

Adolph Herseth Lesson Notes!

Notes taken by Tim Kent during lessons he took with the master, Adolph Herseth.

The Practice Session and All Playing.

- Practice long tones in all registers and volumes.
- Overlap single tonguing speed with double and triple speeds.
- Solfege--Sight sing--buzz excerpts and studies.
- There are appropriate times for beauty and crudeness - use both.
- Sound is criterion for how you do this or that.
- Melodic playing is very, very important. Know the importance of TONE, even in technical passages.
- Play tunes in high range, also pick off high notes for practice.
- Remember-shaky high range can be due to letting up before hitting the note-- rather take the lump and blow, that is the only way to be great. If you let up on all the notes, endurance is lost, and the overall sound is sickening.
- Be consistent, and NEVER PRACTICE BUT ALWAYS PERFORM.
- Never have any tension in the body when playing, just learn to always relax.
- Don't favor slurs, and in fact, DON'T FAVOR ANY NOTES.
- Only practice in 45 minute sessions, that is what Bud does.
- There is nothing wrong with your chops, your mind is messing them up. High register is no more physical than low, it should be as easy and sound just as good. Don't make such an issue of it. This habit must be worked out and will eventually go away, however there is only one way to get rid of this bad habit, and that is to apply concepts every day in your playing.
- Play arpeggios to get all ranges to sound good by being in tune and listening to the sound.
- Play Bud's exercises; like singers do.
- Don't think mechanics at all on the high range, just play and listen.
- When a note sounds beautiful, it is in tune (and vice versa)
- Approach on the lines of good sound and intonation will come there too. The ear will do all the work if you let it.
- Say "tay" on the lower register to get away from the tubby sound.
- Increase air on the lower register. D and B are good examples of good low range sound.
- D, E, and E flat - let them float up to where they belong.
- Don't think, just play beautifully. Your ear will tell you, and do all the work for you if you allow it to. Don't try to place notes, but let them go where they want.
- After working on the mouthpiece, do the same on the horn. Play everything from excerpts to to pop tunes on it to do things musically. Remember you are performing these pieces, and not practicing them.
- NEVER PRACTICE, ALWAYS PERFORM.

- When encountering problems, technically or musically, sing them and play them on the mouthpiece. Then transfer this singing through the horn. Also, add words for added expressiveness, and sing these words through the horn. When a person sings, he does it in a naturally musical way.

- Always take 10 minutes or so off after the first 15-20 minutes of playing (the warmup).

- Rest, like Bud. FEEL FRESH ALL THE TIME.

- Project a message when you play, never impress with mere mechanics.

- Put words to everything.

- THINK ONLY WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE, NOT WHAT IT FEELS LIKE!

- Practice solos much more than drills or exercises for tonguing. Every time Bud learns a new solo (or rehearses one) it adds a new spark to his playing. Vocalize through the horn. Get a message across to the people - tell them a story, an interesting one. REMEMBER THINGS THAT YOU DO NOW WILL BECOME CONSISTANT LATER AS YOU APPLY CONCEPTS.

- Pulse the primary point - it keeps the music moving, and makes the overall sound more musical.

- Practice all three forms of tonguing; only use legato for extreme double and triple tonguing, to make this tonguing move very fast.

- Slur all technical passages first so you get the tones in mind.

- Do same as above for staccato passages also.

- In all technical and lyrical passages, remember that first and foremost is

TONE QUALITY and MUSICALITY.

- When playing slowly, remember that tongue and fingers have to move as fast as usual.

- Everybody comes in late after rests, do something about it.

- Keep dynamics through phrase, and keep dynamics consistent.

- Keep slurs smooth, don't jolt them - they are easy.

- High range is not a separate part of trumpet playing, yet most players make such a big deal of it. It is not any more physical than any other aspects of trumpet playing, rather it should be just as musical. Just move the air more and keep a good sound, and it will always be there.

- High C is not sharp, it's high C. No notes are naturally sharp. Just play and listen for the best sound and you will be in tune. It is very important that you think sound and not intonation. The intonation will be there if the sound is.

- It is important to hear the note played before playing it. If you do, it will be there.

- High range - don't just think "high" before you play and expect to be able to play it.

- On releases - know how long you want to hold the note, and then stop it. Don't just hold it until it stops.

- On soft playing - play soft as if you are playing loud. Flow air the same as a forte.

- Picture the whole phrase before you start to play. Do this all the time.

- Every note must have direction - always must be going somewhere.

- For high range, just use good air flow, with ease of middle and low registers.
- Practice a tune in all registers. Do this often, it will tell whether you are using the right concepts.
- Balance exercises with solos (music)
- Practice a session on just the mouthpiece.
- Tonguing has to be 5% consonant and 95% vowel. Too much tongue inhibits the air flow. Use no more tongue than in normal speech, and release air immediately.
- Think SOUND always - loud and soft.
- Never practice- always perform.
- Practice various ways of articulating everything. (excerpts, solos, etc. i.e. slur Petroushka solo, tongue Schlossberg #18, etc.)
- Get the sound you want in your head first, then play it. Listen as much as possible.
- Send a message when you play.
- USE ONLY MECHANICS TO THINK OF PLAYING AS A WHOLE, AND BREATHING, AND ALL THE REST IS MUSIC.
- Play by sound, not by feel.
- Never work harder than necessary for a desired result.
- Do interval exercises (all articulations).
- Accent is not more tongue, but more air.
- For etude practice, get them clean slowly, then speed them up.
- Melodic playing is very important. Know importance of tone (even in technical passages).
- When you get high horns, play tune on them, then take low horn and play same pitches the same way. You will forget which horn is which.
- Relate little horns to the big ones. The same concepts apply.
- WHEN YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, BE PROUD OF IT. PUT YOUR HORN DOWN AND STARE AT THE CONDUCTOR. UNLESS HIS EAR IS GREAT, HE WON'T KNOW. IF HE DOES, FINE!
- NEVER PRACTICE, PERFORM.
- Don't just listen to yourself on ensemble playing - let the ensemble help you on your entrances so you can be part of it and not playing along with it. All accompaniments will help you to play. Have them in your head so you just don't play out of context.
- Listen to good artists, and know what you want.
- A trumpeter's life is risky, and you have to be able to take those risks. No great playing is accomplished if a person is afraid of playing. To be timid or favor notes or ranges is running away from that risk.
- DON'T THINK YOU HAVE PROBLEMS TO WORRY ABOUT IN YOUR PLAYING, JUST CERTAIN ASPECTS OF YOUR PLAYING AREN'T PERFECTED YET. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING IN YOUR PLAYING, JUST ENJOY IT!
- Practice on the mouthpiece every day before your regular session. Walk around and play anything musical (no drills) from excerpts to pop tunes. Concentrate on being very musical on these pieces, and most important, on a very LARGE SOUND on the mouthpiece.

- The mouthpiece, because of the lack of divisions, it is possible to go over all ranges, and it forces you to use your ear. Also in emergency situations, it can be used as a substitute for regular practice on the horn.

- Play a complete session on the mouthpiece once in a while. This keeps you from getting hangups on the horn, and improves everything from sound to articulation.

- Whenever you are having problems on any piece, play it on the mouthpiece.

- Play no drills on the mouthpiece, only music.

- REMEMBER - BIG SOUND ALL THE TIME.

- When taking a breath, pronounce the word "ho" yet inhaling at the same time.

- When using this method for practice, put hand on stomach and chest - it should move out on its own due to lungs filling up.

- For getting the feeling of an absolutely open airway and flow, put one end of a toilet paper roll in mouth and inhale - note the equal ease of inhaling and exhaling.

- Breathe from low in the lungs rather than from the chest. If done correctly, the stomach will go out on its own.

- To get a big sound, it is imperative that the air flow (or movement) is greater. The pressure of air flow is not what creates the big sound, it is much the same as violin, which creates a bigger sound when the bow is moved faster across the strings than from pressure on the strings.

- Release air immediately - don't hold it.

- Differences between cornet and trumpet - there is none due to modern methods of construction. Most of sound difference is due to bends in tubing, rather than conical vs. cylindrical bores.

- Stravinsky pieces - in world premieres of many of his works, Stravinsky said that cornets need not be used because of little difference between them and trumpets.

- Keep your horn free from ANY dirt inside. Clean it weekly if necessary. Clean mouthpiece daily. Clean horns and mouthpieces so nothing is ever in the horn.

- To have good all around range you have to have good pedal tones. This is due to more and better vibrations producing more harmonics and a richer sound.

- Slur pedal tone from octave, finger according to chart below:

C - open, B - open, Bb - 2, A - 2, Ab - 1, G - 12, F# - 23, F - 13, Eb - 123

- Play pedal tones on both Bb and C horns (harder on Bb)

- Slur and tongue down from normal notes an octave to pedal, so you have an in tune note to relate it to.

- Don't overblow, just blow to get the best sound.

- Do Carnival of Venice starting on pedal C

- I would rather jump right in and make mistakes than be timid.

- Essence of Bud's lessons is that he builds ego, attitude, and musicianship. He lets the technical things work themselves out.

- Have the attitude of "I can play anything". This is necessary for great trumpet playing.

- Always, after hearing someone play something, say "I can do it better, or if not better, different."

- Whenever you have difficulty technically, think of the passage more musically, that's what is wrong.
- The reason Herseth is better than you are, is not that he tries harder, but he thinks musically. It is amazing what the chops can do when you get the head out of the way!
- Don't over-warmup for a performance; always go in a little under warmed up. Just warmup as low and high as the piece will go, that's all, then quit.
- On any orchestral excerpt, study the scores and listen to recordings. Remember that Bud really believes in listening as a teaching guide to good playing. Never play any isolated notes in orchestra. Always be aware of the color that you add and know your role. Know what is important. Remember that there are different interpretations (that is important). Don't just go by one recording.
 - Always be heard - no matter the dynamics.
 - When studying the score, know how it is to sound, and don't change unless the conductor forces you to. Don't wait to be told, if he isn't taking your tempo, change it.
 - For your own personal satisfaction, DO THE BEST JOB THAT CAN BE DONE!
 - IT IS NOT A MATTER OF BEING BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE, HOW CAN YOU LOVE TRYING TO BE BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE. PLAY FOR YOUR OWN SATISFACTION, AND FOR OTHERS ENJOYMENT.
 - IF I COULDN'T PLAY THIS THING AS WELL AS IT COULD BE PLAYED, I WOULDN'T PLAY IT!!!!
 - Don't think of auditioning for a job, or against someone, just offer what music you have to offer. If they like it, fine. If not, that's fine too, go somewhere else. Just make music and enjoy yourself. If you do get excited, apply it to the music and not to the situation. Your goal should be to play as well as Bud, not to have a particular job!!!
 - Be anxious to play, not afraid to play.
 - Sound is criterion for how you play and whether you are doing things right.
 - Say "tu" with the tongue for fast and nice sounding tonguing. This keeps it out of the way, or it will hinder the sound. It also keeps multiple tonguing faster and more even. Do lip trills daily for strong and more dependable high range.
 - You never really know how much Doc and Bud hurt when they are playing, just play beautifully and forget how it feels.
 - Don't only try for musicality and precision in performance, try all the time as in performance. REMEMBER - NEVER PRACTICE, ALWAYS PERFORM.
 - LIVE!!!! Play and show you are alive, and have something to say to the audience.
 - The horn is just a megaphone of yourself, show them how you feel!
 - Don't overblow. Take it easy. You will play better if you don't actually blow so hard, and concentrate on the actual volume of air for a BIG SOUND.