

SOUND THE TRUMPET

HOW TO BLOW YOUR OWN HORN



JONATHAN HARNUM

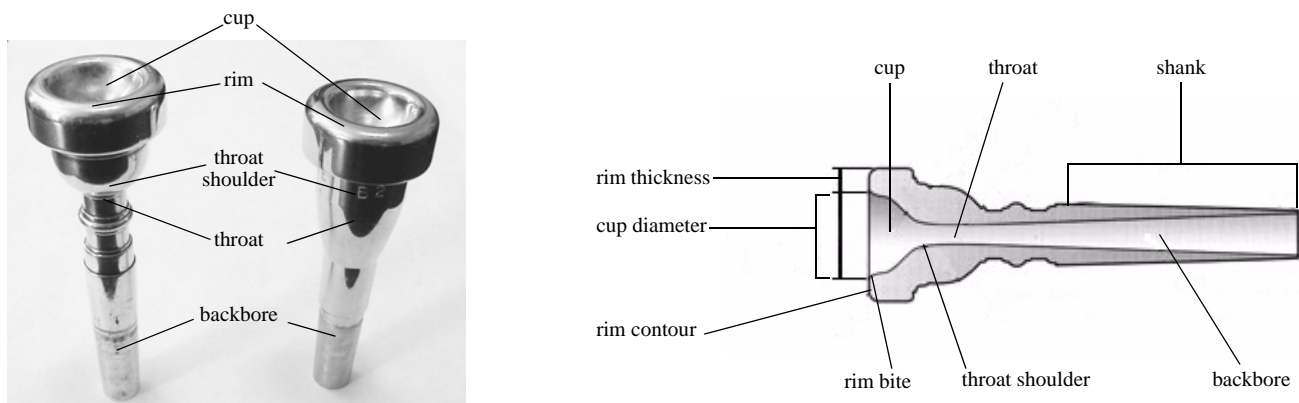
*Author of Basic Music Theory: How to Read,
Write and Understand Written Music*

Mouthpiece Anatomy 101

If there is any one thing which will seriously affect your playing, it's having the correct mouthpiece. If you're a beginner you don't have to worry much about mouthpieces at first, but as you get better you may find that some mouthpieces work better than others. I've known players who had dozens of mouthpieces, though most players rely on a select few.

Mouthpieces come in a bewildering array of shapes and styles, cup depths and shank lengths, density and diameter. It's enough to drive anyone but a brass player loopy. Below you'll get a quick and basic education about what it all means.

Example 3.2 Left: Vincent Bach and Monette mouthpieces with parts labeled. Right: A mouthpiece in cross-section.



Of Throats and Cups and Shoulders

The Rim: This is where the mouthpiece meets your chops. A rounded rim gives a player more flexibility but tends to tire the lip more quickly. A flat rim allows for a sharper beginning to notes and adds brilliance to the sound but reduces flexibility. A wider rim provides better endurance, while a narrow rim provides more range. A sharp rim bite provides brilliance while a rounded rim bite is less brilliant but more comfortable.

The Cup: The cup is measured by diameter and depth. The larger both are, the more resonant your tone will be. However, the larger a mouthpiece is, the more difficult it is to control. Also, a deep cup and wide diameter can make higher notes more difficult to play. The general idea is to use the largest cup you can without sacrificing ability or range.

The Throat Shoulder: This is where the air passes from the cup to the throat. The shoulder influences tone quality and resistance. Rounded shoulders are more resonant than sharper shoulders.

The Throat: This is the narrowest part of the mouthpiece. It's where the air moves from throat shoulder to backbore. A throat that is too small will make a trumpet play sharp up high, flat down low and will feel stuffy. The bigger the throat the fuller the tone, but too big and it becomes difficult to play softly and endurance suffers.

The Backbore: The backbore is where the air passes from the throat to the lead pipe of the trumpet. Intonation and tone quality are affected by the backbore. A small backbore will give the sound a brilliance but at the cost of a flat, stuffy upper register. A large backbore can give a better tone, but too large and notes lack definition and you'll tire easily.

What to Look for in a Mouthpiece

The most general rule is to find the mouthpiece that is the most comfortable. It's that easy. The first critical questions you should ask after finding a comfortable mouthpiece is, "Is it in tune?" If not, don't buy it. Be sure to take your tuner with you to the music store. (What? You don't have one? Better buy one at the music store. A tuner is a must. For more info, see "Tuners for In-tune Tuners" on page 223.)

Here's what Dave Monette has to say about choosing a mouthpiece (from *Monette Mouthpiece Manual and User's Guide*):

- When selecting a new mouthpiece, the size that feels most comfortable and that allows you to play with the most easy, natural embouchure and in the most resonant, centered way is usually the best size for you!
- If you are playing lead trumpet, use a lead mouthpiece! You would not run a marathon in wing tips, and you should probably not try and play the scream book in a big band on a B1-1 mouthpiece! (B1-1 is a very large mouthpiece—JH)
- If your sound shape is too narrow, you miss too many notes and you have difficulties playing "down into the center" of the equipment, try a wider inside-rim diameter with a comfortable cup depth.
- If your sound shape is too wide and you find yourself "swimming" in the equipment, try a narrower inside-rim diameter with a comfortable cup depth.
- Flatter rims, or rims with more "bite" on the inside edge may provide more control and security in articulation, but too much "bite" or "grip" can inhibit flexibility. If you often "splatter" articulations, try a sharper rim. If you feel the rim constricts you, try a wider inside-rim diameter, a rounder rim contour, or both.
- If a mouthpiece feels good, sounds good, provides better range and endurance, and plays more in-tune, you have found your new mouthpiece—even if it is not what you are used to!

And also from the same source (*Monette Mouthpiece Manual and User's Guide*):

Tips for the Very Confused

- 1 Does the mouthpiece you are trying feel too wide or too narrow?
- 2 Does the cup feel too shallow or too deep?
- 3 Does the rim contour feel too round or too sharp?
- 4 Do you need to take a break and come back to the process with a fresh perspective?

If after following these tips you still need help, find a teacher whose advice you trust, and purchase the mouthpiece he or she recommends. Then forget mouthpiece sizes and practice making music!

In the long run, players should always make a good mouthpiece selection based on what equipment helps them to sound better and make more music. If the process seems more complicated than that, you are making it more complicated than it needs to be.

7C, 3D, B2? What Does it Mean!

Mouthpieces are usually stamped with a letter and a number and each manufacturer has a slightly different definition of what these numbers and letters mean. The information below may help clear up the confusion.

Generally, the number refers to the depth of the cup. A larger number *usually* means a shallower cup (see Laskey and Yamaha below for exceptions). For instance, a Bach 7C mouthpiece (a good depth for a beginner) will have a much shallower cup than a Bach 1C.

The letter often refers to the type of trumpet: B for B-flat trumpet, C for C trumpet, etcetera. Bach mouthpieces are an exception to this general rule. Experiment. Find what you like and what works for you. What works is a mouthpiece that gives you clarity, intonation and a free-blowing quality in all registers without sacrificing endurance.

Mouthpieces are not cheap, so most music stores will allow you to try out a mouthpiece before you buy. Bring your horn and tuner when shopping for a mouthpiece so you can try before you buy. Good luck!

Bach	Giardinelli	Laskey	Marcinkiewicz	Monette	Schilke	Stork	Warburton	Yamaha
1	1M	84D		B1-1	19	1	1M	18C4
1B		84B	1	B1-5M			2D	17C4
1C		85C		B1-5	18			
1.25C		80MC		B2	17		2M	
1.5B		75B		B4	16			
1.5C		68C	1	B3	16		3M	16C4
2C	3M	70C		B4S	15	2C		15C4 or 16
2.5C			3					14A4a
3			4	B5				14A4a
3B		70B						13A4a
3C		65MC		B6	15		4M	
5C	5C or 6M	60C			13C4	3C		14C4
6							5MD	
6C					12		5MC	9C4
7					11A		6MD	8C4
7C	7C or 7M	50C	5-6	B7F	11		6MC	11 or 11C4
8C		50B	7-8			5C		
9C			9-10				6M	6A4a
10.5C	10M	40C	11-12	B8	9C4	7C	7MC	8C4
11C	12M		13-15		8A4		8MC	
17					7B4			
20C					5A4			

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:

- **Make your first sound** on the trumpet.
- **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:

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- **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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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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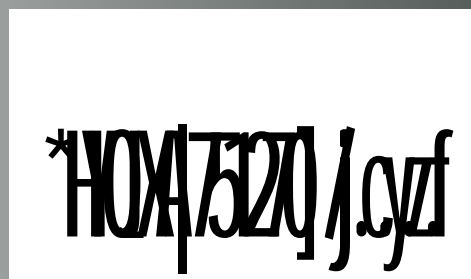
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