

Reprints from the

International Trumpet Guild® Journal

to promote communications among trumpet players around the world and to improve the artistic level of performance, teaching, and literature associated with the trumpet

itg journal, jr.

MARTIN SAUNDERS, COLUMN EDITOR

CARE AND MAINTENANCE DURING MARCHING BAND SEASON

BY MARTIN SAUNDERS

October 2009 • Page 64

The International Trumpet Guild® (ITG) is the copyright owner of all data contained in this file. ITG gives the individual end-user the right to:

- Download and retain an electronic copy of this file on a single workstation that you own
- Transmit an unaltered copy of this file to any single individual end-user, so long as no fee, whether direct or indirect is charged
- Print a single copy of pages of this file
- Quote fair use passages of this file in not-for-profit research papers as long as the ITGJ, date, and page number are cited as the source.

The International Trumpet Guild® prohibits the following without prior written permission:

- Duplication or distribution of this file, the data contained herein, or printed copies made from this file for profit or for a charge, whether direct or indirect
- Transmission of this file or the data contained herein to more than one individual end-user
- Distribution of this file or the data contained herein in any form to more than one end user (as in the form of a chain letter)
- Printing or distribution of more than a single copy of the pages of this file
- Alteration of this file or the data contained herein
- Placement of this file on any web site, server, or any other database or device that allows for the accessing or copying of this file or the data contained herein by any third party, including such a device intended to be used wholly within an institution.

<http://www.trumpetguild.org>

Please retain this cover sheet with printed document.



CARE AND MAINTENANCE DURING MARCHING BAND SEASON

BY MARTIN SAUNDERS

Marching band season is now in full swing: the Friday night shows, the Saturday competitions, the endless after school (and sometime *before* school) practices, the long hours of learning and relearning drill. During this time, your face can start feeling like a couple of pounds of ground beef if you don't take care of yourself. Here are some helpful hints about warming up, taking care, and ultimately about surviving of marching band season.

By now, you've already been playing for several hours a day and are more or less in shape for your marching band duties. However, during rehearsals many players develop poor habits that inhibit them from getting the most out of their trumpeting efforts. The fall rehearsal/performance schedule usually results in less time to properly warm up, more time playing hard and high immediately and following long breaks, and usually causes a more pinched tone due to the "squeeze out those notes" kind of playing. This type of inefficiency causes multiple problems that usually last well into the concert season! However, there are several techniques that can help to head off these problems: first, let's address warming up.

Many trumpeters' idea of a warmup is to make a lot of squiggly sounds and wiggle their fingers violently while squeaking out a sound, low to high, calling this a "warmup." There is no presence of trumpet tone or of getting the breath moving through the instrument in an efficient manner. Those players would be much better served by playing simple long tones and melodic patterns that will establish a good trumpet tone rather than by trying to compete in the trumpeting Olympics. Simple long tones, flow patterns, or songs will do nicely, and will get you warmed up. If you concentrate on playing with a solid tone and moving the breath through the trumpet, many good notes will follow!

Once you have your tone established, you can proceed to get ready to play outdoors. A couple of pieces of advice that will help your outdoor endeavors: 1) You can't outplay the great outdoors. So realize right now that there's no way that you can compete with the vast space that is the outdoors. However, you *can* play with a great tone that will ring and echo a great distance. The better your tone, the more your sound will carry, which leads to the second piece of advice: 2) Get your trumpet section to play in tune! An "in tune" trumpet section sound will carry much further than a loud, out of tune section. Even if your section is not huge in numbers, you can double the sound if your colleagues are in tune, play with a good tone, and unify as one solid unit of sound.

Many of you will be playing in inclement weather at some point during the marching band season. During the wetter times, it is a good idea to remove the mouthpiece from the horn while not playing; keep it dry as much as possible. When it is time to play, use your glove or a piece of clothing (perhaps a t-shirt), to wipe it dry before playing. This will provide a familiar playing surface and give you the best chance at sounding normal. In the cold weather months, a bigger problem may exist in wetting a freezing cold mouthpiece and putting it to your lips; it may freeze! Again, remove the mouthpiece and keep in warm in your hand whenever you are not playing. A recent option that has become available is to purchase a mouthpiece made of Lexan polycarbonate material that is tem-

perature resistant. This material provides a stable, comfortable playing surface for the player, and doesn't pose as much risk of lips freezing or sticking to the mouthpiece.

"The better your tone, the more your sound will carry..."

After competing with the elements of nature and the long periods of playing and practicing, the last piece of advice for a successful marching band trumpeting experience concerns what you do *after* a practice or game. Warming down is an important part of your overall success, and is commonly overlooked and forgotten, or deemed not essential due to time constraints. After you've had your face against the mouthpiece for a long period, the embouchure needs to have a chance to relax. Many athletes will tell you that they would not be able to perform at their peak in subsequent days of training if they did not do things to let their muscles relax after intense workouts. The trumpeter is no different; you must leave your body in a more relaxed state after playing those long practices and shows. This need not take a long time. A simple way to accomplish this is by playing descending arpeggios or chromatic scales that go down into the pedal register. For example, start on middle G (second line G on the staff) and descend an octave. Continue to do so chromatically downward by half steps; G, F#, F, etc. By the third one, you'll be reaching down into the pedal register (middle F to pedal F). Even though these notes aren't technically "on the horn," attempt them anyway; you'll feel much more relaxed by the time you're done, and you'll feel much more ready to play again the next day.

About the author: Martin Saunders is associate professor of trumpet and jazz studies at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. Prior to teaching at Marshall, Martin spent seven years in the Air Force Band program at Offutt AFB in Omaha, Nebraska.

