

## **Horn**

### **First Day of Class**

#### **Assembling the Horn**

1. Students take instrument cases to another area of the room and set their cases flat on a table. If no table is available, students should put cases on the floor and sit or kneel beside their instruments.
2. The cases must be opened with the handle *below* the opening.
3. Students then carefully remove the instrument from the case and gently insert the mouthpiece, giving it a slight turn to the right to make sure it stays firmly in place.
4. The students now carry the instrument to their seats. Do not allow students to "dangle" the horn off to the side. It should be carried in front of the student's body or tucked under the right arm to avoid damaging the instrument.
5. Remind the students to be patient and **not** to play. They will be very excited at this point and it is easy for them to lose control.

#### **Producing a Sound on the Mouthpiece**

1. Students now remove the mouthpiece (twisting to the left) and place their trumpets down gently, flat on the floor beside their chairs.
2. Students slide out to the edge of the chair, sit up tall, and put their feet flat on the floor with shoulders relaxed, head straight and facing forward.
3. Ask students to put their lips together in a normal relaxed position as if saying "em".
4. The teacher now individually places the mouthpiece in the center of the lips of each student using 2/3 top lip and 1/3 bottom lip. The mouthpiece is angled down. Instruct the student to "buzz" into the mouthpiece.
  - a) Lips should not roll in or push out.
  - b) Keep student from pushing his/her head and lips against the mouthpiece.
  - c) Do not allow the student to puff out cheeks.
  - d) The chin is down and flat.
  - e) Breathe through the mouth.
5. Once the student can produce a buzz, have the student try to hold the buzz for four steady counts.
6. If a student has difficulty getting a sound, have the student try:

- a) buzzing without the mouthpiece
- b) blowing air faster
- c) pulling the teeth apart
- d) think about their tongue placement to make sure the tongue is not up and blocking the flow of air

### **Holding the Instrument**

1. Students should now put the mouthpiece back onto the instrument.
2. When holding and playing the horn, students should always sit up tall with their backs away from the chair, feet flat on the floor, shoulders relaxed, and head straight.
3. The horn bell rests on the right thigh.
4. The three middle fingers of the left hand are curved and rest on the valves. The little finger is placed within the finger hook.
5. **The lead pipe is angled down so that it is 15 to 20 degrees from the horizontal.** (This is similar to the angle used for playing the clarinet.) **This angle is critical.**
6. The right hand is slightly cupped (fingers together) and set in the bell with the back of the fingers touching the bell on the side away from the player.

### **Producing a Pitch on the Instrument**

1. One at a time, have each student play into the horn. It is important that the instructor guide the mouthpiece to the center of the lips and fix hand position and posture at the same time. Be sure the lead pipe is angled down and the bell is angled out, not into the body.
2. Once each student is able to get a sound, encourage him/her to keep a steady tone.
3. Students will usually produce one of three pitches - concert F, A or C (C, E, G on horn). Since these three notes are all fingered open, it is beneficial to explain this. Students should practice sustaining all three pitches. However, if the concert C (G) is too high for a beginning student, do not force it. With time and practice all students will develop the strength to go higher. Forcing high notes too soon will only promote poor playing habits.
4. **Constant** and **consistent** reinforcement of these fundamentals at each class will be necessary if students are to develop proper playing fundamentals.

## **Disassembling the Instrument**

1. When the class has ended students return quietly to their instrument cases.
2. Students remove their mouthpieces twisting gently to the left and put them back into the case.
3. The cases can now be closed and latched. Do not allow students to put music or books in their cases, as anything extra in the case will damage the instruments.

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### **Extra Considerations**

1. Recommended mouthpiece: Farkas MC or MDC.
2. Band directors often switch trumpet players to horn. Although this is a logical switch, it is also more difficult than many people realize. The trumpet is played with the lead pipe coming straight off the lips (parallel to the floor). The horn is played with the lead pipe angled down. The trumpet embouchure generally uses 1/2 upper lip and 1/2 lower lip. The horn uses 1/3 lower lip and 2/3 upper lip. These differences are very subtle and often ignored. If the trumpet player who switches to horn does not make these slight but critical adjustments she/he will always lack a characteristic horn sound.
3. Switchovers to horn should not be limited to trumpet players. Flute, clarinet, and/or sax players can make excellent horn players.
4. The double horn makes it much easier for horn players to find the correct pitch. Whenever possible, start horn players on a double horn.