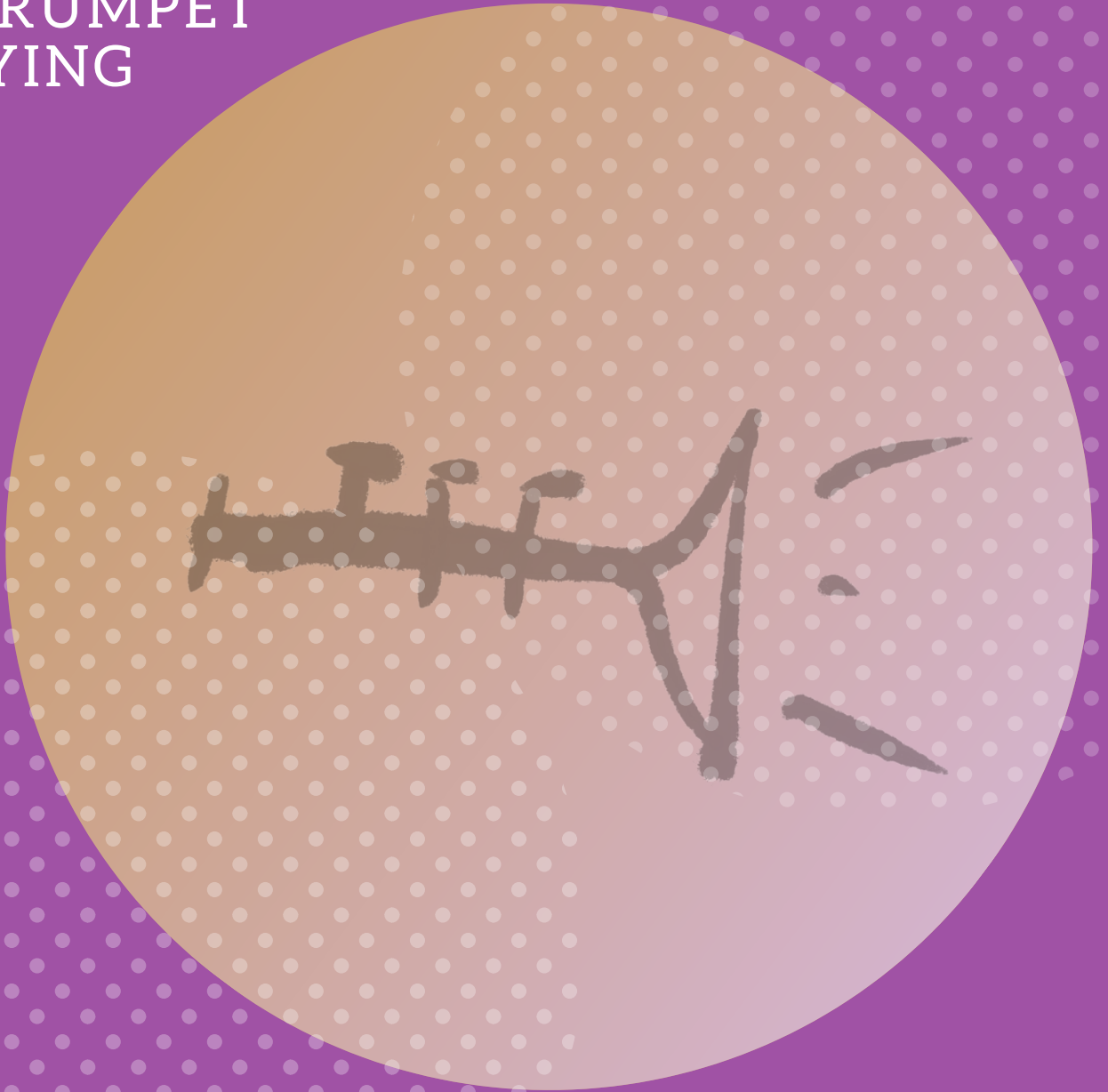


RESPONSE

A GUIDE TO AN
EASIER WAY
OF TRUMPET
PLAYING



BY

ANDY
KOZAR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT RESPONSE.....	1
ORGANIZATION AND USAGE.....	2
SECTION 1.	
A WARM-UP AND FUNDAMENTALS ROUTINE.....	3
I. AIR FIRST.....	4
II. BARELY BUZZ.....	5
III. THE CENTER.....	6
IV. FLOW STUDIES.....	8
V. SCALE STUDIES.....	15
VI. FLEXIBILITIES.....	22
VII. CONNECTING THE REGISTERS.....	27
VIII. EXPANDING INTERVAL STUDIES.....	29
IX. ARTICULATION STUDIES.....	31
X. (RE)FOCUS.....	35
SECTION 2.	
AN APPENDIX OF EXERCISES.....	40
I. FLOW ARTICULATION (SINGLE TONGUE).....	41
II. FLOW ARTICULATION (DOUBLE TONGUE).....	42
III. FLOW ARTICULATION (TRIPLE TONGUE).....	43
IV. ATTACK PRACTICE.....	44
V. TRUMPET SOUNDS.....	46
SECTION 3.	
END OF DAY.....	50
I. LONG TONES.....	51
II. END AT A PLACE OF FOCUS.....	55
ABOUT ANDY.....	59
TESTIMONIALS.....	60

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ABOUT RESPONSE



INTRODUCTION:

There's nothing new in this book, or at least new in the way we generally think about 'new-ness' these days. These exercises, and the words on suggested approach that precede each exercise, all have their origins in other trumpeters and educators from generations both currently active and long passed. In all fields, we build on the knowledge and insight that is passed on from those who dedicated their professional lives to this work. The way I approach trumpet has been informed by the years of lessons with my teachers in school, the one-off lessons with as many people as would hear me, the colleagues I'm so lucky to sit next to from gig to gig, and the friends I have practiced with for years. To say that what I'm writing and sharing in this book is new would be phony. It's an amalgamation of the knowledge and insight I've gathered through these years of experience, collected and communicated in the way that I've found works best for me. My goal with this book is to share my approach to playing the trumpet, and that's exactly what it is. Mine. Not that you can't have it, of course you can! Otherwise, why share? But I mention this only to emphasize that these exercises work great for me, and I hope some of it works for and helps you, but you and I are different. Our chops are different. Our physiology is different. Our brains are different, and this is wonderful. So take what you like, change anything you'd like to accommodate your needs, and if something doesn't work for you, move on.

Basketball star Chris Bosh reminisces about the joy of the daily process, the reps and drills, not only the actual game. Author George Saunders speaks and writes about the joy of the daily process of just getting ink to paper, not only the final story or novel. Playing trumpet and being a musician can't be only about the performance, for the amount of time performing feigns in comparison to the solitary time in the proverbial woodshed. To sustain this life and work, we must find joy in our devotion to the process and the long-term relationship with our art and craft. I personally deeply love this process, and as my family of non-trumpeters (that can now sing my routine) will attest, I live for the fundamentals, for the process. I hope this book can add to the daily joy that bringing this hunk of metal to your face brings!





ORGANIZATION & USAGE


ORGANIZATION:

This book is separated into three main sections, *A Warm-Up and Fundamentals Routine* and *An Appendix of Exercises*, and *End of Day*. The first is exactly as the title states, and this warm-up/fundamentals routine is the one I personally have found works the best for me. It is also an approximation of the routine I work through with my studio in our weekly group sessions. *An Appendix of Exercises* is a collection of exercises I've written or adapted over the past 10+ years. Not necessarily for everyday use, these exercises either address specific concerns on the instrument, are meant to compliment those found in the opening section, or are variations on the exercises found in the first section, a way to keep it fresh. Think of these (and maybe everything in here) as tools in a tool box. You wouldn't use a hammer for everything, but there are a bunch of uses for one, and it sure is great to have one when you need it! *End of Day* is a few exercises I do towards the end of my day of playing, including long tones and some very soft playing. You may be different, but once I turned 30, warming down became quite important!


USAGE:

Each section will vary a bit in its presentation, but you will regularly see general descriptions, specific instructions, and often this little trumpet:  These denote a little something extra, tips for execution of the exercise or a note meant to give some additional context for the exercise. Like this...

 Though the three sections of this book are presented in a particular order, it is not necessary to do them in that sequence. In *A Warm-Up and Fundamentals Routine*, I have found that parts I through IV work best in that order, but that is only a matter of personal preference and quite honestly, I'm always changing it up. The exercises in *An Appendix of Exercises* are in no specific order and should be used as you wish and those found in *End of Day* are written about more in depth when we get there.

 Periodically, you will see some boxes for you to take notes. I always found writing about my practice, lessons, ups, and downs, to be tremendously helpful. I hope you take advantage of this space for that type of reflection.

NOTES:


 My purpose for writing this book is the hope that you will find some of it helpful in your own practice. For many years, I thought of every exercise from every book as a sort of holy and sacred document. In my mind, the thought process would play out like this: "I deeply admire X (a trumpet player) and want to play like them. X wrote this book called Y, and if I would like to play like them, I need to do exactly what X writes." Now, if I told trumpeter X that this was my thinking, I'm sure I would be told 'nope, that's not how that works.' Whether it's Jean-Baptiste Arban's *Complete Celebrated Method for the Cornet*, Chris Gekker's *Articulation Studies*, James Thompson's *The Buzzing Book*, or X's book Y, these methodologies are meant to be a starting point, or better yet, a springboard for our own creative practice, giving us the foundation, tools, and the inspiration to create our own way. This is all to say, try it exactly as I wrote it, but only a few times. Then change anything that doesn't work for you. Add to it, take something away, ignore it completely. **Make it yours, it's about you.**




1: A WARM UP AND FUNDAMENTALS ROUTINE

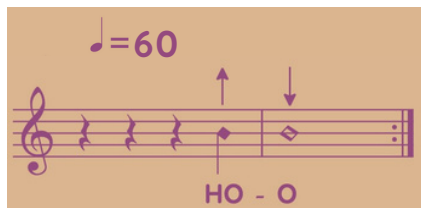
I. AIR FIRST

All trumpet playing starts with air. Without the right breath and air usage, our lips are just hunks of meat, but when we are using our air well, we are able to find that perfect balance between said air and our embouchure, the key to our craft and art. Each time I sit down with the trumpet, whether it be for the first notes of the day or just before a show, the first thing I do, if only for a moment, is engage with my breath. The fundamental components of my personal approach to the breath are quite simple:

 **HOPE** – Say the word ‘hope.’ Now say it again, paying special attention to the shape your mouth makes and what your tongue does. Now take what I call a *Hope Breath*: keep your mouth in the hope position, but rather than exhaling to say the word, inhale. How does that feel? Now play with the vowel, *heep, hoop, hay*, etc. and try these variations on the inhale. What are the differences? In my experience, the hope breath is the most relaxed way to take in the air you need; it’s a gentle and subtle mouth-shape, there is very little dropping of the jaw, the tongue is kept out of the way, and you’re able to fill up from the belly without any upper-chest or throat tension.

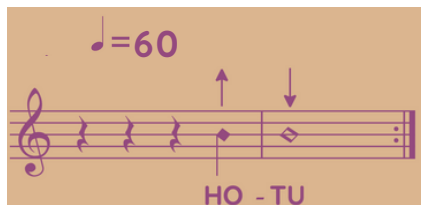
 **Breathe in time** – Whether coming in or going out, our air must be in constant movement and the moment of transition from inhalation to exhalation is no exception. Imagine a tennis ball being tossed up in the process of a serve. It does not stop moving at the top, but immediately begins the process of returning to its origin. The ball is in constant movement and the player hits the ball at the peak. As trumpeters, our air must be in constant movement and we articulate at the top, or peak, of our breath. A stoppage of air in the transition from in to out results in harmful chest and throat tension, and if we’re already tight before our first note? Oye. We’re certainly not setting ourselves up to play with ease in the best case, and in worst case, we’re setting ourselves up to fail. Breathing in time, always with a metronome, will not allow this stoppage and thus avoid the tension, allowing us to play the trumpet with ease.

AIR EXERCISE 1:



Repeat this pattern a handful of times. Remember, the air is in constant motion.

AIR EXERCISE 2:



Now repeat this pattern a handful of times, this time articulating the beginning of an imaginary note.





II. BARELY BUZZ


Once my breathing is activated, I add my lips to the mix by doing what I call *Barely Buzz*. In this exercise, you are going to place the mouthpiece to your lips as if you were about to play, but rather than take an in time *Hope Breath*, you are going to release the easiest and smallest amount of airflow through your aperture and allow your lips to come together and barely buzz, with ‘allow’ being the key word. We want to avoid forcing the lips together, only letting them touch and vibrate. The resultant pitch is of no concern as long as it is coming from a place of ease. Though this may take a moment to get going, especially as you begin to work it into your routine or after a few days of heavy playing, so be patient and fight the urge to force the buzz!

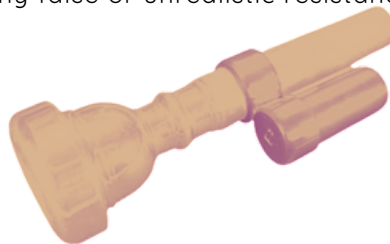
BARELY BUZZ EXERCISE:



 The purpose of this exercise is twofold: In the short-term it’s an easy and low-impact way to start the day. Allow rather than force. But in the long term, this very simple exercise will give you greater control over your aperture. The ability to comfortably use a very small and responsive aperture is essential to playing soft in the low register, playing high, and even the most basic skill of clearly articulating.

 As you can see from the exercises we’ve gone over so far, I spend time with the most fundamental building blocks of trumpet playing every day. Can I breathe without practicing the *Hope Breath*? Get my lips to buzz without doing the *Barely Buzz*? Yeah, sure. But if the breath and the buzz, the balance of our lip and air, are the foundational elements from which our entire technique is built upon, this foundation should be attended to on a daily basis.


 When buzzing, I prefer to use a Brass Buzzer (pictured below) as opposed to a BERP or just holding the mouthpiece. In my practice, the point of buzzing is exactly that, focusing on the balance of the air and lip, the embouchure and aperture, and the pitch of the buzz. The BERP adds a resistance that isn’t like buzzing the mouthpiece alone, while also not anything resembling the resistance we receive when playing the trumpet, and holding the mouthpiece with our hands can lead to angles and pressure that also differs from what we experience when we’re playing. The ‘Brass Buzzer’ allows you to hold the horn as you do while you’re playing, but without any false or unrealistic resistance.

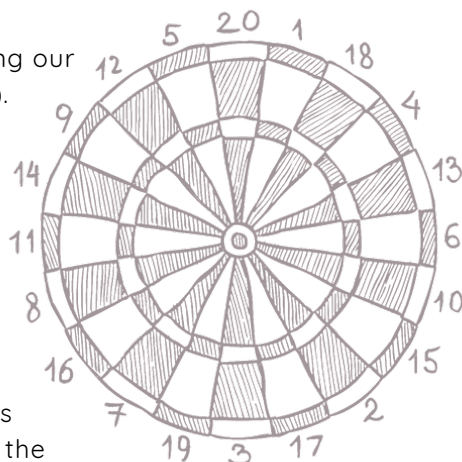



NOTES:

III. THE CENTER

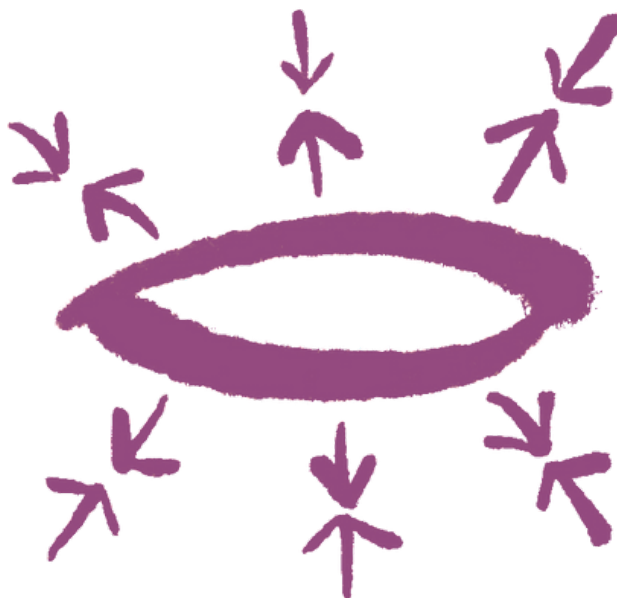
It's time to make some sound on the horn, but before moving from note to note, I spend a moment to find just the right sound and balance, what I, and many, call *The Center*. I prefer to do this on G4 (written G on whatever trumpet I'm playing). Before moving forward, let's first define this sometimes-enigmatic concept. James Thompson describes it so concisely in *The Buzzing Book*: "If the balance of airflow and lip tension is correct the player will obtain a resonant tone rich in harmonics. This is what is known as being 'in the center' of the tone." Using a visual analogy, imagine a dart board. This dart board is a single note, let's stick with G. If you hit the board, than you're successful, to a degree! You did not hit the wall, or a friend. This is the equivalent playing the 'right note.' However, as each dart board has a bullseye, each note has its own center. This is where we want to be playing, all of the time. What better way to create that habit and to get than sound in our ears, than by feeling and hearing this sensation every day, within the first few minutes our practice.

 Visual aids can be tremendously helpful when it comes to deepening our understanding of the complexities of trumpet playing (or anything really!). As we're developing new habits and adjusting or refining our old ones, a simple visual cue can be all it takes to remind the body and mind of this new way of working. As you are moving through this book, you will see many of the images and diagrams I use both in my own practice as well as with my students. I hope they offer another way in to the ideas and concepts we're exploring.

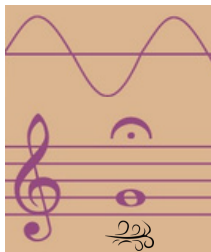


 The balance of airflow and lip tension we have been talking about is illustrated below. The opening in the center is the embouchure (including the aperture) while the two sets of arrows represent the opposing forces: the airflow causing the aperture to open while the lip tension holds the embouchure steady.

LIP TENSION

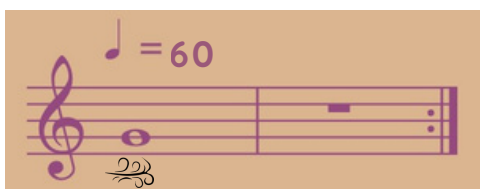


CENTERING EXERCISE 1:



With a breath/air attack, play your G at a comfortable dynamic, bending above and below the pitch. What you are listening for is the sensation that the room you are in seems to be buzzing, vibrating with your full sound, and what you are feeling for is the that of a balanced embouchure. Remember, a balanced embouchure is one where the air quality (speed and quantity) is in perfect balance with the lip tension. It's very likely that when you hear the room buzz, you are playing balanced, as it's quite difficult to make that happen if it's not! As you get closer and closer to the center, reduce the pitch bends until they are no longer necessary, and hang out on that perfectly balanced G, breathing as necessary, enjoying how fantastic you sound!

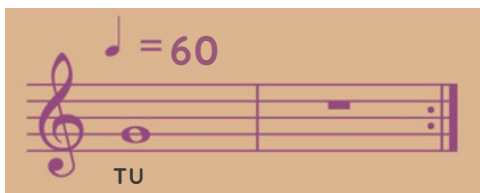
CENTERING EXERCISE 2:




in your ear and mind, actively make the decision to recreate that sound. And don't forget your **HOPE Breath!**

The goal of this exercise is three-fold, to align the exhale and the lip buzz, to improve and refine our aperture's responsivity, and to practice beginning the note in the center, without needing to use the tool of the pitch bend. Before playing either of the next two exercises, I first want you to recall how it sounded and felt when you arrived at the center in Exercise 1. Once you have that sound

CENTERING EXERCISE 3:



Continue with the same mental and physical approach of *Centering Exercise 2*, only now we will be starting the note with our tongue. As you can see, I use the 'TU' syllable to discuss single tonguing and articulation. I prefer this as it keeps the back of my tongue relaxed and helps to facilitate clear articulation and immediate centering of my attack.

 You will note that I used quite a bit of ink on *Start With Air*, *Barely Buzz*, and *The Center*, but I would say on average, these three segments take up only a few moments of my day. The exact time fluctuates depending on how I feel and what I believe I need more or less of, but it's never more than 10 minutes.

 For more practice on single note practice, turn to the *Attack Practice* exercise found in the *Appendix of Exercises*.


NOTES:





V. SCALE STUDIES


These chromatic exercises are designed to expand our range with ease as well as to encourage a sense of flow, clarity, and cleanliness as we move from note to note very quickly. Chromatic scales should be as easy and habitual as brushing your teeth, putting on socks, or tying your shoes (assuming you do these things!).

SCALE STUDY 1 - MID-CHROMATICS:

 This first set of exercises starts with a descending diatonic scale from a 5th above the starting pitch of the chromatic scale. This is to practice the habit approaching the majority of our range as an extension of the middle register. Feel free to try starting at the downbeat of measure 2, but be sure you set your embouchure as if you're about to play a 5th higher!

 Press your fingers down hard and deliberately to improve the clarity of the transition from note to note. Though our finger movement is mechanical in nature, in no way should lead to a mechanical approach to trumpet playing.

 Interpret the crescendos as an increase of air speed as well as an increase in dynamic.

 When playing a passage that contains many fast notes, I like to find *anchor points*, or notes I can use as a place to check in and that keep me grounded and centered. In this exercise, try using the notes on beats 1 and 2 for this purpose.

♩ = 80-90



IX. ARTICULATION

When we're working on our articulation, it makes sense we focus on our tongue, right? Well yes, of course, but it is essential that we also place the same amount of, if not more, attention on the way we are utilizing our air. Using our tongue is an awfully easy way to start a note, but it can also mask inefficiencies in our playing. If we're not placing our attention on our air flow as well and supporting our embouchure with the necessary air quantity and speed (ie. balance) in the same way we do when slurring, our tone and endurance will suffer. Not to mention that it can be very easy to get 'backed up,' creating neck and throat tension that is certainly no good. Often the most simple analogy is the most effective, so though this may feel a bit juvenile, stay with me for a moment while I walk you through something I often draw on a chalk board in lessons and masterclasses.

This is a train, right?



(At this point, a student eager to please or just confused about what the heck I just drew may say 'yes,' but the majority of folks will say 'nope.')

No. So what are we missing?


The connectors, of course.




A train is not a train without these connectors, only a series of cars.



Our air fulfills the role of these connectors.

 Let's try out this concept as it pertains to articulation on the trumpet. First, do the exercise below as a *breath pattern*. Holding your hand about 3-4 inches from your mouth, 'play' the exercise, but only with your air. Try to achieve a near constant stream of air pushing against your hand.

 Now on the instrument, play the exercise as written with the notes as long as possible, using your air as you did in the exercise above. Pay special attention to the fastest of the notes, blowing straight ahead, keeping them as long as a 16th note at this tempo can possibly be.

$\text{♩} = 80-90^*$

* A complete group of single, double, and triple tongued exercises dedicated to this concept can be found in the Appendix of Exercises beginning on page 41.