

# Introduction

Whenever possible, practice these exercises and etudes with a wide variety of dynamics and styles of articulation. These styles might include:

- I. Smooth legato tonguing; also know as portato, or "tonguing on the sound" as St. Jacome described. Use the tongue like a brush, with a very steady air stream.
- II. Staccato, very clear and crisp; also practice a kind of staccato that is less clearly articulated, more of a "puffy" shape.
- III. Marcato, very strongly articulated with every note maintained at full value, very intense.

All of the above should be practiced from very soft to very loud; at slow as well as fast tempos, and occasionally using crescendos and diminuendos.

For someone who is frustrated with their inability to improve tongue speed, I would like to suggest an approach. This routine might also be of value to players who are generally feeling a bit stiff and inflexible.

- I. Using middle G, single tongue sixteenth notes at a relaxed tempo, continuing for one minute. Breathe whenever you wish; it might be twice during the minute or every ten seconds, whatever is most comfortable. Just stop and breathe, maybe taking 2 - 6 beats before playing again, and stop when the minute is over. Determine the speed that allows you to get through the minute with no strain - it will probably feel too easy for the first 20-30 seconds and a little uncomfortable right toward the end. Whatever your speed is, start your next practice session about 20 beats slower. If your test tempo was quarter note = 100, begin your next practice session at quarter note = 80. Do this "one minute drill" every day, or perhaps five times a week. Stay at quarter note = 80 this first week. This might feel too easy, but concentrate on relaxation and how efficiently you can use your air - you could slowly decrease the number of times you stop and breathe, but don't rush this. If you breathe less frequently, let it be because you are relaxed and efficient, not because you are straining to breathe more quickly and play longer on each breath. Keep your tonguing fluid and smooth, don't be too concerned yet with clarity and try to play too crisply.
- II. After one week, move the metronome to quarter note = 88. The third week to quarter note = 94; fourth, quarter note = 100. Now you are at your original tempo that tested as fairly relaxed, but if all has gone well, you are much more at ease with your tonguing and breathing. You may also find yourself more relaxed in your other playing situations.

For many, this would seem too slow a rate of progress, but if real improvement has been achieved, one month is not too long. Most of us can probably think of many months passing with no tangible improvement occurring.

- III. If you have reached your original test speed and feel more at ease than before, begin to slowly increase the metronome speed. Try to find a metronome that allows you to increase the tempo by as little as one beat per minute. Aim for an increase of 4 beats per week: 104, 108, 112. If your "minute" starts to get tense and strained, take an extra week or two to adjust to the new speed. Stay relaxed with your breathing and reduce the increments to 2 beats per week as you increase the tempo: 114, 116, 118, 120. Don't hesitate to proceed more slowly, by one beat per week if you wish. When you reach quarter note = 120, your single tongue is very well trained and should be able to handle almost any problem that comes up. If you can tongue sixteenth notes at quarter note = 120 for a relaxed minute, short bursts at quarter note = 132-138 are usually not too hard.
- IV. If you want to improve further, try doing a type of interval practice, 2 beats single tongue, 2 beats rest for the minute, starting at quarter note = 124 or so. Every couple of sessions, add a beat of tongued sixteenth notes, keeping the 2 beats of rest. When you reach 6 beats of tonguing, 2 beats of rest, increase the metronome mark slightly. You will eventually find your limit, but probably almost everyone who practices patiently enough can reach quarter note = 120 for an almost continuous minute. The benefits of this achievement go far beyond just being able to tongue quickly, mostly in flexibility and general ease of execution. You will have probably eliminated any gap between your single and multiple tonguing, and your triple tonguing will very likely improve, since for a large part the limiting factor in fluent triple tonguing is stiffness in single tongue technique. The process of improving tongue speed usually involves a shortening of the tongue stroke, where the tongue is shifted slightly farther forward in the mouth. Many prominent teachers believe that this more elongated position is conducive to better trumpet playing in all areas.

This type of practice was described in detail by Herbert L. Clarke, who starting with a very slow tongue eventually reached quarter note = 160 for a minute and a half of sixteenth notes, all in one breath! This took him eight years. What I have suggested might take 3-4 months, though the time involved is not nearly as important as the improvement achieved. Impatience will make real progress very difficult to attain. Patience, persistence, and intelligent planning will make it inevitable.