

Thesis for DLA dissertation

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Comparing Examination of Different Blowing
Techniques

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I. Before the investigation

I chose the analysis of the blowing technique of the brass instruments, mainly that of the trombone, for the topic of my doctoral dissertation.

Trombone playing and trombone training have greatly improved in the past fifty years, which is due to the fact that few people started to deal with the blowing technique (breathing, the role of the tongue, starting the sound, the beauty of sound), before the past decades the question of sounding a brass instrument had not been scientifically examined.

During my studies abroad, I had the occasion to get acquainted with the performances of several great brass artists. I noticed they all of them perfectly played, nevertheless they all did it in a different way. Not just from the point of music but from the point of the blowing technique as well. We can establish as a fact that between the blowing techniques there can be appreciable differences even if they do not seem to be great. These differences – in my opinion - can be attached to geographical places as well, American and European people play differently, and in Europe even the French,

the English, the Germans and so on, show differences in their brass instrument playing. In my doctoral dissertation I would have liked to reveal the reasons for these differences and investigate the methods attached to these versatile blowing techniques and exercises - to tune the sound of the brass instrument. It is undoubted, a musical artist can play the more colourful, the more perfect music, the more techniques he knows, and if he can choose the one among the more of them – which is the most appropriate for his talent. This idea became more mature in me when I became a teacher. As the Hungarian trombone training was greatly influenced by the work and results of the American schools I made efforts to get more and more publications by European authors, and studied them so that I can insert their experiences into my dissertation, too.

II. Resources

The current literature of this topic in Hungarian is just very little. This is why I nursed the idea that it would be very useful for the society of people who have a liking for brass instruments if I collect more and more pieces of literature in foreign languages, study and summarize

them and compare them with the works in Hungarian, and enrich them as best as I can with my own experiences. Of course it is impossible to find and treat all the books published in the world so far about this topic because together with the development of trombones, more and more books, dissertations were published. So I could not undertake the task to introduce all of these publications, but without endeavoring to reach completeness I tried to find the most of them and to get acquainted with them.

I got to the conclusion that mainly American authors were the persons who described the theory of the blowing technique, and collected its characteristics. Of course European writers also wrote about the topic but they generally made reference to the results of the American artists and elaborating and enlarging the chosen field they added some particulars to the issue.

The European authors put the emphasis mainly on the developing instrumental exercises, etudes, their merits in these fields are indubitable. I think in order to get a perfect ability at playing a musical instrument the player must essentially acquire the knowledge of these areas. So in my dissertation I endeavoured to analyze

both fields in proper depth so that the people who read my work can get a full picture about trombone playing,

III. The method of investigation

I constructed my investigation method in the following way:

1. At the starting point I collected the literature available in English and in Hungarian languages.
2. I studied the Hungarian resources, and translated the literature in the foreign language. .
3. I collected the thoughts of the authors about the main elements of the blowing technique. I summarized them finding similarities and differences.
4. Together with my students we tried the methods recommended by the authors and I examined their effectiveness, in case of a different opinion I tried to come to a decision on the basis of experience.
5. I collected all the problematic fields, with which only one author dealt with.

6. I added my experiences and ideas to the methods and exercises described in the already existing literature.

IV. Results

My aim in the dissertation was to introduce the different blowing techniques including the possibilities for committing faults and fixing them, demonstrating as many exercises as possible, as the trombone player must know the characteristics of the blowing techniques, the possibilities for committing a fault of the given fields, and as many methods and exercises and etudes as possible so that they can choose the most appropriate ones to their capabilities from a wide circle.

Doing this job I managed to study and summarize a great many pieces of literature. I found several exercises that I could efficiently use while improving a given area. And my decision was more and more intensified that the exercises must be chosen personalized, as the exercises may be very useful for one student, may be less efficient for the other and a different exercises might prove to be more appropriate for him. So

a rich choice can be found in my dissertation in connection with the developmental fields.

I mainly tried to describe the main issues, like breathing, the role of the tongue, starting the sound, the beauty of the sound, the functioning of ansatz. All the works I consulted wrote about these topics, the opinions of the authors are more or less similar. Nevertheless there are some problematic situations, with which only one of the authors deals, to collect these cases was one of my explicit purposes as they can supply deficiencies.

I thought it important to investigate the fields where the opinions of two authors differ, in these cases aligning arguments and counter-arguments and my own experiences I am trying to show the direction in the controversial issue.

Being absorbed in the theory of the characteristics of the blowing technique I was confirmed several times about some techniques I had properly managed following my own experiences and my teachers' advice, but I have not seen them described, analyzed, illustrated by examples, exercises or have not heard about them theoretically reasoned.

V. Documentation of the activities connected with the issue of the dissertation

During my studies I had the opportunity to hear several famous masters speak about the characteristics of blowing techniques and the elimination of the problematic fields. And as often as I could, I endeavored to consult several experts about the issue, took part in courses, professional conferences in order to be able to increase my knowledge as best as it was possible. During my pedagogical career, I got more and more convinced that the knowledge orally shared with me, or read by me, completed by my own experiences should be summarized and systematized in a written form. This recognition gave the idea to writing this dissertation. Together with my students we tried the methods discovered while writing the dissertation, we studied their efficiency and we have used several of them during our every day jobs since that time. I shared my experiences at the courses I led in many parts of the world. (Japan, The United States, Brazil, South Korea and so on) and I usually use the new methods during my concerts, too.