

Trumpet Solo Class Lecture #11

“Selecting a New Instrument”

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There are many factors to consider when selecting a new instrument. Careful selection can provide you with an instrument that will give you many years of service and enjoyment (the two instruments that I play most often were purchased in 1973 and 1975).

Preparation

Establish a budget - are you moving into an intermediate instrument or professional quality horn.

Allow yourself plenty of time to make your selection.

Bring someone you trust with you to listen.

Have an electronic tuner with you. Tune all of the instruments at the same standard in order to give you the clearest sense of tone quality and timbre from one instrument to the next (sharp instruments sound bright and flat ones sound dark).

Playing the Instrument

Use your own mouthpiece.

Use a room that has reasonable acoustics, avoid situations where other people are trying instruments.

Get recommendations from teachers and professional players about the brand of instrument to select.

Try several instruments, usually four or more (of any one model/brand).

Bring a few printed musical examples (in contrasting styles) that you know very well (etudes or solos) and play the same thing on each instrument.

Factors to Consider

Does the instrument produce a good characteristic sound?

Is the tone quality even from the low to upper register?

Does the instrument respond quickly throughout a variety of articulations and dynamics?

Check the pitch on the open harmonics and then throughout the entire instrument?

Does the horn feel good in your hands, is it well balanced and do the slides move freely?

Will this instrument serve all of the different musical styles and ensembles that you play in?

Carefully check the instrument for any damage (small dents) and be sure to examine each valve?

My Method

Start by playing two instruments and select the more desirable. Move onto the third instrument and compare it to the one you have selected, again, select the more desirable of the two. Continue through all of the instruments until you have picked the one that you like the most. Now go back and play every instrument against your first choice and see if it still holds up. Be as objective as you can, you will spend a lot of time with this instrument in the future.