•INTRODUCTORY TEXT•

The Habits of Musicianship

A Radical Approach to Beginning Band

by

Robert A. Duke

The University of Texas at Austin

&

James L. Byo

Louisiana State University

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Robert A. Duke, The University of Texas at Austin
James L. Byo, Louisiana State University

What were we thinking?

We're still kind of ambivalent about calling this thing a *radical* approach…. Is teaching young musicians to think about music-making from the first days of instruction really that radical? After all, most teachers would argue that their ultimate goal is to develop musicianship in all of their students. Ours is the same. So what's so radical in our approach?

It has to do with timing. And as every comedian knows, timing is everything. It's often not *what* you do that matters most, it's when you do it. If your ultimate goal is to think and behave like a real musician, then *when* you start practicing that way of thinking and behaving has everything to do with how successful you'll be.

After watching instrumental music teaching in our professional lives over the past 30 years, we've come to the conclusion that many teachers' approaches to instrumental music instruction go something like this: Get students to make a sound, any sound, on their instruments; then teach them to play 7 or 8 notes; teach them to start notes with the tongue; teach them to play a few different rhythms in common time; teach them to play softly when there's a *p* and loudly when there's an *f*; tap their feet to the beat of the music (or some approximation of the beat); count rhythms using some syllabic coding system; clap rhythms as they count; follow the conductor; breathe only at phrase endings; match one or two pitches to an electronic tuner. Are all these good goals? Sure they are. Anything missing? Lots. Music's missing. And expression. And beauty of sound. And melodic intonation.

We believe that you'll find our approach to teaching beginners quite different than the one just described, in that it conveys a singular focus on developing fundamental ways of thinking and behaving that we call *the habits of musicianship*. We want young musicians to build these constructive habits, not only by the time they reach high school, but from their first days in music class.

Teachers who are new to this approach might ask, How can you guys address habits of musicianship so early, before even the most rudimentary skills have been established? Our answer—the same answer given by all of the great artist-teachers in music—is that *everything* is about musicianship, and habit formation begins on Day 1.

This text and the melodies that go with it reflect *an approach* to teaching and learning in beginning band. The melodies themselves are not the approach, of course. The melodies are simply vehicles through which to apply the approach.

Teachers who have successfully adopted *Habits* remark that their teaching fundamentally changed as a result. They now work harder, but they enjoy the challenge of expecting more of themselves and their students. One teacher who'd used *Habits* for a year described his conversations with colleagues who were using other method books:

> *They were expecting the book itself to be radical, but what's actually radical is how much teachers have to change their approach to teaching. Some of my colleagues don't get that part of it. They think that by simply rearranging the order of what they teach or by playing different exercises or melodies they will magically get another result, even though they're teaching in fundamentally the same way. When you employ the approach in* Habits*, it's not just the order of things or the melodies that change; it's the "how" that changes. Using this book showed me that and pushed me in the right direction.*

So what's radical about our approach? Well, we think it's radical both because it's cool and because it's quite a departure from the typical instruction that's outlined in most beginning methods. We'll leave the decision about what's cool to you. Here's what's different.

A Deliberate Start and Moving On

Our approach is not about making things easy on the first day (i.e., having rooms full of students with everyone blowing and making sound all the time from the outset). Instead, it's about carefully setting up kids from the beginning to be *fundamentally excellent* in terms of the physical and artistic aspects of music making.

Of course, correct repetitions create good habits. Incorrect repetitions create poor habits. Thus, students should be set up to play correctly *every time they make a sound*. Going more slowly in the beginning, making certain that the fundamentals of excellent performance are solidly in place, pays off in the long run. This requires that students, from the beginning, make accurate discriminations about what's excellent and what's not in their own playing. If practicing alone is going to do them any good, they have to be able to tell the difference between the various sounds they make. If they're all "just sounds" as far as the students are concerned, then they're not going to shape their sounds during practice to be more and more beautiful.

So our approach requires that students make judgments about the sounds they make every day, with the goal that their judgments become more and more like your judgments. For that to happen successfully, *you* have to make judgments about students' sounds every day. And with rooms full of children ready to honk at a moment's notice, that takes lots of discipline and patience and tenacity on your part and theirs.

Unfortunately, many teachers lack such discipline, and many others fail to inculcate such discipline in their students. The result is that, as new ideas and new skills are introduced, everyone takes a stab at 'em; some kids get it; some don't; and we move on. And here is

precisely where the persistent and limiting problems begin to develop. Of course, every time the kids are putting their horns up and blowing they're developing habits, and the moving-on-before-it's-right decisions impede the development of correct habits. Understand that the two of us realize full well that not every kid is going to sound perfect at every stage of development. Of course not. But everyone's got to *hear* the difference between the sounds they're making right now and the sounds they're going for. If they can do that, then they can make the same kinds of discriminations when they practice on their own that you make when they're playing in class.

These kinds of discriminations are far more apparent in many other domains of skill learning, like sports, for example. If you're learning to bat in baseball, it's very clear when you miss the ball, when you foul it back, and when you connect with a solid dinger to right field. This feedback provides information that's essential to getting better. But when you're new to the trumpet, and you blow and blow and blow and blow, and can't really tell the difference between one blow and another, it's understandable that you don't make much progress in refining your sound because, literally, it's all the same to you.

We're sure you've figured out by now that this approach requires lots of individual and small-group playing in class every day, which allows you to focus on the performance and progress of *individuals* throughout the course of instruction. This may be a difficult transition for some, who are used to making judgments about what to do next based on the sound of the entire class. The problem with relying on those group-wise judgments about how we're doing, of course, is that the sound of the group can improve without every individual in the group getting better (the weak students may simply learn to play softer or not at all). As you've undoubtedly experienced, lots of clarinets (or trumpets or flutes or whatever) playing together often sound much better than each group member sounds individually. This affects not only the students' perceptions of their own progress, but also your ability to give meaningful feedback. Consider that, in all likelihood, teacher feedback about a group's performance is almost *always* the wrong feedback for one or more members of the group.

So in order to develop the habits of musicianship, individual playing must be the first priority. We recognize that many teachers believe hearing individuals and small groups every day is just too time-consuming at the beginning stages of instruction, especially in large classes, and that having individuals play "puts them on the spot" and discourages students who are having difficulty. Not so. In the hands of an effective teacher, working with individuals and small groups is strategically woven into the fabric of the class activities; it's brisk, productive, even invigorating. It certainly isn't boring, as students learn that playing alone leads to discernible improvements in their sounds.

What's most discouraging for a student is having no tangible evidence that she's getting better each day. And if, during class, you only play with the group and, at home, you can't tell the difference between one sound and another (because, during class, you only play with the group), then you may understandably come to see this whole exercise of learning to play as rather pointless and unrewarding.

Here's a quote from a middle school teacher who helped us experiment with the early version of *Habits*.

> *Hearing students individually is a necessary and valuable part of teaching beginners. Teachers need to make it "normal" for students to play alone. It should be normal for classmates, through the teacher's guidance, to evaluate (not criticize) classmates' playing. This engages all students. I spent several days asking students "what do you think David's buzz sounds like—tight, open, loud, soft, fuzzy?" They learned that when you play by yourself in class, it's the most rewarding time, because you get the most help from the teacher.*

Our intention is that every class session combines group and individual playing and that every instance of individual playing is a fulfilled opportunity to change a student's playing for the better. You can see by now that *Habits* is more than just a new book. It is an approach that challenges teachers perhaps to think very differently than they have previously about beginning band class. Teaching like this is much harder than banging through lines in a book with everyone blowing all the time, but its benefits reward the effort required.

Consistent with our focus on individual student development is our contention that the teacher's conducting should be minimized during the first year of instrumental study. The goal here is for *students* to take responsibility for maintaining steady pulse, starting together, stopping together, and inflecting together. No, really. The students do it; not the teacher. When a conductor beats time and emphasizes that students at this level need to watch him or her, their watching often happens at the expense of listening and otherwise interacting with all the sounds of their classmates.

Here's a thought: put your baton away. In its place, bring instruments for you to model beautiful tone and legato tongue and rhythmic precision and inflection and pitch adjustment and all the things that characterize your own musicianship. Beginners need a teacher and a model much more than they need a conductor. Replace conducting with modeling and your students will become more attentive to the sounds in the room.

Musical Variety

With this book, we've created an environment where fundamental conceptual habits can be learned and practiced, building the foundation for playing in the future as students' thinking and doing become more and more refined. Many teachers take the approach that we should teach beginners in ways that are easiest to understand immediately. This has some understandable appeal, but it's problematic if the ideas and skills we teach now have to be "revised" later because what we taught initially was not precisely true or correct. If students play initial sounds that are easy to produce, they may produce them using an embouchure and air stream that will permit them to play *only* those easy-to-make-a-sound-on notes and nothing else. They'll then have to revise that way of playing

and learn *another* embouchure—the *real* embouchure—later. It's difficult, it's frustrating, and it's unnecessary.

Likewise, many methods establish a conceptual habit—duple subdivisions of the beat, for example—in September, and save triple subdivisions for April. In *Habits*, students encounter duple and triple subdivisions right from the start. Those who postpone the introduction of compound meters like 6/8 argue that compound meter is too difficult to be introduced in the beginning. They cite as evidence the fact that when learners make the transition from months of simple meters to compound meter, many of them seem hopelessly confused. We agree. But their confusion has little to do with inherent complexities of compound meter. Rather it stems from the fact that, over months of practice, they've developed habits of counting and tapping in 4/4, 2/4, and 3/4, learning, wrongly, that beats are always divided in twos (and perhaps fours). When 6/8 is a frequent part of thinking and playing from the beginning, a different habit and a different conceptualization develops, one that recognizes that beats can be divided into any number of parts, but mostly into twos or threes, which is of course the conceptualization held by real musicians.

In addition, real musicians conceptualize rhythm not as individual note values (as depicted in the rhythm pyramid that appears in many books showing the mathematical relationships among note values), but as recognizable, *recurring* rhythm *groupings* (e.g., ♩♪♩. in 6/8 time). Our approach to teaching rhythm reading thus focuses on these gestural groupings, and the melodies in the book provide opportunities for students to see, perform, and hear the same groupings repeatedly, just like in real life. It's interesting to consider how much musical variety is possible with only a very small number of these common gestures. And when the gestures, rather than individual notes, become the units of music, students from the start begin thinking like musicians think. Just as important, they are able to generalize from their vast store of musical experiences, having listened to countless hours of music in their lifetimes, and use that knowledge to help them in this new enterprise of playing and reading music.

From the very beginning of *Habits*, students play tunes in which the beat note is audible (the quarter note dominates in simple time; the dotted quarter in compound time). In this way, students come to hear, feel, and perform rhythmic pulse. Pulses aren't produced and maintained by foot taps, but by the sounds that make up the melodies they play. The pulse is not in your foot and it's not in the metronome; it's in the music, which again is the way that real musicians think of pulse. We have nothing against the metronome as an assistive device, of course, but pounding Dr. Beat through loudspeakers in the band hall loudly enough to be heard over a roomful of beginners doesn't exactly convey a sense of beauty, nor does it seem to necessarily develop a heightened sense of pulse among the players who become inured to its presence.

The way we advise introducing rhythm reading is by having students practice playing the gestures and patterns that appear in the music. Consider the tune "Triumphal March," for

example. There are only four different kinds of measures in the piece. Here are the rhythms they comprise (not including the whole rest):

That's it. That's the whole piece. So, here's how this works. First, sing the sounds of each of these measures on ta or da. Then, have the students imitate the sounds as they conduct the beat (with their hand, not with their feet); no syllable or number system is necessary. Conducting the beat (not conducting patterns, but recurring pulses) puts the beat in front of the students and in your view, using a part of the body that is easily controllable.

Continue this until *individual students* can sing each measure reliably on a neutral syllable like ta. Then, look at the piece and have the students sing the rhythm all the way through as they conduct. Next, have them sing the rhythm as they finger the notes on their instruments. Have them play each of the notes in the piece out of context, demonstrating a beautiful tone on each. And now, finally, play the tune.

Note that there's no analysis of the rhythms at this point. We're not explaining what equals what, because kids don't need to know that now. Instead we're emphasizing the relationship between the pictures on the page and the sounds the pictures represent. We'll do the analyzing and explaining later, only after the students have developed a repertoire of pictures that they can recognize and perform reliably.

Emphasis on Legato from the Beginning

We employ articulation in ways that help establish positive habits of breathing and tone production from the beginning. Except for trombone, we steer clear of tonguing music in the early tunes. We allow time for embouchures to stabilize before introducing articulation with the tongue. Ultimately, we want students to perform long, connected lines, irrespective of the style of articulation. Of course, this is easiest to accomplish when notes are slurred. Thus, the first melodies require no tonguing at all. Each note is marked by a pitch change, with the intention that students play phrases with long, uninterrupted breaths and execute the rhythm by making clear, distinct, exact movements with their fingers, just like the movements made by real musicians. Our liberal use of the slur requires a continuous air stream and thus emphasizes the horizontal, contiguous nature of melody in music. In effect, these early slurred melodies serve the same function

as long tone etudes serve, but the 'long tones' (long breaths) are contextualized in melodies with inflection.

Our sequence of articulation begins with slurring, including the slurring of rapidly changing notes, before the introduction of legato tonguing of repeated pitches, legato tongue of changing pitches, and separated styles. When the tongue is first applied in our sequence of melodies, articulation is introduced in ways that continue to promote long melodic lines. And here's an important point: we bring the tongue to an already established embouchure and air stream. With this approach, we avoid note-to-note music reading, puffing at individual notes, and breathing after every note.

This is not to say that you shouldn't introduce the tongue when playing on the small pieces and performing activities early on. Of course, you can't play rhythms on the mouthpiece without tonguing, and it's certainly appropriate to show students how notes can begin with and without the tongue. But when melodic playing begins, emphasis on the continuation of uninterrupted breath is facilitated by not articulating within phrases (though trombonists will have to get their tongue involved from the beginning). The melodies are composed and ordered in ways that require students first to sustain air throughout phrases without the tongue notes initially, and then to connect notes that are articulated with the tongue just as they had when they were slurring continuously.

Extensive and Varied Collection of Melodies

In *Habits*, the stuff that students play is "real music," with titles and written indications that suggest specific styles and character. All real musicians recognize that the reason a given piece of music goes the tempo it goes is not just because it says *Allegro* at the beginning. It goes the way it goes because the structure of the music itself suggests a certain range of tempo, style of articulation, and dynamic inflection.

As you can see, we wrote nearly all of the tunes ourselves. Many of them are lovely and musical (or so we think); others are somewhat less so, but are serviceable in providing specific practice opportunities in musical contexts. As with all composed music, every one of our melodies has an intended musical character, and the titles and tempo indications provide additional information about how the music should go. If a tune is titled *Triumphal March*, it should sound triumphal and march-like.

We want students from their very first experiences to consider that the purpose of music is to *convey something*: an idea, an emotion, a mood. Thinking about how your playing conveys what you intend for it to convey to listeners is a central habit of musicianship, one that even rank beginners are fully capable of understanding and practicing.

Our goal is to have students play only music that they can perform beautifully and expressively relatively quickly. A student struggling to play a piece over many minutes is developing poor playing habits that will be difficult to overcome. We have written music in which the majority of practice time can be devoted to *refining performance and thinking* (playing beautifully) because the pieces require relatively little time to learn the notes and rhythms. Of course, this is quite the opposite of many beginners' experiences.

Our priorities are beauty and expressiveness. And students must come to believe that a melody isn't learned until it's *played beautifully and expressively*. Making the notes and rhythms come out at the right times is still a far cry from music making, of course. We help you get this idea across to students by providing many, many melodies that are stylistically varied, but that comprise a limited number of notes and rhythms (just like in real life). But it's up to you as the teacher to consistently promote the idea that beautiful playing is the goal. Playing the notes and rhythms is nice, but it's only the beginning. A bad sounding note is a wrong note, just like a note played with an incorrect fingering or a wrong partial. An out-of-tune note is a wrong note. An uninflected note is a wrong note. Achieving this goal is difficult, we realize, but the habits that develop in beginners as a result of it are remarkable and create a beginner with a more musician-like attitude and way of thinking than often develops among young learners.

We have written very few expressive markings in the music. This was an intentional and strategic decision. Our goal is that students understand how musical structure demands that expression be applied in certain ways. The point is not for students only to read markings and do what the markings direct them to do, although this is certainly a part of musicianship. The point is for students to learn to do what the notes themselves suggest (e.g., inflection based on contour and repetition) as well as to interpret markings inserted by the composer or arranger.

The Instruments

We realize that many of you who are considering this book teach homogeneous classes; others of you teach mixed classes with two or more instruments together.

We have purposefully written for only six beginning instruments: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, and euphonium/baritone. No horn, tuba, double reeds, or percussion. These last instruments are excluded because we believe that their inclusion in first-year heterogeneous classes forces compromises that are unnecessary and that inhibit progress in the first year of instrumental study.

Our six-instrument group comprises what we consider the appropriate starting instruments for all beginning instrumentalists. We'll probably take some heat about this, but so be it. Double reeds, horns, tubas, and percussion all present unique problems that don't seem worth tackling at the beginning stages of learning to play. Especially in heterogeneous classes, when all of the instruments are together, starting these instruments seems nearly impossible to do well.

- The double reeds are overly finicky for a variety of reasons (e.g., reeds, instrument adjustments). We want to increase the likelihood that children are set up to be successful from the beginning. If you're playing an instrument that can be whacked out of adjustment easily and you're playing on reeds that are affected by … well … everything, then there are lots of hurdles to surmount before you can consistently produce a beautiful tone and make lovely music. So, no double reeds to start.

- Including horn in the heterogeneous class is problematic because of its register; playing tunes that comprise the tonic through the dominant tones in the keys of F and E-flat requires playing in either the upper half of the treble clef or below the staff for the horn, both of which are unhappy ranges for beginning hornists.

- Tubas simply require a great deal of physical capacity that many 5th or 6th graders have not yet developed. It's hard to fill up a horn that size, and, after a successful start on euphonium, making the transition to tuba is not a big deal.

- Typical beginning level percussion parts in the heterogeneous class do not demand proper playing technique. In fact, the parts are entirely playable with absolutely no technique at all.[1] Thus, there are few natural incentives to hold the sticks properly, to play with relaxed strokes, to produce a beautiful tone, because the parts and the instruments themselves do not illuminate deficits in fundamental technique.

Anyone who plays one of our six beginning instruments for one year and then switches to one of the other instruments in year two will in a short period of time play as well as or better than most students who'd spent a year doing what typical beginners do on the other instruments that we've omitted. (This is especially true of percussionists.) Those starting on one of the six instruments in this book are from the beginning developing physical musculature and coordination required to produce characteristic tones and facile techniques. And when they later switch to double reeds, horn, tuba, or percussion with the advantages of having once developed embouchure and air stream and music reading ability on one of the starting six, they are bigger and more mature young people.

It is clearly best to make decisions about who should switch to what based on students' track records on beginning instruments, after students are solidly grounded in the habits of musicianship made possible in part by friendly first instruments, and after they've learned to recognize and take pleasure in their ability to play with beautiful tone, solid articulation, and control over rhythm reading. The pleasure typically associated with the first weeks of instrument study then extends into subsequent months and years.

This is not to say that select students cannot succeed as true beginners on the oboe, bassoon, French horn, or whatever else. It is to say, though, that the beginning class will run significantly more smoothly if limited to the six basic instruments. And for the music teacher who is attentive to the need for balancing instrumentation, students and their parents can be convinced to make the instrument switches deemed necessary and appropriate by the experts in the field (i.e., you).

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[1] Imagine having to explain (honestly) what typical first year percussion life is like to a prospective drummer: "Seventeen of you will share two snare drums, so you will play on a practice pad most of the time. You will stand for long periods of time. You will play simple, repetitive rhythms, which you will come to know as excessively boring. I will pretty much ignore you except when the band rushes, for which I will blame you. To wrest my full-time attention away from your woodwind and brass-playing friends, you'll have to misbehave. Frequently, I will accuse you of not watching my conducting. You will be forbidden to play loud. You will lose your music and maybe even your sticks, and have to purchase new ones."

On sports teams, certainly on those that play at a competitive level, kids play positions for which they are well suited. Coaches look to match physical traits, skill development (and its potential), motivation, and intelligence to the demands of the position. An 11-year old boy who is slow afoot is likely to always have that tendency despite well-intentioned efforts by coaches to teach proper running technique, disciplined conditioning, and the willingness of the boy to work hard at running faster. He doesn't get to play running back. Likewise, the 11-year old young person who in the first lessons struggles to play 2nd line G on the trumpet may always have a "low buzz" tendency, despite well-intentioned efforts by a teacher to effect change, and the willingness of the student to try hard.

The sports analogy is not new to instrumental music teachers who know the importance of matching a student to the demands of the instrument in question. But in fact too many students are allowed too much autonomy in determining what instruments they play, and many unfortunately choose instruments that pose immediate, insurmountable challenges. We realize that most teachers make recommendations to students about appropriate instruments for study, but these recommendations are based on very little information. Imagine having more time to make considered decisions about what instrument each child is best suited to, expecting that many students will switch instruments within the first year. No doubt, to play an instrument well requires effort and practice, and arduous practice can certainly overcome a lot of initial impediments. But something's not right if the first days, weeks, and months are tedious and frustrating because the student can't buzz high enough or make a small enough flute aperture. What we hope to achieve is greater flexibility in the instrument selection process in order to achieve optimal student-instrument matches.

First Notes

You'll see that our tunes begin with the pitch Concert F, rather than the more traditional Concert B-flat. Our choice of F is purposeful in that it positions everyone in a place on their instruments where they are most likely to produce a lovely, characteristic tone, and, as importantly, where it is nearly impossible to produce *any* tone unless they're set up fundamentally correctly.

If our goal is for Mark, the clarinetist, and Felicia, the trumpeter, to get a sound as soon as possible, we would start Mark on an easy short-tube note (e.g., clarinet thumb-and-1 E) and start Felicia with the 2nd partial and lower end of the 3rd partial (e.g., middle C-D-E on trumpet). But our goal is not to get Mark and Felicia making sounds as soon as possible. Our goal instead is to get Mark and Felicia to make *characteristic* tones as soon as possible. We want Mark, Felicia, and all of their classmates to experience the advantages of playing in registers whose tone is most characteristic of their instruments. To this end, longer tube notes are preferable to shorter tube notes in the woodwinds, and the 3rd and 4th partial notes are preferable to 2nd partial notes in the brasses.

The advantages of this way of thinking are perhaps best illustrated on clarinet, where students' first performance experiences in *Habits* involve chalumeau G. Of course, it is much easier to produce open G or 1st line E than it is to produce chalumeau G. In fact, it's

possible to do lots of things incorrectly (e.g., weak breath, flabby embouchure, misplaced tongue) and still get an open G to speak. Open G on the clarinet has the twin distinctions of being the easiest note and one of the ugliest notes on the instrument. But our goal, like yours, we hope, is not merely to get students playing easy-to-produce sounds, irrespective of their quality. We want students to produce sounds that approximate excellent clarinet sounds right from the start.

When playing chalumeau G, the clarinet itself serves as a teacher's aid by providing important feedback to the student about how they're doing with their embouchure, air, and hand position. With not enough air, loose embouchure, or fingers not covering holes, no sound comes out. (Remember, you can have any or all of these problems and open Gs will come out anyway.) Thus, the starting notes create a level of demand that requires better performance habits right from the start. Compared to throat tones, chalumeau G *demands more* and *reveals more* in terms of correct mechanics (embouchure, breath, and hand position) and, once produced, evinces a more characteristic tone quality.

Of course, a lot of beginning clarinetists cannot simply put all of their fingers down and produce a low G instantly. We know that. They must work down to G, starting perhaps with 1st line E and slurring diatonically to G until instrument and finger position are in a ballpark-range of accuracy. To us, the first notes in the music (in this case, chalumeau G) are defined as the *best sounding notes*. The easy-to-play notes (like open G and first-line E) are just used to get to these first notes in the music.

The time invested in getting a pretty-sounding low G is time well spent, and it should happen without metronomes and foot tapping and counting and following a conductor. Its achievement should be one in which everyone's focus is on making their clarinets sound beautiful on this very beautiful sounding note. Once we've accomplished that, then let's play some music that helps us practice that beautiful sound in context.

The same idea applies in starting brass players on the 3rd partial. 2nd partial notes (low B-flats on the trombone and euphonium and low Cs on the trumpet) will speak with little air, an unstable embouchure, and a variety of other inaccuracies in a beginner's set-up. Playing 3rd partial notes (fourth-line F for the low brass and second-line G for the trumpets) with a pretty sound *requires* that students move air, firm their corners, let their lips vibrate freely, and position their tongue correctly. Unfortunately, many students learn beginning embouchures that will produce only low register notes, and for weeks they (and often their teachers) have little indication that the embouchures they're practicing are incorrect.

Here's another quote from one of the beta testers of our book:

> *This is time well spent. It is absolutely necessary to make this method book work. I think teachers are really going to have to drop their preconceived notions about how beginning band is supposed to work from day one to get this right. It's not about making students play "Mary Had a Little Lamb" during the first week of instruction. It's about making them happy later because they have fun being an actual musician. There is a lot of*

> *pressure from students, parents, and colleagues to teach fast. It is important to understand that time without stands, books, etc., is time very efficiently spent, even if it's hard to see at that point."*

There are many reasons why it's a good idea to start this way. Here are some specifics about the clarinet, but the principles apply across the board:

- Tone quality is better with long-fingered notes (certainly better than it is in the throat register).
- This register reveals *to teacher and student* problems in the fundamental skills (which are more easily masked in the throat register).
- The teacher can insist on better sound from the beginning, because it's possible and discernible.
- Playing in the low chalumeau register sets the stage for moving into the clarion register, which reveals even more about the state of the embouchure and air stream. It's an indicator during class for the teacher and an indicator at home for the student.
- Both hands are involved from the beginning, which is good for instrument balance and correct habit formation.

Absence of Preparatory Exercises and Activities

As you can see, we've written no notated preparatory exercises. This is not to say that preparatory activities are unnecessary or unimportant. By all means, appropriate exercises are absolutely necessary. We feel strongly, however, that in doing preparatory embouchure work or woodwind fingering work or range development work, the activities should be largely rote-based. This allows students to focus on the task at hand without being distracted from the purpose of the exercise by reading notation, tapping their feet, or playing an accompanying whole note part "to keep me busy while the clarinets learn to use the register key."

Below, we suggest instrument-specific activities to be used in class for brief periods while uninvolved students simply listen. A rote basis to teaching during this early phase makes music stands, another distracting impediment, unnecessary. By rote we mean, for example, the teacher sustains the flute tone on the open head joint for 4 moderately-paced beats. Students watch, listen, and without losing a beat they echo what the teacher modeled. In another example, the teacher models the first phrase of a simple folk song on the trumpet mouthpiece. Students watch, listen, and echo.

Many times in creating this book, we have asked ourselves, What is the purpose of this musical task? How do we want the music material to function for students? If the purpose is to teach flute players to manipulate the lower lip across the lip plate, they need to practice lip movement, not lip movement (the focus) *and* note reading (a distracter). They

should just play and think about the task at hand. If the purpose is to get clarinet players to slur from chalumeau to clarion register as a check of thumb position or embouchure quality or reed strength, they need to do that in an environment that allows student and teacher to make these assessments *with individual students*. Students don't need to do this repeatedly in full-blown, contrived exercises when in fact one or two opportunities tells students and teachers exactly what they need to know.

General considerations for the outset

Start with small pieces (head joint, mouthpiece and barrel, mouthpiece and neck, brass mouthpieces) until everyone can rather consistently produce the requisite sounds on each.

Small piece activities for flute include sustaining sound on the closed head joint, sustaining sound on the open head joint, increasing speed in finding the "sweet spot" location on the lip, manipulating the direction of air by doing lip-across slurring on the closed head joint (ascending a 12^{th}), imitating rhythms in simple and compound time on both the closed and open head joint, and eventually real tonguing. Playing on the closed head joint and slurring between the first and third partial (a 12^{th}) illustrates the changes in air speed and direction that are necessary to play in the different octaves of the flute.

Small piece activities for clarinet and saxophone include sustaining long tones, matching teacher-provided pitch, increasing speed in finding optimal placement of the small piece "in" the embouchure and setting the pre-blowing embouchure characteristics, imitating rhythms in simple and compound time.

Playing on the small pieces to produce consistent sounds illustrates the embouchure musculature and tongue position necessary to create a characteristic tone. On the brass instruments, buzzing the mouthpiece and playing bends and sirens vividly illustrate that the speed of the air is the primary determinant of pitch and that the speed of the air is affected by the placement of the tongue. This aspect of playing is not easily recognized when students play on the instrument in a limited range of notes in one partial (e.g., concert B-flat C D). By the time students assemble the instrument, they have demonstrated the ability to play between the second and third partials. This idea is elaborated by playing simple melodies on mouthpieces alone.

Initially with small-piece work, the goal is to get students into the right ballpark. The musculature required will not get you to the target right away. The time spent playing on small pieces is informative regarding individual students' abilities and tendencies. As long as students are playing only on these small pieces, student**s** who continue to struggle without success are often more amenable to consider trying a different, and perhaps more suitable, small piece. "I've never actually tried to play a flute, but I can tell from this head joint thing that I'm not happy. Let me blow into something else and see how that works."

Small piece activities should be practiced not only in the first days of class, but every day *for many weeks* to develop the musculature necessary to play the instruments. Of course, as you're practicing the small piece activities, it's appropriate to spend time introducing the rhythm notation with singing, using the sequence of activities we described earlier

(imitating gestures first, then stringing gestures together to form longer phrases). Thus, when it's time to begin looking at the music, the rhythms are already known and readable. The only remaining task is learning which pitches on the page correspond to which notes on the instrument.

Note that in the preceding descriptions of small-piece activities, we talk about playing little melodies on brass mouthpieces and rhythms with woodwinds. Of course, this requires the use of the tongue. Introducing use of the tongue at these early stages is certainly appropriate, even though the first written melodies will be played using no tongue at all.

Epilogue

By now you know that we approach musicianship in a big, comprehensive way—as something much different than recognizing after some weeks that, "Hey, it's time to get some dynamics into your playing." The habits that permeate the approach taken by artist musicians are all-encompassing, involving expressiveness of tone quality, articulation, rhythm, tempo, style, character, dynamic inflection, and a healthy respect for the fundamentals of music performance. This book is designed with this context in mind—to allow the teacher to operate within this context—to free the *teacher* to inculcate in her students the habits of musicianship. Our book won't do it. No book can. What we have intended to provide here is a working repertoire for building fundamental excellence, not only with respect to tone quality and intonation, but also with respect to conveying musical ideas through expressive inflection. After all, that's the point of music, and there is no reason to postpone students' development of expressive skills, even when they can play only two notes on their instruments.

Let's make some music.