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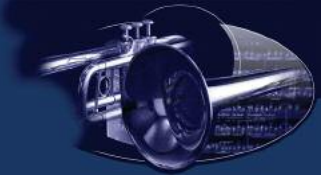
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TRUMPET TECHNOLOGY

MICHAEL ANDERSON, COLUMN EDITOR



Trumpet Technology is an expansion and refinement of ITG's previous column titled *Web Site Reviews*. This column will continue to examine Internet locations of interest to trumpet players. It will expand to examine developments in the technology associated with trumpet. Ideas and suggestions should be directed to: Michael Anderson, Wanda L. Bass School of Music, Oklahoma City University, 2501 North Blackwelder, Oklahoma City, OK 73106 USA; website@trumpetguild.org

TRUMPET GADGETS III

BY MICHAEL ANDERSON

I'm always on the lookout for new gadgets related to our loud and lofty art. Although some of the products in this column have been around for a while, they will be new to many and hopefully helpful.

Embouchure Exercisers

Chop-Sticks™ and P.E.T.E.

Although both of these products were designed by trumpet players and originally marketed to trumpet players, they can be used by any wind player where embouchure muscles come into play. Both are useful as a supplement to regular practice, so that players can work to strengthen their embouchure muscles while away from the horn.

Chop-Sticks is a variation on the old "pencil exercise." I refer to it as the pencil exercise on steroids. The concept is that you strengthen the chops by holding the weighted, stainless steel Chop-Sticks straight out with just your lips. Working out with this system can develop the muscles around the lips and increase range and endurance. There are five different sticks

that graduate in size from very small in diameter to about the size of a large pencil. The sticks get heavier as they get bigger in diameter and the system even comes with additional weights that can be attached to the sticks for extreme workouts. Chop-Sticks comes with a nice neoprene carry case that can be clipped to your belt right next to your mouthpiece pouch for that "über-trumpet-geek" look. You also get an excellent methodology pamphlet filled with exercises and pedagogical material for using them in conjunction with regular practice. The basic idea is to gradually increase the time you can hold the stick out with your chops and to gradually increase the weight you can hold. I have had both the P.E.T.E. and Chop-Sticks for several months and have been using them mostly in the car as I drive to and from work and gigs. My favorite thing to do with the Chop-Sticks is to use the smallest stick and work the embouchure muscles isometrically which I feel promotes a smaller, closed aperture. This is only one of many ways to use this system. This product is made of high-quality materials and has been designed so that the user can discover the optimum uses for their needs. Chop-Sticks kits vary in price from the "Starter Kit" at \$24.95 up to the Advanced Nickel Plate kit for \$54.95. Go to <http://www.chop-sticks.com> for all the details.

P.E.T.E. by Warburton Music Products stands for "Personal Embouchure Training Exerciser" and is described by its inventor, Ken Titmus, as "an isometric tool for strengthening the support muscles of the embouchure." Although the P.E.T.E. can be used in a similar way as Chop-Sticks or the old pencil exercise by holding the thinner end of it between the lips supporting the weight of the tool, the real innovation with the P.E.T.E. is the exercise you can do with the flat disk end of the tool. You simply place the disk between your lips and your teeth, form an embouchure around it and pull slightly while resisting with the facial muscles. The P.E.T.E. comes in silver and gold plate and is also offered an all-plastic version. The plastic P.E.T.E. is my personal favorite. It is very light and since I prefer the isometric resistance exercise it works better for me than the version in silver. I also like that the plastic version is "grippier" than its silver-plated counterpart. P.E.T.E. works well for all brass instrument players and even though it doesn't yet come with a method book, I'm told there is one in the works that should be available by the printing of this column. However, there are good demonstration videos and testimonials on the web site. You can order an optional lanyard and carry your P.E.T.E. around your neck for constant access. Yes,





I did this for a couple of weeks and endured all sorts of grief and teasing from colleagues, but it was worth it!

I've found that my students and colleagues who have tried the P.E.T.E. reacted differently than I did. You have to experiment with it to find the way to use it that fits you best. I would like to caution everyone against the overuse of these tools. As a part of my experiment, I decided to use the P.E.T.E. to the point of overuse and see how it affected my playing. I carried it around my neck and used it as often as I could for a couple of weeks. To my surprise it took much longer to get to the point where it felt like I had overdone it than I thought it would. At that point, I took 24 hours off of using it and my chops recovered much stronger than they were before. I have experienced some jaw pain as a result of using the P.E.T.E., so I have to make sure to watch for that when I use it. I have had excellent results with the P.E.T.E. and am using it regularly when in the car. My endurance has increased dramatically and it is simply easier to play the trumpet now that I am working with it. During my experiment of trying to overuse it, I hardly had to warm up and was able to play easily on a bigger mouthpiece. I'm a believer in the benefits of the P.E.T.E., but not everyone I know who has worked with it has experienced the same benefits. The silver P.E.T.E. is priced at \$39.50, the gold-plated version is \$69.50, and the plastic version is \$34.50. More information, videos and testimonials can be found on the Warburton's web site (<http://www.warburton-usa.com>).

ErgoBrass

The ErgoBrass support system was originally introduced several years ago for trombonists and was called the "ErgoBone." The inventor, a Finnish trombonist named Jouko Antere, expanded the system to include versions for nearly every brass instrument. The trumpet version of the ErgoBrass is an exceptionally well-engineered and designed product. It works flawlessly and is very easy to use. It adjusts to fit any

player whether standing or sitting and balances the weight of the horn in such a way that takes stress off the player's hands, arms, and shoulders which allows for a much more relaxed approach to playing. It can also be quite helpful to those who have some kind of injury or handicap that doesn't allow them to support the weight of the instrument while playing. I have lent it to people who have had hand or shoulder surgeries so they could continue to practice and perform while recovering. It helps people who have carpal tunnel syndrome and find it painful to play for extended periods of time. I have also used it as a teaching tool to promote better posture and a more relaxed upper body. Although a different design from the Shulman System, which has been featured in this column but is no longer being manufactured, the ErgoBrass does provide some of the same benefits but is easier to use and adjust. At the time of this writing, the ErgoBrass for trumpet/cornet/flugelhorn (includes shipping outside Europe) sells for €130, which is around \$160. More information can be found on the company's web site (<http://www.ergobrass.com>).



About the author: Michael Anderson is associate professor of trumpet at the Wanda L. Bass School of Music at Oklahoma City University and is a member of the Oklahoma City Philharmonic. He has been the Director of the *ITG Web Site* since its inception in 1996 and is a member of the ITG Board of Directors and the *ITG Journal* Editorial Committee.



CORRECTION!

ITG regrets that there was a mistake in the June Trumpet Technology column entitled "The Latest in Practice Mutes." It was incorrectly stated that the Wallace Collection mutes were designed by Don Maslet. This is not accurate. All of the Wallace Collection mutes featured in the practice mute review article were designed solely by Iain Muirhead of the Wallace Collection. We regret this mistake and apologize to Mr. Muirhead and Mr. Wallace for distributing this misinformation.