

Playing Wind Instruments---a Method

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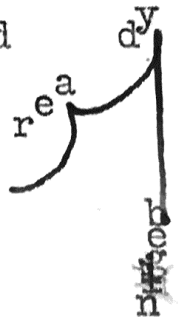
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Wherever wind instrument players gather:--back stage, chugging show trains, rehearsal halls, and even across the poker table, the Tabuteau method eventually enters the conversation. The interpretations are always varied and range from the dyed-in-wool enthusiasts to the pure inspirationalists, who claim that mathematics has no place in music. Neither group approaches understanding. The few that do, remain silent, while the others rave on.

One of the common mistakes is the failure to comprehend that the system is both individual and flexible and that successful application is in direct ratio to the ability and musicianship of the user. It is a method of teaching, and an aid to interpretation; it permits and encourages individuality by giving direction and purpose; and finally, it is a method of projection. Numbers are used as aids (1) to tonal equalization (2) to differentization of tonal level and (3) to phrasing. Other principles are treated under these groupings and, in the following, practical applications are used to clarify wherever possible. To do is to understand and so, take out your instrument and



1 Tonal Equalization

A. Speed of Wind

Tonal equalization is accomplished by the speed of the wind. In example 1 the wind speeds necessary to equalize these tones

Ex. 1

A musical staff with a treble clef. It contains four notes: a whole note on the first line (G), a half note on the second line (A), a quarter note on the second space (B), and a quarter note on the third line (C). Below the staff, the numbers 1 through 13 are written, corresponding to the notes: 1 under G, 2-4 under A, 5-8 under B, and 9-13 under C.

would result in a cresc. on the same note but make these different notes of equal volume.

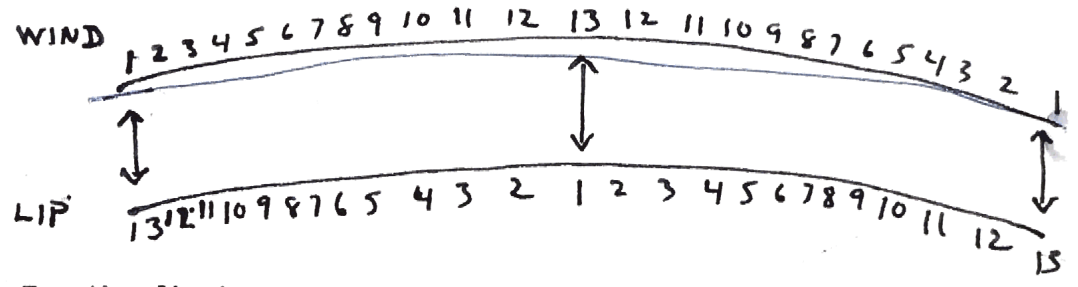
A musical staff with a treble clef. It shows a single note on the first line (G) with a crescendo hairpin underneath it, starting from the first measure and ending at the thirteenth measure.

The player can prove this to himself by sustaining a "G" on his instrument and increasing the intensity of same from the count of 1 (which is the lowest level of speed necessary to produce this tone) to the count of 13. Then play ex. 1 changing tones on the air speeds necessary for equalization.

B. Wind Speed and Lip Pressure

In playing the above did you not find a relationship between wind speed and lip pressure (i.e. the control of the size of the opening thru which the air flows)? This relationship is a direct one and is illustrated by the following chart.

Relationship of Wind and Lip Pressure



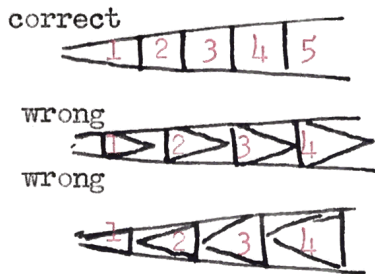
Try the first exercises again with this in mind.

C. Potential Wind Pressure (Line)

Potentially, the wind speed of 13 was in back of the attack on 1 or it could not have gathered momentum. Since control and a smaller opening slowed it down, it lay dormant, awaiting opportunity. This principle then, insures a graduated tone production

Wind speed
 Lip pressure
 Velocity of air
 1
 9

(see below) in which all of the notes are played on the wind,



(which is interrupted but never discontinued) making a beauty and continuity of line not otherwise obtainable.

The following exercises will perhaps clarify the above principles to the reader. Try to apply them as you play. Afterwards you may use them in whatever you do because they apply to all music.

1) Attack G and cresc.

a.



Attack G (on counts of)*



Attack G on every count from 1 -9-1

1--13--1



*always take breath ,when needed, after 5,9,13,etc.,never before.

2) Now play a. 1--5--9--13 (Ex. 1)
 of the scale, first detached and then slurred, always attacking and holding the last note.

b. Repeat with 13 (of greatest intensity) on the lowest note and 1 (of least intensity) on the highest.

3) Finally--try a scale--1 to 13 and back.
 As you increase the wind speed, decrease the lip pressure to insure a larger opening for the wind and move your fingers. The scale should be perfect. Isn't it? Well, try again--once staccato, once legato, and hold the last note until it disappears. Be careful about the attacks too. They shouldn't be hard but a continuation of the breath or wind from the previous note. On the wind-remember.

Now apply all of the foregoing to every note and scale on the instrument. Each note and scale starts upon a higher or lower level according to its position in the scaling of the instrument. The limit of the scaling will depend upon the combined capacities of instrument, reed, and player. The system is a transposing one for purposes of convenience. i.e. "G" may be denoted as 1 and yet be on the sixth level in the scaling of the instrument which leads us to the second principal--

□ Tonal Levels

Until now we have been concerned with equalizing the various tones of our instruments: **balancing wind-speed, resistance and lip pressure to glide on one level from note to note. To play on different levels is, of course, essential and applying numbers helps the musician to analyze what ^{he} wishes and intends to do. On a night without inspiration he can still be musically intelligent and interesting.

Start with the scale and let it live up to its name. Scale each tone so that the lowest is played with the least intensity, and the highest with the most. Call the lowest 1 and the highest 13, 15, 17, or 19, depending upon the range of your instrument. Then reverse process and let the high note be 1 and the low note 15. Any note can be tailored to any level, depending upon the musical line desired. Try the following:-

Ex. 2

Ex. 2 consists of two musical staves, labeled 'a.' and 'b.', both in treble clef. Staff 'a.' shows a scale of seven notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The notes are marked with intensity levels: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1. The highest note, C5, is marked with a '4' above it. Staff 'b.' shows the same scale of seven notes, but with a different fingering: 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1. The notes are marked with intensity levels: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1. The highest note, C5, is marked with a '4' above it.

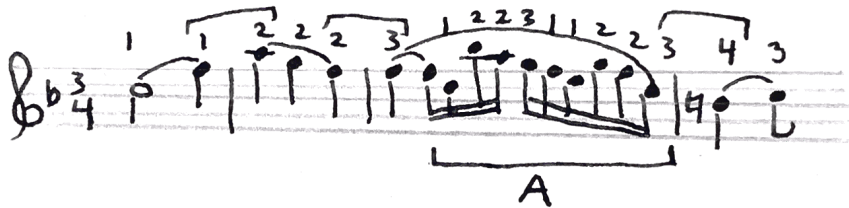
In ex. 2, a. the air speed increases and decreases to play the notes evenly on one level. In ex. 2, b. the same process takes place but to a much greater extent so that the phrase is played on three different levels, automatically giving shape and meaning to the group. The proper air speed, however, is always attained on the preceding note. When such has been attained the fingers change and the note comes by itself.

III Phrasing

A. Changing Tonal Level

You have seen in the preceding example how changing tonal levels brought about phrasing. No note, even when played upon the same level, is static. It has direction because it is always changing and its destination is that of the entire composition. It is related to the whole and to the sections and phrases within the whole.

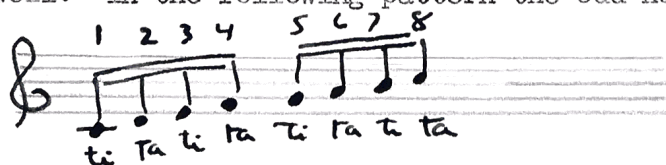
Study the following:



It is on four levels with the climax on 4. Between 3 and 4, (bracket A) the tonal level is still a progression from 3 to 4 but, for the sake of speech facility, the numbers are transposed, permitting a smaller phrase within the larger. The choice of number and distribution of level is, of course, an individual matter, changing with the mood and intention of the player. Now play it. You, too, can phrase by tonal level.

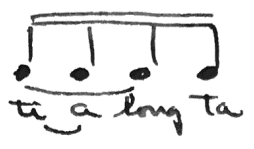
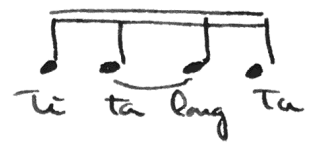
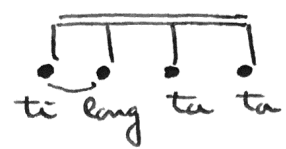
B. Articulation

A section on phrasing would not be complete without a brief consideration of articulation, which necessarily goes hand in hand. A simple sixteenth note scale pattern not only has varying wind speeds and tonal levels, but different stresses and articulations, as well. In the following pattern the odd numbered notes have a



down stress which is greater than the up stress of their even companions. This is facilitated by the attack *ti* and *ta*. As the phrasing is changed so is the corresponding attack.

For example---



In playing these articulations the end note of each slurred group is always long and moves toward its successor. It is a common error to chop it off and hurry on.

C. Silence, Space, and Time

These three factors must also enter into any consideration of phrasing. Silence is bounded by sound and space and both exist in time, in the sense of rhythm and stress. Take one note and attack it on varying intensities from 1 to 9.

9	7	5	3	1	3	5	7	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8	6	4	2	2	4	6	8	

You will see that as the tone increases in wind speed the silence around it varies in inverse ratio and that the space between notes changes progressively. These two principles, then, can be applied to rhythmic patterns, which, modify, continue, and clarify the musical line, giving it added form and substance.

In conclusion, I hope you are not tired out. Don't get discouraged because to approach perfection takes many years. Neither is understanding reached in a day. I sincerely hope that the preceding principles will help you and I wish you good luck.