

Three Spheres

A Horn Player's Path

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MENTAL: the lifelong “puzzle” of achieving horn mastery...“figuring it all out.” Practice techniques and strategies, listening skills, short term and long term goals. Openness, curiosity, diligence, candid self-appraisal. Setting the highest standards, competing (internally) against peers. Imitating great horn players and other musicians. Choosing a characteristic sound, and the equipment needed to create that sound. Experimenting. Learning the horn rep and classical music rep. History/theory of horn, music & art. Going to concerts...absorbing musical traditions via osmosis. Self-producing recitals & concerts. Schmoozing, networking, being a supportive colleague, having fun. Learning how to stay in top shape, and how to keep calm, confident and energized while performing in public. *The “desire.”*



PHYSICAL: Chops! Both physical “chops” aka embouchure, and “chops,” i.e. “technique” in all its forms: soft playing, loud playing, fast playing, sustained playing, legato, staccato, facility, sound, articulation, range, endurance, attacks & releases, trills, multiple tonguing, scales, arpeggios, harmonic series & natural horn, stopped horn, alternate fingerings. Warm-ups, etudes, interval studies, transposition, sight-reading, playing by ear. Breathing, buzzing. Reducing excess tension, playing with relaxed chops. Programming technique “into the body.” Learning to focus, to be in the present moment, looking only a few notes ahead. Building strong yet flexible chops that can do whatever you want them to. *The “means.”*

MUSICAL: *On time, in tune, play the ink!* Playing “musically” is not about personal “emoting”...it’s *basic* musicianship skills: great rhythm, intonation, accuracy, and observing *all* musical instructions on the page, with time-honored principles of phrasing (strong vs. weak beats, harmonic emphasis, vertical vs. horizontal line.) Playing with Zen-like simplicity and directness—become the music! Singing. Eliminating unconscious musical “tics” and habits—random notes sticking out, lack of connection between notes, non-sostenuto, “twa,” pitch waver, vague articulation. The icing on the cake—once the caked is baked!—is a compelling musical personality. If you are pursuing all of the above, this will happen naturally. *The “end.”*