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Some Thoughts on Practicing

To do anything well requires time and dedication. To play an instrument well requires a love of the instrument, the ability to observe and analyze, a desire to improve, a tolerance for frustration, and the discipline to work toward improvement daily—music is not the domain of instant gratification. The problem is: How and what to practice? There are as many ways as there are people, but generally speaking, people who practice effectively tend to do similar things. Keep this in mind: When you practice you are building skills and solving problems, or you are reinforcing bad habits and practicing mistakes. To be productive, you must learn to understand the difference.

“When you practice you are building skills and solving problems, or you are reinforcing bad habits and practicing mistakes. To be productive and successful, you must learn to understand the difference.”

Musicians are the world’s most refined athletes. What we do is physical, requires strength training, requires endurance training, and requires timing. Because the muscles that we use are predominately small muscle groups we have to exercise and train daily. Small muscle groups lose what has been developed after only 24 hours of training. Daily training is a must.

The biggest myth of practicing: “Practice makes perfect.” Absolute nonsense. Practice does nothing but form habits of playing. The question is: Are you forming good habits?

The “Undeniable Truths” of practicing:

- You are what you practice
- Practicing is the formation of habits—good and bad
- You perform like you practice
- Quality of practice time is more important than the amount of practice time
- You must start by knowing what it should sound like

Important things that students don’t normally do but they should:

- Spend time thinking about correct playing concepts
- Spend time listening to great players
- Count the rhythms in new music perfectly BEFORE playing the new music
- Note name ALL material perfectly BEFORE playing it
- Note name and finger ALL material perfectly BEFORE playing it

Practical Steps to Practicing

Some important practice aids are:

- A quiet room
- A comfortable chair that allows good body use and alignment
- A music stand
- A metronome (absolutely indispensable)
- A pencil and notebook to keep notes and track progress
- A tuner - Tonal Energy Tuner is recommended
- A recording device (personal computer/tablet works great for this, especially to store recordings for reference and to track progress)

Practice suggestions:

- DAILY practice at the same times of day
- Several practice sessions each day rather than one long session
- Have a plan/goal for practicing and for each practice session
- Keep a practice journal to stay organized and focused on your goals
- Take time to think about and review important playing concepts (see beginning of book)
- Frequent listening to recordings of great players (iTunes, public library)
- Record something from each practice session (keep these recordings to track progress)
- A consistent routine
 - Warm-ups/Fundamentals
 - All Major and Minor scales (it doesn't take that long)
 - Chromatic scale (the full range of your instrument)
 - Technical exercises
 - Music (solos, ensemble music, etudes)
 - Break passages down into the smallest group and drill (chunking)
 - Memorize difficult passages

Practicing New Material

For all new material, take the time to note name each line BEFORE any attempt is made to play the line. It is also good to do this with familiar keys and exercises. Do not play the line until the note names can be said in sequence without hesitation. For new music, rhythms should be counted and then note naming done BEFORE playing. Remember that the goal is to practice playing correctly. When the rhythms can be counted and the notes named there is a much greater likelihood of success and the prevention of mistakes.

Another important aspect to practicing is your state of mind and mental attitude. It is difficult to accomplish very much when you are tired or not healthy. It is very important to your musical progress to stay rested and healthy. It is also essential that you maintain a positive attitude toward your practice. You have to enjoy playing and practicing to make significant progress. This can be difficult to do, especially when you reach those plateaus that every musician experiences. The best advice for this situation is to relax, keep practicing, and find ways to

vary your routine. You will eventually get past the plateau.

It is also very easy to get in a rut and get bored. Think about it: You have to practice every day. You have to work on the same things every day. You need to have a consistent routine that you do every day. This can become tiresome and affect your progress. So find ways to vary what is in your routine. The necessary fundamentals and technique can be practiced with a wide variety of exercises, and there are countless ways to vary each exercise. This will help keep your mind fresh and your attitude more positive.

One more thing to think about...Every day that you practice you are trying to get better. Every day you want to feel like you are a better player. It is very easy to begin to feel like the only reason that you are practicing is because you are not good enough. When, if ever, will your playing arrive? It can be difficult to strike a balance between expecting a lot from yourself and not beating yourself up during each practice session. Set ambitious long-term goals but make your short-term goals realistic (your journal will help). By doing this you will be able to notice your progress more easily, and will be able to enjoy the challenge that your instrument and music present. Like they say, success is not a destination as much as it is a journey – make your journey an efficient one.

Rehearsal Tips and Strategies

Rehearsals are different from individual practice because they require the cooperation of many individuals. Rehearsals are like individual practice in that they require a plan, thoughtful analysis, and the desire to improve.

Some suggestions for individuals to make rehearsals more effective are:

- A. Rehearsal is where you learn everyone else's part - come to rehearsal with your part learned.
- B. What you do in a rehearsal either adds to or takes away from the rehearsal - ALWAYS add to the rehearsal.
- C. The director is concentrating very hard during rehearsal. Help his or her concentration (and the ensemble's progress) by remaining silent and attentive throughout the rehearsal.
- D. Always pay attention to everything that is said in rehearsal. What is being said to others applies to you as well. You are still rehearsing even when you are not playing.
- E. You can learn a great deal about musicality, problem solving, and greatly improve your ear by watching and listening carefully to your director during all rehearsals.
- F. Be more committed to ensemble improvement than your director is!
- G. Set a goal to learn to solve any problem before your director even hears it!

"Practice doesn't make perfect. Even perfect practice doesn't make perfect..."

All practicing makes PERMANENT!"

Tone Exercises

Chromatic Resonance Exercise

Goals: Effortless tone Production, Smooth, easy note changes, All notes sound alike

1. keep the face still
2. keep the air the same speed
3. think of each pattern as one long note

Brass do on mouthpiece and horn.

1.

Keep lower register notes focused and clear - they should sound and feel like the concert F.

Note: This is THE MOST IMPORTANT flexibility exercise to master.

Sustaining/Crescendo Exercise

Goals: Long notes that are even, Crescendos that are controlled

1. practice without crescendo first
2. keep the face still
3. start every pitch the same and keep the syllable the same throughout the crescendo
4. keep the tone color the same throughout the crescendo

2.

Air Flow and Articulation
Concert D^b

Your key of E^b

The image displays six numbered musical exercises for trumpet, arranged in pairs of two staves each. All exercises are in the key of E-flat major (three flats) and 4/4 time. Exercise 1 features a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. Exercise 2 includes a repeat sign in the second measure. Exercise 3 also features a repeat sign. Exercises 4, 5, and 6 consist of continuous eighth-note patterns, with Exercise 6 being a more complex sixteenth-note exercise. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Review Sample' is superimposed over the center of the page.

Air Flow and Articulation
Concert C

Your key of D

The image displays a musical score for trumpet, consisting of eight numbered staves. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (D major). The music is written in a single melodic line. The first staff (1.) features a long, sweeping slur over a series of eighth notes, starting on a whole note and ending on a half note. The second staff (2.) includes a repeat sign and a fermata. The third staff (3.) also features a repeat sign and a fermata. The fourth staff (4.) continues the melodic line with a slur. The fifth staff (5.) continues with a slur. The sixth staff (6.) continues with a slur. The seventh staff (7.) continues with a slur. The eighth staff (8.) continues with a slur. A large, diagonal watermark reading "Review Sample" is overlaid across the center of the page, crossing through the middle of the staves.

Goals: Effortless note changes, Consistent tone in every register

Concepts are the same as all of the previous exercises

1. keep the face still
2. use the same syllable for every note
3. think of each pattern as one long note
4. keep low notes focused

Play exercises 1-4 first as written, then when note changes are effortless omit notes with * and perform with the same ease.

Make this exercise sound and feel as easy as #1 on page 6.

Brass: Try these on your mouthpiece too!

1. *simile*

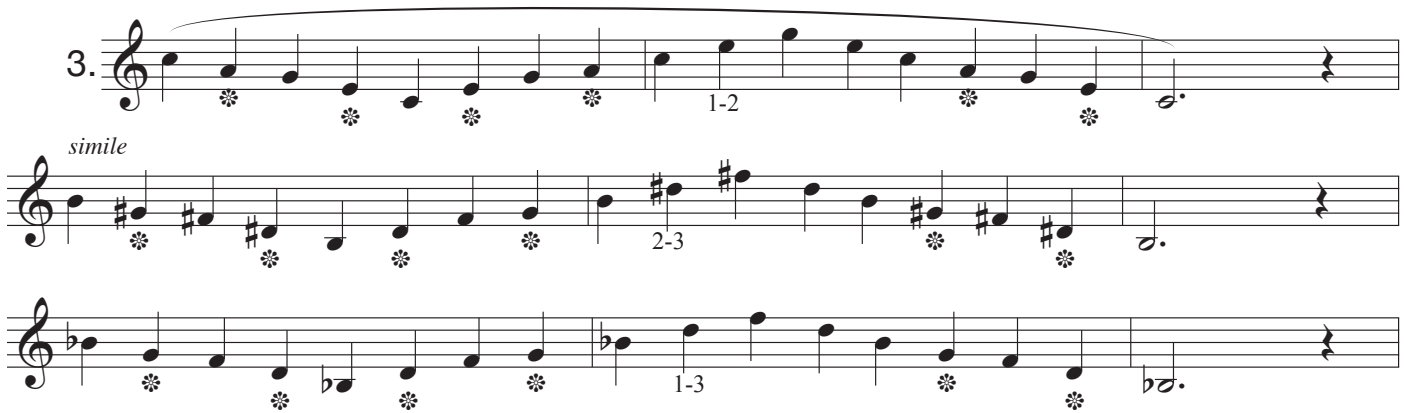
Valve brass: Use regular fingerings first, then when note changes are very smooth use the alternate fingerings.

Suggestion: Alternate each two measure pattern with the patterns in #1 on page 6 to compare ease of playing. This exercise should be just as easy.

2. *simile*

Flexibility

Reminder: The goal is to make these exercises feel and sound like a long tone.

3. 

Reminder: Use regular fingerings first.



Make this exercise sound and feel as easy as #1 on page 6.

Reminder: The goal is **Effortless Note Changes**, not velocity

4. 

Don't force. Think #1 on page 6.

5. 

Key Studies

Concert B^b Major/G Minor

Goals: Learn all major and minor keys,
Transfer fundamental concepts into all keys

Your key of C Major/A Minor

1. practice slowly at first
2. accuracy is a must
3. review the previous fundamentals

Use different articulation patterns. See index.

1.

Scale in Thirds

2.

Tonic/Dominant 7th Arpeggio

3.

Keep the face still and don't react to the visual distance between notes.

4.

5.

6.

Natural Minor - play the notes in the key signature
 Harmonic Minor - raise 7th scale degree going up and down
 Melodic Minor - raise 6th and 7th going up, revert to key signature going down

7.

Melodic Minor Scale in Thirds

8.

Fully Diminished 7th Arpeggio

9.

10.

Key Studies
Concert E^b Major/C Minor

Remember:

Transfer all of the fundamental concepts into every key.
Every exercise should feel and sound easy.

Your key of F Major/D Minor

1.

Scale in Thirds

2.

Tonic/Dominant 7th Arpeggio

3.

4.

5.

6.

Natural Minor - play the notes in the key signature
Harmonic Minor - raise 7th scale degree going up and down
Melodic Minor - raise 6th and 7th going up, revert to key signature going down

7.

Melodic Minor Scale in Thirds

8.

Fully Diminished 7th Arpeggio

9.

10.

Major Arpeggios

Goals: Mastery of all keys, Effortless note changes

1. transfer all of the fundamental concepts into every key
2. every exercise should feel and sound easy
3. remember the concept of a long sustained sound
4. make sure that you hear every note

The image displays six numbered musical exercises for major arpeggios, each consisting of two staves of music. The exercises are arranged in a descending sequence of keys: 1. C major (one sharp), 2. F major (one flat), 3. Bb major (two flats), 4. Eb major (three flats), 5. Ab major (four flats), and 6. Gb major (five flats). Each exercise is written in a 2/4 time signature and features a sequence of eighth notes forming the major triad and its inversions. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Review Sample' is superimposed over the center of the page, crossing through the musical notation.

Minor Arpeggios

Remember:

1. transfer all of the fundamental concepts into every key
2. every exercise should feel and sound easy
3. remember the concept of a long sustained sound
4. make sure that you hear every note

The image displays six numbered musical exercises for trumpet, each consisting of two staves. The exercises are arranged in a vertical column. Exercise 1 is in B-flat major (two flats). Exercise 2 is in B-flat minor (three flats). Exercise 3 is in B-flat minor (three flats). Exercise 4 is in D major (two sharps). Exercise 5 is in D major (two sharps). Exercise 6 is in D major (two sharps). Each exercise features a sequence of arpeggiated chords, with the first staff of each exercise showing the upper voice and the second staff showing the lower voice. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Review Sample' is overlaid across the center of the page, partially obscuring the musical notation.

Fully Diminished 7th Study

From #9 in Key Studies

Goal: Mastery of fully diminished 7th arpeggios!

1. review #9 in Key Studies
2. practice VERY slowly at first
3. insist on right notes, don't practice mistakes
4. remember your fundamentals
5. make this difficult exercise feel and sound EASY!

The image displays a musical score for a study piece titled 'Fully Diminished 7th Study'. It consists of eight staves of music, each containing a sequence of fully diminished 7th arpeggios. The notes are arranged in a way that demonstrates the three unique voicings of a fully diminished 7th chord. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Review Sample' is overlaid across the center of the page, partially obscuring the musical notation.

Did you notice that there are only three different fully diminished 7th arpeggios?

Now try different articulations!

Extended Articulation Studies

Pattern 1

Goals: Clear, even articulation, Consistent tone,

Efficient tonguing, Velocity

1. keep the face still
2. tongue in the same place for each note (a legato approach works best)
3. think of each pattern as one long note
4. make all notes have the same energy and quality of sound (resonance)
5. hear every note

Special Instructions for Pattern 1

1. do in one breath (it is possible!)
2. tongue in the same place for each note (a legato approach works best)
3. think of this exercise as one long note
4. keep the tongue very relaxed and move it as little as possible

The musical notation consists of six staves of music. Each staff contains a continuous sequence of eighth notes. The notes are arranged in a pattern that repeats every four notes. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The notes are arranged in a pattern that repeats every four notes. The final staff ends with a double bar line.

This exercise may seem impossible at first, but if you start slowly and carefully follow the directions you will be able to do it! This pattern will force the tongue to work efficiently, and when you apply this skill to difficult passages you will begin to realize the goal of effortless playing.

Pattern 2

Goals: Clear, even articulation, Consistent tone,

Efficient tonguing, Velocity

1. keep the face still
2. tongue in the same place for each note (a legato approach works best)
3. think of each pattern as one long note
4. make all notes have the same energy and quality of sound (resonance)
5. hear every note

The image displays 12 numbered musical staves, each containing a sequence of notes with stems pointing up and down, representing a specific articulation exercise. The staves are numbered 1 through 12. A large diagonal watermark reading "Review Sample" is overlaid across the center of the page.

Dexterity Studies

Pattern 1

Goal: Ease of playing

- 1. play slowly to master articulation
- 2. play all notes full value
- 3. treat as an air flow exercise

1. *C major*

2. *D major*

3. *E major*

4. *F major*

5. *G major*

6. *A major*

7. *B major*

8. *C major*

9. *D major*

10. *E major*

11. *F major*

12. *G major*

Dexterity Studies
Pattern 2

Keep air moving and use an easy legato style.

The image displays a musical score for 'Dexterity Studies Pattern 2', consisting of 12 numbered staves. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature. The key signatures are: 1. C major, 2. F major, 3. Bb major, 4. Eb major, 5. Ab major, 6. Gb major, 7. D major, 8. A major, 9. E major, 10. B major, 11. F# major, and 12. C# major. The music is written in a single melodic line with a consistent eighth-note rhythm. The first four staves (1-4) feature triplet markings (the number '3' above the notes) at the beginning of the pattern. The remaining staves (5-12) do not have these markings. The pattern consists of a series of eighth notes, often beamed in groups of four, with slurs indicating a legato style. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Review Sample' is overlaid across the center of the page.

Use these patterns with the exercises in this book to gain even more facility.

Goal: Ability to use any articulation with clarity and facility

1. practice each pattern SLOWLY on a scale that you have memorized
2. keep note lengths the same
3. tongued notes must sound the same as slurred notes
4. make the last slurred note touch the next note (don't clip it!)

Tongue All

Slur All

Slur in 4's

Slur in 2's

Tongue 1, Slur 2, Tongue 1

Tongue Every other note

Slur 2, Tongue 2

Tongue 2, Slur 2

Slur 3, Tongue 1

Tongue 1, Slur 3

Note: The following markings only affect the END of each note. The note beginnings MUST all be the same.

2 Tenuto, 2 Lifted

2 Lifted, 2 Tenuto

1 Lifted, 2 Tenuto, 1 Lifted

1 Tenuto, 2 Lifted, 1 Tenuto

Review Sample