

# Master Class Handout

*We don't yet do lessons on line!*

It is possible, however, to portray some of my core concepts and ideas in these pages. I hope that they can help you take a refreshing look at your own playing.

Specific ideas and techniques on playing the trombone are best communicated in person, working one-on-one, playing with and for each other, and trying to define, capture and cultivate sometimes-elusive concepts. That is why our instrumental education process is built upon the weekly one-on-one lesson. If it were possible to write a chapter or two on just how to perfectly operate the trombone, I would have done it long ago and had it patented. In reality, each student approaches the task with a unique combination of desires and concepts, strengths and, yes, also shortcomings.

This master class handout has evolved to include many of my playing and teaching ideas. Contained in these pages are many of the phrases and concepts that I repeat to myself when practicing and to others when teaching.

By design, a master class handout is made for use in a master class. Simply reading the headings and suggestions below on your own could lead to questions ? or even misinterpretation. By nature, many of the remarks below seem to be mere cliché. I make them available here for practical reasons, but also in the hope of spurring readers to maybe look at their playing in a new or fresher perspective. Please feel free to contact me with questions on these concepts. My answers to such questions are already resulting in links to more detailed explanations.

Please remember, however: that no amount of verbalized information or theorizing will ever replace one-on-one lessons with a qualified, master teacher.

Keeping that in mind.....

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## *Master Class with Carl Lenthe*

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### *Attitude*

Cultivate a positive, constructive manner

Don't get down on yourself for not being somewhere you aren't

*Better: recognize where you are and what it will take to get where you want to be*

### **Posture**

# Play Something

## Songs, songs, songs

Improvise - noodle around

Play by ear (get what you hear out of the trombone)

## Memorization

# Make Music

## ***I) Make music with others - that's what it's all about!***

Find a duet buddy, start a trio or quartet

Don't play only with brass players

Learn to play other instruments to whatever degree possible

## ***II) Improve your musical understanding***

Cultivate and improve your understanding of the different styles

Metrical, rhythmical structures (dance steps)

Harmonic, melodic relationships

Learn about non-brass instruments

## ***III) The world is a stage; be creative***

Be theatrical; from articulation to character portrayal

Make words from syllables, sentences from notes and phrases

Build paragraphs and chapters

Make story lines, create narratives

Timing, charisma, personality, temperament, charm, panache, 膽an,  
flamboyance, flair, passion (add more of your own?)

Play the role, even if it isn't "you"

# Concepts and techniques

## ***I) General practice tips and ideas***

Pull your results out of bell instead of pushing them into the mouthpiece

Scales, scales, scales

Arpeggios, arpeggios, arpeggios

Play technique musically - make exercises out of your musical passages

Etudes, the missing link

Go to your range and dynamic extremes regularly - blow freely

Buzz on the mouthpiece sometimes (nice, healthy buzz - blow freely)

Play the "air trombone" (mouthpiece in left hand - right hand plays the air

slide

Slur through the phrase to recognize air and phrase flow

Blow through the phrases

Practice slow things fast (you already practice fast things slowly, right?)

Don't abort the breath because of a miss - don't make two mistakes out of one

## ***II) Basic blowing***

### **Breathing:**

#### **Breathe quietly**

Breathe relaxation, not tension

Breathing should be quiet, free and natural

Breathing exercises

"Hot potato"

Breathe from the lips

**Posture affects breathing**

Bring the horn to you, don't you go to the horn

Music breathes - breathe musically

Make a musical virtue out of the necessity of breathing,

**Blowing:**

Blow freely - don't fight yourself

**Flow & Focus (and other f-words)**

Let go and blow

Back off - don't force

Let go of the lips. Blow freely. Stop the squeeze

Should ideally feel whole face vibrate

Blow a nice full and free flow and focus of air

Low register (also valveless notes) can help breathing and blowing

Focus the tones with the air

Think of the "lip slurs" as blowing exercises (Flow & Focus)

### ***III) Tone***

Don't be monotonous (mono-tone-ous)

Be able to speak in many tones, colors and shadings of voice

Your tone is your calling card

Listeners don't know what is difficult - but they know what sounds good

**Vocal approach:**

Don't try to sound like a bass in the tenor register

**The Tone of intonation - sharp/flat vs. high/low**

Place the tones vocally; don't squeeze them around

Place the tones in a resonant, vocal manner

Hit the notes clearly and let them ring

Nice and easy

### ***III) Articulation***

**Be an articulate musician**

How many sentences can you speak with only two consonants?

Play as if giving dictation - Play deliberately

**Articulation - develop good multiple tonguing before you need it** and beyond your needs

A slow tongue squeezes the preceding note while getting ready to strike the next

"Stay on the string" (tenuto)

Resonant staccato, like a pizzicato walking bass

**The tongue articulates the air (tone) column - it doesn't break it**

Tongueless slurring

### ***IV) Hearing***

Hear better, internalize notes and intervals - **sing**

Conceptualize - **sing**

Work on hearing - **sing** the notes and phrases.

**Sing** for intonation purposes and to avoid mechanical dependency

Hear the notes and harmonies

Holding points for the ears - half, whole steps, sequences, etc.

Find "interval tags"

The Drone --- Use a tuning machine that gives all pitches (anchor notes)

Sight-read and transpose

**V) Right hand and arm (slide technique):**

Throw and catch the slide (please don't forget to catch)

Toss the slide, toss the slurs, toss the air - even in slow connections

Slide vibrato (not elbow vibrato) - will illuminate right hand and arm use

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