disastrous for any wind player!

THE TONGUE (front and rear)

The tongue can be a major factor resisting the flow of air to the embouchure. It is a very powerful muscle that has the strength to resist the abdominal muscles. The tongue can restrict air flow at the front or rear.

It must be noted that the facial muscles of the embouchure are some of the weakest in the body. They cannot resist the powerful abdominal muscles which are used for breathing, defecation, and giving birth. We cannot resist air flow with our lips! Often, the player senses breath resistance and they consciously think it's occurring at the lips because their embouchure is collapsing.

They instinctively try to restore air to their embouchure by blowing harder but that only causes the brain to increase resistance at the point of closure. If the cycle of blowing and resisting continues, there will be complete failure of the embouchure.

THE THROAT

Since it is necessary to close the passage way to the lungs (trachea) when we swallow, it is also possible close the airway when we are not in the act of swallowing. However, opening and closing the trachea cannot be directed by the conscious brain. Nobody consciously thinks about opening or closing their throat when they breath or swallow. Some misguided vocal and instrumental teachers try to direct their students to obtain conscious control over this function by yawning.

It's a waste of time and effort. We cannot have conscious control of a subconscious function. It's like consciously trying to stop your heart from

beating. We can temporarily stop breathing at the conscious level, but eventually the powerful subconscious mind will take charge and restore inhalation.

ROCCOISM

"In order to alter a subconscious function, we must alter the conditions that are creating it."

ISOMETRIC CONTRACTION

Most muscles of the body are paired against each other to create motion in two directions. As a result, there are different muscles for inhalation and exhalation. If both sets of muscles contract simultaneously, there is plenty of tension but no movement of air. The player senses they are blowing hard but there is no movement of air. Usually, the teacher tells the student to "relax". That's another ineffective comment because nobody consciously puts themselves in an isometric state. It's a way of creating paralysis because the player very has little confidence of success.

Occasionally, instrumental teachers have noticed that a young brass player may resist the breath by closing their mouth entirely when they attempt to play. It must be a rare occurrence because I have never encountered it with any of my students.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT RESISTANCE OF BREATH IS CAUSED BY THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND. IT IS MOTIVATED BY PLAYING CONDITIONS, NOT THE CONSCIOUS WILL OF THE PLAYER. SINCE IT IS BEING CONTROLLED BY THE SUBCONSCIOUS, WE CANNOT ALLEVIATE THE CONDITION WITH CONSCIOUS MECHANICAL MANIPULATION OF THE TISSUES. INSTRUCTIONS, SUCH AS "OPEN YOUR THROAT", "RELAX", "FLOW THE AIR" ARE MEANINGLESS ATTEMPTS TO TREAT THE SYMPTOMS OF OTHER PROBLEMS, WHICH ARE THE CONDITIONS OF PLAYING.

CASE STUDY

In 1979, my first year teaching at Vandercook, I noticed that I could hear the vocal chords of one of my students when he played the tuba. I didn't mention it until the end of his first lesson. I asked if he was aware that his vocal chords could be heard. He emphatically replied, "Yes!".

I also asked if anyone else has mentioned the problem. He replied, "Lots of people have been telling me for many years." I said, "What do they tell you to do?"

"OPEN YOUR THROAT." OR "STOP DOING THAT."

"Did those instructions work for you?" "NO!!!"

Such meaningless comments never work. Students are aware of that fact but they don't have the courage to tell their teachers. However, they do communicate it with their instrument. But much of the time, the teachers don't get the message.

My student was at the beginning of his senior year but he could barely play his instrument. He was very concerned about his senior recital.

I never said another word to him about his vocal chords until after he played a very successful recital about six months later. I remember congratulating him for his excellent performance. Then I asked, "Have you noticed that you no longer make sound with your vocal chords when you play?"

He smiled and said, "Yes, thank you Mr. Rocco!"

Before we worked together, the student never learned how to be successful. His history was mostly failure so he had a high expectation of failure. This caused the protective reaction of his subconscious brain from experiencing further emotional and physical discomfort. The brain will most often try to protect the player by restricting air flow or creating paralysis of the embouchure. However, this subconscious reaction causes much greater failure and anxiety.

The solution was to provide a playing method that would allow him to create success. I simply encouraged the Sing, Buzz, Play formula. As he began, to experience success, his expectation of success grew. With a new history of success, came a positive association with playing his instrument.

The instrument began to have a positive influence on his state of mind. There was no longer a need to create paralysis because playing was becoming a pleasurable experience rather than a painful one.

I did nothing more than alter his conditions of playing by providing a methodology that allowed him to create success. There were no comments about air, embouchure, vocal chords or any other mechanics of playing. However, there was much that I did do (Sing, Buzz, Play) to elevate his awareness of what he should sound like.

In time, his subconscious learned the mechanics necessary to realize his heightened awareness of sound. Since restricting air will with vocal chords did not help him to realize the sound, his brain stopped doing anything to prevent it.

SHALLOW BREATHER

If a brass player frequently plays past the last third of their vital capacity, the stress of trying to force the air from their lungs will become a normal condition of playing. In time, the subconscious brain will try to duplicate the conditions of having to force the air from the lungs all the time, including when they attempt to play above the last third of vital capacity.

The only way the brain can accomplish the forcing of air is to restrict air flow. At some point before the embouchure, the brain will trigger one of the four areas of resistance.

WEAK EMBOUCHURE

The brass player who attempts to play higher notes than their development allows, will attempt to substitute exaggerated air pressures for their weak

chops. They cannot sustain the tone with a weak embouchure so they press the mouthpiece into their lips and blow harder.

However, the air pressure required to play notes with strong chops, is the same as with weak chops. They will artificially try to increase the air pressure at their lips. Again, the brain is forced to restrict the air pressure somewhere before the embouchure and one of the four points of resistance will be triggered.

DYNAMICS AND RANGE DEVELOPMENT

Playing in extreme dynamics (loud and soft), or range (high and low) requires embouchure development and breath control. It is very important to understand that all mechanical skills are developed by the motivation of the player's awareness of sound, not body parts or air.

If the player attempts to perform much beyond their development, the brain will desperately try to artificially alter air flow and air pressure to compensate for their weak embouchure.

In the case of high notes, they will also increase contact pressure on their lips forcing the mouthpiece into their chops. Too many teachers attempt to treat this symptom of weak chops by utilizing elaborate exercises to minimize contact pressure. Nobody consciously make the decision to force the mouthpiece into their embouchure. It's a subconscious reaction of the brain to maintain the embouchure when it's collapsing from fatigue.

ROCCOISM

"Excessive contact pressure of the mouthpiece rim on the chops is the result of a weak embouchure. The solution is simply to strengthen the embouchure, rather than to treat the symptom with meaningless exercises like playing with the instrument suspended on a string or placed on a piano."

"The perfect embouchure required to play in any register can only be created at the subconscious level of thought. It can only be motivated by the player's conscious awareness of sound."

IN SUMMARY

The subconscious brain will restrict air flow for one or more of the following reasons.

There is a high expectation of failure based on the player's history of failure. The history of failure is the result of not having a mechanism of success.

The player too often plays past the last third of their vital capacity, so they must force the air out of their lungs. The subconscious brain eventually becomes accustomed to forcing the air all the time. In order to force air, the brain must resist air flow by triggering a point of resistance.

The player attempts to play high notes or extreme dynamics without physical development. They will try to substitute exaggerated air pressures or air flow to compensate. The exaggeration will eventually become a normal playing condition that will trigger a point of resistance.

Breath resistance can also be a subconscious response to the player's history and expectation of failure. This response is a protective mechanism that seeks to prevent further emotional pain and physical discomfort. However, the paralyzing impact of breath resistance exacerbates the situation, causing even greater malfunction and anxiety.

We must consciously alter playing conditions to alter a subconscious response. There must be a methodology that will allow the player to create a new history of success. Once the history is established, a new expectation will follow. The protective mechanism of the brain will no longer resist breath or cause some other paralysis in anticipation of a negative experience.

THE THREE STEP APPROACH TO RANGE DEVELOPMENT

1. SUSTAINED (LONG) SOUND

Long tones or slow slur studies require continuous function of the embouchure so they provide the greatest opportunity for muscular development. THE FIRST STUDIES in Arbans or the numerous slurred studies in Schlossberg are a good example of recommended exercises.

The starting point should be a mid-range key or note. The player should alternate studies a half step lower with a half step higher from the original starting point. Each subsequent repetition should continue by further alternating a half step lower with a half step higher. The interval between high and low repetitions should be increased gradually from the starting point.

The player should continue the sustained studies to a point of moderate fatigue but not exhaustion. In about six months, the distance between high and low should be 3-4 octaves or more.

ROCCOISM

"Maynard Ferguson showed us that range development is limited only by the player's imagination. There are few real physical barriers."

Because of some limitations of the lower register on trumpet, trumpeters may repeat the lower key as they expand to higher keys. The studies should be practiced on a daily basis or at least 4-5 times weekly. With development, the amount of time devoted to these studies should increase. The mid-range starting point can be adjusted higher as the player expands their range. At first, these studies will cause noticeable fatigue, but that will alleviate with further development.

VELOCITY STUDIES

Like a healthy diet, range development should include a variety of studies. In addition to sustained playing, rapid scales and chords should be practiced. At first, I like to use the Clarke, Technical Studies for that purpose. The slurred exercises are written in every key starting in the lower register. I recommend starting in a mid-range key and alternate lower keys with higher keys. The studies should be played slowly at first and in slur to encourage tone production. Later, the tempo should be increased and the articulation should be varied.

As with the long tone studies, the interval between high and low key should be increased. They should be played to a point of moderate, but not excessive fatigue. With development, the player should expand the studies by half step beyond the written keys. Ultimately, the distance between high and low keys should be 3-4 octaves or more.

I also recommend similar chord and scale studies in Arban, Schlossberg, and Ernest Williams.

MELODIC STUDIES and REPERTOIRE

I ask students to transpose (or clef changes) simple melodic studies from Bordogni, Concone, Getchell or solo repertoire and etudes. They should start in a mid-range key and alternate lower and higher, gradually increasing the interval between keys.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"I knew I was prepared to play the "Christmas Oratorio" when I could play it twice through and a whole step higher than written."

"Studies like Charlier, challenge the trumpet player beyond anything encountered in the orchestra repertoire. Each one should be mastered as if it is a concerto."

ROCCOISMS

"Playing skills should be developed beyond any challenge that might be encountered on stage. We always want to perform well within the limits of our ability, not at the limits of our ability."

"Musical and technical development is the result of musical and technical challenge."

"Only a history of success can create an expectation of success."

The development of any playing skill requires repetition over time. It's no different than what is required to develop the ability to walk and talk.

If we try to execute a skill beyond our level of development, the result will be failure. We must always accept a certain amount of failure because it's an inevitable element of creating success. However, if we experience too much failure over too much time, we will develop a high expectation of failure.

A body builder knows that if they want to lift a 300 lb weight over their head, they must first start with whatever weight they can cope with. Then, they gradually increase the weight to continue strength development.

If a playing skill is developed gradually, we will mostly create satisfying successful experiences. This will continue to motivate the subconscious brain to develop the proper mechanics necessary to realize the player's expectation of success.

ROCCOISMS

"We always realize our expectations of success or failure."

"If we don't have the discipline to develop our playing skills over time, we will suffer the consequences of it never happening."

MAXWELL MALTZ

"The mechanisms of success and failure are the same."

We must not search for the perfect embouchure, mouthpiece, or instrument as substitute for playing skill that is undeveloped. Once we have developed our skills, we can execute the music regardless of what instrument we are holding or what mouthpiece is placed in the leadpipe.

Decisions regarding the equipment we use should be based primarily on the quality of sound that we want for the music. It is acceptable to use higher pitched instruments to make the music closer to mid-range for easier development. However, the final decision of what instrument to use should always be made for considerations of sound.

If you can't play a musical passage on a large horn, you won't be able to play it well on the small horn either.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Practice difficult music on a variety of instruments and make the music sound the same no matter what instrument you are playing."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I sing the notes (regardless of range) in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lip feels or how I feel."

ROCCOISMS

"We must liberate ourselves from the shackles imposed by self analysis. Let music be the key to your freedom."

"The function of a teacher is to create opportunities for success."

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

"Conditioned Reflex"

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Paralysis by Analysis"

Most people are familiar with the "conditioned reflex" experiment of behavioral psychologist Ivan Pavlov. He associated the ringing of a bell with a dog's feeding. In time, the bell alone stimulated the dog to salivate in preparation for food when none was present.

Musicians have a strong emotional commitment to creating music with an instrument in their hands. We invest years of our lives in a relationship that has positive and inevitably, negative moments. The first question I ask students at a clinic or masterclass is, "How many of you at have ever wanted to throw your instrument at a brick wall?" The response is always the same no matter where I ask the question. Everyone puts their hand in the air!

ROCCOISM

"Don't test your notes. Make an emphatic commitment to every note."

Since an instrument is a "lie detector", every note coming from the bell is exposed to the world the moment it is heard. It is also honest because the instrument has no intelligence or music of its own. It can only reflect the mind of the musician. When we play an instrument, there are no opportunities to test our results. The proof is the sound coming from the bell.

A mathematician or computer programmer can test their work before they present it to the world. As brass players, we must have the courage to commit to the sound that we expect to come out the bell. However, without a high expectation of success we will not be able to make a commitment.

MAURICE ANDRE

"I expect the notes to be there."

We must live with our efforts whether we are happy about it or not. Unfortunately on a brass instrument, the resulting sound can make the player unhappy more often than it gives them satisfaction. Whatever our emotional response is to the quality of our notes, the response is not ignored by our subconscious (reactive) brain. Like Pavlov's dog conditioned to salivate at the sound of a bell, we become conditioned to the emotions associated with the instrument we are holding for hours on end.

ROCCOISM

"The emotional and physical experience of playing your instrument can be like having someone point a double barreled shotgun at your head. There is a great expectation of emotional and physical discomfort."

Any musician experiences emotional pain when they fail but they don't necessarily experience physical discomfort. If a pianist plays the wrong

note or a violinist plays out of tune, they might experience emotional pain but it doesn't hurt their fingers.

The subconscious brain responds in a protective manner to avoid both emotional and physical pain. The protective reaction of the brain will create paralysis as it tries to avoid a negative experience. However, the resulting paralysis will cause even greater failure and pain.

If the cycle of failure and pain is not broken, the player will eventually become completely paralyzed. This condition is commonly referred to as "focal dystonia", a neurological condition. However, FD is the involuntary flexing of muscle tissue. Referring to paralysis as FD is an incorrect application of the term. It's a misuse that I have been guilty of on occasion.

ROCCOISM

"Paralysis associated with playing an instrument is not an incurable medical condition. It is a manageable psychological condition."

Far too many professional musicians have been told by the medical community that their careers are finished. In many instances, they are forced to retire. Others have tried to cure their paralyzed chops with the injection of cortisone or other substances in their lips. The medical profession does not have a real solution because they are trying to treat the symptoms of paralysis rather than the cause.

The cause is the negative conditioning associated with a history of failure. With highly accomplished players, the history is recent. With less accomplished players, the history may be life long.

I have found that accomplished players start to alter their "state of mind" with self analysis. The less accomplished players have never achieved the "state of mind" necessary to become accomplished musicians.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

I have helped many professional wind players, including myself, overcome paralysis. The negative conditioning that is stored in the brain can never be erased. It must be replaced with new conditioning based on creating a history and expectation of success.

ROCCOISM

"We cannot erase bad habits. They must be replaced with something new."

When the air column of a brass instrument, or any wind instrument, rejects the sound created in the mouthpiece, the rejection causes embouchure malfunction and breath resistance.

Traditional brass pedagogy wants to treat the symptoms of rejection. This never works because the problem exists in the brain, not external or internal body parts.

Rejection of the air column is uncomfortable physically as well as emotionally. A friend (professional trumpet player, John Cvejanovich) colorfully describes the unfortunate experience of having your sound rejected by the air column.

"It feels like I'm trying to push a piano up the stairs."

If a brass player experiences too much failure over a long period of time, the experiences add up like depositing money in a bank. Inevitably, the emotional and physical pain becomes associated with their instrument. Playing eventually is like the experience of touching a hot stove.

CASE STUDIES

The Pianist

When she was a child, a friend, PHD in psychology, aspired to become a concert pianist. She came from a very musical family. Her father, who was also her piano teacher, was a very fine professional pianist. Three of her relatives were string players in the Chicago Symphony.

When visitors came to her home, she was frequently asked to perform a short recital for the guests. However, she was dismissed if she made a single mistake. Eventually the emotional pain associated with playing the piano completely paralyzed her. She could not even bring herself to sit on the bench.

Later in life, she decided make clinical psychology her profession in order to understand what had happened to her. We have spent many hours together comparing what I was seeing in the world of instrumental music performance and what she knew in psychology. She was able to affirm in the literature what I already knew from my experiences with students and myself.

The Flutist

Several years ago, I received a call from a professional flutist who I knew as a very fine high school player. Fifteen years had passed since the last time I saw her. She told me that the fingers of her right hand would no longer allow her to play without pain and paralysis. The pain was so great that she could no longer finger the instrument with her right hand. She had been to numerous medical doctors and flute teachers throughout the world.

No one was able help her. She was told that she had focal dystonia and that it was incurable. However, she was not experiencing the involuntary flexing of the muscles of her right hand. She was experiencing pain and paralysis. FD was a misdiagnosis of her problem.

I asked if her hand functioned normally when she wasn't playing the flute. She affirmed that her hand worked fine when she did other things. I understood that her problem was not physical, it was psychological.

I wanted to know when she first noticed the symptoms of her pain and paralysis. She replied, "Fifteen years ago." My next question was, "What happened in your life fifteen years ago?" She said, "I started giving eighty flute lessons a week to make a living."

JAY FRIEDMAN

"After a day of private teaching, I sound more and more like my students."

Endlessly listening to elementary level flute sound began to have a negative influence on her own playing. Her symptoms of failure were very similar to mine. She noticed deterioration in her tone quality and it was becoming harder for her to play technically.

Because she is a committed musician, she naturally had an emotional response to what was happening. As she analyzed her playing, the situation became worse and she became even more anxious. In time, her anxiety became associated with the flute. Her subconscious protective instinct tried to prevent her from playing the instrument by causing pain and paralysis in her hand.

Over the years, I have noticed that the paralysis and discomfort manifests itself most often with the hands of woodwind players and the "chops" of brass players.

ROCCOISM

"We cannot use a physical solution to solve a psychological problem. Otherwise, we will attempt to treat symptoms of failure rather than the cause. Treating only symptoms will result in more failure."

Since the problem is psychological, the solution must also be psychological. The flutist was no longer thinking about music when she brought the instrument to playing position. She was only thinking about her pain as she desperately tried to make her hand function. I knew I had to alter her "state of mind" by bringing it back to the music.

It is common practice to have beginning flutists play their first notes on the head joint alone. A flutist can simultaneously sing vocally and finger the instrument.

I asked her to sing the notes (neutral syllable la) while the instrument was in resting position rather than playing position. I wanted to reduce the paralyzing influence the instrument had when she brought it to playing position.

It was important that the music be very familiar so she would have a high level of awareness. She found that she could finger the instrument normally as long as it was not brought to playing position.

I asked her to sing and finger short phrases in sets of three. With each repeated set, she brought the instrument closer to playing position until the mouthpiece was at her embouchure.

Then, I asked her if she thought she could play normally. She responded, "yes!" She was able to finger the instrument without pain for the first time in years. This was the opening she had been searching for. It required continued repetition of the singing and fingering over several months to create a new history of success and a new expectation of success.

There is no cure for playing paralysis. The conditions that motivated the paralysis are stored in memory forever. As long as the player substitutes new playing conditions, there will be a different response from the subconscious mind.

I continuously remind my students and myself that we must "Follow the Yellow Brick Road". If we don't, we will end up back in the "Witches' Castle" rather than "Emerald City".

The Trombonist

One summer, I received an email from one of my former Vandercook College graduate students. When he studied trombone with me in the 1980s, he was a very fine brass player. He mentioned that he was currently teaching applied low brass instruments and brass methods courses for music education students, at a small college in Tennessee. However, he lost all ability to play and was in danger of losing his job.

I was beginning a new week-long brass pedagogy course at Vandercook. I invited him to audit the class, which met for eight hours daily. I promised to work with him privately during breaks, lunch, and in the evening after class ended for the day. His was the worst case of paralysis that I had ever experienced in my forty years of teaching.

Although he had taken similar course work with me at Vandercook, he decided to refer back to the doctoral thesis of his undergraduate trombone teacher in his new duty of teaching brass pedagogy. The subject of the thesis was the analysis of facial muscles involved in a trombone embouchure. As he began to study and teach the subject, he slowly analyzed himself into a state of total paralysis.

H.E. NUTT

"To teach is to learn twice."

When I first asked him to play his mouthpiece, I was astonished that he could not make a sound. I had never encountered total paralysis playing on the mouthpiece alone. I knew I was going to be challenged by this level of paralysis, which was 100%.

Since he could not buzz anything, I asked him sing in sets of three repetitions. However, when I instructed him to play the mouthpiece on the fourth repetition, he was unable to make a sound. He made several attempts to sing and buzz the mouthpiece without success.

I asked him to sing and buzz his lips without the mouthpiece, but he could not function. After experiencing an endless amount of frustrating failure, I sent him home for the evening. I told him we would continue the next day and that I was confident we would eventually find an opening.

I always communicate a confident attitude to my students. They must believe that I can help them! However, that evening, I had some doubt. I recall telling my wife that this might be the first teaching failure of my career. Later, I thought of an important book I read several years before.

"THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED" (M. Scott Peck, M.D., pub. Touchstone)

For many years, I had been encouraging my students to read a self help book,

The Road Less Traveled by M. Scott Peck, M.D.

Peck says that life is a series of problems that we must learn to solve. Failure to solve them, because of avoidance or ignorance, usually leads to some form of mental illness. He gives us a beautiful three part formula for problem solving.

NEED

Dr. Peck tells us that we must first have a powerful need in order to solve problem. If our need is not powerful, we won't have the discipline to take the time necessary to find the solution.

DISCIPLINE

Solutions to problems require time to discover them. Since the solution will come at some point, we must be willing to "delay gratification". We must have the discipline necessary to take the time.

TIME

If our need and discipline are powerful enough, we will take whatever amount of time is necessary to find the solution to our problem if one exists.

I knew there certainly was need and discipline. Would I have enough time?

The next day was even more frustrating for the student and myself because the opening had not come. We worked for two days without success. He seemed willing to keep trying but I knew my time was running out. I thought he might not come back a third day.

On the third day, he wasn't present for the start of the 8 AM class. I was quite dismayed because I knew I had failed him and that his career in jeopardy. However, at 9:30 he walked into the room and apologized for being late because there was a major accident on the expressway.

During the day we continued to work but again, with no success. I knew he was going home the next day if something positive didn't happen. Before end of the day, something wonderful did happen!

ANOTHER LESSON FROM MR. JACOBS!

At the last possible moment, I remembered a wonderful and amusing experience I had sitting next to Jake in the CSO. It's a true story that is worth telling here.

Erich Leinsdorf was conducting a rehearsal of Deserts by Edgar Varese. It is scored for a huge compliment of wind and percussion instruments, including two tubas. The first tuba part has a very difficult solo note (Gb above middle C) that is played very softly. It is very treacherous because it's quite exposed and at the top of the range for CC tuba! Jake rarely used smaller horns for any reason. As usual, he used his 5/4 York CC tuba for this piece.

There are many horror stories about tuba players having trouble with the note. I was curious to see how Jake would handle it. I was also glad it was in his part, not mine!

As the moment to play the note approached, I noticed that Jake began to quietly sing the Gb into his mouthpiece. He repeated the note vocally several times. However, he sang the note very softly so I was the only one who could hear it. When it came time to play the note, he sang it louder into the instrument without actually playing it. He fingered the tuba correctly as if he had played the note. What happened next was astonishing!

Leinsdorf stopped the rehearsal and shouted, "Bravo Mr. Jacobs!" The rest of the orchestra shuffled their feet, a CSO tradition, signaling their approval.

I was the only person in the room who knew he never played the note. He leaned over with a patented "twinkle in his eye" and said, "My personal integrity won't allow me to do that at the performances."

We played six performances of Deserts. The note was flawless every time. However, he continued to do the preparatory singing each time. He just transferred the note from his vocal chords to his lips in order to execute it perfectly.

Thanks again Jake!

I noticed that he sang the note directly into playing without pause. There was no break between the singing and buzzing. This was the opening I was searching for!

Just as Jake had demonstrated, I asked the student to sing into buzzing without a break in the sound. Bingo! He immediately buzzed a sound with his mouthpiece for the first time in years. I'll never forget his first word, "Marvelous!"

Without a pause between singing and buzzing, there was no time for his subconscious brain to set up paralysis. I distracted him from himself with the sound. This is an important technique that I use to alleviate paralysis when the student is in a straight jacket. I distract them from themselves with music.

From that moment of success, he was able begin his recovery. It was just a matter of reapplying the SBP formula. He was able to perform publicly in about six months.

Not only was he able to keep his college teaching job in Tennessee but he later found another in Oregon where he also began playing with a local orchestra.

THE FIRST NOTE

The first symptom of paralysis that I noticed in my own playing was my difficulty starting the first note of a phrase. I remember a rehearsal Prokofiev's ballet, Romeo and Juliet with the Seattle Symphony. I had trouble starting a very simple passage of soft quarter notes in one of the slow movements.

Later, I learned that this symptom was quite common among all the brasses. Many teachers suggest breath attacks to their students to prevent the tongue from blocking the air. This is treating the symptom rather than the disease. We must understand why the subconscious brain is creating this condition.

The subconscious brain will frequently use the tongue (front or back) to block the air in order to prevent playing as it tries to protect the player from emotional and physical pain. This is the same protective reaction that prevents us from touching a hot stove or standing too close to a cliff.

However, the paralysis only makes matters worse. Because the subconscious is reactive not intellectual, it will override the conscious will in order to protect us from harm. When this happens, the result is disastrous!

The subject of the brain's protective response is discussed further in Trading in the Zone (Mark Douglas, New York Institute of Finance). "Zone" refers to the "State of Mind" necessary to achieve any goal.

To alleviate the paralysis associated with starting notes, I simply have the player sing directly into playing just as Mr. Jacobs demonstrated in Deserts. The technique requires a little practice but it works very well. Eventually, the player can get the same successful result by singing, but with a slight pause before playing. Finally, they only have to think the note at the moment they play it to be free of paralysis.

Sometimes the paralysis is confined to a few notes in a certain register. It doesn't matter where in the range paralysis occurs. The simple solution is always the same.

SING, BUZZ, PLAY

IN SUMMARY

THE PROBLEM

The paralysis is the result of not having a powerful enough awareness at the moment the player wants to create the sound. Since the subconscious brain has no awareness to respond to, it searches for the awareness by trying to feel the note at the lips. The brain desperately tries to convert the lips into ears.

ROCCOISM

"Playing by feel is like trying to drain the water out of swimming pool with a straw."

It is very important that the thought of the note occur at the same moment the player wants to play the note. Thinking of the note ahead of playing will result in failure if the thought is lost at the moment of execution. The brain will instantly try to substitute feel for awareness.

If the brass player has difficulty thinking the note, it's because their awareness level is not high enough to dominate other distractions. Thoughts, other than the note (This feels good or bad. I hope this works.), will dominate if their awareness is too weak or nonexistent.

If a student fails to execute their starting note, I ask them, "What were you thinking about at that moment?" They frequently respond, "I hope this works." I always reply, "Well, did that thought work for you?"

After I help bring their awareness back to the note and they play it successfully, I ask them a series of "loaded" questions.

"Were you successful because you played on a different instrument?" "NO!"

"Were you successful because you used a different mouthpiece?" "NO!"

"Why were you successful?" "I had a different State of Mind!" or "I thought the note."

Apply the SBP formula to raise the awareness level high enough to execute the sound with the instrument.

Since "feeling", rather than "singing", the note can never work. The resulting failure will cause the player to experience emotional pain and physical discomfort. The protective response of the subconscious brain will react by creating paralysis.

Paralysis causes increased emotional pain and physical discomfort, which results in even more severe paralysis and pain. The end of this vicious cycle may ultimately end in total paralysis. It will be associated with and ultimately influenced by the instrument.

THE "FEEL GOOD" APPROACH TO PLAYING

ROCCOISM

"Feeling good is a by-product of playing correctly. You cannot play correctly by trying to feel good first."

A philosophy exists among some brass teachers that, "You can't play until it feels right (good)." They spend endless hours, usually doing extensive warming up exercises, trying to create the right "feeling" in their chops when they play.

I'm reminded of another beautiful learning opportunity presented by Bud Herseth.

One summer morning, he was asked to give a clinic, on the stage at Ravinia, to 200 trumpet players who were attending a Northwestern camp.

We had a CSO concert the evening before. I'm sure he was very tired at 10:00 the next morning. I was also tired but I was not about to miss his clinic.

The stage had not been reset from the night before so there were chairs and music stands everywhere. Bud was quite irritated about this because everyone knew the stage hands made more money than the musicians. We were never allowed to move a chair or stand. A stage hand had to be called. We would usually just slide the stand or chair with our foot.

Since no stage hands were around at that early hour, Bud started tossing the chairs and stands around himself. I could see he was upset so I rushed to the stage to help.

When the clinic started, he looked out at the sea of trumpet players (I call them doo-dahs.) and replied in a very sarcastic voice, "I suppose you want to hear my warm-up!"

He reached into his five trumpet case and pulled out the piccolo. His first notes of the day were from the 2nd Brandenburg Concerto by J.S. Bach. He played flawlessly! The doo-dahs in the audience were stunned! There was no warm-up. Did it feel good to play that music on a piccolo trumpet for his first notes of the day? No!
Did it matter? No! No! No!

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lip feels or how I feel."

Herseth played by sound, not feel!

VANDERCOOK

"Keep It Simple"

THE "SIMPLE" SOLUTION TO A COMPLEX PROBLEM

Create a vivid conscious awareness of the sound. The subconscious brain will respond by executing the mechanics of playing rather than to search for the sound by trying to convert the lips into ears.

THE LADDER OF AWARENESS - SING, BUZZ, PLAY (SBP)

The SBP formula will elevate the player's awareness to a level ("Emerald City") which will allow their subconscious brain to order the playing mechanics necessary to realize the sound. The application of this formula has never failed my students or myself!

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I'm constantly ordering products. I don't care how I get them."

ROCCOISMS

"Playing an instrument requires highly complex physical maneuvers. However, we must motivate the complex mechanics with a simplistic approach. It's same as walking and talking."

"My students have and I have failed to apply the Sing, Buzz, Play formula, but the application of SBP has never failed us."

"We must transcend the instrument by committing our volitional thoughts to only the music. Otherwise, the mindless piece of metal will lead us to failure. We will become insecure, uncomfortable, and dissatisfied brass players."

"Sing in your head to liberate yourself from the shackles of the instrument. Don't try to eliminate the shackles in order to sing."

"There is no reason for your success or failure other than your 'state of mind'."

"FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD"

Tone Production

FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGE TONE PRODUCTION

ROCCOISM

"Music is the interpretation of sound. Without the creation of sound, there can be no music."

There are many factors that encourage tone production on a brass instrument. From my own experience of imitating the sound of Mr. Jacobs playing in the CSO, I learned that concept of sound is the most important factor. Adolph Herseth and Arnold Jacobs were such powerful figures on the stage of the Chicago Symphony that they influenced the sound of the entire orchestra. The sound of the orchestra changed when they were not present. The intensity

of their sound influenced everyone, including the conductors. That sound cannot be described with words alone. It had to be experienced!

Jake and Bud were the most important influences that created the unique "Chicago Symphony" sound first developed under conductor, Fritz Reiner and later nurtured by maestro Georg Solti. I first experienced the CSO on the great Reiner recordings for RCA. later, I was fortunate enough to live it in Orchestra Hall sitting in the gallery and on stage.

It's the brass player's concept of sound that ultimately has the most powerful influence on other factors, such as breath, embouchure, articulation, and fingering.

ROCCOISM

"The player's volitional (conscious) concept of sound is the primary motivator of other elements of tone production, such as embouchure and air. Contrary to popular belief, embouchure and air are not the primary motivators of the brass player's sound."

"It is the sound of words that motivates a child to speak, not the study of vocal chords, anatomy, or breath. If we go to a child's crib with pictures of vocal chords and anatomical charts of lungs and the diaphragm, there will be no spoken words coming from their mouth."

"Only the conscious mind can be the master of the music. Only the subconscious mind can be the master of realizing it."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"The key to playing a brass instrument is found in speech."

"It's not what you sound like that is important. What is important is what you want to sound like."

RICHARD OLDBERG (former 3rd horn - CSO)

"You know you have a great sound if you can be identified by it"

That statement was certainly true of Dennis Brain, Arnold Jacobs, and Adolph Herseth. The same can be said of Luciano Pavarotti, Itzak Perlman, or Yo Yo Ma. In my career, I was fortunate enough to have a few people, including Ed Kleinhammer and Jake's wife Gizzi, comment that they thought Jake was playing in a closed room, but it was me. Yes, imitation is the greatest form of flattery.

There are many factors that encourage tone production but the most important one is conceptual. Jake told me to, "Imagine what the music would sound like if Bud Herseth played it on his trumpet." Or he frequently would say, "You're Italian. Make the music sound like Renata Tibaldi is singing it." I always sounded different immediately after those comments.

Interestingly, Bud Herseth does not credit great brass players for having the most important musical influence on him. Since his parents loved opera, they would frequently play recordings of great opera singers.

In 1992, I interviewed Brian Bowman for The Instrumentalist magazine. I asked him how he started on the euphonium and who were his most important influences. There was an interesting response.

Brian had few brass teachers influencing his euphonium playing. His father was violinist and directed a church choir. He sang in the choir and occasionally accompanied them with his euphonium. Brian traveled to Chicago from his home town of Rock Island, Illinois to take an occasional lesson with Forest Buchtel at Vandercook College. He had his first lesson with Jake day after our interview.

Jake frequently said, "I was a pretty good brass player until my first teacher came along." When he was a child, he volunteered to play the bugle for his Boy Scout troop. His mother was an accomplished pianist but she knew nothing about brass instruments. She simply played the notes on the piano and Jake imitated them with the bugle. He eventually became an excellent trumpet player without having a teacher.

DESCRIPTIVE WORDS AND MOUTHPIECES

Working with inexperienced brass players, I to use very simple familiar descriptive words, such as loud or big, to motivate them to produce a more resonant sound on their mouthpiece. I also associate the sound with a familiar large object such as an elephant or a bus. I'll ask them to imagine that their mouthpiece is twice as large.

I may give a beginning trumpet or cornet player the mouthpiece of the next larger brass instrument, such as a trombone mouthpiece. It's easier to produce a large sound on a larger mouthpiece.

One of my former graduate students at Vandercook College, a fine professional trumpet player and middle school band director, starts his beginners on a Bach 1C trumpet mouthpiece. It is the largest diameter trumpet mouthpiece in the Bach catalogue. For many years, he has been successfully developing excellent young brass players for his band program.

Most of my professional colleagues and I play large diameter mouthpieces and use large bore instruments to encourage resonant tone production. Jake preferred used a large tuba (York) to help him compensate for his reduced vital capacity.

I remember seeing a trumpet mouthpiece designed and used by Maynard Ferguson. It was not a typical cup shaped design. It was essentially a deep horn mouthpiece (funnel) with a wide trumpet rim. Mouthpiece design and playing characteristics will be discussed further in a future post.

INHALATION - EXHALATION

ROCCOISMS

"A large breath can be used to produce a large sound."

"Make the sound of a vacuum cleaner when you inhale a deep breath."

"Inhale very large breaths and renew them often."

"There are ideal parameters of breathing in order to encourage maximum tone production. Start playing from maximum capacity and renew the breath at about 50% capacity. Avoid the danger zone at less than 33% VC."

I only make one reference to air when I'm working with wind players. I'll encourage them to take in maximum inhalations and to renew them often. I immediately associate a large inhalation with a resonant sound. Ultimately, it's the player's desire to produce a resonant sound that will motivate them to take in large breaths. However, this association must be conditioned over time.

It is important to understand that no one needs to be taught how to quickly suck in a large quantity of air into their lungs. References to anatomy, such as chest, stomach, or diaphragm are not only unnecessary, they are detrimental.

ROCCOISMS

"At birth, we already have the ability to inhale air into the lungs and to expel it quickly without having someone teach us how to do it."

"Nobody has to teach us how to breathe in order to play a wind instrument. If you are living, you are an expert breather!"

Since no one is born with an instrument in their hands, an infant does not take their first breath in order to play a trumpet. They breathe to establish their own life support. How do they motivate their first breath? They scream and cry as loud as they can! It's sound that motivates their first breath!

ROCCOISM

"Sound motivates function."

A wind player must condition the need for the large inhalations associated with playing an instrument. It is not necessary to relearn how to breathe. They only have to transfer the use of the skill they already have to use for another purpose. That is playing a wind instrument.

It is also important to understand that the knowledge of breathing is at the subconscious level of thought. No one is consciously thinking about every breath they take in order to sustain their lives. When we try to give a student lessons in anatomy in order to breathe, we are attempting to bring a subconscious function to the conscious level of awareness. At the conscious level, we don't have the intellect, knowledge, or skill necessary to make that happen. A beautiful function is destroyed.

ROCCOISMS

"Deep breathing must be associated with producing sound on a wind instrument. Without a strong association between the deep breath and resonant tone production, deep breathing becomes a meaningless exercise."

"Playing an instrument must always be a musical experience that requires a certain amount of mechanics. Playing can never be thought of as mechanical experience first. Otherwise there will be no music."

Once the brain has been conditioned to associate a large inhalation with quality sound, the large breath will become motivated by the player's concept of sound. It is important to understand that any conditioning requires numerous repetitions over time.

THE URBAN LEGEND OF ONE LUNG

Frequently, I'll ask a new brass pedagogy class, "What do you know about Arnold Jacobs." Someone always says, "He only had one lung". Not true!

Jake was a severe asthmatic with a greatly reduced vital capacity. At the end of his career, his vital capacity was less than two liters. It should have been at least double that for his age. When I occasionally saw him walking down Michigan Avenue from Orchestra Hall, I would always ask him how he was feeling. He invariably replied, "I'm still fooling them." He was "fooling" them for fifty years!

Early in our relationship he would say to me, "I wish I could put my brain inside your body. What a combination that would be!" At one time, he measured my vital capacity at almost seven liters of air.

Jake was a master musician who knew how to phrase music in order to disguise his frequent breaths. He also knew how to draw on the strength of the other brass players around him for support. That's why Jake and Ed Kleinhammer were such a great team.

Because there are only a few compositions that require two tubas, I spent much more time in the CSO sitting next to Mr. Kleinhammer than I did with Jake. Ed was a very supportive partner! I owe him a great debt of gratitude for everything he taught me about ensemble playing. More importantly, he taught me the meaning of musical integrity.

Kleinhammer and I worked out where we would breathe in the music as if we were string players marking bowing. He always wanted to know where I was going to take a breath in an extended passage. He would accommodate my needs first by breathing after me and did the same for Jake.

Even though Jake had a reduced vital capacity, for short durations, he could dominate the entire orchestra with his powerful tone. He would allow the other brass players in the orchestra to do much of the work in extended loud passages. Then, he would bring all his sound to the fore at the end of a climatic passage. It was his sound that the audience remembered most, as if he was carrying the entire brass section all along. He compensated by taking in maximum breaths very quickly and renewing them often. I never knew any wind player who could inhale air into his lungs faster than Jake!

VITAL CAPACITY (VC)

VC is the maximum amount of air that anyone is capable of physically inhaling into their lungs. For life support, there is a tremendous amount reserve capacity built into the respiratory system of the body. While resting, we only utilize 10-15% of our vital capacity to sustain life. We could survive on less than 10% VC but we would be weak and probably bedridden. The extra 85% of reserve capacity allows us to do other physically demanding things like running away from an animal looking for lunch. It is in the best interest of any wind player to utilize 100% of their VC.

Physically, the ability to expel air from our lungs is greatest when we are at 100% VC. This ability diminishes slightly as the air begins to leave the lungs. It looks like a gently sloping curve on a graph. However, when the last third of VC is reached, the curve takes a dramatic nosedive. It looks like the first drop on a roller coaster.

This means that the last third of our VC is mostly unavailable to a wind player. If a wind player typically finds themselves trying to play in the last third of their VC, they will have to uncomfortably force the air out of their lungs. It can be done, but why? It's very uncomfortable, especially at loud dynamics. If they are playing below 33% VC for an extended amount of time, they will certainly become distracted by the discomfort. In time, the brain may try to duplicate the flow rates associated with the last 33% VC, in the first 67% of VC. The way to make that happen is to resist the flow of air in another manner. This will be discussed in a future post.

THE FOUR POINTS OF RESISTANCE OF BREATH

To illustrate this condition, I ask students to take in a very large breath and to slowly expel the air until they can longer squeeze any out. I always find out who the smokers are because they begin to cough and choke as they reach 33% and approach zero VC.

Starting from a very shallow breath, I ask them blow the air on their hand. They repeat the process several times but each time they start with a larger breath. They continue until they are blowing on their hand from a maximum breath. Then I ask, "When did you feel the most air on your hand?" The answer always is when they blew from the maximum (100% VC) inhalation.

ROCCOISM

"Take in maximum breaths (100% VC) and renew them often (50% VC)"

"Shallow breathers handicap themselves in three ways. They reduce their ability to play extended phrases, louder dynamics, and they begin their exhalation at a point of reduced ability and they quickly move into the 33% VC danger zone."

I encourage the renewal breath at about 50% to provide the greatest potential for tone production. However, if the wind player doesn't start playing at 100% VC they will severely reduce their ability to play anything but shorter phrases. What's even more problematic is if the player starts

their exhalation at less than 100% VC, they are already at a point of reduced ability to expel air. They quickly enter the danger zone, the final 33% VC.

Should the player take a maximum breath for every passage? No, I don't know anyone who does that. The amount of inhalation for a given passage will be motivated by the challenges of the music. Extended loud phrases will require larger breaths than shorter softer passages. Nobody consciously regulates their inhalation when performing. However, a maximum breath must be conditioned.

ROCCOISM

"The wind player must condition a maximum capacity breath at the subconscious level by repetition over time. Otherwise, when the musical need arises, the brain will never go to that level of breath but of the lack of experience."

VACUUM BREATH

The body forces air into the lungs by creating an internal low pressure or partial vacuum. It does this by expanding the area of the lungs. Conscious knowledge of the precise physiology is not necessary. We live our entire lives as ignorant breathers. However, there is a vast amount of knowledge of breathing at the subconscious level of thought. We must stay out of the way!

Just as fingering, deep breathing, associated with playing, must be gradually conditioned by repetition over a period of several weeks. I encourage my students to consciously focus on taking in maximum breaths with loud mouthpiece playing, for no more than 5-10 minutes a day. I don't encourage extensive breathing exercises away from playing. It's very important to establish a strong connection between taking in maximum breaths and playing (mouthpiece and instrument) with a full resonant tone.

Jake once showed me a very simple exercise to motivate a large inhalation without using a breathing device. He said, "Put your first finger vertically over your open mouth and try to suck it in." The finger doesn't get sucked into your mouth but a rush of air certainly does. I tell the students to exaggerate the sucking sound to produce a dramatic effect. It's the sucking sound, like the end of a vacuum cleaner hose, that will motivate a massive inhalation. I call it "vacuum breath". My younger students don't like the term because it sounds gross to them. I have asked them to come up with another term but nobody has done so. I'm still open for suggestions.

I'll ask a student to do an inhalation-exhalation exercise loudly in sets of three. Their first finger placed vertically across their open mouth. They are encouraged to make sucking and blowing sounds as the air quickly moves in and out of the lungs. The use of the HO syllable encourages a fairly quiet inhalation. I'm much more concerned about the quantity and speed of the inhalation than I am about it being quiet. Some teachers encourage silent inhalations because they are concerned about excessive noise or breath resistance. There is no breath resistance unless the player closes their mouth.

Very few brass players have had the opportunity that I experienced sitting in the brass section of the CSO. There is a lot of inhalation noise coming from the players. I have never heard a complaint from anyone in the audience!

I once invited Charlie Vernon, the great bass trombonist of the CSO, to give a master class at Vandercook. He brought a stack of music a foot high and practiced his trombone on the stage for six hours! The sound of the air rushing into his lungs was frightening but the sound coming from his bell was glorious! Once in a while, he played a note he didn't like. He said, "When that happens, I take the mouthpiece off the horn and buzz. That's how I fix it!"

I also encourage a long duration of sound (inhalation and exhalation), otherwise students may perform the exercises using a shallow breath with little benefit. The exercises may also be done at varying speeds to simulate real playing conditions. It is most important that the inhalation be taken to maximum capacity and that the exhalation should be to about 33% VC. The discomfort and stress associated with breathing below 33% VC must be avoided.

After the student has executed the breathing exercise well with their finger, I have them substitute their mouthpiece for the finger. They are asked to cover the end of the mouthpiece stem with their free hand on the inhalation and to release open the stem on the exhalation. The purpose of sealing the stem on the inhalation is to prevent the player from inhaling air through the mouthpiece. I want the player to inhale air from outside the mouthpiece and to blow air through it. If the player gets in the habit sucking the air from inside their instrument, the instrument will excessively amplify the sound of the inhalation.

I don't discuss how the player should form their mouth when sucking the air in while the mouthpiece is on their lips. I prefer not have them consciously thinking about what to do with their mouth. The subconscious brain will respond to the player's need to suck in air by creating a sufficient opening. The use of the HO syllable for inhalation is very effective.

I have the do inhale-play exercise by buzzing loudly on the exhalation. At first they may buzz a single note, but I prefer that they play a familiar melody. It could be as simple as, "Mary Had A Little Lamb." A high level of awareness of the melody is an important factor encouraging tone production.

The next step is to do the inhale-play exercise transferring the mouthpiece playing to the instrument. Again, I recommend simple melodic playing. With advanced players, I'll have them play mid-range slurred phrases from Bordogni or Concone. Slurs are an important factor encouraging tone production.

Frequently, I notice that succeeding breaths after the initial breath become shallower. When this occurs, I ask the player to take the time necessary to renew a maximum breath by pausing between phrases. This

eventually conditions the player to continue to take in large inhalations after the initial breath.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"Don't expand to breathe. Breathe to expand."

Jake tells us that you cannot motivate a deep breath by merely creating an expansion of the chest or abdomen. It is possible to create body motion without creating motion of air. It is deep breathing that will motivate expansion. However, expansion alone will not motivate a deep breath.

It should also be noted that a maximum inhalation requires full expansion of the lungs, both upper and lower areas. As a result, there will be simultaneous motion of the upper chest and abdominal areas. There should be no awareness of specific breathing from the "stomach" or "chest".

POSTURE AND PLAYING POSITION

ARNOLD JACOBS

"Sit as though you are standing from the waist."

Many wind players prefer to stand when they play because it is easier to inhale a maximum breath. I knew of a very fine tubist, playing in a major American orchestra, who insisted that he be allowed to stand on the stage as if he was playing in a marching band.

It is not necessary to stand if as Jake says, "you stand from the waist while seated." When I first started teaching at Vandercook College of Music in 1979, the only chairs available for the musicians were slanted toward the front. They were called "H.E Chairs" because they were the idea of one of the school's founders and a highly respected faculty member, H.E Nutt. The chairs forced the player to sit on the end rather than with their lumbar pressing on the rear of the chair. He wanted their lumbar to remain the same as if they were standing.

I first ask new students to stand in front of their chair and bring their instrument to playing position. They sit on the edge of the chair so their playing position and torso are the same as if they were standing.

Proper posture and playing position will not make anyone a great player. However, poor posture and playing position will make tone production a little more difficult.

INSTRUMENTS AND EQUIPMENT

Large bore instruments and large diameter mouthpieces encourage a more resonant tone.

ROCCOISM

"We can make a large bore instrument or a large diameter mouthpiece sound like a smaller one. But, we can't make small bore instruments and small diameter mouthpieces sound like large ones."

ARTICULATION

Another important factor encouraging tone production is articulation. This brief discussion will be followed by a more detailed post later.

ROCCOISMS

"The tongue serves no purpose in tone production. It can only interfere with tone production."

"I never use the word "tongue" in my teaching. I substitute the word, "articulation" instead. The instant you say tongue, the player has a mental image of their tongue. They start to consciously think about their tongue instead of the music."

"In everyday life, the tongue has been conditioned, at the subconscious level of thought, to respond to the sound of words and to function as an aid in chewing . It works beautifully without conscious interference. When we play a wind instrument, we want to subconsciously condition the tongue to respond to the sound of music."

Consciously, thinking about how our tongue feels or what it should be doing, will cause it to malfunction,"

I have noticed that when I'm lecturing about not consciously thinking about the tongue, I begin to stutter because I start thinking about my own tongue!

DICTION (SYLLABLES)

Wind players have learned that they can use words to direct the motion of the tongue and air in articulation. The syllables consist of a consonant (t,d,l,r,n, etc.) and an open vowel sound (ah, oh ou). I never encourage the use of a closed vowel such as ee. Some trumpet teachers encourage their students to use the ee vowel in the upper register to help play high notes. I strongly disagree with this antiquated practice. I will discuss this subject further in a future post, DEVELOPING RANGE.

Syllables are only used initially with beginners to condition the brain to use the tongue and air to create the sound of precise articulation. I never think syllables when I play. I'm always thinking sound! That's always the ultimate goal.

SLUR (LEGATO)

Sound is created in the mouthpiece only by vibrating the lips with the use of air. Since the tongue can only interfere with the flow of air to the embouchure, it is important to minimize that interference.

The pure slur (lip slur) minimizes the use of the tongue. I always begin my initial performance (after melodic mouthpiece playing) by slurring

scales and chords. They may be long tone type studies or velocity exercises from Arban, Schlossberg, Kopprasch, or Clarke. I first establish my quality tone in the mid-range and gradually expand lower as well as higher.

LONG TONES

Sustained notes also minimize the interference of the tongue in the inter oral airway and they maximize the production of sound.

DYNAMICS

ROCCOISMS

"Loud dynamics encourage tone production. Softer dynamics discourage tone production."

"Think (sing) pitches, play loud"

"Loud dynamics encourage air flow through the embouchure."

"Dynamic studies are tone controls for tone production."

"When a player is challenged by practicing varied dynamics, they learn how to use air (subconsciously) to create better tone."

"Musical and technical development is motivated by musical and technical challenge."

As a young high school tuba player, I thought the job of the other members of the band was to accompany me when I played. I was proud of my tone so I thought it was the most important sound on the stage. It should be heard the most! Unfortunately, that's what happened most of the time.

However, that mindset served me well later when I found myself on the stage with the CSO. I remember Ed Kleinhammer once remarking, "Don't hide in the weeds kid!"

I recall a rehearsal of the Tchaikovsky 4th Symphony conducted by Georg Solti. I was stunned by the enormous sound of the opening brass fanfare. Eventually a descending scale is passed around the brass section and finally comes to the tuba. By the time, it was like the giant ball in the opening of the first "Indiana Jones" movie. I'll never forget the sound that came out my bell. It was so loud that I turned to Ed Kleinhammer and apologized. I told him that I didn't mean to play so loud. He said, "Don't apologize, it sounded great!"

It is important that loud dynamic should be encouraged but it's also important to understand that soft dynamic playing should not be neglected. Again, this subject will be discussed further in a future post.

RANGE

"Low register notes encourage a resonant sound. High notes discourage resonant tone production."

"Low notes are the foundation for your sound"

Jake once invited the principal players from each of the four brass sections of the CSO to his studio. He wanted to measure inter oral air pressure by inserting a small tube attached to an air pressure gauge through the corner of each brass player's mouth. Inter oral pressure is the amount of force of air necessary to have the embouchure vibrate specific frequencies.

He asked each player to play the same frequency (middle C- 256 cps) at about the same dynamic level. Middle C is a lower register note on a trumpet, a mid-range note on the horn and trombone, and a relatively high note on the tuba.

He learned that the inter oral air pressure was about the same for each instrument and that the pressure doubled with the interval of an octave. There is a distinct correlation between frequency and the embouchure's resistance to the flow of air. He also learned that the pressures were not very great even in the extreme upper register of the trumpet. He noted that even in the extreme upper register of the trumpet, the inter oral air pressure required was much less than that of a cough.

It is not possible to measure this air pressure when we play because we don't have the sensory awareness at the conscious level to detect it. That's not a problem, because we can consciously detect frequency very vividly.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"Strength is your enemy, weakness is your friend"

Jake is telling us that since the embouchure provides very little resistance to the flow of air, it doesn't take much physical strength to play a brass instrument, even in the upper register of a trumpet.

ROCCOISM

"The facial muscles of the embouchure are some of the weakest in the body. The abdominal muscles used for breathing, defecation, and child birth are some of the strongest in the body. It is not possible to resist the flow of air with lips."

"Facial muscles vs. abdominal muscles is no contest."

In his master classes, Jake frequently demonstrated the power of the abdominal muscles by having a female student stand on the stomach of a male while he was lying on the floor. He could easily resist the weight of the person standing on him.

Serious problems can develop if a brass player thinks that the strength necessary to play is greater than it actually is. The flow air can't be resisted by the lips but it can by the tongue, throat, or an "isometric contraction" state of the muscles of inhalation working against those of exhalation.

With almost no exceptions, the muscles in the body are paired against each other. The biceps bends the arm at the elbow. The triceps can straighten it out again. There are separate muscle for inhalation and exhalation. When they simultaneously work against each other, an isometric state occurs and there is great effort but no motion. This subject will be discussed further in a future post. THE FOUR POINTS OF RESISTANCE.

AIR FLOW AND AIR PRESSURE

When air flow and air pressure lines are graphed relative to frequency, the lines move in opposite directions.

At low frequencies, the embouchure offers little resistance to the flow of air so flow rates are high. At high frequencies, the embouchure becomes more resistant to the flow of air so air flow rates are lower. The bottom line is if we want to encourage high flow rates of air through the embouchure to encourage tone production, we must play with the air pressure-flow characteristic of low notes. To do this, we must practice a lot of low register notes.

JOESPH MOUREK (former 4th horn - CSO)

"Practicing low notes is more beneficial than high notes."

ROCCOISM

"You can never damage your tone by playing too many low notes. However, playing too many high notes without compensating for their detrimental impact, can damage your sound."

"If a brass player confines their playing to the upper register of their instrument, without balancing by playing in the mid and lower registers, their subconscious brain will begin to interpret the air flow-air pressure characteristics of high notes to be normal. Unfortunately, those characteristics are not normal for playing in the middle or low register and failure will result."

"Always play with the characteristic sound of low register notes in your mid and upper registers."

I frequently have my advanced level students play their etudes one octave lower than written. They may play by phrase, lines, or entire sections. Students may repeat a passage two or three times before playing in the written octave (loco). Their improvement in tone is always dramatic even if their low register sound is still somewhat undeveloped.

EQUIPMENT

ROCCOISM

"You can make a large bore instrument and mouthpiece sound like smaller equipment, but you can't make small equipment sound like large."

"Small equipment can have limiting factors in your tone. Most brass players use large equipment because they don't want any boundaries."

Early in my career, I had the great fortune to spend many hours in Chicago recording studios, working with some of the finest musicians in the world. None of the brass players used large bore instruments, including myself. The reason is we were playing into a microphone and our sound was being controlled by engineers.

Most of the professional brass players who I work with outside the recording studios, tend to use larger equipment because of its greater amplification of sound and darker timber. The exception is jazz players who want a brighter timber and also to play with greater flexibility in their solos.

Many teachers, who start beginning brass players, give their students smaller mouthpieces, such as a Bach 7c trumpet mouthpiece. The theory is that because they have weak and undeveloped embouchures so they are not capable of playing on larger mouthpieces. However, many teachers have told me that they prefer to start beginners on medium sizes mouthpieces because they encourage more resonant tone production.

One of my former graduate students at Vandercook, a very fine professional trumpet player, starts his beginning trumpet players on the largest mouthpiece in the Bach catalogue (1C). He has been a very effective brass teacher for many years.

Motivated students should never be allowed to remain on small mouthpieces for an extended length of time because they will never develop a mature brass sound.

MOUTHPIECE PLACEMENT - THE "E" WORD

Since "embouchure" is such an overused word in the brass player's vocabulary, I prefer to refer to call it the "E" word. Actually, the term I use most is "mouthpiece placement".

It is very unfortunate that many brass players and teachers misdiagnose their failure as the result of problems with embouchure. They usually don't correct problems by ordering embouchure changes. They cause more severe problems!

ADOLPH HERSETH

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

We have all heard horror stories about students who were forced to alter their mouthpiece placement by some well intentioned teacher. In the worst situations, the players were destroyed by the experience and never played their instrument effectively again.

Some teachers have the misguided notion that the mouthpiece placement should look the same for all their students. Usually, they want their student's mouthpiece placement to be the same as their own or some picture in a book.

However, that's not what is taking place in the world of high level brass performance. You can observe the brass sections of any major orchestra, and see that there is no uniform mouthpiece placement. Yet all the players perform very well on their instrument. Phil Farkas photographed the unorthodox mouthpiece placement of several professional horn players. He noted, "They all were very successful players."

There are some elements of mouthpiece placement that may be a source of failure for some players. Those elements will be discussed in a future post, MOUTHPIECE PLACEMENT.

THE DOs AND DON'Ts FOR BRASS PLAYERS AND THEIR TEACHERS

DO

1. Sing and buzz the notes you want to play.
2. Inhale maximum breaths when the musical challenges require it.
3. Consciously think about the sound you want to play.
4. Sing each note in your head as you play it.
5. Develop a beautiful sound in your middle register first.
6. Use open vowel syllables to develop the sound of precise articulation.
7. Practice a wide range of dynamic levels, but develop forte + dynamics first.
8. Expand your range gradually from the mid-range simultaneously in two directions.
9. SING, BUZZ, PLAY TO ASCEND THE LADDER OF AWARENESS.
10. CONCENTRATE ON THE SOUND YOU HEAR IN YOUR HEAD!

DON'T

1. Pay any attention to your lips, tongue or any body parts.
2. Be concerned about blowing air when you play.
3. Consciously think about the mechanics of playing.
4. Think about air except to condition a deep breath over time.
5. Play too many high notes without balancing with middle and low register notes.
6. Play in extreme registers until you have developed a good sound in your middle register.
7. Pay much attention to the instrument you are holding.

"Transcend how it feels to play your instrument."

I strongly encourage students to acquire buzzing devices such as a "Berp". They allow the player to buzz and finger their instrument at the same time by holding the mouthpiece near the leadpipe. The instrument is less of a distraction when they place the mouthpiece inside the leadpipe.

Some teachers dismiss external mouthpiece playing because of the difference in feel when it's inserted into the instrument. Brass players need to transcend the difference and focus only on the music.

Here are three brief stories about great players who transcended feel no matter the circumstance.

The first story is about Adolph Herseth early in his career with the CSO. Bud held the position of principal trumpet in the Chicago Symphony for 53 years! That achievement will probably never occur again. He is widely regarded as one of the finest brass players who ever lived. Jake always said he was the finest brass player he ever heard. He certainly was the best I ever heard. His greatness cannot be described. It had to be experienced! We only have a hint of that greatness on the Reiner-CSO recordings. I was very fortunate to have an opportunity to share a stage with him.

The CSO used to play a concert in Milwaukee once a month. We could take a train to Milwaukee but many orchestra members commuted by car. I don't remember the specific circumstances, but I once had an opportunity to ride to Milwaukee with "Bud".

It is not possible to buy five hours of his time for any purpose. What an opportunity! Naturally, we discussed brass playing. One of the stories he told me changed my life as a brass player and as a teacher.

Bud was injured in an auto accident early in his second year with the CSO. His mouth and teeth were badly damaged. He was told to, "leave the orchestra for a year to play golf." Walking away from a challenge is not in the character of this great man from Minnesota! He chose to continue playing in spite of the severe pain he experienced when he brought the trumpet to his lips.

When warming-up in his studio before concerts, he was unable to produce good sounds. But somehow, he found the courage and determination to go the stage of Orchestra Hall to perform with the orchestra. Interestingly, while on the stage for performances, he could play well enough. Good notes came out the bell of his trumpet. His lips had not changed from the studio to the stage. He also played the same trumpet with the same mouthpiece.

What changed was his "state of mind".

He transcended pain by making the music dominate his awareness. Everyone who was around Bud then, tells me that his playing became even greater after recovering from the accident.

I was once told a story by someone who attended a Maynard Ferguson concert where he split his lip during a performance. He injured himself so badly that blood stained the entire front of his shirt. He excused himself for only a few minutes to change his shirt. He returned to the stage to continue his performance as though nothing had happened to his lip.

I recall the time in 1973 when the CSO was on an East coast tour. Georg Solti was conducting Symphonie Fantastique at the Kennedy Center in DC. He basically wanted us to play as loud as possible most of the time.

Jake was very sick. He had a high fever and was coughing and wheezing from severe asthma. I had to carry his instrument (York) to the stage. While we were listening to the first three movements, I thought to myself, "You

better be ready to play his part." When the fourth movement started, he picked up his instrument to play. As they normally would, the notes exploded out the bell for the "March to the Scaffold". Nothing was going to stop him from performing. His powerful mind transcended everything he was feeling. Only the music ever mattered to him!

I was stunned! I remember thinking to myself, "another great lesson from Mr. Jacobs."

Thanks again Jake!

The Resonating Air Column

ARNOLD JACOBS (quotations from Song and Wind, Windsong Press)

"There are acoustical laws that must be obeyed."

All wind instruments, including brass, are nothing more than a length of tubing that defines a column of air within. The tubing shapes the column of air, giving it length and width. The brass tubing and mouthpiece design have some influence on the timbre of the vibrating air column. However, the player has the most influence on the quality of tone.

A professional musician will have the sound of an advanced player even if they are playing a beginner's instrument. Conversely, an elementary musician will sound like a beginner even if they are playing a professional quality instrument. Dennis Brain maintained his characteristic horn sound when he played a garden hose with a funnel on the end.

Length is the primary factor influencing pitch on the air column. The length of the air column is changed by adding or subtracting varying numbers of half steps associated with valves or a with a slide.

What method must be used to vibrate the air column of a brass instrument?

SYMPATHETIC RESONANCE

The process of creating sound with string or percussion instruments is obvious and well understood. Strings are vibrated with friction by plucking, (pizzicato) or with the bow (arco). Occasionally, the strings are struck with the wood of the bow (col legno battuto). Sound is produced with percussion instruments by striking, rubbing, or shaking. We do not strike, rub, or pluck the air column of a brass instrument to create vibration.

Since the air column is invisible, there can only be a vague awareness of its existence. Many brass players and their teachers go through great effort trying to create an awareness of air. They discuss velocity, ("fast air") or thickness ("fat air"). It is possible to have some detection of air's velocity or pressure if we blow on our hands. However, at the conscious level of awareness, we are unable detect quantity, velocity, or

pressure of air while playing. However, there is total awareness and mastery of these elements at the subconscious level.

In order to consciously detect the air, we would have to use the sense of touch or feel which is somewhat weak externally and very weak internally. We cannot detect air like a violinist is aware of their bow. The use of a bow, mallet, or air is primarily directed by the player's awareness of music.

ROCCOISM

"The instrument does not direct the music. The music directs the instrument."

"Ears are powerful detectors of sound but they can't be used to produce it. Lips can produce sound but they can't detect it."

"Lips cannot become ears just as ears cannot become lips."

THE KEY IN THE LOCK

The Rejecting Air Column

To create vibration, we must create a source sound (catalyst) that the air column can respond to. The catalyst resonance is produced by the embouchure. It is sent to the air column through the mouthpiece.

It is very important to understand that the air column will not respond to any source frequency. It will only respond to the very specific frequencies of the natural overtone (harmonic) series. The air column will reject source frequencies that are not specific to the overtones of any given length.

Rejection will produce a non-resonant sound, sometimes described as a "crack". Rejection will also cause embouchure malfunction and breath resistance. These are symptoms that traditional brass pedagogy tries to alleviate. Creating awareness of air and embouchure are common mantras of many brass players and their teachers. It is much more important to create a powerful awareness of the sound.

ROCCOISM

"We must not waste our time treating symptoms of failure. We must treat the cause."

"Far too many brass teachers assume that poor performance of their students is the result of problems with embouchure or air. There seems to be plenty of air to produce the discordant sounds coming from the bell of the horn."

"Embouchure is what the subconscious mind creates in order to realize the awareness of the sound present in the conscious mind. It's conscious awareness of sound that motivates the embouchure, not the other way around."

"The sound of words motivate the vocal chords create speech. Nobody gives a child lessons about their vocal chords in order to teach them to talk. They only give them the sound of the words by speaking to them."

"Fill the instrument with sound. It already has plenty of air but it has no sound of its own."

ADOLPH HERSETH(quotes from Herseth Lesson Notes by Tim Kent)

"There's nothing wrong with your chops. Your mind is messing them up."

"Think sound, not mechanics."

The Accepting Air Column

In order to have the air column accept the source sound (buzz) that we are sending to the mouthpiece, the frequency must be precisely tuned to one of the partials of the harmonic series associated with its length. If this occurs, the air column freely accepts the buzz and begins to vibrate the same frequency.

Sympathetic Resonance

If two or more physical objects are tuned to the same frequency, one will cause the other to begin vibrating if the source is resonating with enough energy.

This process can be demonstrated by playing a note on an instrument into the free strings of an open piano. The strings that are tuned to the overtone series of the source sound, will begin to vibrate. The non-sympathetic strings reject the source without vibrating.

Timpanists tune the drum by singing a note into its head while adjusting the tension. When the pitch of the drum head matches the player's vocal chords, it "sings back" the note.

ARNOLD JACOBS

"Play by sound, not by feel"

"I sing the notes in my head as I play them. It doesn't matter how my lips feels or how I feel."

"We cannot create sound using sensors. Sound can only be created by utilizing motor systems."

"The nervous system is a one way street."

"We receive information through sensory systems. We impart information through motor systems."

ROCCOISM

"Feel and fail or four letter words to a brass player"

The Priority of the Senses

The human brain gives priority to the senses in the following order. This order is based on the brain's ability to receive information about the external world.

1. Sight
2. Sound
3. Touch (feel)
4. Smell
5. Taste

Some animals, especially nocturnal ones such as a ground hog, give a higher priority to smell or feel rather than sight. A bat, whale, or dolphin gives the highest priority to sound. A snake will give priority to the sense of taste as it "tastes" the air with its tongue.

We don't play brass instruments by sight. As stated, we must play a brass instrument (or any instrument!) with a precise and vivid conscious awareness of sound. If this awareness is present, the subconscious mind will be free to create the mechanics of playing required to realize the sound.

Nobody is born with an instrument in their hands like they are with vocal chords. The mechanical skills required to play an instrument are acquired by repetition over time. However, these skills must be motivated by music, not by body parts or the instrument.

We run into severe problems when the awareness of sound is vague or absent in the consciousness. Instead of responding to create a sound with the instrument, the subconscious brain is forced to respond by searching for the missing sound elsewhere. The brain will not move up to sight in the priority of senses. It moves down to the lower sense of feel.

ROCCOISM

"Playing by feel is like trying to suck all the water out of an Olympic size swimming pool with a straw."

"We must prevent our brains from trying to convert our lips into ears."

"Nobody tries to listen to music with their lips."

When the brain is forced into the "feel mode", it tries to convert the lips into ears. The lips can detect vibration but not specific frequencies. As a result, the brain does not receive the information that it's trying to detect. When that happens, there are no mechanics necessary to create sound. The player notices that their embouchure collapses and air flow stops. They usually try to correct their chops and create air flow by consciously trying to manipulate their lips and apparatus of breathing. It doesn't work because the highly complex mechanics required to play can only be directed by subconscious mind.

ROCCOISM

"At the conscious level of thought, we don't have the intellect or awareness of internal mechanisms necessary to create the complex motor function required to execute sound on a brass instrument."

"Playing an instrument requires very complex motor functions. However, we must have a simplistic approach."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"I want you to have the mind of a child."

BARRY GREEN (The Inner Game of Music, Doubleday)

"Wouldn't you like to perform with the carefree ease of a child?"

WE LIVE IN TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS

We are aware of the external world around us through information transmitted to the brain by the five senses. However, there is another universe within our bodies. We have very little conscious awareness of the internal world unless something goes wrong and we experience discomfort or pain.

The subconscious mind has complete awareness and mastery of the complex functions necessary for life support and other motor skills. Our subconscious mind takes great care of this inner world so our conscious mind can focus on other things, such as finding food or all the other things we experience in life like making music with an instrument.

When we attempt to bring a subconscious function to the conscious mind, we will the cause failure of that function. We don't have the necessary intellect or awareness of the internal mechanisms to get the job done. It's like trying to drive a car or play pool blindfolded.

We function beautifully in life because there is a symbiotic relationship between our conscious and subconscious mind. We can have creative thoughts or the desire to create an accomplishment, such as walking or talking. The subconscious mind responds faithfully to the conscious thoughts "on the screen" of the mind.

Jake described this as, "ordering products". The product could be as simple as lifting a cup or as complex as creating sound with an instrument. In either case, simple or complex, the approach to create accomplishment is the same.

MAXWELL MALTZ (Psycho Cybernetics, Pocket Books)

"The mechanisms of success and failure are the same."

ROBERT COLLIER (The Secret of the Ages, Classic Books America)

"The conscious mind is a gateway to the subconscious."

Collier tells us that the "Secret" is the immense power of the subconscious mind. This power is little understood even though we experience it every conscious moment of our lives.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"It's amazing what we can accomplish if we don't (consciously) get in the way."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"It's only in music that I find the extreme self analysis that leads to failure."

"Analyze the music, not how to produce it."

"We must be somewhat unconscious of our physical maneuvers but highly conscious of our musical goals." (Advanced Band Method, Hal Leonard)

It must be understood that a precisely tuned source resonance (buzz) must be created in the mouthpiece. There are two approaches we can take. Unfortunately, only one will consistently create success.

The "feel" approach will result in failure, causing the brass player to become anxious and insecure with the instrument in their hands. Their expectation of success will be low and they will have a high expectation of failure. Because of "conditioned reflex" (Pavlov), the negative emotions and expectations of failure will become powerfully associated with their instrument. In time, just holding the instrument will reinforce the player's expectation of failure and associated negative emotions. Eventually, they may become paralyzed because the experience of playing their instrument will be like touching a hot stove.

Focal dystonia is paralysis resulting from experiencing excessive negative conditioning over a significant of time. Contrary to popular belief, focal dystonia is not a condition that is untreatable. I have helped numerous musicians, including myself, overcome this condition. There will be much more discussion of this subject in a future post.

I have worked with brass players who could not take their instrument out of the case without trembling at the thought. A friend, a very fine trumpeter who played in a major American orchestra, once told me he would choke at the thought of playing the mouthpiece when he woke up in the morning.

The sound (singing) approach will allow the player to create success. This will lead to a high expectation of success. The player will experience positive emotions, and confidence.

H.A Vandercook

"If you can sing it, you can play it."

ROCCOISM

"A history of success is a powerful motivator for future success. A history of failure creates a powerful expectation of future failure."

ARNOLD JACOBS

"The experience of playing a brass instrument can be a joy if we understand how to do it."

Once a brass player understands how to perform successfully on a consistent basis, they can be liberated from searching for the "brass grail". All their attention can be focused on making music rather than playing the instrument. When a player is truly liberated, the instrument becomes meaningless. This can only occur when there is a total commitment to only the music.

Unless there was a technical malfunction such as a sticking valve, Mr. Jacobs was not influenced by his instrument. He was also never influenced by how he was feeling physically, which was fair to poor most of the time. I remember many occasions sitting next to him in the CSO when he was very ill. Never once did I hear him fail to perform at his normal level. He might admit that playing was more difficult because he was tired or sick. However, he never allowed anything prevent him from being totally committed to the sound coming from his bell.

Musical commitment is the secret of the "brass grail". It is an experience that is the ultimate goal for any musician. I describe it as the, "clouds in the sky clearing to allow the sun to shine". When one of my students first experiences this level of freedom from the shackles of the instrument, their first words are usually something like, "Wow!", or "Oh my god!".

There is always a beautiful smile on their face, confirming their liberation.

My number one goal is to create an opportunity for my students to smile because of their success.

ROCCOISM

"The job of a teacher is to create opportunities for success."

A Brass Player's Story

ROCCOISMS

(This term was first used by my high school students when they presented me with books of "Roccoisms" on several occasions.)

"There is no reason for your success or failure other than your, 'State of Mind'."

"Sound Motivates Function."

THE BEGINNING

1. First Failure!

In 1959, at the age of ten, I came home from school one day carrying a trombone. I was instructed by the band director to learn how to play by finding find a private trombone teacher. Of course I wasn't going to wait until then to produce my first sounds. On my own, I figured out how to assemble the bell and slide and to place the mouthpiece in the leadpipe. However, that was as far as I could go without someone's help.

After mindlessly blowing air into the mouthpiece with no resulting trombone sound, I decided that I needed to blow air and simultaneously move the slide. Nothing! My first disappointment as a brass player! Yes, I needed to find a trombone teacher.

2. The Trombone Teacher - My first and only lesson! The second disappointment!

I remember that the half hour lesson cost \$1.50. I was a poor kid with no parents so \$1.50 was a lot of money. The lesson was a waste of time and money. I would have been better off figuring it out by myself. I remember Jake once saying, "I was a pretty good brass player until I found my first teacher."

After showing me how to assemble and hold the instrument, he proceeded to talk about blowing air and to create various levels of tension and relaxation in my lips. He wanted me to play fourth line F. Disaster! Where was the sound of F? Nowhere!

I must have spent ten very frustrating minutes trying to figure out what he wanted me to do. I only thought about my lips and blowing. He didn't provide me with any awareness of the sound he wanted me to produce. I don't remember if I cried but I do remember my severe anxiety and disappointment I felt disappointment with myself because I could not play the F. I also noticed the teacher's frustration which made me feel even worse.

Eventually, the air column of the instrument did resonate an F but it was only by chance. I had no idea why it happened. The lesson was such an emotionally painful experience that I never had another one. Unfortunately, I blamed myself for the failure, not the teacher.

My experience would have been different if he had sung the note or better, if he played it on his trombone. He should have said little or nothing about air and lips.

ADOLPH HERSETH

"Paralysis by Analysis"

I spent the next four years of my life trying to figure out what he wanted me to do with my lip tension and air flow. My elementary school band director soon moved me to the baritone horn, and eventually the tuba. He hoped to find some instrument that would bring me success. The next stop

would have been the bass drum but I gave up playing in the band before that happened.

I went on to high school without continuing in music. Four years of disappointment and low self esteem were enough! I loved music but playing a brass instrument wasn't an enjoyable experience.

ROCCOISM

"A history of success creates an expectation of success. A history of failure creates an expectation of failure. Expectations always become reality."

MAURICE ANDRE

"I expect the notes to be there."

3. The High School Band

One day at the start of my freshman year in high school, a friend excitedly proclaimed that he had joined the beginning band and was learning to play the French horn. I replied, "I used to play the tuba".

It wasn't long before he told the band director about me and I was back in music. He needed another tuba player in the band. Much to the chagrin of the other tuba players, he presented me with a brand new instrument that was kept hidden in a storage cabinet. I still couldn't play very well but I was thrilled to have a shiny new instrument.

Interestingly, my band director was Rudy Macciocchi, a very fine professional hornist, who was on first call as an extra player with the Chicago Symphony. A daughter of the great Frank Brouk, hornist of the CSO, was a member of the band. Frank was the former principal horn of the Cleveland Orchestra and at one time or another, played every chair in the CSO.

His daughter and I became friends. She frequently invited me to attend CSO concerts when she could get free tickets in the gallery of Orchestra Hall. This was the early 1960's before several later renovations tarnished the wonderful acoustics as heard on the Fritz Reiner-CSO recordings.

The glorious sound of the brass projected powerfully to the gallery. Jake's bell pointed directly to where I sat. The sound was incredible! It seemed like he could lift the orchestra off the stage with the power of his tone. The impression he and the orchestra made changed my life. In my personal practice, I tried to imitate his sound with my tuba. Gradually, I sounded more and more like him. I soon discovered that I actually could play a brass instrument.

4. The First Lesson with Jake.

(Everyone called him Jake but I later learned from Brian Fredrickson that he preferred to be called Arnold.)

During the next three years of high school, I gradually achieved success as a tuba player, playing in the ALL-City High School Band in Chicago, and eventually in the Youth Orchestra of Greater Chicago. I had a few lessons with John Taylor before he left Chicago to eventually become a tubist with the Army Band in DC. However, my progress was mainly the result of imitating Jake's sound on a daily basis.

At the end of my junior year, Frank Brouk asked me what I wanted to do as a career. I didn't know if I wanted a career in music. However, I did know that I wanted a lesson with Mr. Jacobs. Frank and his wife relentlessly bugged Jake about me until I finally received word to call him. I'm sure he only agreed to see me because he wanted them to stop bugging him.

I had to call him several times over the summer of 1966. Each time I called he would say, "Rocco who?" I had to remind him about me several times before I finally had an appointment in September 1966. I was a 17 year old high school student at the start of my senior year.

At the conclusion of the lesson, he made an extraordinary commitment to me. He said, "I'm going to put you in the Civic Orchestra, training orchestra of the CSO, and give you a full scholarship to study with me." He said, "Here is the reason why."

"YOU ALREADY SOUND AS THOUGH YOU HAVE BEEN STUDYING WITH ME FOR THREE YEARS.

At the time, I didn't understand the importance of that statement. Yes, I had already been studying with him for three years. There was a fantastic lesson every time I sat in the gallery of Orchestra Hall!

5. The Career

Jake opened all the doors of opportunity for me. I first played with the CSO at the age of 18 while I was still in high school. He gave me all his recording studio work. I was his assistant in the CSO for six years and was on first call with the Grant Park Symphony. I regularly played with several brass quintets and assorted ensembles. He once told me, "You are starting out at the top of the profession."

I consider my membership in the Chicago Symphony Alumni Association to be one of my most cherished achievements.

In 1973, Jake said he wanted to give someone else the opportunity that I had for so many years. I knew it was time to find a gig outside Chicago. In 1973, there were several openings for tuba around the country. I won a job with the Honolulu Symphony. Two years later, I won a one year position with the Seattle Symphony.

Coming from Chicago and the CSO, I wasn't pleased with the performance standards of the HSO. Seattle was a much different musical environment. I loved playing there but I knew the job was only temporary. I was determined to work very hard to win another orchestra job after Seattle.

6. The Crash!

Early in my first HSO season, I noticed that I was beginning to lose my "Chicago" sound. I sounded less and less like a player who sat in the CSO brass section and more and more like some of the very insecure brass players I heard around me. I also began to notice the physical symptoms of failure. My "chops" didn't feel right. I was no longer taking in large breaths and my tongue wasn't functioning. I started missing easy notes and became increasingly paralyzed. This was especially true of starting notes. I complained about my symptoms to the other brass players but they didn't know what I was experiencing physically. I could still play well enough to function professionally but I was becoming less and less secure.

As time went on, I tried to correct my symptoms of failure. I did breathing and tonguing exercises, and studied my embouchure in a mirror. My playing didn't improve, it got worse. By the time I left Seattle in 1976, I was almost completely paralyzed with a horn in my hands. The darkest day of my career was the day before the first rehearsal of "The Ring". I was forced to call the conductor to tell him that I couldn't play the "Cycle". I was sending a substitute, friend Ron Munson.

My playing career was over at age 27! The only thing I could do was to come back home to Chicago. I was totally devastated! However, it wasn't long before the dark clouds opened up and the beautiful sun came shining through.

7. The Epiphany

My wife flew back to Chicago while I drove our car with my instruments and other belongings. It's a three and a half day drive. There was a tuba mouthpiece on the passenger's seat of the car. Curiously, I noticed that there were no problems with my chops, tongue, or air when I buzzed on the mouthpiece alone. I could play anything I wanted with a full resonant sound. There was absolutely no paralysis!

I was deeply perplexed by the apparent difference in my ability to play the mouthpiece inside vs. outside the horn. I decided that when I arrived in Chicago I would pretend that the tuba didn't exist.

I inserted the mouthpiece into the leadpipe and played it the same way I did when it was in my hand. Bingo! For the first time in several months, I could produce a reasonably good sound with a tuba in my hands. The experience gave me the possibility for recovery. It was the opportunity that I was searching for. The implications of that moment greatly influenced my understanding of how to create success and what caused failure within myself and ultimately, my students.

I was young and determined enough to find the answers to why and how this level of failure could occur. I wasn't out of the woods yet but I could see the sun shining through the leaves. That day was my personal liberation from searching for the "holy brass grail". I knew the path that I needed to follow.

I have since referred to it as, "The Yellow Brick Road".

8. The Teacher

My epiphany was only the beginning of the recovery process that has been ongoing for 35 years. Actually, once this level of paralysis (dystonia) has been experienced, a player (on any instrument) can never be truly "out of the woods" again.

All life experiences, positive or negative, are stored in the memory of the brain forever. While a person is alive and functioning normally, stored information cannot not be deleted like a computer file.

ROCCOISM

"We cannot erase bad habits. They must be replaced with good ones."

In 1976, my professional playing career was temporarily over. I had to make a living so I decided to start a teaching career in order to continue in music. I'll always be thankful to my wife, Karen and friends who helped me professionally and financially. Without their support, I would not have been able to continue my personal recovery and I would not have had the opportunity to help others.

I pursued a true understanding of Jake's teaching. Although, I had studied with him for over seven years. Only his personal lawyer, a horn player, had spent more time in his studio. However, I didn't fully comprehend his teaching.

Yes, he worked his magic, inspiring me to play very well in his basement studio on South Normal Avenue in Chicago. I never really understood the how and why of my success or failure.

I have always contended that if you didn't have your lessons at his home, you were deprived of the complete Jacobs experience. The downtown studio was not the same environment. Most people who did go to his home for lessons agree with my observation. The basement studio was an incredible place! There was a steady stream of the finest brass players in the world who would come to his South side home. He frequently sent me upstairs to let them in. I was thrilled!

I began listening to recordings of his lectures and attended many of his masterclasses. We have Brian Fredrickson, his assistant for twenty years, to thank for recording these events. Brian and I were very close to Jake personally. He was our father figure so it's only natural that today, I consider Brian to be my brother. Many of Jake's recorded lectures are accessible at Brian's website, windsongpress.com.

As I revisited his words, my understanding of his teaching grew to new levels. First, I applied this new understanding to myself. I began to comprehend the how and why of my personal success and failure as brass player. My recovery process accelerated. Within two years, I was performing professionally again.

I have been on the faculty of fifteen colleges and universities, both adjunct and full time positions, teaching applied low brass, brass pedagogy, and instrumental performance. I have also published numerous

articles on brass pedagogy and instrumental performance for The Instrumentalist magazine. Since 1992, I have taught instrumental music at Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School in Chicago.

As I began to apply Jake's concepts to my students, I saw the same positive results in them that I was experiencing. I have never seen failure in any student that I had not experienced myself. This has given me a distinct advantage when diagnosing a student's playing problems. I know what's going on in them within seconds of their first notes. It's like looking in a mirror and seeing myself.

Interestingly, the success that I saw in my brass students was achieved equally on all instruments, not just the brass. There is an extensive article, published in The Instrumentalist magazine (November, 2005) about how I successfully apply these concepts to string and woodwind players as well.

ROCCOISMS

"Failure is an opportunity to learn how to succeed."

"I have always learned much more from my failures than my successes."

"We can convert poor sounds into good sounds. We cannot convert silence into good sound."

"If you want to truly understand what I'm teaching you, teach it to someone else."

H.E. NUTT

"To teach is to learn twice."

In 1979, I began teaching at Vandercook College of Music in Chicago. VCM is one of the finest schools of music education in the country. I viewed teaching there as a powerful opportunity to influence brass pedagogy within the educational system.

Since I was a product of that system, I understood its shortcomings. I also had the unique opportunity of experiencing the highest levels of brass performance in the world, playing in the brass section of the CSO.

I knew that the educational system did not comprehend what the players in the CSO were doing to achieve that level of performance. Neither Arnold Jacobs or any of his colleagues were teaching brass pedagogical methods to music education students at VCM or anywhere else. I saw a unique opportunity to bring the two worlds together. The environments of the stage of Orchestra Hall and the elementary or high school classroom have more in common than they are different.

The information presented here is the result of forty years of teaching my most important student (myself) and the countless others who have shared the joy of this knowledge and experience. I won't allow this knowledge to become a lost art.

It is offered freely for all who have interest. I sincerely thank all my students for the opportunity to learn from them!

It is not necessary for anyone to go through life as a "suffering" brass player.