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# Breathtaking: An alternative approach to breathing for trumpeters

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## Introduction

### Challenges of trumpet performance

Up till recently, I have always struggled with the physical aspect of trumpet playing, mainly with playing in the extremes of the registers (high and low) and also with endurance. I had to be extremely careful with choosing performances, and planning practice sessions, so that I do not tire myself out. However, even with all the effort to manage my trumpet playing, I found myself going in a downward spiral in the years 2009-2010, and my trumpet playing eventually degraded to a level where producing a third space 'C' in the treble staff feels painful. This started to change when I adopted a different way of breathing in late 2010.

Since then, I always find myself asking, "What can I rely on to play better? What should I change in order to play better? How can I find more security in performance situations?" This is due to the reason that the trumpet, to me, is a brutally honest mirror to myself; if something is not 'right' within me, the trumpet responds accordingly in a very unforgiving manner, and can have disastrous consequences. A small inaccuracy in the internal mechanism would result in a cracked or completely wrong note, which is clearly audible during performance.

In his article *Trompete!*, the principal trombonist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Jay Friedman summarizes the difficulties of playing the trumpet well:

"... The demands placed upon the [trumpet] player are almost super-human. Composers... have no qualms about writing very high, demanding parts for trumpet... a trumpet player must possess great physical strength as well as several other things that must come together in one person. In addition, it requires an almost perfect embouchure... A very small area of the lips must produce a large sound and at the same time play incredibly high... the equipment only being a small aid to that end. I also think the trumpet is the most difficult instrument to play softly. It naturally wants to blare, and it takes a skillful and talented operator to make a beautiful sound in pianissimo."

However, from the description above, one can be misled into thinking that the trumpeter needs to focus on the small lip area or embouchure directly in order to play their instrument. However, personal experience has taught me that the control over the embouchure is merely a side effect of the refined balance between motor skills, cognitive functions, and stress within the player. This refined balance falls into Friedman's generic phrase of "several other things". I further believe that learning to breathe properly is the key to achieving this balance.

My own playing trauma from 2009/10 was solved by learning a new method of breathing from trumpeter and pedagogue Willem van der Vliet. This method

restored my ability to play and saved my career. For this reason, I want to document and discuss this way of breathing in case it could be interesting and beneficial to other players.

In this paper I will first discuss, in chapter one, how breathing is approached in conventional trumpet pedagogy and then go on to describe the breathing method of Willem van der Vliet. I supplemented my own view of this method by surveying other students of Willem to find out how they experienced the method (see Appendix 2). Chapter two is about the physiology of breathing. Chapter three describes several exercises, mostly from Willem, which can be utilized to learn to inhale simultaneously through the nose and mouth and further practice it in trumpet playing. My conclusion is that – based on the experiences of myself and of others and on the science of breathing – practicing the nose-mouth inhalation could be hugely beneficial for trumpeters.

### **Research question**

Breathing simultaneously through the nose and mouth: What are the benefits for trumpet playing? How can this technique be learned?

## Chapter 1

### 'Breathing' in trumpet pedagogy

The subject of breathing is probably one of the most controversial and confusing areas in trumpet pedagogy. Trumpet method books usually contain either breathing information that omits the physiology of it in general, or instructions that seem to conflict with each other. While the more modern brass pedagogical books seem to adopt a more uniform and scientifically supported approach to the subject, there still appears to be a lack of research regarding where and how the air enters or exits the body whilst playing.

#### Trumpet method books regarding breathing

An examination of published trumpet method books that are commonly used reveals the following – sometimes confusing and contradictory – list of instructions pertaining to the inhalation process for playing the trumpet:

1. Breath intake should be effortless and never be noticeable (Colin pp. 172).
2. Breathing should be deep (Clarke, *Elementary Studies* p. 3, *Setting Up Drills* pp. 5, Vizzutti pp. 6, pp. 120).
3. Do not inhale more deeply than necessary (Saint-Jacome pp. 1).
4. The amount of air inhaled should be measured against the musical phrase that would be played, and should not be excessive (Arban pp. 20, Freidstadt, Saint-Jacome pp. 1)
5. Do not take a new breath until all the air in the lungs have been utilized (Clarke, *Elementary Studies* pp. 5, *Setting Up Drills* pp. 5)
6. Be careful to breathe regularly, inhale with freedom (Clarke, *Elementary Studies* pp. 5).
7. The chest must be extended when inhaling for a full breath (Clarke, *Setting Up Drills* pp. 5).
8. Do not breathe high in the chest (Vizzutti pp. 120).
9. The stomach must rise while the chest swells from inhalation (Arban pp. 20).

It can be quickly seen that some instructions appear to conflict with each other (2 and 3, 7 and 8), and Clarke seems to be contradicting himself within a set of instructions (5 and 6). It is hard to imagine how a student juggles this information.

A further point of note is that more methods favour the usage of mouth for inhalation. Arban (pp. 20), Saint-Jacome (pp. 1), and Schlossberg advise breathing in through the corners of the mouth. Vizzutti writes that the mouth and throat should form an "Ah" syllable. Carmine Caruso is an exception and instructs the student to breathe only through the nose while keeping mouthpiece contact with the lips in his book (pp. 8), which is aptly named *Musical Calisthenics for Brass*.<sup>1</sup> There is no mention of which orifice to use for inhalation in Clarke's and Colin's methods.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that Caruso intended for his method to be purely a clinical and physical approach for trumpeters to build up the muscles to cover all physical demands of trumpet playing, and should

And here is a list of instructions regarding exhalation in the method books:

1. Diaphragm supports or pushes the air (Colin pp. 174, Freistadt, Vizzutti pp. 120).
2. The tongue releases the air into the instrument (Arban pp. 20, Colin pp. 173, Freistadt).
3. Blow carefully to not force the tone, but to produce it naturally (Clarke, *Elementary Studies* pp. 5)
4. The air stream through the lips should be constant (Caruso pp. 8, Freistadt).
5. The stomach returns [lowers] to the original position, and the chest deflates (Arban pp. 20).

It should be noted that Colin's description of the exhalation process is more complex compared to the other method books. He mentions that playing the trumpet is an unnatural process, and exhalation should generate "vitality and must perform like an uninterrupted, turned on faucet" (pp. 172). He further writes that the exhalation process leading to sound production should be supported by good aural imagery, good usage of the human body, and constant concentration (pp. 173-174).<sup>2</sup>

It is however interesting to read that Colin, as well as James Stamp, 'prescribes' controlled hyperventilation to encourage deep breathing (Colin pp. 178, Stamp pp. 2).<sup>3</sup> The physiological process of how hyperventilation helps with the student's development is not described, but recent health research has documented that inducing hyperventilation regularly has serious adverse impacts on personal health (See Chapter 2).

### **Conventional brass pedagogy on breathing**

Brass pedagogy books nowadays have a more uniform approach towards the breath, with much credit to Arnold Jacobs,<sup>4</sup> who began studies of human physiology and psychology as a hobby in the 1940s (Nelson pp. 10). Jacobs actively integrated the knowledge obtained into his teachings, which, in some ways, laid down a standardized approach to breathing for brass players supported by science. Since then, Jacobs has been quoted on numerous occasions in brass pedagogy.

Jacobs himself did not write a book regarding his ideas of breathing, but his students have compiled and published a number of books in attempts to preserve

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not be treated as a music method (pp. 6). Breathing in through the nose while keeping mouthpiece pressure is advocated to reduce the playing process to only inhaling and exhaling (pp. 7), and the student would develop an embouchure quicker (pp. 8).

<sup>2</sup> Colin constantly refers to "riding on the breath" and also maintaining a constant vigilance to keep buoyancy within the body or diaphragm [he uses the words 'body' and 'diaphragm' interchangeably in this context] (pp. 176-177).

<sup>3</sup> Breathing exercise IV in Stamp's book causes hyperventilation by expelling too much air [carbon dioxide].

<sup>4</sup> Arnold Jacobs was the tubist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1944-1988.

those ideas, and some even went on to add more research alongside his ideas. Even then, the basic pedagogy boils down to a very simple set of instructions: “Suck and blow” (Campos *Trumpet Technique* pp. 47-48, Nelson pp. 45). The principle behind this simplicity, however, is based on a substantial amount of research put into the physiology of the respiratory muscles in the torso area. These pedagogues primarily want to avoid unnecessary tension – one of which is the Valsalva maneuver<sup>5</sup> – which inhibits the breathing process.

However, even with all the research put into this area of brass playing, I feel that it still lacks the physiology of how organs in the head participate or influence the breathing process. Granted, there is no question that the air should pass through only the mouth during exhalation when playing the trumpet, but with regard to inhalation, there is still much to be explored. Campos wrote, “It is not proper technique to breathe through the nose.” (*Trumpet Technique* pp. 38) but provides no further explanation. Steenstrup talks about “sensing the air pass *the lips* with minimum friction” (pp. 113), which implies that inhalation is done through the mouth only. Nelson, in his usage of pictures, also shows that only the mouth is used to take in air (pp. 52).

### **Willem van der Vliet**

From all the teachers I have learnt from, Willem van der Vliet’s way of breathing best addresses this knowledge gap. Willem was the former principal trumpeter of the Radio Filharmonisch Orkest (RFO), and has amassed a huge amount of experience performing widely varied styles of music around the world during his freelance career prior to and after his job at the RFO. In addition to that, he also taught at Het Utrechts Conservatorium and Conservatorium van Amsterdam, and was active in giving masterclasses in Europe and United States of America. Since his retirement in 2002, he has been active in helping trumpeters with playing problems, and even singers and other instrumentalists, like clarinetists and flautists. Willem developed his method through trial-and-error, constantly seeking mastery over uncontrollable elements<sup>6</sup> in performance situations. His search led him to the realization that the high position of the soft palate plays a central role when playing the trumpet, and it is the combination of developing the inner hearing, tongue position and the breathing that makes it possible to stimulate the soft palate (see Appendix 1).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Anton Maria Valsalva was the first to document this body function scientifically, where the abdominal muscles tightens up and subsequently closes off the respiratory airways to provide a more rigid and stable body for physically straining actions, such as weight-lifting, childbirth, and difficult defecation. It can also be activated by the body to protect internal organs from external impact. (Steenstrup pp. 87-88)

<sup>6</sup> Negative colleagues, unforeseen mechanical instrumental problems or logistical problems on stage, psychological well-being are some examples of uncontrollable elements.

<sup>7</sup> The movements of the soft palate is regulated by the autonomic nervous system, which also regulates other body functions like heart rate, digestion, respiratory rate, urination etc.

## Proposed alternative technique

Willem tackles breathing by teaching his students to inhale through both the nose and the mouth simultaneously. From my personal experience, this way of breathing feels more 'complete'. When done properly, there is this sensation that I exist in seemingly paradoxical states, for example, feeling vitalized and yet relaxed at the same time or feeling vulnerable and yet secure at the same time. This type of psychological balance is important for me to feel stable in a performance situation, while providing me with enough energy, inspiration and also perspective to take risks.

Other students of Willem have reported that incorporating nasal inhalation into their practice has the following benefits in their playing (see Appendix 2):

1. More resonant sound.
2. Increased ability to vary sound colour.
3. Increased ability to keep airways in the head and throat open.
4. More relaxation in the tongue, leading to increased ability to articulate in different ways.

These listed benefits might be the reason why Frank Campos,<sup>8</sup> in a recent interview with the author, has started to change his stance against nasal inhalation (see Appendix 1). Regarding his statement in his book *Trumpet Technique* on nasal inhalation, he says that there is a need to first search for answers about the value of nose or nose and mouth breathing before that statement could be re-examined and clarified. In other words, there is not much information regarding this area of the inhalation known in trumpet pedagogy, which means that that information needs to be obtained also from other disciplines.

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<sup>8</sup> Frank Campos is a world-renowned trumpet player and pedagogue. He is also the 'Clinic' columnist for the International Trumpet Guild Journal since 1995.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Understanding breathing**

It is helpful to understand how breathing works, especially when the musician needs help with the process or when the pedagogue has to instruct or correct their student. However, when brass pedagogues talk about the breathing process, they mainly refer to the respiratory muscles in the torso in the physiological aspects of the process (Campos pp. 30-50, Nelson pp. 35-54, Steenstrup pp. 55-112). What is neglected is the consideration of the physiology of nose and mouth breathing; I believe that taking account of that into our breathing choices on the instrument would also prove to be beneficial. It is for this reason that I investigate the physiological impacts of different ways of breathing without taking the instrument into account first.

That being said, it is, however, not within the scope of this research to document all of the physiological impacts of nose and mouth breathing; the list will be limited to those that have a closer relationship to trumpet playing. Furthermore, it is also important to recognize that the majority of people do not breathe exclusively only through the mouth or only through the nose in daily life; most of us employ both, depending on the circumstances at a given time. The extremes (i.e. only nose or only mouth) are examined only to give us an idea of the full effects of each type of breathing.

#### **Nose breathing**

The human body is designed to use the nose for breathing. The nose works “synergistically to filter, warm, moisturize, dehumidify and smell the air” (O’Hehir and Francis). The mouth does not allow access to those functions. The nasal passages are the narrowest airway in the whole respiratory system, which means the passages contribute the most resistance on the airflow. This is particularly important in exhalation, the slower expulsion of air means that the lungs have more time to extract oxygen and deliver it to the blood.<sup>9</sup> On the inhalation, one of the unique functions of the nose is to release nitric oxide into the body. Carol Vander Stoep writes about how nitric oxide aids body functions (pp. 191):

1. Improves blood circulation by dilating blood vessels.
2. Increases blood oxygen levels by 18% (O’Hehir and Francis).
3. Improves the efficiency of oxygen release to brain and muscle cells (O’Hehir and Francis).
4. Increasing alertness by suffusing the brain with oxygen.
5. Promotes relaxation and feelings of wellbeing.

In Yogic traditions, the filtering, warming and moisturizing effects of the nasal passages on the air is important in protecting the throat and lungs from impurities in the air (Ramacharaka pp. 20). Furthermore, this protection is what yogic traditions

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<sup>9</sup> O’Hehir and Francis. “Oxygen is absorbed on the exhale, not on the inhale.”

contribute to decreased chances of falling ill (pp. 19). For trumpeters, this could be beneficial in overall health and longevity of playing life.

A 2016 study done in Northwestern University has also found out that airflow in the nose is important for generating respiratory rhythms that help cognitive functions. That effect is reduced when breathing is done through the mouth.<sup>10</sup> This suggests that incorporating nose breathing into the breathing process could potentially help trumpeters 'cope' with performance situations.

## Mouth breathing

Recent health research has found that chronic mouth breathing has a lot of adverse impacts on the body. In mouth breathers, the tongue rests at the bottom of the mouth. This could have the following implications in the development of the maxilla, or upper jaw, and the mandible, or lower jaw:

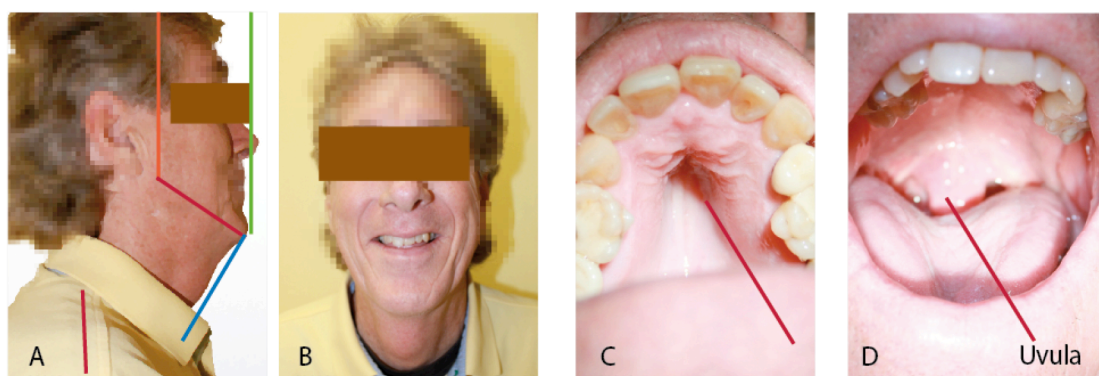


Fig. 2.1. Long faces. *Facial Meltdown – Birth to Death – and how it affects your overall health* by Carol Vander Stoep, 2013. [www.mouthmattersbook.com/2013/12/08/facial-meltdown-if-a-form-in-nature-isnt-beautiful-something-is-wrong/](http://www.mouthmattersbook.com/2013/12/08/facial-meltdown-if-a-form-in-nature-isnt-beautiful-something-is-wrong/), last accessed 27 Feb. 2017.

1. The palate loses support from the tongue, and the maxilla succumbs to the inward pressure exerted by the cheeks,<sup>11</sup> resulting in the development of a smaller teeth arch and a high-vaulted palate (Fig. 2.1 C). The lower face also grows down and backwards, creating a long and narrow appearance (Stoep, pp. 187-188), also known as the Long Face Syndrome (Fig. 2.1 A and B).
2. The high palatal vault reduces the size of the nasal passages, increasing the potential of nasal and sinus congestion (Stoep pp. 190).
3. The downwards and backwards growth of the mandible makes it weak and underdeveloped. The receded mandible results in overcrowding of the teeth, especially at the back of the mandible. This worsens when the wisdom teeth erupts. The tongue would then have to rest in a smaller area in the mandible, and the tongue moves backwards to compensate. This backwards movement

<sup>10</sup> Northwestern University. "... found evidence for respiratory entrainment of local field potential activity in human piriform cortex, amygdala, and hippocampus. These effects diminished when breathing was diverted to the mouth, highlighting the importance of nasal airflow for generating respiratory oscillations."

<sup>11</sup> Stoep. "It takes 1.4 grams of pressure to move teeth or change bone structure. The tongue exerts up to 500 grams of pressure, check muscles up to 300 grams." (pp. 185)

of the tongue reduces the size of the airway in the throat (Fig. 2.1 D), which is already compromised by the vertical growth of the mandible (Fig. 2.1 A).

The reduction of airway sizes listed in points 2 and 3 above, leads to a further complication: There is a tendency for mouth breathers to tilt the head backwards, similar to the maneuver required in cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), to open up the airway. And to counter the upward direction of the face in this backwards tilt, the head is brought forward so that the face faces forward in what is known as the Forward Head Posture (FHP)<sup>12</sup> (Stoep pp. 188-189).

Stoep believes that prevention is the best when it comes to dealing with the above problems caused by mouth breathing (pp. 205-207). This means that the best time to correct this is at age 2 or 3. Later in life, it is still possible to attempt to correct this,<sup>13</sup> but the older one gets, the more diminished the effects will be.

The mouth, being a larger orifice than the nostrils, allows for more air movement in a shorter time. This can be used to good effect when the amount of carbon dioxide produced by the body grows to excessive levels, for example during strenuous exercise. However, if this becomes habitual, the body loses too much carbon dioxide and hinders oxygen transfer to the brain and muscle cells, which is known as the Bohr effect.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, excessive loss of carbon dioxide also sends a signal to the body to produce more mucus in the nose, to further slow down the expulsion of carbon dioxide. Ironically, this increases nasal congestion, causing mouth breathers to slip into a downward spiral of breathing more through the mouth. Over time, the body adapts to the lowered levels to carbon dioxide in the blood, making it more sensitive to increase in carbon dioxide levels, and the respiratory trigger in medulla in the hindbrain resets to trigger respiration before carbon dioxide amount reaches normal levels,<sup>15</sup> causing hyperventilation (Flutter).

Another double-edged effect of mouth breathing is that it primes the body for intense activity (Ortego). Mouth breathing triggers the “fight or flight” response, but it is unquestionably harmful if that is maintained during rest. Balancing this response well could increase the chances of the trumpeter being ‘ready’ to play at any given time.

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<sup>12</sup> FHP is highly undesirable in many postural methods, like Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais.

<sup>13</sup> Consider how orthodontics works: it is the light and gentle pressure on the teeth that moves them slowly. Taking it further, the facial muscles can also remodel facial bones.

<sup>14</sup> Physiologist Christian Bohr first documented this effect in 1904. He observed that when carbon dioxide levels in the alveoli [tiny cavities in the lungs] and arterial blood drops below 5% [normal body requirement is 6.5%], blood pH rises and oxygen ‘sticks’ to the hemoglobin instead of transferring to muscle and brain cells.

<sup>15</sup> Flutter. “... the point that we inhale is determined chemically. As carbon dioxide builds up in the body it changes the pH of the blood and... triggers the brain to take a new breath. The Medullary Trigger reacts to levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the body of approximately 40mm Hg, producing a normal breathing pattern.”

## Trumpet playing and breathing

Before adding the trumpet into the equation, it is important the note that in these two extreme ways of breathing, there are efficient and inefficient ways of inhaling. One of the easiest ways to define this is by the 'noise'. Efficient methods of inhalation tend to be 'noiseless', and vice versa for the inefficient.

*Try it yourself:* Inhale either through the nose or the mouth noisily. Next, inhale while reducing the amount of 'noise'. Notice the difference between the efforts the body uses for the two ways of inhalation. Alternate and experiment with the other orifice. Chances are, the body employs tense and/or sharp actions to induce 'noisy' inhalation, and smooth and/or slow actions to induce 'noiseless' inhalation. This is because constricting the airways causes the noise.

With the experiment detailed above, it can be further observed that the speed of inhalation through the nose is much slower than through the mouth in the efficient ways. This itself is a problem in practical performance settings of the trumpeter. Here is an example:



Fig 2.2. Excerpt from clarinet part, *Sonata à 3 in C major* J.H. Schmelzer (1620/23-1680), edition by the author, 2015.

Consider the long phrase in Fig 2.2 (bars 18-27). The possibilities for breathing are in the rests, or between the half notes in bars 23-24. Either of them provides an inhalation time of about less than a second, which would be too short for efficient nasal inhalation, especially when the player is feeling out of breath. However, what can the trumpeter do if they do not want to lose the benefits associated with nasal inhalation?

## **Combination of both**

This is where Willem's instructions fit in. Theoretically, using the nose and the mouth simultaneously during inhalation gives the best compromise of the both ways of breathing, namely:

### **Nasal benefits**

1. Release of nitric oxide into the body, promoting brain alertness and feelings of relaxation.
2. Improved cognitive functions, which increases the potential to deal with the stress of performance.

### **Oral benefits**

1. Quicker inhalation.
2. Balanced triggering of 'fight or flight' response, which prepares the body for playing the trumpet.

However, no matter how good the above information looks, it is still only words, and one can go as far as to call it only a hypothesis. Even in the case that this hypothesis is proven to be true, it will not mean anything to a trumpeter if they do not experience how breathing in this manner helps, or hinders, their playing. There is a need to find ways to learn, by means of experiencing, how to inhale through both the nose and the mouth and then observe the effects over time. Only then, there are possibilities of connecting experience with physiological knowledge.

## Chapter 3

### Learning the inhalation

Learning to combine nasal and oral inhalation is much easier than it sounds. The central idea to achieving this is breathing in through the nose and the imagination of the breath going 'up into the head'. This encourages an 'open' feeling in the head, which correlates to the enlargement of the airways in the head. These airways play a crucial part in determining the overall resonance in the sound. The following exercises are from Willem, of which not much documentation of them exists. The exercises below are reproduced with his permission, and further complemented with my personal commentaries on them based on my experience of doing them.

#### Simultaneously breathing in through nose and mouth

One of the most efficient ways to learn to inhale simultaneously through the nose and the mouth is as follows:

##### Exercise 1.0

1. Stick the tip of the tongue out of the mouth and place it on the upper vermillion border, or the junction where the red area of the upper lip meets the surrounding skin of the mouth.
2. Feel the jaw – wriggle it about to find more possibilities for it to loosen up.
3. From this position, breathe in through the nose, up into the head.
4. There are physical sensations to take note of. When done properly, you can feel air passing through the nostrils and the lips. There is also a feeling of 'stretch' in the tongue and at the back of the mouth. It could be that some sensations are stronger than others, or some are non-existent at the moment.

The exercise above is the basic form of learning this way of inhalation. However, there is a danger of becoming too reliant on the physical sensations brought about from this experience. The human body adapts very quickly to these physical feelings, and after some time the body gets used to them. This causes these feelings to become diminished and the learner's body could interfere incorrectly with the breath subconsciously to have a stronger 'grasp' on these feelings.

The study of the breath is a paradox. It must be remembered that physical feelings are a kind of 'side-effect' of the process of inhalation, and the concentration should be given only to the breathing process. But at the same time, these physical feelings are a form of indication that the breath is 'complete'. Therefore, there is a need to vary the breathing exercise to monitor that the exercise is being carried out properly and to deal with the intervention of the subconscious. An example is listed below.

### Exercise 1.1

1. Put the index finger vertically against the center of the lips, touching both upper and lower lips.
2. Stick the tongue out to touch the upper lip and index finger.
3. From this position, breathe in through the nose, up into the head.

The presence of the finger creates a different balance of physical feelings and reaction, and is also a good way of starting to feel how this inhalation method would work with the trumpet. The finger can be substituted with a trumpet mouthpiece, and subsequently the trumpet.

### Exercise 2

1. For this exercise, a pipe of  $\pm 20\text{mm}$  in diameter and  $\pm 50\text{mm}$  is required.
2. Put the pipe in the mouth, until only the end is barely sticking out. The pipe should be held in place by the upper lip and upper teeth above the pipe, and by the tongue and lower lip below the pipe. The tongue should be extended over the lower teeth and its tip should touch the lower lip.
3. Breathe in through the nose, up into the head.

Naturally for Exercise 2, a huge airflow activity could be felt from the pipe. The pipe helps to direct airflow to the back of the mouth, and enhancing the sensation of the breath 'going up into the head'. Furthermore, the wide diameter or 'openness' of the pipe stimulates a certain balance of 'openness' in all the airways in the head and neck, especially in the throat.

### Exercise 3

1. Stick the tongue out and stretch the tip downward towards the ground. The back of the tongue should be in contact with the chin as much as possible. The tongue should also be kept as broad as possible.
2. Gently bite down on the tongue with the upper teeth.
3. Breathe in through the nose, up into the head.
4. Maintain the contact points mentioned in steps 1 and 2. Feel how the back of the mouth and tongue stretches.

The purpose of Exercise 3 is to increase the flexibility of the tongue and also the muscles at the back of the mouth. The increased flexibility allows for more 'stretch' during inhalation, which increases the oral cavity and improves the potential resonance related to it.

## **Incorporating the nose-mouth inhalation into trumpet playing**

The following exercise provides a context in which the nose-mouth inhalation works with the trumpet.

### Exercise 4

1. Inhale in the manner as detailed in Exercise 1.1, but with the trumpet in hand, and with the intention of playing a C in the third space of the treble staff.
2. When the inhalation is complete, the facial muscles, supported by the intention of playing the C, form an embouchure naturally. The tongue is brought back into the mouth at the same time.
3. Air pressure can be felt behind the tongue. Releasing the tongue lets the air pass through the embouchure and creates the intended sound with the help of the resistance of the instrument.

The potentially difficult aspect of Exercise 4 is to find the correct timing or rhythm, especially in steps 2 and 3. Experimentation is highly recommended, and the aim of experimenting is to find out, at which point the body feels ready to play. However, the danger of the body getting used to physical feelings is ever present, and the learner must constantly remind themselves that constant vigilance is required when studying the breath.

It must also be noted that what is described in Exercise 4, in some ways, is an extension beyond the scope of this paper. Before, only the inhalation has been discussed in great detail. However, inhalation is only a part of the breath; the other parts – each of them of equal importance to warrant a dedicated research study on their own – are: the exhalation process, the transition from inhalation to exhalation, and the transition from the exhalation to inhalation. Each part influence each other in profound ways; if the learner is serious about mastering the breath, they should also seek for ways to gain knowledge and experience also in the other three aspects of the breath.

### **Further study**

As the learner advances in the process, there are ‘deeper’ developments in the body and mind to take note of. The approach of inhaling ‘into the head’ takes away excessive physical attention to the rest of the body, and is focused on allowing it to find its own ‘form’. Willem uses an analogy of holding up a cloth to describe this process (see Fig 3.1). The point into where the inhalation is concentrated on is similar to the point at the top where the cloth is being held up. The sides of the cloth find their own places in the air, balanced between the force that holds the cloth up and gravity, and that is the ideal concept that the body should feel.





Fig. 3.1. Three Hanging Cloth Sculptures. *Projects & Collections* by Harry Roseman, 1991-1992. [faculty2.vassar.edu/haroseman/?p=2356](http://faculty2.vassar.edu/haroseman/?p=2356), last accessed 1 Apr. 2017.

Learning to breathe well also requires developing control and awareness of the body.<sup>16</sup> A good guideline of how the body should develop could be found in *The Yogi Complete Breath* sections in Ramacharaka's book (pp. 27-31). Miller also describes something similar called the *Appoggio*, which is a term used to encapsulate the breathing technique employed by the Italian [singing] School back in the 1970s (pp. 41-42). To summarize it briefly, these are the key points, which could be used alone to check the inhalation process:

1. Area under the collarbone expands up- and outwards.<sup>17</sup>
2. Intercostal muscles directly underneath the armpits pull the ribcage towards the sides. This applies to the area around the floating ribs as well. (Ramacharaka pp. 28)
3. The abdomen or the area around the belly button is drawn inwards towards the spine, and the region where the celiac or solar plexus is located expands out to the front, which raises the sternum (Ramacharaka pp. 30, Miller pp. 42). This creates a sense of support to the whole breathing mechanism.

And once again, it must be brought to attention that these physical reactions are the result of the inhalation process, and should not be sought after actively. How these muscles react to the inhalation process each time differs in many different ways on many different levels, and these differences could add up to give a completely different sensation in the body. Again the analogy of the hanging cloth is

<sup>16</sup> Khan. "Before control of breath is learned, control of the body must be gained by the practice of postures and positions."

<sup>17</sup> This is an aspect of the *High Breath* which is utilized in the *Complete Breath* (Ramacharaka pp. 25, 30-31)

helpful – the sides of the cloth always fall to form a certain shape, but the way they fall differs every time the cloth is picked up.

Over time, in studying and developing control over the breath and body, all the physical sensations can be ‘forgotten’,<sup>18</sup> and the body and mind gain metaphysical sensations or indications that they can rely on to recognize when the inhalation is performed well or not. At that stage, there is no need to physically fill up the lungs completely with air to achieve a good inhalation (Ramacharaka pp. 29). The inhalation required to play the trumpet can be achieved by simply ‘wishing’ for it.

Finally, to be able to reach that stage of ‘doing by not doing’,<sup>19</sup> it cannot be emphasized enough the importance of daily practice. The Murshid of Hazrat Inayat Khan instructs that the only sin is “To let one breath go without being conscious of it.” If the learner adopts the attitude of studying the breath only during trumpet practice, it will not be enough. The breath and body should be studied and developed at every moment. As Miyamoto Musashi says, “... make the everyday body for the martial arts, and the body for the martial arts the everyday body.” (pp. 77)

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<sup>18</sup> This concept is in line with the Taoist ideas of Lao-Tzu: “... destroy [let go] for the sake of the Way, continue destroying, and finally achieving *wu wei*.” [... 為道日損，損之又損，以致於無為。] (Translation by the author.) *Wu wei* [無為] literally translates to ‘without action’, and it cannot be actively sought after. It is the result of cultivation.

<sup>19</sup> Also known as *wei wu wei* [為無為] in Taoism. This paradox stems from the concept of *wu wei*.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Summary of surveys with Willem's students**

#### **Findings**

Structured surveys were conducted with Willem's students who have studied with him for at least 4 years (similar to the length of time of study for a bachelor degree in music performance in the Netherlands) on a regular basis. With the exception of the author, the students surveyed have either a position in a major symphony orchestra or teach in a major conservatory. A trombonist was also surveyed.

In general, all the students found Willem's ideas in breathing useful in their practice and performance. Almost everybody stated that this way of breathing has a relation to achieving a more resonant sound. Individual students also reported the following:

1. Clearer 'attacks'
2. Increased ability to vary sound colours and hardness of articulation.
3. Increased endurance.
4. Better intonation.
5. Better connection with the body.
6. Better concentration towards music making.

All students still employ the aforementioned way of breathing at the point when the survey was conducted. 3 students, including the author, further said that this breathing method even has an effect in daily life, apart from the instrument.

The way that Willem's breathing method was described varied wildly between each student. 3 students, including the author, went into great detail about how different areas of the body interact with the breath, with different focus. However, the tongue is a recurring body part in everybody's description of breathing, interestingly enough.

All of Willem's students who teach regularly incorporate Willem's ideas into their teaching. 3 out of the 4 students who teach focus on the sound as an indicator to instruct their respective students. They seem to prefer to avoid giving out too much instruction to their students. The last student seems to adopt a physical-based approach, focused on developing the body for the breath, and subsequently the trumpet.

#### **Further interpretation**

There seems to be no question about the benefits of Willem's breathing method, seeing that every student surveyed still practice it and found it useful in a variety of situations. Furthermore, all those who teach regularly make use of

Willem's concepts, which speak volumes of the effectiveness of Willem's instructions.

The intriguing aspect arises from how each student understands and/or explains Willem's breathing method. There are a lot of variations in each description, which means that everybody understands/knows the breath in different ways. However, considering everybody's career success, it does not mean that one version is more 'accurate' than the other. To the author, this simply highlights the limitations of the written word, and that the experience behind the written word has to be expressed in person.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions and discussion

In conclusion, there are theoretical benefits (from sciences of breath) and also practical benefits (see interviews and surveys of trumpeters in Appendix 1 and 2) of simultaneously inhaling through both the nose and the mouth in trumpet playing and performance. Furthermore, it is easy to learn this inhalation technique.

However, an immediate problem is that it is not as easy to incorporate this inhalation technique into trumpet playing, as described in Chapter 3. Inhalation is only one of the four parts of the breathing process; changing one part of it changes the balance and relationship between every part. Improving one part certainly helps, but the other parts need to change as well so that the balance in the breathing process does not fall apart.

Another problem linked to the above problem also arose during my attempts to reach out to Willem's students to survey them about their experience with the simultaneous nose and mouth inhalation. Some of them turned me down because they felt that they would devalue his ideas with their explanations, and it is something that has to be experienced in person. This showed me that even with the developments in multimedia documentation, a video or audio recording or text or picture is, in most cases, only a source of inspiration, and is insufficient to show and give the learner the complete experience of the breath. In some cases it could even obstruct the learner from achieving the complete experience of the breath.

The solution to the above problems, I feel, is best approached by learning from somebody who is well-versed in the study and practice of the breath, and also by learning from feeling or 'listening' to the body and the breath. If learners are left only to their own devices, it is possible to succeed, but the questions that would plague the students endlessly would be: "Am I doing it right? Am I good enough?" A teacher who can supervise and direct the learner to experience the breath is a much-needed complement because of the direct feedback provided to and from the student.

This is not to say that multimedia documentation has no place in the study of the breath. In my experience, multimedia sources are best used either as a reminder of the lessons and experience or as inspiration from a fresh perspective. Musashi's *The Book of Five Rings* is a good example of the former. He describes technique in great detail, but also emphasizing the importance of practice. In some cases, the ideas described are inimical to the written word that he merely passes them off as "oral tradition", meaning that it has to be passed on in person rather than in the book.

Finally, going back to my attempt to contact Willem's students for surveys, there are also a couple of trumpeters who turned me down because they did not want the fact that they go to Willem for 'unconventional' instruction to be known. In a certain way I understand their sentiments. When I started to work on playing the

trumpet with Willem's instruction on breathing, I met with a lot of resistance. Teachers and colleagues were telling me that my way of breathing was 'wrong', and I should revert back to the low abdominal breathing with the open mouth and throat. And when I explained that the latter way of breathing was the thing that caused my playing to deteriorate, they dismissed that idea and simply said I was not working hard enough. That was frustrating on many levels. Nevertheless, in showing the theoretical and practical benefits through my research, I hope that it could be recognized that simultaneous nose-mouth inhalation has its place in trumpet pedagogy, and more importantly, that it could serve as a form of encouragement to trumpeters who want to explore this type inhalation.

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## Appendix 1

### Interviews

#### Interview questions for Willem van der Vliet

1. Could you describe the breathing technique that you teach and its benefits? Do you have a name for this technique?
2. How was this technique developed? What was/were the underlying motivation(s)?
3. How do you teach this technique? Which aspects of it do you find easy or difficult to teach?
4. What do you observe from your students when they are learning this technique?
5. What other instruments/singers have you taught apart from the trumpet? What feedback have you had from people who have worked deeply on the technique?

#### Interview questions for Frank Campos

1. From Ithaca College's website, it says that you have an amazing range of musical styles in your performing career, as a classical and jazz soloist, and also as a member in numerous orchestras, big bands, and even period orchestras in USA. You are also currently the trumpet professor in the Whalen Centre for Music, and the 'Clinic' columnist for the *International Trumpet Guild Journal* since 1995. You also wrote the book *Trumpet Technique* in 2005, which is "regarded [as] the best single source on the subject".

In addition to the above information, is there anything else of importance about yourself as a pedagogue that you would like to add?

2. During your clinic in the Royal Conservatory in The Hague in September 2015, Willem van der Vliet was also present as a guest lecturer. What were your impressions of his lecture?

3. How do you teach trumpeters to breathe?

4. What, in your experience, is the mainstream pedagogy on breathing for trumpet players?

5. In Willem's teachings: *the breath is a way of connecting the player with their inner selves, and with the creative process of music making. This is accomplished by developing two things: first, the inner hearing of the student, and second, the stimulation of the soft palate. The first makes the student recognise the relationship between the sound colours and the soft palate. The second influences the soft palate so that the student themselves can produce those sound colours. To stimulate the soft*

*palate, Willem teaches to breathe in through the nose and mouth simultaneously; this raises the soft palate, which influences the opening, and the 'form of the opening' of the throat.*

What, in your opinion, is different, new, surprising or innovative about this method? Do you think it could help trumpeters and why?

Follow up question

6. In your book *Trumpet Technique*, you mentioned that "It is not proper technique to breathe through the nose." (pp. 38), but it is evident from your answers above that you have changed your ideas. How would you instruct trumpeters to inhale on the trumpet now?

### **Interview transcript – Willem van der Vliet**

Transcribed by Danny Teong, 9 Jan. 2017

Ed. (in red) by Willem van der Vliet, 3 Mar. 2017

*Danny (D)*: This is the interview with Willem van der Vliet, what's today's date... It's the 9<sup>th</sup> of January. So the first question, could you describe the breathing technique that you teach and its benefits? Do you have a name for this technique?

*Willem (W)*: Mmm, you know, everybody is breathing, and the way you breathe also depends a lot on your personality, so the breathing is very much related to your psychological structure. The breathing, this technique [that I strive to achieve] is more like a process than something fixed, different from conventional teaching, and I hope that everybody can recognize something in it. I met many people who were involved in breathing and breathing technique, and finally, you could compare it to total breathing, [more or less] like yoga. But it rises above the physical; it's more than physical breathing. Finally, you see that the breathing—first of all, maybe I should say that first – that all your possibilities you have, is the result of how you use your breath. [Everything you do is related to the breath], everything in your whole body is coordinated by the breath, and your possibilities are the result of how you use your breath, and also directly related to your psychological condition. When you don't feel well, you don't play well! So it means that your psychological condition has an influence on how you use your breath. It [can] disturb the contact. Breathing, breath, is something to connect yourself with your body. Many people are not in balance, and as a result, they don't experience real 'empathy' with themselves, they don't have good feeling connection with themselves, they don't feel themselves. On the moment that there is fear or anxiousness, it is because this particular connection is missing. But I would say, your blockage, and everything you experience during your playing, is also the result of the breath. So, the breath creates your possibilities, and the breath creates your blockage. And that depends on you, how you use the breath. And that [again,] depends on your psychological condition, and, the magic is that when you are making music, you rise above your personal limitations. You rise above controlling and thinking. Breath is also intelligence. Because it coordinates the body, coordinates all the cells, [and] all the processes in your body. So the breath is in a way, your natural intelligence. It's life's intelligence, you could say. But you only

can experience that, if you can feel that breath is more than only the air you suck in and blow out, air is the energy. So air is directly related to your consciousness. On the moment that you feel that, you can feel that the balance you need to play the trumpet, is to create balance on all the levels: the physical level, the psychological level, and finally, on the musical level. Because music is the highest form of energy and in the same time, relaxation. I don't know if that is an answer. The benefits are, that what I try, and what I was searching for in my life, that the breath, gave me the possibility to rise above my own limitations. Sometimes I felt, when I was on stage, sometimes, it was my own limitations which stopped me from playing as I wanted. Sometimes you play really well, if you think: "This is it!" And [then] you want to control [or have a grip on it], it's gone! So it is rising above intellectual control, control of thinking. And name? There is no name for it. I mean, I think, it's Complete Breath, or realising that breath is not only air, it is life's energy, and life's energy is intelligence, universal intelligence.

D: How was this technique developed? What was/were the underlying motivation(s)?

W: Well, it was always that, [as I told you before,] on the stage, during the concert, you are really confronted with your limitations. Sometimes at home you had a wonderful feeling, and you thought, you could play everything, eh, very easily. And then on the stage, you experience that it was not, in that kind of circumstances, possible. And then you are confronted with that what stops you from playing well. And my motivation was, how can I rise above these 'good-and-bad', and 'better-than'... How can I find this balance in myself that I am not disturbed anymore by myself. Because you are always disturbed by your reaction to circumstances. It's you who stops yourself from playing well. I remember that when I was irritated by some conductor, [colleagues or the acoustic of the hall]. Sometimes I thought to myself: How is it possible that this man is conducting? And when I was irritated, I played badly. I had to understand that it was my judgment about this man which stopped me from playing well. So I had to stop judging the circumstances, reacting to the circumstances. And later, I suddenly felt that the moment before you play, that is the most important moment. There you could feel, [whether] the note is there or not. When I grew older, and got more experienced, I felt on a certain moment, in a way, the whole piece already, that I felt all the notes, all the difficult lines, they were already there, and I only had to connect myself with it. It sounds strange, but I remember a piece, that I had a difficult thing to do, in a famous hall, and suddenly I felt totally free of all frustrations and free of all [things, for example:] it's difficult, or famous people [in the hall], [am I playing well] this kind of bullshit. But [those] were all pictures in my own head, and I had to get rid of all pictures I made of, for instance, famous concert halls, famous conductors. It's just to sit there and be yourself, and then you play well. Forget reputation, also your own reputation. When you are willing [to be vulnerable] to miss notes, and [you accept that you are not perfect,] that everything can go wrong, then you play best! Because you surrender to the moment. In [that] moment, the real moment, [it feels] timeless and spaceless. And that was the moment where everything was there. It sounds strange, but I don't know, my english is not so good to explain what I want. Is that more or less...?

D: More or less, so is that how the technique was developed, in a way?

W: Yes, by falling and standing up. Making mistakes, and...

D: And always trying to find the--

W: Yes, yes, find more balance and more easy, you know, and always searching for what are my limitations. I always wanted to break through the limitations; I wanted to understand this. I remember once I was 30 or 33, and I actually had all the work and all the jobs that I wanted. And I thought, what do I want more? I realised that the reputation, or fame, this kind of things, are all bullshit. The only thing, or the only desire I had, was to understand the 'uncontrollability', could you say? When you are the stage, and everything seems not being controlled, that you cannot control it. I wanted to understand, what is this, and what is the secret behind that you cannot control this situation and how, still, that you can reach that point, that what I want, happens, without controlling. And that took 25 years or so.

D: How do you teach this technique? Which aspects of it do you find easy or difficult to teach?

W: Well, this is very difficult to teach, you know, first of all, it depends on the quality of the ears of the student. You have to learn to feel, and you have to learn to listen. [Listening is also a 'breath activity'.] And listening and feeling are very much related. The better your ears are, the more you discover all the colours, you know, in your sound. Because, I told you already, that controlling the whole system is impossible. But your ears, are always open. So with your ears, you hear the sound, you can search for the sound you want, and suddenly something happens in your body, which you cannot understand, that's the point. So what I do is first... The first blockage that most people have, because you know I work with people who [think they] have embouchure problems, they call it embouchure problems, but mostly it's breathing, breath contact and articulation [problems]. The way of belly breathing, or lower breathing, is often a misinterpretation of the breathing technique of yoga. People went there for a few lessons and they thought they knew what it was all about. But the lower breathing is only the one part of the whole breathing. It's low, it's wide, it's high. So in certain asian tradition, they say the breath has 6 directions. Down and up, to the sides, and one forward and one backward, and you should find the balance in this 6. But what is mostly forgotten, it's the higher part of the breathing. People say, lower breathing is important, and they forget that finally, there {gesturing around his head}, there is the magic. Of course it depends on the contact, the lower contact and the wide breathing, here {points to lower pelvic area}, and here, what is it called?

D: Ribs? Under the armpits?

W: Yes, more or less there, there is a point where it should be wide. And this should be wide also {points to floating ribs}, and then you feel the lower part of the belly,

goes it, and the upper part comes out, that you feel this *{demonstrates}*. And then, to keep the balance, you know, to physically control is almost impossible, but when you listen to your sound, and you **recognize** that point, what I sometimes call the zero point, or hangtime, you remember what An Chun said? That is the moment where you have to touch, that's the point where all the other things in breathing find the natural place. The magical point in breathing, is the transition from the inhaling to the exhaling. And to that point, where you don't know if I'm **[still]** inhaling or already exhaling, in that point, if you surrender to that point, the rest of the physical body finds its natural place. And there is a transition moment from 'in' to 'out', from 'out' to 'in'. And **[in the same way,]** also from 'in', to the **[first or]** next note! And also from one note, to the other note, one phrase, to the next phrase. Do you know the conductor Celibidache? He could be **[a]** terrible man for musicians. And once I remember a story -- I have played there for a while -- and there was a violin player who told this story, when they had a concert in Vienna. No not Vienna, Venice. There was a concert and the conductor was very excited: "Wow now I **know the secret!**" And what is it then? He said it's the transition of one group to the other group, it's the transition from one melody, it's the transition from one note to the next note, you know all this, he understood. And he was very happy and was "oh now I know". And the next day, he thought, "wow we're doing the same tomorrow!" And as I understood from [the] musicians, he never found it anymore. Because he thought he could control, and then he started yelling to musicians, that "you don't understand what I mean", and so on and on. But the secret is this, it is the transition from one moment to the next moment. What you said, what you **[can]** call hangtime, that's the moment. Even when you talk to somebody, you make this movement. *{gestures}* So you first connect to yourself, hang point, and then you speak. And that is the magic of the beauty. That makes the line on the screen is nice, or that the sound is nice. That's the inner reality of beauty, it's not a mental thing. It's above this.

D: So what do you do to teach people to get to this...?

W: First of all, develop their ears. Listening, the colour of the sound. Listen to musicians, who play or sing like this, so singers... The first man who, where I recognize this, was Alfredo Krauss. And I don't know exactly what he sang, it was very nice with a piano, an old recording, and he -- I recognised something what I had recognized **in** myself some weeks before. I thought, how can I control this, how? I felt suddenly, in the back of my mouth, was something, which had huge influence. When this happened, suddenly other things were the result of it. I didn't have to control everything, I didn't have to practice all day to control. Because it is there when you breathe like this. But sometimes I could do it, and other times not. So I wanted to understand, what is this? And then I realised it was the soft palate **[which is well known in singing technique. The soft palate has far-reaching consequences, much more than assumed, in general]**. And then Alfredo Krauss, he spoke about it, and I met somebody from the opera in Berlin, he said, "Alfredo Krauss, he's, how you say, he's 'misforming' the soft palate of his students, they all had an extremely high soft palate." But I realised that, that was my direction. And then I met a french-spanish artist, and he said, "Well I know this, I use this when I make my sculptures. I have the image in my head, as long as I am connected with this image, my hands

follow the image. When I start thinking about **my movements**, then I make a mistake." And then, I think this happened in two weeks. But that's what we were talking about, "intention", you remember? Suddenly, I knew I want to know, I want to understand this. And then I met a yoga teacher, he was an old man, and he was very intuitive. I said I want to understand, and how can I control that soft palate? And he said to me, "Start humming, especially head voice." You know the exercises I gave you, that's what I started to do. {Hums} And then I felt suddenly, this movement at the back of my mouth, and then when I try to do it on the trumpet, and I thought suddenly, wow, this is much nicer, and easier for my lips. What we were just doing [earlier in lesson], when we were searching for the hangpoint. I was so enthusiastic, excited about it, that it went on all my life. And I recognise it also in sports, I recognise it in movements of animals, I recognise it in all philosophies, and suddenly, I understood **much more of the old** scriptures, you know, from 1000, 2000 years ago. And I thought, wow, this is what they have meant. Recorder playing in the Renaissance, some of the musicians are talking about it. I know this from Frans Brüggen. He knew about it. But only a few **[others knew about it]**. And then the only thing you can do is, listening and listening and how can I... And the abdomen, that's what we call the lower breathing, often, is so over-emphasized. That you get this {drops belly}. And if you start from this **['sagging']** point, you create blockage. You feel already the space in your head [is blocked].. Okay I talk too much...

D: No, no, no, it's good because we are still missing one part. So the thing that you didn't mention was that, how in the inhalation do you get to that high soft palate? Or what do you teach to students to get this high soft palate?

W: Well, I do not directly start with the soft palate. First of all, when the soft palate is not working, and if people want to be secure, they want to be safe, it's all based on fear. And on the moment that you are afraid, the tongue goes backward. Because you want to run away, like animals do. I know this from musicians, for instance **[in jazz music]**, you're sitting there, and suddenly you have to stand up and go to the front and play a solo. At that moment you are very vulnerable. You need vulnerability. Because you must be able, or willing to die, in a way, then you play better. But if you want to run away (**'flight' behavior**), as a result of that, **[the breathing is disturbed, and]** the tongue goes backward. And then you disturb the whole breathing. So first of all is keep the tongue forward on the long note. {Demonstrates} When you walk on the street, keep the tongue there. That is the first thing. Then what I ask them, if you keep the tongue forward, you're walking on the street, how does it feel? Do you feel the difference in the personality? We say in dutch, how you are in your skin? How do you feel? You feel different, when the tongue is tensed, or backward, it has a mental result. The whole body is tensed. That's **[the]** first thing, tongue forward. Because I learned in a certain Tao scripture, that every tension in the body is also in the tongue. So by using the tongue, being aware of the tongue and relaxing **[and widening]** the tongue, you create already possibilities to get rid of tensions in your body, as well. So that's the first thing. Then what I did also, was that the nose breathing had a totally different influence than the mouth breathing. Mouth breathing only could lock you, tense you, **and** block you. {Demonstrates}. But the nose breathing gives a different influence on your

diaphragm, and then I discovered that the soft palate created a balance in the whole system. You know, what I told about breathing **having** 6 directions. And I also learned in eastern philosophy, that the quality of an action, whatever you do, depends on the direction of the breath. So it was not the strength of the breath, it was the direction of the breath. There were 6 directions, so there should be a balance. And I felt that the soft palate create that balance. And the tongue forward -- when the tongue goes backward, then you **lose the balance**. It's **all** about the two. The tongue, and the articulation, creates a connection, from there to there, and to there *{gestures in the 6 directions of the breath}*. When the tongue goes backwards, it's doing this *{mimics choking}*. So the nose breathing, and especially the noiseless nose breathing. It's not *{sniffs in strongly through the nose}*, no, you suck in the air as if you suck in the air here *{points to forehead area between eyebrows}*. In the beginning, I had, I told you once that I met a wonderful man, that he really knew about breathing, yoga breathing. **[Unfortunately,]** he died very young. But what I learned of him, that he said, "You can inhale here *{points to nose}*, also here *{points to bridge of nose}*, but you can also inhale here *{points to forehead, between and above eyebrows}*. And that is directly related to the soft palate. That's what -- I gave you the tube. It's because the tube is creating that. And then you feel that, for instance, that the jaw, tensions in the jaw, eh, you got rid of it by using this. Because mental control, if you are afraid and you want to control, you want to survive, creates tension in the jaw. But that destroys the balance when you play the trumpet. I don't know if this is more or less, ya?

D: To summarize what was the thing, it's a kind of combination of mouth and nose breathing?

W: Ya, ya, ya, finally, my final aim is that the nose and the mouth breathing are in balance. So then I do this, I search for the balance between the two. And then, I feel then the soft palate comes up, at the same time, I feel that the throat opens, it frees **[up]**, you know... And not only just open, the throat is not just open, but needs a certain form. And that form is, eh, creates itself, created by the breath.

D: What do you observe from your students when they are learning this way of breathing?

W: Well, first of all, the sound is getting better. It's easy for them to express, the musical ideas, the, how you call it, the phrasing, this kind of things, and the quality of the sound is getting better, because the quality of the sound creates, the same time, that balance. But the same time, they get more self-confidence. Their personality differs, it changes. They get stronger, and they are more subtle, softer, the ego diminishes, you [know] that? Can you say that? But they feel stronger, with less ego. That I could say. That's finally the result. But I don't know if you have observed it.

D: Yea, that's what I feel from myself.

W: Ya, so I felt, on the stage, suddenly, once I had -- once I felt this. When I touched -- when I put the tongue forward, and I started breathing, nose, mouth, and suddenly I



felt such balance, I felt huge power, but no ego. Maybe you can realize this, understand what I mean. It's, so there was, in a way, compassion, also with myself. I didn't judge any more about circumstances, and I felt extremely strong. Yea? Can you imagine?

D: Yep *{laughs}* it is still difficult, but it's coming.. So okay yea the final question: What other instruments/singers have you taught apart from the trumpet? What feedback have you had from people who have worked deeply on the technique?

W: Now first of all they must serve music, they must stand there, they are serving the music. It's not me, but it's the music. So, dienstbaar (*subservient*), you know? You know dienstbaar in.. being able, or willing to be the servant of the music. That's in a way, I don't know how you say in English, but... That's one of the most important thing, and that they learn to observe themselves. And not to judge about themselves. Yea? So... Because on the moment that you judge about yourself, on the stage, you lose contact with yourself. The breath, you understand, if you judge about, if you judge about other people, the same. Because, judging about other people, about circumstances or the conductor, starts because you judge about yourself. And when you get free of it, because you learn to be yourself, without any temptation to judge, you see that your contact with the world around you also is different.

D: Ah, so that was actually for the previous question I guess?

W: Ah yea.

D: And then the last one is uh, so, did you, I mean, you taught also other instruments and also singers? This way of playing?

W: Yea, I have some singers, yes? You know I'm not a singing teacher, but, I mean, the exact articulation, this kind, that's something special for them. But many singers, I had some people, who stopped – especially – who stopped singing. And they came in the conservatory as the great talents. And after 2 or 3 years, nothing came out anymore. And then you see that they were *[educated in]* this *[over-emphasized]* low breathing. You know, and this was forgotten and this was forgotten *{gestures to side of ribs and point between eyebrows}*. *This creates the whole breathing.* Yes, I have met *several* singers, but they stopped already. They were rather frustrated, that's a pity, you know. And in a way, if you have an impression, *of having* failed, these impressions become part of you. And everything you do, later in your life, is also that, *having* failed, has an influence on it. So the way you treat people, or the way you educate your children, is *often* disturbed by the feeling of failing. You know what I mean, so it has a negative influence on the contact with your children, or with your students, or when you are manager with your staff, people who work for you, you know? So it has huge influence on the rest of your life *and of others*. When you can rise above it, you are happy, then you also create the same circumstances. That's actually... what was it about?

D: You helped the singers to get over this problem or...

W: Well yes, I make them... well, I never worked with famous [singers]. Because I – who am I, you know? But, some of them, was one, great talented singer, and she stopped. But she loved singing so much, she start singing jazz music, and then I explained, what the result of this, this, support in the belly, you know, it's absolutely terrible. It's a very subtle, it's up and **down**, you know, and wide and... my, I don't know if I ans—you can make something out of it?

D: Yea, very much. So, people who have worked very deeply—

W: Deeply in this technique, ya?

D: What kind of feedback did they tell you?

W: That, what the, the main reaction that I get, of people I work a lot with, flute players, you know, and clarinet, and so they said: "I found again the pleasure in playing."

D: From them, the flute and—

W: Ya, they said: "I found..." Yes? Because many, when they play, many of them, they were frustrated, you know, and that didn't give them what they wanted. And they suddenly felt the pleasure of playing.

D: That's very nice!

W: You know, separate from career, separate from—because they feel that they, when they play, they get happy. They don't understand why, but— I understand why. Because they touched this moment. *{Gestures over his head}* Because on the hangpoint, is the moment when you touch a deep thing in yourself where it happens, there is the real happiness. You know, happiness of life is being connected with life, and that's deep in you. And if you are trying to control, and then think, you're never happy. It's never enough... if you earn a lot you want more, if you know a lot you want to know more, you know, when you have 1 wife you want more...

D: *{laughs}*

W: Yea, whatever! You have 1 car, you want 2 cars, or a bigger car... And that's when the ego rules. It's... and then suddenly you can be happy with nothing. Just a simple life, you know, one **[pair of]** shoes, or two pairs of shoes, is enough. You cannot eat... yea, why should you be happy if you eat everyday in restaurant? Isn't it? Or have more clothes? Are you more...? No, you are not more happy.

D: Ya. Okay, we have touched everything, so thank you!

## Interview transcript – Frank Gabriel Campos

22 Jan. 2017

1. From Ithaca College's website, it says that you have an amazing range of musical styles in your performing career, as a classical and jazz soloist, and also as a member in numerous orchestras, big bands, and even period orchestras in USA. You are also currently the trumpet professor in the Whalen Centre for Music, and the 'Clinic' columnist for the International Trumpet Guild Journal since 1995. You also wrote the book *Trumpet Technique* in 2005, which is "regarded [as] the best single source on the subject". In addition to the above information, is there anything else of importance about yourself as a pedagogue that you would like to add?

*Campos:* Yes, I would like to say that I struggled with the physical side of trumpet playing in my youth, and much of my younger years were spent looking for answers. So I am always looking for ideas and information that will help me become a better player, even now.

2. During your clinic in the Royal Conservatory in The Hague in September 2015, Willem van der Vliet was also present as a guest lecturer. What were your impressions of his lecture?

*Campos:* I was very excited about what he was saying! These are new ideas in trumpet pedagogy, and it was lining up with things I had discovered in my own work but could not explain. The evidence of the position of tongue was starting!

3. How do you teach trumpeters to breathe?

*Campos:* Regarding teaching breathing, after preliminary instruction, a lot of verbal description is a waste of time. The students must learn from the breath itself. I use timed panting, which is panting like a dog, but through the nostrils, and other exercises that call for inhalation through the nose. The nostril inhalation is a very important part, I have found. I first came upon nostril inhalation in the Russian martial art called Systema. Here we have clear evidence of the benefits of nostril inhalation. When I heard Willem speak of this, I knew I would follow up and learn more from him. I am not aware of anyone who is exploring these kinds of ideas.

4. What, in your experience, is the mainstream pedagogy on breathing for trumpet players?

*Campos:* That is too big a question for now, but one thing that Willem and I agreed upon was that throwing the belly out when you inhale, as we learned to do from

Arnold Jacob's teaching, was not helping some trumpeters play high, loud and long. Willem said he had met several low brass players with playing problems that are rooted in that way of breathing. Maynard Ferguson said the belly button should go inward, toward the spine, when we inhale. This type of inhalation, with its characteristic way of supporting the air, known to some as wedge breathing (Bobby Shew) and yoga breathing, can be taught easily with daily panting exercises. What I am suggesting is that there is still disagreement about how to breathe properly, and over the years, I have moved from the way many classical players support the air to supporting the air the way many lead players do it. There is no question which is more effective, and I have abandoned the Jacobs approach. It was good to hear that Willem, a fellow trumpet player and pedagogue, had done so too.

5. In Willem's teachings, the breath is a way of connecting the player with their inner selves, and with the creative process of music making. This is accomplished by developing two things: first, the inner hearing of the student, and second, the stimulation of the soft palate. The first makes the student recognise the relationship between the sound colours and the soft palate. The second influences the soft palate so that the student themselves can produce those sound colours. To stimulate the soft palate, Willem teaches to breathe in through the nose and mouth simultaneously; this raises the soft palate, which influences the opening, and the 'form of the opening' of the throat.

What, in your opinion, is different, new, surprising or innovative about this method? Do you think it could help trumpeters and why?

*Campos:* The statement you have provided above is much more information than I knew about Willem's teaching! I am unfamiliar with his ideas about the soft palate or connecting with the inner hearing. I cannot comment on that until I know more. I am referring to the thesis that the nostril inhalation, and the combination of nostril and mouth breathing, have great potential to explore. I'm intrigued by the very forward position of the tip of the tongue as found in elite performers, which in exploration, shows that this is a position in which we can breathe through both the mouth and nose easily. I am intrigued by the other ideas you mentioned and trust you will share your paper with me as I want to learn about Willem's ideas.

Follow-up question:

6. In your book "Trumpet Technique", you mentioned that "It is not proper technique to breathe through the nose." (pp. 38), but it is evident from your answers above that you have changed your ideas. How would you instruct trumpeters to inhale on the trumpet now?

*Campos:* The statement in my book about nose breathing is one of many that need

to be examined and clarified when we have more answers about the value of nose breathing or mouth and nose breathing. However, I would still instruct beginners to learn to breathe through their mouth as we have always done in traditional trumpet pedagogy. But when a more advanced student begins to do breathing exercises involving nose inhalation, such as nose panting, many naturally begin to employ nostril breathing to some extent in their playing because they recognize the value of it. Some teachers have questioned whether developing the habit of nostril inhalation is detrimental, but speaking for myself and my students, there have only been benefits.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Surveys**

#### **Survey questions for Willem's students**

1. What is your current job?
2. When and for how long did you study with Willem?
3. What trumpet/brass methods or books did you use to learn to play the trumpet, apart from your lessons with Willem?
4. Could you describe the breathing method you learnt from Willem?
5. Do you still use it? How do you practice it?
6. How has it affected your playing and performance?
7. Do you teach? If yes, do you teach this method, and how?

#### **Survey answers of Jacco Groenendijk**

30 Jan. 2017

1. What is your current job?

*Groenendijk:* My current job is tutti trumpeter at the Royal Concertgebouworchestra in Amsterdam, since august 2015. Before that 10 years in the RFO.

2. When and for how long did you study with Willem?

*Groenendijk:* I studied for one year at the Conservatory Utrecht with Willem, season 1996-1997. But after that I went on a regular basis to him and also to other teachers. He played at the RFO at that time.

3. What trumpet/brass methods or books did you use to learn to play the trumpet, apart from your lessons with Willem?

*Groenendijk:* When I was younger I played from Clodomir, Sigmund Hering, parts of Arban and pieces like Rondo for Lifey – Bernstein. Later on with Theo Mertens we always had to play his warm-up exercises without sheet music. Great exercises, I still do them. Then most of the time Charlier etudes. And pieces of course, repertoire with piano.

I also start to use a bit of Vizzutti by then, Caruso, Stamp, Clarke and I practiced a lot from the book Training Coordination Program by trombonist Bart van Lier. As well the book from Bram Balfoort – Houding, Adem en Keel just for breathing and posture.

#### 4. Could you describe the breathing method you learnt from Willem?

*Groenendijk*: Speaking of method: one of the things that Willem emphasized was that a teacher can only show you the way to enter the door. The word method can be misleading. It is eventually based on experiencing it en feeling/hearing it. And how strong you want it, your wishes. What is the taste of a strawberry? A personal thing...

Willem saw that many books are about deep breathing, which is in the basis good (relaxation), but too deep can also make you a bit numb, too heavy in the bottom. Could be a thing that the air stays there, no upward direction. Willem used to show many times to pick up a handkerchief. You lift it with your fingers in the middle and the rest follows. As a posture model for the body, the head up and the rest follows. Also spoken about this subject in Taiji. Willem always got strong influences from eastern visions. The breathing he speaks of starts low but after continuing inhaling climbs up like filling a glass to higher regions, under the collar bones. In the same time it is not only air you take in but also a kind of life energy source, which makes you more awake, more vital. You can see it in the eyes. And has the power to overcome your fears by pulling you into the moment itself, a kind of brain switch from left (scatter talk) to right (hearing, feeling). Then you create a kind of feeling that there is a arch and arrow which directs to the ceiling. It is only too simple to explain it in this way. It is also based on good timing to play the note in a logical sequence after. Too long waiting blocks the setup. But by sniffing a final small nose breath on top of the mouth breath you can keep the system "open" and somehow waiting for the next entrance (for example a conductor who does a longer fermate than he rehearsed...) The advantage of this is that the tongue has less tension and can strike in a different way, more supple. So, simplified: breath in through mouth in beginning, climb up to the higher part of the chest, underneath the collar bone, subclavian and add a little nose breath in the end to release the shot=attack of the note. It depends on what to play how much air and how long it takes 2-5sec. Also nose can be omitted sometimes, in between phrases, you simply don't have enough time and mouth gateway is the fastest... Best way for me I try to place it in the timing of the music you are playing. Long phrase=more exaggerated amount of air compared to if you just have to play one or two notes.

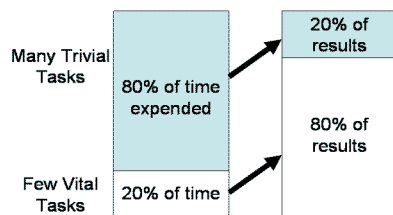
Again: too simple to explain it this way unfortunately...

It's like describing how Messi passes a defender, it looks simple but to do it yourself is much harder. Or to see Federer playing tennis, looks so easy...

Willem demonstrated it many times (for example in Spaulding exercises) and then you had to copy it and experience it (or not really, for a long time personally haha) It is all in the area of finetuning. Like a formula one car. A little screw in wrong position can block the best running of the engine. And too much focus on what happens during playing can block it too. Like going on holiday with car and driving in

the mountains, you enjoy the view but in the same time many things move under the hood to keep the car running. So zoom out is also important to let it happen...

If you have look at the Pareto principle, also called the 20/80 or 80/20 rule, you can see interesting things. For example 20% of time effort causes often already 80% of results. An eight as a mark. But if you want to go higher, to a nine or above, then your 80% rest time is needed to get the last 20%! In that area is the teaching of Willem based. It takes a lot of time, but you have to keep practicing it...



Pareto principle

5. Do you still use it? How do you practice it?

*Groenendijk:* I use it but not in a too controlled way, only when I warm-up or practice. In concerts I hope it pops up automatically. More a reflex kind of thing. Don't want it to be my only way of breathing, want to be free somehow of choice... Like a plumber who comes to repair your kitchen, has maybe 500 tools or more for the right action, not only 3... Another thing I try to do while practicing/ warming up is to keep the tongue in front as much as I can. And then forget it later and hoping for reflexes, trusting the body to solve it. To teach the body what to do.

For me an important thing is the separation of practice and performance. Practice: plan-action-feedback. You try to repeat and make it better, analyse after (not during). To TRY. But performance: plan-action, no feedback! That makes you crazy. You have to DO it then.

6. How has it affected your playing and performance?

*Groenendijk:* I think in a good way hopefully haha! More accurate tonguing of notes, popping sound. More stamina, lighter feeling of bouncing the notes in stead of slamming them. Although you also have to be able to do that as well, we need as much colors and attacks as we can to make the music sound in different ways. Loud-soft, high-low, sad, aggressive, etc. Otherwise we only can make one kind of color, that would be deadly boring translated to for example painting... A good trumpeter does not mean a good musician automatically... You should also listen a lot to music, how your hero's do it, taste/culture and be inspired by that!

7. Do you teach? If yes, do you teach this method, and how?



*Groenendijk*: Yes, I teach. Not main subject but subsidiary subject students.

I try to integrate this in a playful way, not too emphasized. Little by little. More gradually according to the level of the player, because if it becomes too much in the analytical way, it can make your playing even worse, overthinking, opposite results. Feel every muscle in detail in your leg while walking, you can also say: just take a step. Small or big. Simplify. Images are very helpful of course (dark sound, royal attacks, shining sound) but everyone reacts different to certain images/mind pictures. The good result should be audible out of the bell. Recording can help a lot. Then you know you are on the good way. And by listening your sound you stay in present time focus.

So don't make it too complex. Not easy haha! The brain can be a huge enemy... But some things should really happen on a trumpet to make it running, especially for example to make a ringing sound! To take a look on different aspects or parameters can make the difference, quality is the summing of many details. This is what Willem really works/worked on. Your optimal finetuning, not of someone else. Solfege is of course the big motor behind it, as well coordination of the elements tongue, air, lip in conjunction...

And have fun on the road, because the path is endless anyway!

### **Survey answers of Sef Hermans**

10 Apr. 2017

1. What is your current job?

*Hermans*: Lecturer of trumpet at the University and Conservatory of Melbourne, Teaching undergrad and master students.

Guest lecturer at the Australian National Academy of Music; ANAM

Performer of Avant guard music/New Music Theatre .

Guest trumpet in various Orchestras.

2. When and for how long did you study with Willem?

*Hermans*: From 2003 till now. From 2006 till 2013 on a weekly basis. Still meeting once a month on Skype.

3. What trumpet/brass methods or books did you use to learn to play the trumpet, apart from your lessons with Willem?

*Hermans*: Stamp technical studies, Arban vol 1-3, Clarke Technical studies, Buzzing basics, Allen Vizzutti trumpet method, Book 1-3, Shuebruk Graded lip and tongue Trainers

4. Could you describe the breathing method you learnt from Willem?

*Hermans:* Breathing with direction. By using the direction of the breath and its contact with the tongue, soft pallet and diaphragm, you allow for a deeper and more profound connection with the body, resulting in a soft/relax but vital play-form. Letting the breath and direction aid in the forming of the play-form ed est using the breath and its direction to create compression as well as space in the cavities of the head and body allowing the connection of the diaphragm and soft pallet to create a balance in the play-form.

Ps. Word[s] do not do justice to the process.

5. Do you still use it? How do you practice it?

*Hermans:* Every day. By finding the balance, softness and direction in the play-form, and keeping the vocality even in Avant Guard music.

6. How has it affected your playing and performance?

*Hermans:* More than I can explain. It changed my vision on music, trumpet playing and life itself.

7. Do you teach? If yes, do you teach this method, and how?

*Hermans:* Yes and yes. This is a very complicated question, with every student you have to join them in the discovery of their play-form and connection to their body. With each student you have to try various methods and suggestions to make them aware of the inside of their bodies such as tongue, nasal cavity, soft pallet, diaphragm and expanding the soft tissue to expand the space in their heads. You have to make them aware of their bodies, and spend every lesson re-balancing and expanding. This is a very dynamic process. My main way of guiding them is through my color of sounds, as Willem always does. The color of the sounds says more than a thousand words. The rest is suggestion, awareness and vitality.

### **Survey answers of Angel Serrano Soliva**

7 Feb. 2017

1. What is your current job?

*Serrano Soliva:* 1st Trumpet in Barcelona Symphony Orchestra  
Trumpet and Chamber Music teacher in High School Music from Cataluña ESMUC (Barcelona)

2. When and for how long did you study with Willem?

*Serrano Soliva:* I studied by Willem from 1990 to 1993 in Sweelinck Conservatorium Amsterdam. [Since then] we are always in touch.

3. What trumpet/brass methods or books did you use to learn to play the trumpet, apart from your lessons with Willem?

*Serrano Soliva:* Arban, Colins, Clarke, etc...for technical things.  
Chavanne, Charlier, Bordogni, etc... for lessons.  
And Concerts and Orchestral Parts.

4. Could you describe the breathing method you learnt from Willem?

*Serrano Soliva:* 1<sup>st</sup>, important to relax [the whole] body and get out any tension from [it]. Generally breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. Opening the jaw from the inside, this gives you relaxed and open throat and natural relaxed position of the tongue (wide and close to the [lower] teeth). Then the direction of the air is important and also the position of the tongue [guides] the air [out of the mouth into the instrument].

5. Do you still use it? How do you practice it?

*Serrano Soliva:* Yes. I try to practice all time, not only playing, [but] also doing [daily life activities].

6. How has it affected your playing and performance?

*Serrano Soliva:* Well I got better sound, better intonation because [this way of breathing] helps to [achieve a] natural singing way when you play and much more [resonance] because you play more relaxed, [more] air, less muscle [tension].

7. Do you teach? If yes, do you teach this method, and how?

*Serrano Soliva:* Yes. I do like I told you in [the answer to] question 4.

1<sup>st</sup>, relaxation exercises to get out tensions in our body

2<sup>nd</sup>, I do all [kinds of] breathing exercises, breathe in 4 [counts, and breathe] out 6, 8, 10 etc.... all combinations, the important [thing] is how, [and I explained that] in the [answer to question] 4.

3<sup>rd</sup>, direction of the air. I practice blowing out [while] moving out the sternum and [keeping] wide ribs, and I try to keep this form and always relax, you don't have to feel any tension... never blow [with a downward force] and never 'close' your shoulders.

4<sup>th</sup>, do this with trumpet in basic exercises.

## Survey answers for Christian Ansink

Transcribed by Danny Teong, 17 Jan. 2017

Ed. (in red) by Christian Ansink, 27 Jan. 2017

*Danny (D):* ... Could you tell me what is your current job?

*Christian Ansink (CA):* My current job is trombone player in Het Gelders Orkest, in Arnhem. And that I'm doing for over 27 years now in the orchestra.

*D:* Good, is it tutti, or 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>?

*CA:* Ya, just, how do you call that... eerste posaune.

*D:* Principal, in a way.

*CA:* ... first trombone, how do you call it... I don't know exactly... Associate Principal?

*D:* No, that is clear, thank you.

*CA:* Ya, I think it is enough.

*D:* Yup, okay. And, so 2<sup>nd</sup> question: When and for how long did you study with Willem?

*CA:* I think I began to go to him for about 6 years ago, because after 20 years of playing, I wrote that in the [email], you know too eh? Then I couldn't play anymore. I've got to play the low B-flat and just in my study room was nothing coming out, of the horn. Nothing coming out of the trombone. I played for 25 years, and now nothing is going very well. I was in the orchestra, and the lower part, there was nothing there. I couldn't play. And then first I was with Pierre Volders, Bart van Lier, and even George Wiegäl, my former teacher, and nothing of all the exercises worked for me to solve the problem. And then, a trumpet player in the orchestra in Arnhem, and he told me to go to Willem. And after playing two notes with him, he knew exactly what was going on. And then for the first time, Willem told me my tongue lie too far away from the lower teeth, and it was the first time since 3 years I had a new contact with the trombone. So that was my first lesson, and then the first two years, I was going, I think, once in 6 weeks. And then, it became a little bit lesser. I go now once or twice a year.

*D:* So you have been studying 6 years ago, until now.

*CA:* Yup.

*D:* Okay great. Yes, so the 3<sup>rd</sup> question: Well, this is not really applicable to you... because – but I will try to modify it a bit. What, um, you mentioned some methods earlier, so what brass methods, or books did you use apart from your lessons with Willem?

CA: Not exactly... When you have a career of about 30 years, then you play not 1 or 2 or 3 methods. You build your own exercises, technical studies, and when you have to play a Bruckner symphony, then you do a little bit more strength. And when you have to play Mozart, ya, you train a little bit, you train something else. Well I don't have a playing method that I use daily. You do some warming up exercises every day about [sings arpeggios with different articulation], but it's a mix from everybody.

D: Yup okay, great. So the next question would be, could you describe the breathing method you learnt from Willem?

CA: Ya. [pause] To describe? Okay. Could I describe... Ya, the most important thing is, for me, **is that the tip of the tongue is making contact with your upper lip by breathing in and so this position of the tongue, with the sides of the tongue against your molars, makes it possible to have** contact with your whole body. And that was the great eye-opener for me, to get a new grip on the trombone. So the, how do you call that, the tip of the tongue, and you keep it at your upper lip, you will feel in your diaphragm a little bit energy. So this energy is going up, and the position of the tongue when you blow on, keep the front of your tongue against the lower teeth so you can keep a steady breathing, steady airstream. And, can I describe the breathing in... **through** mouth, and nose, and when the nose is much free, you have a feeling you are breathing in **to** your ears, and further, at the back of your head. **The more you breathing in to the back of your head the more you have** contact with your whole body. The tongue is getting more free, and so you have more freedom when you blow out, you can get a nice sound. That is my – that is how it works for me.

D: Great! Sounds good. Okay, so I'm supposing you still use it nowadays, because –

CA: Wait a minute, wait a minute. The last, I cannot understand.

D: Sorry! So my next question on my list is actually, do you still use it, but I guess yes, right?

CA: Yea!

D: Okay, and then, so, how do you practice it?

CA: Just every day, when I start, to play with my trombone. I do a lot of mouthpiece exercise, so the first 3-4 minutes, and then you try to feel every place of your tongue, near your lips, and in the back of the tongue, as broad as possible. Have a nice, free, breathing in, with the mouth and the nose. And then with the blowing out, check if you have the tongue just in front against your teeth, and have a free feeling in your head. **Like you are saying 'Dingngngngng' with a lot of emphasis on the NG.** That's all these points I'm looking, the first 5 to 15 minutes, I think. Just checking. And hear the sound of the trombone. That's what I try in the first minutes. And when it's becoming a little bit less, I try to pick it up back in the good shape. And then you can play all the things, you can play the long tones with a good feeling, you

can play the lip exercises, or just the scales, and just get a good form, a good form in your head. As free as possible in your head. Ya, as free as possible, and the breathing out, and try to think a lot about the, that Willem told you, the *ding* or *twing*, the *diiiiinnnggg*, if you do it then you know your head is free. That is important for me.

D: Very nice answer, thank you. And okay, the next question, you mentioned a bit, but how has it affected your playing and performance?

CA: Ya, everything.

D: Could you give some examples?

CA: It gave me a whole new concept of brass playing, the method of Willem. Without Willem, I think I couldn't play anymore on the trombone. That it's impossible for me to make a career again. If Willem was not there, I still looking how to manage the trombone and now I have grip is an imagination. What is happening.

D: Ya, so that's a very drastic, erm, what do you call it...

CA: Ya! Very drastic, ya.

D: Okay. Then this is the final question, do you teach?

CA: Yup, a little bit. But not on a conservatorium or something like that.

D: So, private?

CA: Ya, private, I have a few students.

D: And then, so, the next part of this question is, do you teach them this method? And how do you teach them this method?

CA: I have to see the person, when he plays, and then, that I always tell them, is the free breathing in, and the tongue at the front of the mouth, against the teeth. That's what I always tell them. About the pulling out the tongue, that's only when the player has no good sound, something like that. Then I try to teach that method to... When it's okay, it's okay. I'm not gonna give him the whole situation, what Willem tells. I think then it's too...

D: Too much information?

CA: Ya, then the story is more difficult. If it's okay with the student, then it's okay. I don't do something like that, so much.

D: Good, that's actually about all the questions, thank you so much!

## Survey answers of Danny Teong

2 Apr. 2017

1. What is your current job?

*Teong:* Full-time masters degree student at Koninklijk Conservatorium, natural trumpet performance major, and freelance musician in The Netherlands and Germany.

2. When and for how long did you study with Willem?

*Teong:* My first lesson was in October 2010, I visited him on average once per month. Since 2016, the average went down to about once every 2-3 months.

3. What trumpet/brass methods or books did you use to learn to play the trumpet, apart from your lessons with Willem?

*Teong:* Books regarding basic technicalities were Arban, Vizzutti, James Stamp, Clarke, Bai Ling Lip Flexibilities, and also a basic trumpet technique book in Japanese aimed at beginners, which I cannot remember the title. Etudes used were Charlier, Kopprasch, Snedecor, Bitsch.

4. Could you describe the breathing method you learnt from Willem?

*Teong:* In simple terms, it is a breath that invigorates the body, the mind, and the playing. It also provides balance, and also a connection between all those 3 aspects and also to the self.

The act of inhalation itself is to breath in upwards into the head through both the nose and mouth, with the tongue as far forward as possible. This does a couple of things: raising the soft palate, creating a certain 'form/shape' in the throat, opening up airway cavities in the head, bringing the body into an active posture. The space in the head created by that, in turn, serves 2 purposes: It creates an optimal inner-form for resonance, and acts (in combination with the windpipe and lip aperture) like a venturi to generate air pressure (in combination with the trachea or windpipe) and speed up the airflow (in combination with the lip aperture) for playing the trumpet. It is efficient.

The exhalation needs to be supported by the body, staying in this upwards direction of the inhalation. This is in line with Hazrat Inayat Khan's ideas that it is the direction of the breath that matters, and not the strength of the breath. This means that the diaphragm should not be 'dropped', and the upper thoracic area should be kept open and up so as not to create a contradictory direction to the breath of playing the trumpet.

Finally, in Willem's idea of breathing in combination with the trumpet, the transitional moments in the breath are not any less important than the act of

inhaling or exhaling. Much like how an end of a pendulum's oscillation seems to just suspend in the air 'without weight or time', this is how the transitional moments should feel. These moments occur between the inhalation and exhalation, and vice versa. They also occur between one note to another note, between one phrase and the next. Practice is needed to be able to recognize and use these moments. In this respect, Willem's breathing method surpasses the act of breathing, and its principles encompass and apply to everything else we do.

5. Do you still use it? How do you practice it?

*Teong:* Yes. I practice it at every moment I can. Specifically for the trumpet, I pay great attention to how I breathe in my warmup, after which I 'forget' about it and trust that my body is able to achieve the state of being able to utilize the breath the way I want. The colour and quality of my sound will inform me about the condition of my breath, and I make adjustments accordingly when needed.

6. How has it affected your playing and performance?

*Teong:* Training myself to breathe in this way has conditioned both my body (posture) and mind to be more 'open'. I feel that this effect directly correlates to my playing, and manifests also in my sound. I also feel that I am gaining mastery, in a certain sense. I do not have to practice for long periods per day to maintain or improve my level of playing. For example, I find that 30 minutes of practicing on the trumpet per day is sufficient to maintain my level.

In performance, this breathing method 'quiets' my inner thoughts. I find that I can concentrate better on the task at hand, and I get fewer obstructions accessing my inner self to express music the way I want. Furthermore, this way of breathing vitalizes me, and I get enough energy to give to the performance.

7. Do you teach? If yes, do you teach this method, and how?

*Teong:* No, I do not teach.