



# YAMAHA

## Educator Series

WIND INSTRUMENTS



*Richard Chenoweth*

*Richard Chenoweth, Professor, is coordinator of the instrumental program at the University of Dayton Department of Music.*

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*Dr. Chenoweth is a Yamaha Performing Artist. He hosts the UD Horn Masterclass Series, and has been asked to present masterclasses across the US at prominent institutions such as Indiana University, University of North Texas, University of Miami (FL), CCM, University of Wisconsin (both Madison and Milwaukee), University of Michigan, and Southern Methodist University.*

*In recognition of his activities as a performer, Dr. Chenoweth is the recipient of the Montgomery County's Artist Fellowship, and has been awarded the 1997 UD College of Science's Award for Outstanding Scholarship, as well as the University of Dayton's prestigious 1999 Alumni Award in Scholarship.*

## Tips for Helping Your Beginning Horn Players

*By Richard Chenoweth*

If you are interested in starting young instrumentalists on the horn, here are some suggestions to help you and your beginning horn students.

First, let your horn players know how lucky they are! They have chosen a beautiful and very special instrument, both in appearance and sound. To identify potentially successful players, try to find extroverted, musically talented young people who enjoy singing and who are not shy about "stepping forward" to perform. A quick check consisting of singing and matching pitches on the piano will verify the student's aural accuracy and potential. Although there is some controversy about the best time to start a horn player, I firmly believe that the sooner, the better! In the case of "switching-over" a player from another instrument, the worst or last-chair player in another section is usually not the best candidate to be a horn player. Instead, select players who show enthusiasm for the horn and a strong desire and will to succeed. In learning to play the horn, a positive attitude is a very important commodity!

The selection of the proper horn for your beginners depends on a variety of factors: the physical size of the student, your concept of horn tone quality and, to be practical, the size of your budget! I firmly believe that a single horn in Bb, such as the Yamaha Model 322, will help your students progress at a faster rate (and can save you money!). Single Bb horns are lighter, easier to hold, and the wider variety of fingerings allows the student to be more accurate. If you think there is a difference in sound between the single horn in F and the Bb horn, you're right; the Bb horn tends to sound a bit "brighter" and more focused. However, when you consider that the majority of hornists use the Bb horn side of a double horn from second line G# on up, then using a single Bb horn makes sense. Because the overtone series on a Bb horn has wider intervals, the young player will automatically be more accurate.

Although most single horns are made out of brass, some teachers prefer the tone quality of the nickel-silver horn. In that case, you should consider starting your students on a double horn, such as the Yamaha Model 668, which is built in a style called a "Kruspe" wrap. (The wrap is the way the tubing and valves are designed.) Many professional orchestral players now prefer the style of wrap called the "Geyer" wrap, in which the Bb valve appears to be placed below the first three valves. The advantage of this style is smoother slurs, wider dynamic range and greater ease of tone production. The Yamaha Model 667 is an excellent example of this style. You'll find that most "Kruspe" styles are made of nickel silver, while "Geyer" styles are usually yellow or red brass. Nickel silver is generally a stronger alloy, more resistant to dents, although yellow brass, while softer, is more easily repaired.

Young horn players who are physically small should not be discouraged from playing. A simple solution is to have them hold the bell off their leg (much easier to do if playing a single horn, because the weight is less). This is actually a common style of playing in many bands and orchestras and allows the player to achieve more volume efficiently.

There are as many different concepts of a "good" horn tone as there are good horn players. Have your students strive for a clear, unforced, pure and focused sound. The horn will do the rest! The most



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important factor in producing this good sound is a healthy air-stream: make sure that the student understands the concept of blowing THROUGH the horn, not AT it. A helpful tip to accomplish this is teaching an awareness of the air intensity as it moves past the RIGHT hand in the bell; FEEL the air moving! RELAXED blowing will help your players be efficient in their tone production. Have them take deep, "yawning" breaths (breathe in by saying "AW", breathe out by saying "HOO"). Using this "AW" sound while inhaling will also relax the student's throat muscles.

Mouthpiece placement is actually very simple: ask the student to say the letter "M" while looking in a mirror. This usually forms the relaxed but firm embouchure needed to cover the range of the instrument. Place the mouthpiece 2/3rds on the upper lip, and anchor the lower 3rd on the bottom lip and then have them practice buzzing on the mouthpiece as a warm-up to help reinforce this proper placement. The buzz sound should duplicate the horn sound (clear, focused, pure) as much as possible. By teaching the student to play with a relaxed embouchure, using firm corners and a relaxed but "pointed" lower jaw, you will provide them with the fundamentals for covering a wide range on the horn.

For clean articulation, have the student use a tongue placement that will produce the sound "DEE". This produces a rounder tone quality than "TEE", although that placement is very useful for staccato or marcato passages. Tonguing speed is best achieved by using a relaxed tongue stroke: if fast notes are played long, the tongue won't stiffen up.

Intonation problems can most often be solved by insuring that the student uses proper right hand placement in the bell. Since most horns are built a half step sharp, it is essential that the student DOES place their hand in the bell! Although hand sizes vary widely among young players, the proper hand position remains the same; the hand should be slightly cupped with the fingers together, bent slightly at the knuckles and positioned inside the bell on the side AWAY from the player. Experimentation and critical listening on the teacher's part will determine the proper amount of closure. Also, make sure that your students are aware of the location of the main tuning slide, which is almost always the closest moveable slide to the mouthpiece.

To help your students develop an enthusiasm and interest in the literature for the horn, play CDs for them by outstanding solo artists, such as Barry

Tuckwell, Dennis Brain and others. Most professional horn players will be happy to offer help and encouragement to your young players, too, so don't hesitate to contact professional players in area bands, orchestras or university faculties.

By combing a healthy measure of enthusiasm, patience and teaching of fundamentals, you can insure your students of a lifetime of musical enjoyment. A good horn player will ALWAYS find a place to play!