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### Playing the LeadPipe and “Flat Out”: What!?!?!

This one, maybe more than other articles I’ve written, will more heavily reflect my own perspective and opinion than the other articles. While there is very little in my playing or teaching that is not heavily influenced by Mr. Adam, this take is not necessarily from him - but has a large dose of my 2c . . . FWIW, as follows:

Mr. Adam got into the leadpipe thing during my time at IU, which was 1973 - 1980 or so (not counting very many visits once my degrees were done). You may know that Bob Slack, Greg Wing, and I were Associate Instructors for 3 years or so in that time frame, having followed Jim O’Banion in that role - which was a very rare and special gift, again, FWIW. We remain in constant touch to this day, and talk shop almost every day - their impact on me is immeasurable.

You may find all kinds of examples on the Internet relating to how to play the pipe, what it’s for, and etc.. I suggest that most of this information is not only errant, has nothing to do with Mr. Adam’s genius pedagogy, but is more likely to set you back than do you any good.

Mr. Adam got leadpipes from the Bach plant, thanks to the generosity of Tedd Waggoner. For the rest of us, it usually meant taking the main slide out and using the pipe on our trumpets. And at that time, almost all of us played a standard-pipe Bach 37. (Reverse pipes are FINE, they just might sound a little different - not a worry.)

Mr. Adam took that signature big breath, and in one fluid action, played a robust, resonant, locked-in, F (concert Eb). That was IT. No scales, no bent notes, maybe the next higher note in the harmonic series, but it was robust, full, and purposeful.

My point in sharing this is to try to answer, “WHY?”

Blowing the pipe before you launch into your practice session can warm up the facial muscles. It can be a super valuable tool to free-up the breath; maybe you hit it pretty hard the night before and things are not as free as they could be, so take time on the pipe that next morning. Play, rest, play, rest, until things are cooking along well. This is all good and just fine. A qualifier here though, the TONE MATTERS. If you are not delivering that robust, core-dominant, resonant sound, back the truck up and get that right.

OK, but here is something you may not have thought of:

Mr. Adam talked about playing “Flat Out.” This does NOT mean loud. It means, the up and down of the scale becomes 2 dimensional. That is, we remove the sense of up and down, keeping only “out.” FLAT OUT.

Our notation system tends to aim us in the direction of thinking of a high C as UP and a low F# as down. Mr. Adam said, “that sound is no closer to the ceiling than it is to the floor.” Whatever note we play is simply, a sound. We have to emancipate ourselves from thinking “up and down,” but rather, all sounds are OUT. FLAT OUT.

Mr. Adam also told me, point blank, literally, “the area under the mouthpiece stays soft.” “The area under the mouthpiece is inactive.” My words: the area under the mouthpiece is in repose. The area under the mouthpiece is in repose in ALL registers and at all dB levels (back to Bob Slack, “take every breath as if you are going to play a 2<sup>nd</sup> line G). This is good stuff.

What does this have to do with anything?

**Think of the freely delivered leadpipe sound, the notion of “flat out,” and the notion of “everything under the mouthpiece is in repose,” as three interlocking circles.** They are each intertwined and all three depend on one another, and work as one.

Try this: play your Arban single tonguing (p13 #11) on the pipe, and notice that you tend to move that pitch up and down. Now do it again, and make sure that as you look at that page, the pitch stays on that F (concert Eb). Now go to the horn and play it as written, but from the orientation of “flat out.” Game changer.

The change of pitch is only in your imagination, again quoting Mr. Adam, “there is no physical connotation to that young fella.” FLAT OUT.

If you play the pipe with this sensibility, it will steer you into the lane you want to be in as you progress to your daily routine and whatever comes next in your playing day.