

SOUND THE TRUMPET

HOW TO BLOW YOUR OWN HORN



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Write and Understand Written Music and
All About Trumpet*

POSTLUDE - HOW DO YOU DIDGERIDOO?

We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of the dream.

— Arthur O'Shaunessey

This Chapter Covers:

- What is a didgeridoo?
- Why play a didj?
- How to Play a Didj
- Circular Breathing

Terms to Know:

circular breathing: A breathing technique which allows you to maintain a continuous sound without asphyxiating.

overtone toot: A higher note on the didgeridoo. Also called a trumpet toot. Often a P5 above the fundamental tone.

backpressure: The pressure created when blowing through a tube. The smaller the tube, the greater the backpressure

Yidaki: A didgeridoo made by a first Australian using traditional harvesting and decorating methods.

How Do You Do, Didgeridoo?

This is the oldest type of trumpet in continuous use in human culture. It's popularity is skyrocketing because it's such a cool instrument and is pretty easy to play. The true reason for its popularity is its sound. That powerful, hypnotic drone is mystifying and in the hands of a capable player, a didgeridoo can be truly magical, primal and spiritual, all at the same time. You've got to hear it to believe it.

If you'd like to hear samples of how a didgeridoo sounds, go to www.didjshop.com. Most of the didgeridoos available on the site have sound clips, and it's a great site. Though didj is pretty easy to play immediately, to play didj at a high level is like any instrument; it takes time, study and practice. The good news is that this chapter can help you with some of that.

Didgeridoos are sacred to many Australian aboriginal people and it's wise to respect this when approaching the didgeridoo. Also give consideration to the first Australians' role in the creation of the didj (their copyright, if you will). Don't buy a cheap didgeridoo made in India with indentured and low-wage labor. This disrespects the culture which is responsible for the didgeridoo, and is counter to the spirit of didgeridoo itself. Honor the Music and the musicians that created this instrument by being a responsible consumer.

Didgeridoos have traditionally been made from the eucalyptus tree, but can now be found in most types of wood, desert agave, PVC plumbing pipe, and even exhaust pipes. Any tube of the right length and backpressure will work. *Yidaki* is a name for a didgeridoo which has been made traditionally by first Australians using special tree harvesting and decoration methods.

Example 23.8 Two natural didgeridoos. These didgeridoos have been named. The pictures have been generously donated by www.laoutback.com.



Earthrise



Lightning Rod of the Rainmaking Cave dwellers

Example 23.9 More didgeridoos, several of which have been painted in a semi-traditional style. The long winding line represents a journey (walkabout) and the circular designs represent a place of water. These fine instruments are from www.laoutback.com



The artist who shaped this didj left the bark on the bell.



Motion Blue



Lost in the Humming Air (two mouthpieces!)



Outback Hot Rod



LA Outback Didjeridus with beautiful artwork

Play Didj to Enhance Your Trumpet Skills

Because you've been playing trumpet for a while, making a sound on didj will be pretty easy for you. You'll be happy to know that the buzz for didgeridoo is *much* looser than the one you use to play trumpet. This is one of the reasons playing didgeridoo is such a good thing to do after a particularly tough practice session or gig. Playing didj gets the blood flowing to your chops like nothing else and the slow, steady vibrations are a great lip massage. But wait, there's more!

In addition to loosening up the chops, playing didgeridoo helps you to breathe deeply, gets a lot of oxygenated blood to flow (especially to your loosely flapping lips), and playing didj is good for your sensation of tone and rhythm. It's great for the coordination of breath, lip, tongue, and even voice. Some of the multi-tonal skills (singing along w/ buzz) you'll learn in a moment can also be used with the trumpet.

As you learn to make cool sounds on this strange and wonderful instrument, don't be afraid to experiment with as many different sounds as you can come up with. Cries, screams, howls, hoots and hollers are all acceptable things do put through your didgeridoo.

How to Do didgeridoo

Let's go through the steps to get you making a sound on this strange instrument. Remember to be persistent whenever you try something new. If one approach doesn't work, try another. Don't expect immediate success, though with an instrument like this, you should be able to get a pretty good sound after a few attempts.

The buzz for didgeridoo is a little different from the one used on your trumpet. The vibrations are much slower and because of this, they'll take more air to sustain than you may expect. When you need a breath, stop and take one. If you're prone to light-headedness, you may want to sit while doing this at first. If you do start feeling light-headed, stop until the feeling passes, then begin again.

Instead of the lips being taut as they are when you play trumpet, your lips should be slightly pursed to get a good sound on didgeridoo. Make a motorboat or old biplane sound instead of the fat bumblebee sound for the trumpet buzz. It's similar to the loose-lip flap you learned earlier in the book.

Begin with the didgeridoo centered on your lips, just like the trumpet embouchure. Some play out of the corner of their mouth. I've been experimenting with this technique and have changed my embouchure as a result. I still come back to playing in the center of my chops to get the benefits for my trumpet embouchure. Your goal is a good sound, so don't let fear of mouthpiece placement stop you from experimenting with a different placement. Here are my three examples of mouth placement.



The Fundamental Tone

Each didgeridoo has its own fundamental tone. This tone happens when the air column within the instrument vibrates. Didgeridoo fundamental tones are low and take a lot of air to produce and sustain, so the air you're pushing through the didj shouldn't be fast, but slow. Think of making your breath steam on a cold day, "haaaaahhhh." That's the kind of air speed you want.

If you have trouble getting the fundamental tone on your didgeridoo, relax your buzz even more; the fundamental tone may be lower than you expect. Keep trying. Once you find the fundamental tone for your didj, remember the pitch so you can produce it immediately the next time you play. For even more precision, play near a piano keyboard and when you have the fundamental tone, find the corresponding note on the piano. This will help you with singing chord tones later.

Overtone Toots

The didgeridoo adheres to the physics of blowing air through a tube, which is why it has overtones. When you speed up the air and the vibration of your lips, the instrument responds by playing a higher note in the overtone series. For more info on the overtone series (also known as the harmonic series), see “the harmonic series,” on page 14.

A good didgeridoo will have two or even three overtone toots. Even a low quality didj will have overtone toots but they may be more difficult to produce. Your ability as a trumpet player will make these overtone toots seem like child’s play compared to trying to play a first-leger-line A on trumpet.

To get a toot, simply blow faster and flex your lips like you would when playing higher on a trumpet. The didgeridoo will lock into one of the notes of the overtone series. Once you find the first overtone, try for others. See how many you can coax out of that hollow tube. As you become familiar with your didgeridoo, you’ll know where those sweet spots are that get the best sound quality.

Circular Breathing



The great mystery of didgeridoo playing! The hypnotic drone of the didgeridoo is most effective if it’s sounding continuously. A break in the sound and the spell is also broken. If you have to stop to take a breath, the silence created by the inhale disrupts the feeling didj playing invokes in and evokes from listeners. Circular breathing allows you to continue the drone without asphyxiating and is an essential skill for high-level didj playing.

Not to worry. Circular breathing is a pretty easy with practice. Sound impossible? It’s not. The musician performing circular breathing is filling her cheeks with air, then using that air in her cheeks to continue the sound while she breathes in through her nose, quickly refilling her lungs. It’s a cool trick and there *is* a way to learn it.

First I’ll throw a term at you. **Backpressure**. Backpressure is what helps you maintain a sound on a wind instrument. If you buzz into a room with just your lips, there is no backpressure. This is one of the reasons buzzing with lips alone is more difficult. A trumpet has much more backpressure than an open room because of the diameter of the trumpet tube. It’s harder to push air through a smaller tube. That’s backpressure at work.

A poorly made didgeridoo has slightly more backpressure than an open room and it will be difficult to master circular breathing with such an instrument. The good didgeridoos have decent backpressure, but still much less than trumpet. Didgeridoos come in a wide variety of backpressures. If you’re learning, more backpressure will make circular breathing easier. You’ll learn more about qualities to look for when searching for a didgeridoo in the section below on buying a didgeridoo.

This isn’t a tough skill to master, but don’t expect immediate results, either. You’re practicing coordination of muscles which aren’t normally used, so give your brain time to wrap itself around what you expect of it. If you really want to learn this skill, you must practice it daily until you get it. Write on your hand or pin up notes to yourself where you’ll be reminded. Circular breathing can be practiced without an instrument, anywhere you are. Okay, here we go.

Step 1

Don't use an instrument for this part, and before you use air, try water. Fill your mouth and cheeks with water and push a stream of water out of your face by using your tongue and cheek muscles. Stay relaxed while you breathe in and out through your nose when your mouth is full of water. Do this a few times until you're comfortable with it.

Then do this same trick with air. Fill your cheeks with air and breathe through your nose. Simply fill your cheeks up until you look like a chipmunk or Dizzy Gillespie. Push the air through your lips and try to get a buzz. It will be a short buzz. When you're able to fill your cheeks with air easily and can get a little buzz as you force the air out, you're ready to try it with an instrument.

Play a drone on the didgeridoo or a low note on trumpet, 2nd line G or below. Once you've got a good solid tone, allow your cheeks to fill with air but at the same time, maintain a good steady tone. This will take a little practice. Just keep at it until you can do it.

Step 2

The air in your cheeks will power the vibration of your lips. Use your cheek muscles to force the air in your oral cavity through your buzzing lips, and into the didgeridoo or your horn. Try it without the instrument first. Can you maintain a buzz with the air in your cheeks alone?

Circular breathing can change your didj sound quality in an interesting way. This is often done on purpose to get a different sound. If you're trying this on a didgeridoo, don't worry if the quality of the sound changes. As long as the sound is continuous, you're doing it right. With trumpet, strive for steadiness of pitch and tone.

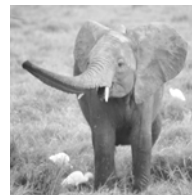
When you try this with your horn, the trick is that you must maintain the pitch and sound quality. The speed at which you force air through your lips and the shape of the inside of your mouth will help you control pitch. Experiment until you can do it. It will take a little practice, so don't give up.

Step 3

This step is like patting your head and rubbing your stomach at the same time. As you force the air out with your cheeks, you must breathe in through your nose at the same time. This is a good thing to practice without an instrument on your face. Just sit there in your chair and fill your cheeks with air. As you push that air slowly out your embouchure, sniff in through your nose. I know, it's easy to say and not so easy to do. Keep practicing.

If you're having trouble, or even if you're not having trouble, find a drinking straw and fill a *large* glass with water. Pinch or bend the submerged end of the straw so that not much air comes out. This will give you more backpressure.

Time to make bubbles! As you make bubbles with the straw, fill your cheeks with air, then use the air in your cheeks to keep the bubbles going, and sniff in through your nose. For more backpressure use more water or maybe chocolate milk. Feel free to take a drink at any time and replace fluid as necessary.



Step 4

Practice.

Step 5

Practice.

Step 6

Once you've got the process automatic and can maintain a tone, take your skills to the next step by circular breathing on didgeridoo while keeping a rhythm going. You must incorporate the rhythm of the breath (and cheek-puffing, etcetera) with the rhythm you're playing. On the trumpet, try to change notes while you force the air through your cheeks and breathe in through your nose. Yeah, I know it's a lot easier to say than to do. Push yourself to do circular breathing with faster rhythms and, with trumpet, higher in the range. Listen to Wynton Marsalis play *The Flight of the Bumblebee* on his album, *Carnival* and you will be astounded at his mastery of this technique.

Step 7

Practice.

Step 8

Get on out there to an open mic or to a drum circle and whip out your didgeridoo. If you have friends with rhythm, they can bang on a drum while you drone away on the didgeridoo. Better yet, take along a shaker and provide your own rhythm when you perform.

Harmonics

All sounds are made up of many harmonics and there are many wordy definitions of harmonics, also known as overtones. For our purposes, it will be easier to experience and hear them than talk about them. First you must have a good fundamental tone on your didj.

Vocal and didjeridu harmonics are affected by the shape of the resonating chamber, which is your mouth. To change the upper harmonics you simply change the shape of the inside of your mouth. Sound confusing? It isn't. These are the same skills you use when you talk.

Try this. Sing a steady note and go through the vowel sounds A, E, I, O, and U (no, not Y). The change in sound is also a change in the upper harmonics. The most valuable of these vowels for didj playing is the O and the E which embody the greatest difference in tongue position. Say "Oh," and "Eee" to feel how your tongue changes for each sound.

Play a drone on your didj and change the shape of your mouth from O to E, slowly at first, then more rapidly. You should hear a buzzing in the upper register that also changes pitch as you change the inside of your mouth. This is harmonics. Any mouth shape you can devise will alter the sound of your didj. It's best to simply experiment and find what works best for you and what you like.

The word didjeridu is a great place to start with harmonics. As you play, use your mouth as though you were speaking the word *didjeridu* and notice what happens. Try *doo-wah-diddy-diddy-dum-diddy-doo*, or anything else you can think up that has a lot of vowel changes. Try to say your full name through the didj.

With practice, you can use this change in harmonics to sustain a rhythmic pulse.

Vocalizations

The fundamental drone and harmonics are just the beginning of the fun with this instrument. Once you have a good tone, start experimenting with other sounds in addition to the harmonics you just learned. You don't need to be able to circular breathe to do these sounds.

As you play the fundamental tone, use your voice at the same time. This may take some practice, but you should be able to sing, cry, scream, howl, hoot, bark and moan through your didj while buzzing. Masterful Australian aboriginal players imitate animals from Australia with the didj, like the kookaburra, frogs, and the bush pigeon. Try imitating a raven or a wolf howl. Experiment with low growls and high screams. Short bursts of sound like a barking big dog, or a yappy little dog are also very effective.

You can also sing through the didj, and this can be quite dramatic. Because the didj is pitched so low, the intervals I'll mention are often an octave or more above the fundamental; it depends on your vocal range. Intervals of unison (same note), perfect fifth, and an octave blend in very well with the fundamental tone. A cool effect is to sing any of these tones, get it perfect so the sounds are clean and clear, then slightly raise or lower your voice. You will hear *beats* in the sound that speed up the further you go from the fundamental. As you sing any of these tones (root, fifth, octave) you have to sing them perfectly in tune to avoid any of the *beats* in the sound. Keep practicing until you can.

An interval I particularly like is the major third above the fundamental (4 half steps). It has a rich, vibrant quality that sounds great and will really bring out the harmonics in your sound. Practice singing the root, third, fifth, and octave. You'll also be singing the tones of a major chord. When singing a chord tone you can really hear the changing in overtones when you use the vowel changes mentioned earlier

In addition to all the above, use change volume levels of your vocalizations to add even more interest and musicality to your playing.

Inventing Rhythms

Rhythms on didj can be articulated many ways: with your tongue (t, d, k, g, j, l, n, z), your lips (p, b, m), and with a pulse of air. Double and triple tonguing, flutter tonguing, the growl, and any other tongue technique will create interesting effects and rhythms. Try them all.

Inventing a rhythm to play through your didj is as easy as talking. Literally. The rhythms of speech are perfect for making up a rhythm. Try mouthing your full name as you drone away. Try "What are you doing," over and over again. Try a chant you may know. I particularly like a chant in the Oglala Sioux language, "Wakan Tanka tunkashila onshimala." Anything you can say, you can put through your didj. Tap your foot and keep the beat steady.

Or take a more *written music* approach. Tongue four quarter notes, or any combination of quarters and eighths. Add some sixteenth notes or triplets or other rhythmic figures. When you arrive at a rhythm that pleases you, write it down so you can recreate it later or share it with others.

As a way of punctuating your rhythms, add an overtone toot or a bark or scream on every third beat, or at the end of a two-measure rhythm. The rhythmic variations available are endless and are only limited by your imagination!

Finding a Didgeridoo

When you search for your own instrument, please don't succumb to your wallet and buy a cheap Indonesian or Indian knock-off. Though these instruments will play, they are generally produced using cheap labor and do horrible ecological damage. This is completely contrary to the spirit of the instrument and does not honor either the instrument or the Australian Aborigines who gave us this wonderful musical voice.

If you can't afford an authentic didj, simply make your own out of PVC pipe. Use the pipe with a diameter of 1 1/4" or 1 1/2". Ten feet is usually under five dollars. Ten feet of pipe will give you two nice didgeridus. Dip one end in beeswax for a mouthpiece and you're all set. You can also sand, paint and burn designs into the PVC.

If you want to look for a didgeridu, doing it online is your best bet. Here are two of the best sites that honor the spirit of the instrument:

www.laoutback.com

www.didjshop.com: at this site you can hear incredible and informative sound clips of the instruments.

Sources for Further Study

As with any instrument, listening will help you realize what is possible. Listen to Stephen Kent (www.stephenkent.net) and you'll hear some of the didgeridoo potential. Amazing stuff. Here are some of the sources for additional information on the magical didgeridu.

Book/Magazine/Video	Format	Author (available at)
The Didgeridoo Phenomenon	book	Djalu Gurruwirri et al., (www.didjshop.com)
Didgeridoo & Co. Magazine	magazine	(www.laoutback.com)
Playing the didgeridoo (vol. 1-5)	audio CD	(www.didjshop.com)
Make and Play a Didgeridoo	video VHS	David Hudson (www.laoutback.com) (They have many more videos....)
Learn How to Play an Australian Aboriginal Didgeridoo	video (60 min)	David Blanas, Svargo Freitag

Up Next

That's it! Congratulations if you've gotten through the entire book. The last section of the book contains scales, practice aids, web sites, a musical terms glossary, book index, and the piano keyboard. All of these resources will help you become a better musician.

May you experience a lifetime of making music, and may you greet every challenge with a smile of confidence.

DO YOU WANT TO PLAY THE TRUMPET?

How do you make a sound on this hunk of brass? How do valves work? How do you play higher? What are some good exercises for trumpet? What's it like to perform?

Sound the Trumpet answers these questions and more as it takes you through the fun world of trumpet playing with a clear, concise style that is sometimes funny and always friendly.

The author has more than twenty years of experience playing trumpet, over ten years of experience as a teacher, and is the best-selling author of *Basic Music Theory*. Chapters are short, well-paced and enjoyable.

Whether you're new to the world of trumpet, whether you're an experienced player who wants to bone up on your skills, or whether you teach trumpet and need a fun way to do it, you'll find this book valuable and will refer to it again and again.

YOU WILL DISCOVER HOW EASY IT IS TO:

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- **Progress quickly** with easy lessons designed and used by a professional teacher and player.
- **Learn skills:** fingerings, buzzing, lip slurs, double and triple tonguing, flutter tongue, pedal tones, bends, shakes, the ever-popular horse whinny, and more!
- **Learn tricks** to make playing easier and more fun.
- **Perform in top form** using these tips and suggestions: How, when, where and why; what it can be like and how to prepare, and how to make opportunities to play for others.
- **Find the best music** in many styles, performed by some of the greatest trumpet players the world has known.

INTERLUDES ON:

- **Ultra-brief history** of the trumpet. When, where, how, and maybe even why.
- **How to practice.** Some topics: where-when-how to practice, how much to practice, equipment, how to improve, tracking your progress, ear training, listening, private teachers, and more.
- **Clean your trumpet.** Many strange things can and will grow in your horn. Learn how to take it apart, clean it, and put it back together.

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- **Scales and Patterns**
- **Listening Discography**
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- **Method Book Lists**
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- **Book Index**

THIS BOOK HAS HELPED OVER 50,000 PEOPLE LEARN HOW TO PLAY TRUMPET, WORLDWIDE.* IT CAN HELP YOU, TOO!

“My sincere thanks and heartfelt admiration for what you have done in *Sound the Trumpet: How to Blow Your Own Horn*. Truly a marvel. I've never before seen so much good musical knowledge in one place. Wow!”
—Kent Larabee, Silverdale, WA

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