

10 Simple Steps to a Great Horn Section

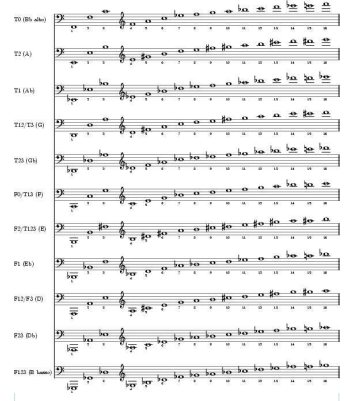
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Why do I want a great horn section?

- Fills out the mid-range of your band's sound
- You need horns for advanced repertoire
- Students who switch instruments need extra support
- A very important instrument in orchestral repertoire

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Why is horn so hard (and why do they miss so many notes)?

- Horn in F: 12 ft long
- For comparison:
 - Bb trombone: 9 ft
 - F tuba: 12 ft
 - BBb tuba: 18 ft
- Horn is playing very high on the harmonic series
- This necessitates small bore size and small mouthpiece
- Pro: makes the horn sound like the horn
- Con: makes accuracy very difficult

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1. Playing Position

- Right hand is critical!
- Left hand: consider an aid
- Leadpipe angle
- Rest on leg or not?
- Horn's relation to body

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2. Embouchure

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| There is no one perfect embouchure | There is a most common embouchure | Corner, chin, corner triangle |
| Anchor to lower lip | Keep pressure off upper lip | Upper to lower ratio |


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3. Equipment

- Geyer vs. Kruspe horns
- Importance of tight valves
- Care for your instruments
- Mouthpieces
- Detachable bells

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Geyer Horn Kruspe Horn



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4. Articulation

- First note of phrase:**
 - Tip of the tongue
 - Between the teeth
 - Air behind tongue, tongue releases
- Notes within phrase:**
 - Tip of the tongue
 - Between the teeth
 - On top of steady air

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5. Stopped Horn and Mutes

Stopped horn

- +, gestopft, bouché, chiuso
- Pops the pitch up a 1/2 step, transpose down a 1/2 step
- Hand position, stop mute
- Should sound buzzy

Muted

- Con sordino, avec sourdine, mit Dämpfer
- Only straight mute is common
- Transposing, tunable, hand strap

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6. Seating arrangement and balance

- One long row is hard to hear
- Cube is great
- Principal's bell points at the section
- Bell facing side wall
- Lower parts louder

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7. Pitch and Tuning

- What do the slides do?
- Tune Bb side, then F side
- Valve slides come last
- Tuning tendencies
- Drone work
- Notes are flexible

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8. Air Support and Sound Production

- Air makes it go
- Like other high-resistance instruments (i.e. oboe)
- Inhale: inflate the abdomen
- Exhale: support
- Work in the right place

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9. Accuracy

- Everyone wants to do it better
- Repeatable approach
- Practice aids
- Practice initial attacks
- Ear training

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10. Double Horn Fingerings

- Standard: Bb fingerings Ab4 and above
- Low range: Bb fingerings F3 down to C#3 common
- Pedal: F2 down to C#2 must be Bb fingerings
- Modern players: what makes it easiest to sound best

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French Horn Fingering Chart

we written in F top fingering on Bb horn (with trigger)
bottom fingering on F horn (no trigger)

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Questions?

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