Part II

The Stevens – Costello Triple C Embouchure Technique
FOREWORD

The exercises in this section were selected for their value in developing an embouchure technique appropriate to today’s playing needs. When practicing them, keep these words of William Costello in mind: “…at no time, during practice, (should) the embouchure be forced into a secondary consideration. Regardless of the player's advancement, he must practice primarily from the embouchure standpoint -- keeping in mind the essentials of its proper formation and control. In the beginning this will necessitate playing at a slow tempo and may require resetting the lips after every few measures. This is vitally important inasmuch as further playing after the formation has become distorted is not only a waste of time but detrimental to progress. Consistent improvement can be attained (1) only by playing the simpler exercises on the correct formation and (2) being absolutely certain that the formation is retained in proceeding to the more difficult. Never practice an exercise faster, or attempt a more difficult one, than is permitted by the condition of your lips. Therefore, when you find the lips giving way, due to such a circumstance, rest, then practice either more slowly, or an easier exercise. Do not try technique that your lips cannot, at the time, support. Rather, keep both lips and technique on an even basis. Then, as you increase the efficiency of the lips, increase the technique correspondingly. Build at all times. Think, and apply nothing but the correct formation.

The average player endeavors to bring about a change from the old to the new embouchure too quickly. The fact that the new technique immediately teaches the production of high tones often leads to the belief that the complete development occurs overnight. This however is not the case. Establishing the statics and upper register is simply the first phase in acquiring the embouchure setting. Following this, every factor must be seriously considered and its relative connection or position to the embouchure thoroughly understood.

The majority of players find it necessary and should devote considerable thought-to lip development. True, there are a selected few who, due to the position of the jaw, shape of teeth, lips, etc., naturally play upon the correct formation. For them, the development is simple. But for the others, development is gradual, and a certain amount of practice every day must be applied for its perfection. The favorable point is: correct lip formation and phenomenal embouchure results can be acquired and mastered by all. It is the foundation to all successful playing and must not be neglected.

If you naturally play on a low register formation, which means open lips and generally blowing downward, you are in no position to immediately apply the new and correct Technique. Time and patience are required in making the necessary changes and stabilizing them to the point of dependability -- or to the point where you can reliably use them for all playing."
NORMAL TO FROWN EXERCISE

1. Line lips up parallel to each other.

2. Roll red meat in, enough to hide red meat of both lips.

3. Bring jaw forward slightly.

4. Begin bearing down hard, with top lip. At the same time bring bottom lip up hard. Squeeze hard for 5 seconds, then relax completely.

5. Keep repeating process till cheek muscles ache.

Check Points:

1. Mouth corners down.

2. Red Meat hidden.

Note: The following are exercises to strengthen the embouchure muscles. The positions are exercise positions, not playing formations. Use a small hand mirror during exercises at all times.

**AIR TO NOSE EXERCISE**

1. Roll lips in enough to hug teeth edges.
2. Bring jaw forward as far as necessary to blow air to tip of nose. Air must flow freely in one steady column.
3. Keep repeating until jaw aches

**AIR TO CHIN EXERCISE**

1. Recede jaw, pull bottom lip up hard.
2. Blow air with great force using abdominal muscles.

Top lip and teeth must overlap bottom lip and teeth.
EXERCISE 1, (Statics vibrations) The object of "statics" or "vibrations" is to create the proper lip contraction or grip necessary to play in the upper register. It must be accomplished in order to continue successfully with this technique. As illustrated on the previous page, lay the instrument flat upon the palm of the left hand with the fingers extended in such a way that with any excessive pressure, it will slide off. Then close your lips gently, (2) establish teeth aperture about 1/4th inch and bring jaw forward until bottom teeth edges are parallel to, or slightly forward of, top teeth edges, (3) invert both lips evenly in the direction of each other, sides parallel. Do not allow either lip to overlap the other. Lock the corners gently in their natural position. Do not pull the corners back and up or perform any other action that may contribute to any thinning of the lips. When this lip or playing formation is made, place the mouthpiece, preferably, a little less than half on the upper and a little more than half on the lower lip, and you are ready for these static tones. (Instrument is laying flat upon the palm of the hand. Try to avoid gripping the casing or any other part of the instrument. The weight of the mouthpiece on the lips during the palm exercises is more than enough to isolate the vibrating area and facing from the rest of the two lips.)

Direct the breath toward the upper part of the mouthpiece, that is "blow up". If you naturally "blow down", it will be necessary to overcome the tendency, as a matter of habit and comfort, and to keep the jaw from receding into its normal under-bite, "state of rest position".

For this exercise, begin on any note above middle C and glissando to any note higher - high C, G above high C, C above high C - the higher the better. The fixed aperture law states that increased air compression (or increased force behind the air
The higher tones - statics, vibrations, cyclonics - will at first sound more or less like wind whistling through a small hole or crack. They will be extremely high, often reaching tones between double and triple high C. (Note: It is possible to reach tones between the triple and quadruple C. I have done this many times. I mention this merely to show what is possible when the embouchure apparatus is coordinating and functioning in a direct ratio to the air column. I am not implying that these tones be considered a playing area. The nodal points or harmonic intervals are so close there is no room for fingered tones between the nodal points. The sound is siren like.)

Do not be discouraged if these notes refuse to respond immediately. The more experimenting you do, the greater lip knowledge will be acquired.

Practice in this fashion at least a half hour a day, total playing time. Rest two to five minutes every ten minutes of playing time. After a week or so, playing time can be extended to whatever practice time you desire. You must practice without fail every day. The palm exercise is the key to the entire embouchure technique.

Before going to the playing exercises, you should have an understanding of the various tensions necessary to begin on a predetermined note. In doing the above exercise you have learned how to produce statics or lip vibrations, and acquired the playing formation for the high tones. You have also learned that these tones are produced so easily that it is difficult to control them. The remaining exercises in the book will bring about this necessary control.

For middle and low tones use less tension below the corners and a slower air column. For loud middle and low tones employ a faster air column, increased tension below corners, and a relatively larger lip aperture, governed by the jaw and the bottom teeth edges. Set the lip for the highest tone in the phrase, place mouthpiece, then reduce corner tension and back off mouthpiece, (do not take mouthpiece off lips). Intake of air should be silent, must be silent, for if air is sipped in there is too much tension in the sides of the two lips. At the peak of inhalation close sides of lips gently, using the relaxed fixed corners as the guide and starting point for lip alignment, release a firm and steady air column to discover what tension and what air compression brings in what tone. It is from this point on that the air column will support the embouchure musculature as you will it. If the air column is controlled, the tones will be controlled. The playing muscles have been trained to resist air, therefore they will behave accordingly. The mind must exercise control over the breathing muscles in order to establish a mental connection between air and playing tensions.