

Harvesting a Horn Section: Strategies for Moving Students to French Horn
Michael Fleischmann
fleischm@mac.com
2020 SCSBOA Conference

WHY DO WE NEED THE HORN?

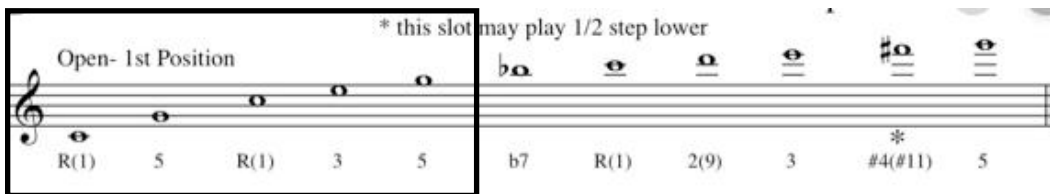
- The horn is a unique color bridge between the trumpets & low brass
- Grade 3+ music tends to utilize the horn more independently and purposefully

GET YOUR KIDS EXCITED!

- John Williams, Vienna horns (youtube), live demonstrations in class (local college?)

WHY IS HORN SO DIFFICULT?

- The overtone series: most brass parts (trumpet, trombone, tuba, euphonium) are written between partials 1 - 5



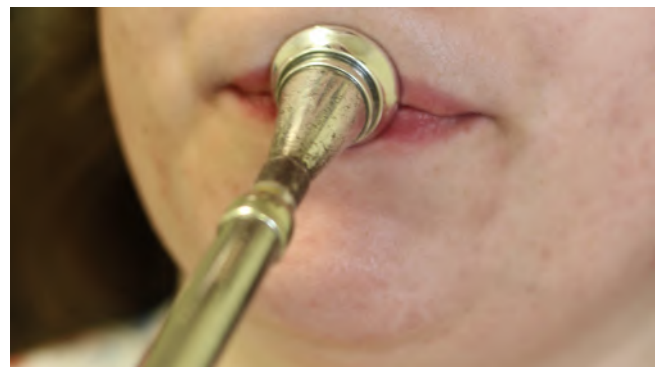
- Horn music is written in partials 4 - 12 where the notes are much closer together



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A HORN PLAYER:

- Good attitude, willingness to fail, student leaders, previous experience with piano or strings
- “downstream” players
- easily over-blows the trumpet or trombone
- clarinet and flute embouchure tends to translate
- lips that are not too full or “fleshy”

EMBOUCHURE: 2/3 top lip, 1/3 bottom lip

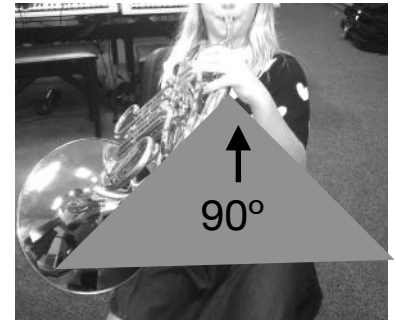


DOUBLE HORNS VS. SINGLE HORNS VS. MELLOPHONES

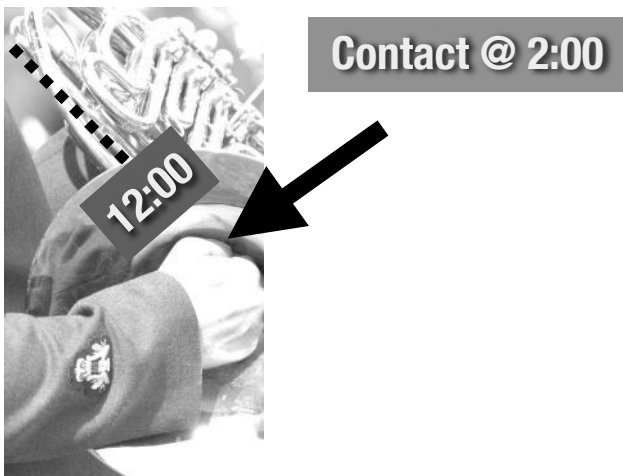
- For high school music (grade 3+) double horns are going to be best
- The B-Flat Side (trigger) is more in tune, and uses a wider harmonic series = better note accuracy!
- The F-Side is more in tune below G4 (2nd line G), use the B-Flat (trigger) side ABOVE G#4
- Mellophones may be tempting to use - but they are the wrong color for horn music, and may just confuse players when it comes time to play a real instrument
- Mellophones and single horns are a last resort for high school if double horns are available

SETUP: SEATED POSITION & HAND POSITION

- Legs at 90°, slightly off to the right
- The left arm and tilt of horn should make a 90° angle
- Bring the lead pipe TO the student
- Right Hand position:
 - Blade w/ fingers, tuck thumb to make a flat “table top”
 - Fingers slightly curved to match contour of the bell
 - The table top should make contact w/bell at 2:00



INCORRECT: arched thumb

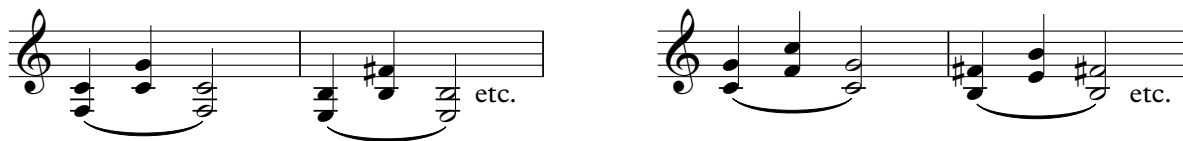


INCORRECT: palm on the contour of the inside of the bell

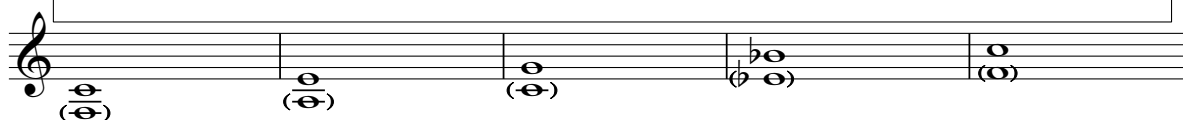
Moving to Horn: Exercises

Bottom Notes Are CONCERT pitch

Mouthpiece matching: do-sol sirens, sol-do sirens, sequence chromatically up and down.
2/3 top lip, 1/3 bottom lip, "downstream" air



Find the "home note" Play open 5+ times and see which note comes out the most frequently
try to start subsequent matching on the home note, move back and forth between the four pitches. Model short sequences on piano and then have the student playback. All notes are playable "open" on the F-side (no trigger)



Short Sequences - open (no fingers) on the F-Side (no trigger). Start with long tones, progress to half notes, quarter notes, etc. Don't worry about slurring/tonguing, just strive for ability to match pitch. Start slow!
These are short sequences starting on a C home note



Short scale sequences, call & response. These exercises will take students through the common range of Grade 3+ music
Use your best judgement - this will be easier for some, difficult for others. If they can hit everything, great!
(slurring recommended, follow the fingerings below) Show students the fingerings as they play.

