BASIC TONE PRODUCTION ON THE TRUMPET

by Dr. Brian A. Shook

I. Introduction

II. Warm Up – Just like athletes, this is always necessary

A. Good posture

- Sit on edge of chair, feet flat on ground, back straight, shoulders back, relax

B. Proper Breathing

1. Open mouth like a yawn
2. Relax, take a deep breath, and fill up your lungs
3. Let it out easily

*This is the feeling we want while playing the trumpet

C. Breathing While Playing (with the mouthpiece on your lips)

1. Put your first finger over your lips like you are saying "Shhhh"
2. Then open the corners of your mouth while keeping the middle closed
3. Inhale deeply as before
4. Let it out easily

D. Buzzing

1. Creating a good mouthpiece buzz is essential to good tone production
   - Good buzz = good tone
2. Start every practice session by buzzing the mouthpiece (soft, not loud)
   - Sirens, scales (see Ex. 1), easy melodies (Amazing Grace, etc.)

III. Producing a Good Tone

A. A good tone is the most basic element of becoming a good musician.

- No matter how high, low, fast, or slow you play, if your tone is poor, people will not want to listen to you

B. How do we get a good tone?

1. Listen to good musicians—not just trumpet players, but all instruments and voices
   - If you don't know what a good tone sounds like, how can you produce one?
2. Buzzing practice – in small amounts, about 3–4 minutes at a time
   - Free buzzing (without the mouthpiece) and buzzing with the mouthpiece
3. Long Tones (see Ex. 2)
   - Good posture and good breaths
   - Play very slowly
   - Think big, full, rich sound
   - Rest as much as you play
4. Moving Long Tones or Flow Studies (see Ex. 3)
   - These are just like long tones, but they are a little faster and use more notes
5. Lip Bends (see Ex. 4)
   - Lip bends exercise the muscles to develop strength and good tone
   1. Play a second-line G, slur to an F#, and slur back to the G
   2. Play a second-line G, slur to F# ***without using your valves***, and then slur back to the G.
   3. Repeat on any note, always descending by a half step

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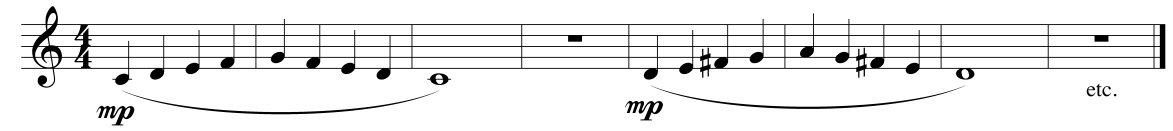
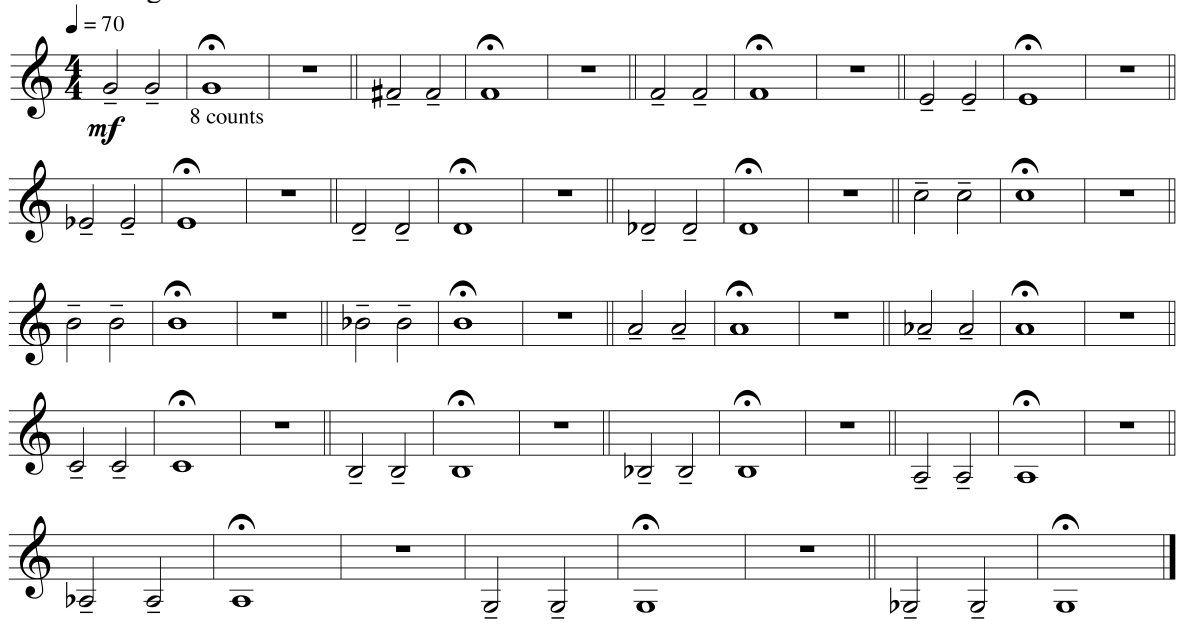
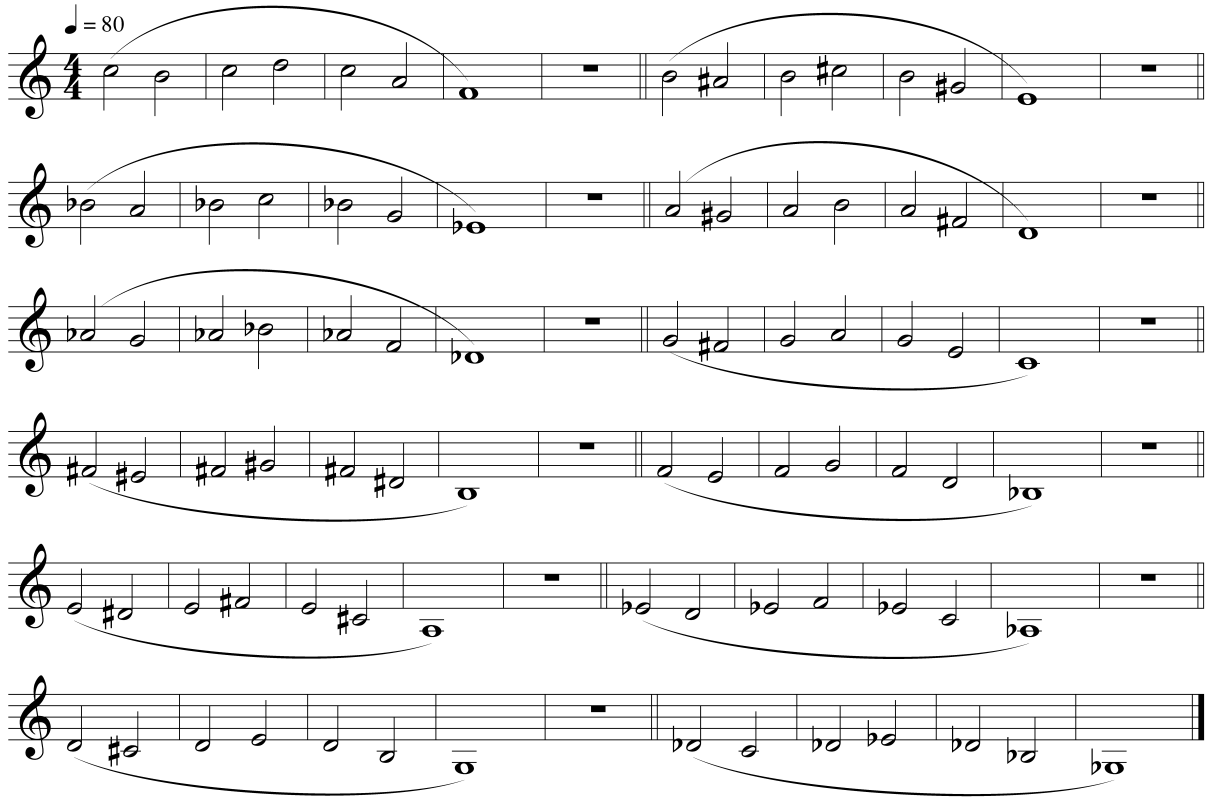
Ex. 1 - Buzzing



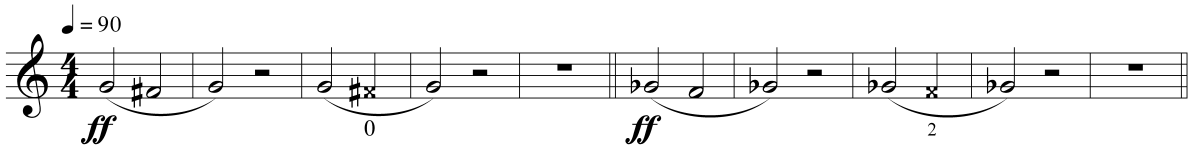
Ex. 2 – Long Tones



Ex. 3 – Moving Long Tones (Flow Studies)



Ex. 4



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