

## Klages Philosophy of Trumpet Pedagogy

My pedagogic approach for trumpet is *sound* centered. Before even one note is played I speak with the student to learn and establish goals we will pursue. Next, we always go through a brief history of the trumpet, and the way that it works. (Why and how do the valves work? Why are valve combinations sharp? ) We discuss body usage in performance- both sitting and standing and breathing techniques. I often introduce the Alexander technique or Yoga to help them play more effectively and with greater ease.

I have developed a series of exercises to enhance proper playing processes and habits. The very first one is a series of descending slurs, using all the common valve combinations. On a three-valve instrument there are seven different trumpets – each with a slightly different feel and tone. The descending slurs encourage a relaxed approach – something that is central to success on the instrument. The tone must be full and make the room ring with sound. Note, I did not say that these are to be played loud. I encourage my students to distinguish between volume of sound and quality of tone. I often trade off on these to match tones and ensure proper intonation. It is important to have the student rest as much as he plays. If this is not done, the embouchure becomes starved for blood and oxygen. The tempo taken should be controlled-rhythmic – fast or slow. The point is to listen to the tone and the connections from note-to-note. This exercise goes from the middle to the very lowest notes of the normal range of the instrument. The tone of each note should be comparable.

### Routine and Techniques

J. L. Klages



The next exercise in the sequence starts on the second partial of the instrument: Like the first it descends by half-steps through the seven standard valve combinations. It has ascending and descending slurs of a perfect fifth. Each note must “slot” and be connected without break. The note must have constant tone, tempo, and dynamic. The amount of rest must equal the playing. The perfect fifths must be in tune.



I proceed to logically repeat the in the exercise at different partials of the instrument. These are simple things to do, but when encountered in music often are problematic. Tonal consistency is the *sine qua non*. The student will learn from this that it is no more difficult to play or slur higher notes than it was to play the lower. Intonation and rest remain important.



And



The next two series cover a wider range of pitches using the seven fingerings of the preceding ones. Consistency of tone and accurate intonation through the range is crucial. I listen very carefully for any breaks or changes in the tone as well as any change in how the instrument is held. Many *or most students* shift how the instrument is gripped to increase the pressure to get the higher notes. Very often the student shifts the position of the fourth finger on the “pinky” ring to pull the instruments into the embouchure when they try this one. I use this study to teach them that it is counterproductive rather than helpful. Note: I enclose rests with each example. Each note must slot. The embouchure (especially the corners) must be constant.



The next exercise combines expanded range, with ascending with descending slurs. The goal is to learn flexibility. It is important to note that as the range ascends differing fingerings are used for the same notes. This is deliberate and important for several reasons.

1. The students learn to know the instrument. Each fingering has a different playing character.
2. The student must learn to play the same note with different fingerings with good tone and intonation.
3. The alternate fingerings learned are not commonly taught in books, but have musical uses. (This often enhances performance facility or intonation.)



The next series, combines slurred intervals through the normal playing range of the Instrument, using the same sequence of fingerings that are derived from the chromatic scale. The pattern can be started by connecting any two notes that are fingered with the open instrument. I teach that anything that can be articulated can be slurred.

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The written music ascends to the upper range maintaining the same sequence of fingerings. The player learns through doing this to play with ease in the extremes of the instrument. The two lines of music for each section may combine as a single study in one breath. This is a very good ear-training study. The intervals cannot be played successfully unless the player can hear them accurately.

This study can be practiced to the extremes of range of the player, and is handy for learning the Baroque trill (Lip trill) and the Jazz .shake.

The next series of studies presents scales and articulation. I teach all major scales from the first lesson. A good percentage (about 80%) of young students leave their first lesson having played all the major scales. (This is a different thing from saying they know all of them- but we do them all every week, and they **do** learn them.) I have every student play the tonic and dominant arpeggios for all keys. (I say to them, “Tonal music is made of combinations of scales and chords. If you can’t play your scales and chords what can you play?” quoting my teachers.)

I enclose a short article I wrote for **TPIN** on how I have the advanced students practice their scales:

Here is a playing insight that I have never read about that Steven Burns (at IU Bloomington) introduced to me (he learned about it in France.)

Clean playing comes as a result of a centered, focused embouchure: accurately buzzing the desired pitch. Valve changes must be clean. All keys must be practiced (scales, chords, and intervals - at all dynamics and articulations.)

When all these basics are mastered somewhat there remains an advanced topic: It can be called an *against the grain* pitch change- (the concept is used by trombonists all the time.)

"*With the grain*" would be moving to shorter tubing while going higher C# (1,2,3) to G (0). This type of interval does not present undue problems - just hear it and play it, with normal clean fingerings.

"*Against the grain*" would be "low" C (0) to C# (1,2,3). Going from the open horn to the longest amount of tubing available. Even when the fingerings are clean, accurate, and fast - a turbulence is still created by the lengthening of the air path through the horn. Common problems occur in the trill between third space C and the D above it (0 - 1), as in the **Carnival of Venice**, first Variation.

This *against the grain* phenomenon occurs frequently - (C - D) (C - E) (C - F) ... (D - Eb) (F# - G#). and happens in **every** scale.

Once made aware of this, the player will notice this every time it happens. Across the grain passages tend to harm lyrical passages in most players performance. It is where the unwanted noise crops up - when nothing wrong has been done - and the mastery of this is what separates the Maurice Andre's from the mass of players - who are unaware of it most of the time.

The solution to this is to practice slow trills on every instance of this. Play your circle of fifths, trilling across the grain slur. Do not move on until it is clean and clear. It can be done, and is a matter of air and embouchure coordination.

Minor scales are systematically introduced next. I have created a pattern going from major to minor to major scale through the circle of keys. If you trade off with the student and take "two laps" all major and minor scales are covered. I have the student practice all conceivable articulation patterns with this. This can also be done an octave higher. It can be double or triple-tongued. All scales must be cleanly played - with good tone.

# Scale patterns

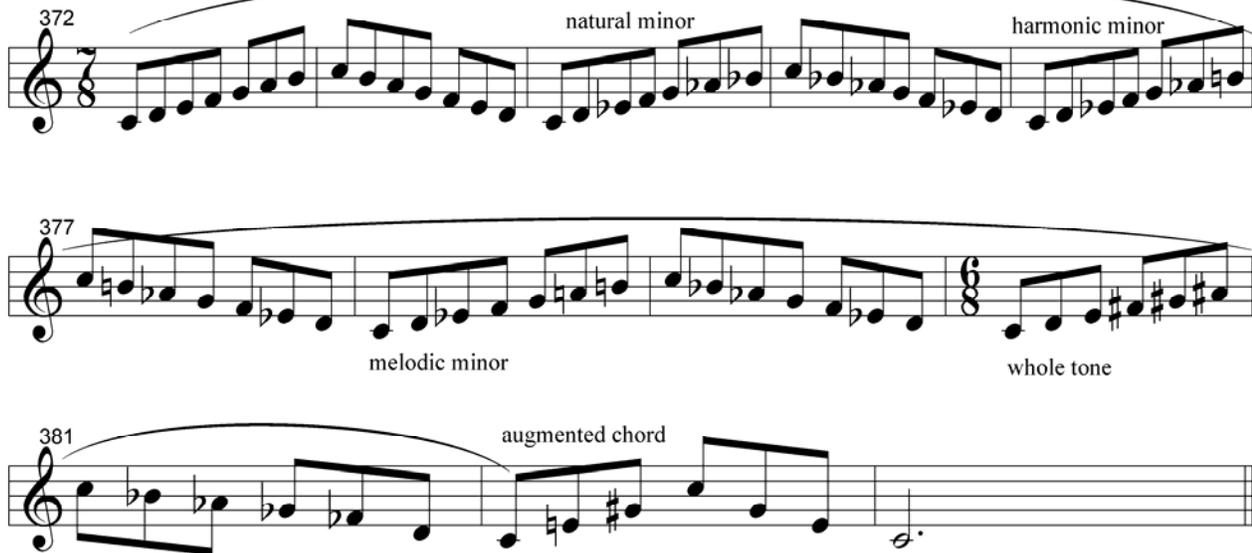
*(Slur, single-double, and triple-tongue in every pattern you can think of. Breathe when you need to.)*

Dr. James L. Klages



After the basic scales (major and minor) are learned and can consistently be played fluently this can also be done up an octave. The next scale pattern I introduce deals the various forms of minor scales and the whole-tone scale. I put this in 7/8 and 6/8 meter so that the students learn to get comfortable with different meters than the most common

## Scales and modes



The students tend to learn this pattern very quickly. In practice I have them do these with and without the music so their ears become more sensitive to distinguishing between the sound and form of the scales used in music. These are done in all keys. These must be done at a constant tempo.

The next sequence is one I have never seen done in the manner I present. MODES- are built from major scales starting on the various notes of the scale. (The “C “scale, starting on “D” is called a dorian mode.) My thought was to explore all the modes that have a given note. This can be addressed by asking (for example) what major scales have the note “C”? Going down from the “C”, the scales would include Bb, Ab, G, F, Eb, and Db.major scales.

Modes

384 ionian dorian phrygian

389 lydian mixolydian

393 aeolian locrian

397 ionian

This permits the student to play all the modes that use a given note in one breath. It also makes the player become much more aware of the “taste” or feel of each mode. I have the students do these with and without music. This may seem difficult, but I have had many students do all this while still in High School.

When this is mastered, I have them compress it by changing modes each octave, going up or down which takes one-half the amount of time. I also go through other scales including the blues and diminished scales-.always in all keys. I tell every student that there are no difficult keys, just unfamiliar ones if you don’t practice properly.

Advanced players are also taught to play all the major scales in one breath. The point of this is to encourage mental flexibility. Changing keys every measure demands concentration and control. (*Real* music modulates after all!)



**The chromatic scale** is used to develop range, tone flexibility, power, and virtuosity. I start with simple two-octave scales. At first played metronomically at a soft dynamic. This was shown to me as a French technique by (Steven Burns, Maurice Andre competition winner) at IU, Bloomington. The point was, that we tell students that the key to playing is air and breath support. This is true – but does not mean that it is always loud. I have students practice at all dynamics, but as they develop range it is good to practice it first at a softer dynamic – later at a loud one. I have the students practice all scales starting from the bottom, middle, and top. We alternate doing this.

We work on power by playing the scale (pp) up to the top note, then holding (at least twelve counts) it while making a crescendo as loud as possible (fff) the returning to the bottom note and making a crescendo in the same way at the bottom of the scale.

I often help them check the tuning by playing a loud note a third, fourth, and fifth along with the notes- producing a strong resultant tone.

## Tuning

Trumpets

Resultant Tone  
(if in tune)

The notes produced are mathematically predicable. By subtracting the number of the lower note from the upper, the difference is audible – if you are in tune. The better one’s tone is the louder the resultant tone. This trains the student to tune by ear rather than by eye (looking at a tuner.) A movement of a whole or half-step can result in the movement of a third, fourth, or fifth in the resultant tone.

Musical score for two staves, measures 29-38. The top staff has notes with numbers 1-10 below them. The bottom staff has notes corresponding to the top staff.

This leads the student to actually play with better intonation than using a tuner which uses only equal temperament. The human ear normally does not hear with equal temperament. (We demonstrate this by telling our players to lower the third for major chords.)

Musical score for two staves, measures 7-13. The top staff has notes with a slur over measures 8-10. The bottom staff has notes corresponding to the top staff.

Musical score for two staves, measures 14-19. The top staff has notes with a slur over measures 14-16. The bottom staff has notes corresponding to the top staff.

This series lets a duet of players play a trio.

**Articulation;**

Accurate clear articulation is essential for musical performance (or even for speech!) It is essential for coherent performance. The sound must be clear as possible to start. At the collegiate level most players come with a level of skill in single, double, and triple-tonguing. Note, I did not say most were skilled. Students are taught that what you can slur you can tongue. That what you can double-tongue, you can triple-tongue. The following pattern has the student triple-ongue something normally felt as duplets. They do this in all keys.



The next pattern has the double-tongued triplets. This is also done in all keys- throughout the range of the player.



I believe in starting with simple music played at slow tempo with a metronome. This would include all the scale work mentioned earlier, but quickly includes many musical examples. I often tap into my library of cornet solos for this. My goal here is to find music the student loves and enjoys to work on, perform, and hear. I have composed, arranged (and published) many pieces for use by my students. Music is best learned through performance. The students are encouraged to perform frequently in every venue they can. This does not mean that they are encouraged to perform poorly ever! Poor performance is a cancer and must be prevented with hard work and high standards. The point is to remove performance anxiety and bring intensity to our work. I make many recordings of each student and give them CD's of their performance each semester for their (and my) records.

Ideally, I have each student work on a balance of solo (literature) things to read, practice short term (one movement solos) and long term (sonata's and concerto's), orchestral parts and excerpts, and etudes.

For each piece of music, the composer, form, historic style and period, are discussed. Books, recordings, and similar literature examined.

In addition to the usual written assignments, I encourage each student to compose or arrange music. Most have done this for the trumpet choir. Several of the pieces we played on the steps of the U. S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. were written by UCO students on our first tour in 2000.