



YAMAHA

Educator Series

WIND INSTRUMENTS



Ronald Romm

Yamaha artist RONALD ROMM has shared the stage in live performance and recorded albums with leading artists including Wynton Marsalis, Arturo Sandoval, Jon Faddis, Doc Severinsen, and brass performers from the Boston Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Berlin Philharmonic. As an educator, Ronald Romm has contributed to the growth of brass performance through hundreds of student clinics. While a member of the Canadian Brass, Mr. Romm was involved with the creation of two instructional videos, "Strings, Winds, and All That Brass: The Inspiration of Music" and "The Canadian Brass Master Class," both distributed by Hal Leonard. He has edited student quintet and solo collections, along with demonstration recordings for the Canadian Brass educational series, also distributed by Hal Leonard.

Ron and his wife and long time partner Avis recently released their first CD "Wellness for the Soul, Volume 1: Seeing the Light" on the Romm Enterprises label. Ron and Avis are also very committed to the creation of global wellness, and are actively involved with the promotion and use of leading edge technologies such as Magnetics and Far-Infrared technology. For information about this exciting endeavor, you are invited to visit their wellness website at www.MusicRomm.com.

Trumpet Teamwork

A Fresh Approach to the Trumpet Studio

By Ronald Romm

In the USA, we are very much enamored with team sports: football, baseball, basketball, hockey, volleyball, and soccer, to name a few. I have noticed that team sports are very similar to the way I envision chamber music... a unanimous ensemble approach. If we observe a team practice, we see that warm-ups, stretching, basic skill emphasis, specific techniques related to the sports endeavor, and general coaching and inter-team-cooperative reinforcement are a very natural part of both group and individual improvement. In sports, most of these exercises are done by all participants in session at the same time... as a group.

At The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Dr. Michael Ewald and I are taking a team approach with our Trumpet Studio. We have been encouraging our students to establish Trumpet Teams. The teams can be groups of three, four, five, or six players. For the early part of the year we are grouping student teams mostly in similar skill levels, and the plan for later in the year is to mix skill levels, so as to combine experience with review of basics. The players work in teams for warm-ups, basic skill techniques and music study; each brings to the mini-group his/her strengths. The idea is that the team as a group learns at a higher rate than individuals who are just sitting in practice rooms alone at work might. As a team member, the individual is not required to grow in a vacuum, without reinforcement and encouragement of colleagues. This team approach, however, does not substitute for the individual practice session, and the responsibility of moving forward still rests with the student. We each still have to practice on our own as well as having individual (and even team) sessions with our professors.

There are other positives to the team concept beyond just the musical. One of the challenges the group may face is disparate learning curves. A degree of patience must be learned, and the encouragement and challenge to the team member that may be for the first time approaching a particular hurdle that others in the team may have already mastered, when done in a positive way, often takes the place of frustration and disappointment. All of the team members are responsible for helping each other succeed. The focus here transcends just music into a broader "life skills" study.

The team has the power and ability, as well as the responsibility to create through an atmosphere of congeniality a relaxed approach to learning, while still emphasizing the concept that "every note is a performance note." When one player plays for the team while the rest listen, the featured player is not just practicing, but really performing for his/her peers...we all know that our peer group is the toughest group to please.

As a team finds and focuses on its strengths, a synergy is building. When practice sessions progress beyond the note-learning phase, the team can help its members to gain stage-presence awareness, including knowledge of blocking, direction, staging, lighting, etc., all on a fast track compared to doing it alone. The net result of this type of study/practice is clear: when the performer is on the stage either as an ensemble artist or as a soloist, the environment and the impact of having worked with the team is still there. The performer never feels alone on the stage, and



Ronald Romm

therefore is comfortable interacting with the audience. The relationship of a performer to the audience is perhaps the most important aid to our communication skills we can experience. The most successful performances are those where the stage performers share the energy of the event with the audience. The more comfortable an audience is at the concert, the more interested it is in returning for another one. This is an obvious aid to audience building, and a good subject for a future article.

At UIUC, this year's Trumpet Studio will also be expanding on an interdisciplinary exchange. We are inviting specialists in Alexander Technique, Theater Arts, Physical Training, as well as specialists from our colleagues in strings, woodwinds, percussion, and various aspects of music composition to visit with us. The idea is to share and compare views and concepts, all in an effort to amplify our individual and group abilities, not just as musicians, but as interactive human beings. It is our desire that the cross-fertilization of all of these interests will bring music to more peoples lives in the larger sense, and help to enhance our environment.

Another idea that I have put forward is that of an open studio, where anyone in our musical discipline is invited to observe and to some extent participate in the lessons and workshops that are taking place in the Trumpet Studio. This is another way to reinforce the relaxed performance environment while making every note a performance note. Through my 29 years as a performer with Canadian Brass, I learned that the more often we perform, the less upsetting it is physically and psychologically for us to do so. It becomes easier and easier to recognize and work with the energy that we share with our audience. The "zone" of performance then becomes more the norm and less the exception.

I enthusiastically encourage all of us to perform as often as possible. Form musical teams. Work with these teams to enhance basic technical and musical skills. Use those skills to make as much music as we can in as many places we can as often as possible. Share the joy of performance with as many people as we can. Have fun while we make every note a performance note.

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