ARSENAL
DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS

BRASS

METHODS
TECHNIQUES
AND
AUDITION MATERIALS
Dear Prospective Brass Team Member,

Congratulations and thank you for taking the first step towards membership in the brass team here at Arsenal! Many people just dream of participating in drum corps, but you had the courage to sign up. From here, your next challenge is having the courage to show up to your first camp and using the time between then and now to make sure that you’re as prepared as possible. For most of you, playing in a drum corps brass line will be a new experience; it’s an adventure, so use that to fuel your excitement, and use that excitement to drive your focus and preparedness. The name Arsenal was chosen for this corps because it sounds aggressive and confident, two qualities we look for in prospective members.

Your success as a member of Arsenal is dependent on many factors. Drum Corps is an activity with an especially high focus on uniformity and to achieve this you must understand the process and develop the fundamentals to do so. To get started on this process as an individual, you need to utilize both this brass manual and the visual manual to help you understand Arsenal’s approach to standardized technique.

The prospective members of our corps represent a wide range of music programs, and thus bring with them differing schools of thought as well as individual technique and skill. To make a brass line composed of musicians with differing approaches work for our purposes, we have to create a cohesive approach from the ground up. This means that for some of you, the initial exercises in this book and the techniques in the visual book will seem rudimentary and perhaps even basic. This is by design. If anything in this packet or out of the mouth of a staff member seems contradictory to something you’ve been taught before, that’s okay! Every program has their own school of thought, but at Arsenal the expectation is for you to adapt to and master our approach in pursuit of uniformity. Every drum corps in the activity goes through this process. This is part of the beauty of drum corps, and a true manifestation of teamwork. The initial exercises are also modular, meaning that they have built in variations. We’ll be adding new exercises that are show-specific as the season progresses, and some of the exercises in this book may disappear as the ensemble grows.

We’ll be using this packet as a means of assessing your ability and growth as a player. The best performers in the world practice their fundamentals constantly, and these exercises are designed to both develop and to continuously reinforce them. You are encouraged to think of your initial experience with us as an opportunity to learn, not as an instance for us to put you on the spot and for you to become nervous. As you prepare for auditions, remember that there’s very little difference between being nervous and being excited; learn to harness that excitement and you’ll do just fine!

We firmly believe that drum corps is honestly more mental than it is physical. (Though the physical demands certainly are high!) And again, you’ve already shown mental toughness by having the courage to sign up and we can’t wait to see you follow that up by attending your first camp. In addition to showing up, your next step is to prepare the materials in this packet with diligence, and to the best of your ability. Your hard work and determination in doing so will pay off; we’re truly excited about your membership in our family here at Arsenal!

Sincerely,

Tyler Clark
Brass Caption Head
ATTENDANCE, CONTRACTS, AND TUITION

Attendance and communication are critical parts of your membership at Arsenal. In drum corps, being late or absent without approved reason are never options, as they can negatively affect the entire team. That being said, we understand that life gets in the way of some of your obligations at times. We expect you to attend every camp possible. Your intent to do so will be communicated to us via an RSVP system/email. If you must miss a camp, you are to communicate that to us via said system and to let us know the reason. An “excused” absence does not terminate your contract or your status as a prospect, but there will be a soft limit on absences, as your attendance is crucial.

Examples of “Excusable” Absences:
- Major ensemble concert (that you are performing in)
- Being sick and providing a doctor's note.
- Attending a major convention, tournament, etc.
- Major family event (Wedding, funeral, etc.)
- Major vacation that was planned LONG BEFORE registering/learning of camp dates.

Examples of “Inexcusable” Absences:
- Vacation that was NOT planned LONG BEFORE committing to becoming a member
- You forgot.
- Exams are coming up and you need to study or otherwise do homework – school is important! But we've all got to balance it with other major commitments in life. Trust us, we've been there. That's not just drum corps, that's LIFE. The same goes with work, with is mentioned below.
- Work – We understand the need to make money, especially when becoming a member mandates tuition. However, you will have had more than enough time to ask off of work for every camp, and obviously for the summer commitment.
- You don't feel prepared – Your preparation between camps is indicative of your constant work ethic, time management, discipline, and mental toughness going forward.
- Your club, organization, intramural team, etc. is having an event. (again, membership here is expected to be a major life priority)

You get the idea. Again, one of the most key components here is that you COMMUNICATE. Absences that are not communicated to us run the risk of jeopardizing your contracted or prospective status with Arsenal, as will multiple unexcused absences.

FEES/TUITION

Your account status will have a direct impact on your membership with the Corps. Without collecting fees and tuition, we would not be able to operate successfully. In reality, the fees you pay make up only a small portion of the total funds required to run an organization of this size.

It is vital that you keep your finances up to date if you expect to march, members who fail to meet tuition requirements will not be permitted to go on tour. Always be mindful of your account, and please contact us if you have questions; it's much better to deal with problems early than to deal with them as tour approaches. We're happy to help, but please give us time to assess the situation and figure out a solution.
PREPARING FOR AUDITIONS

In order to best prepare for these auditions all prospective members should thoroughly review all materials in the brass and visual packets. Exercises should be played slowly and with a tuner, with specific focus on getting a strong, clear tone out of each note. Members will not be required to have the entire packet memorized at the first camp, however, they are encouraged to commit as much of it to memory as possible as having it memorized allows them to direct more focus towards their playing.

If you are still new to playing a brass instrument and/or are otherwise struggling to learn and achieve the material in this brass packet, you are encouraged to seek help. Ask your band director if they are willing to work with you once a week, seek out a private instructor in the area, etc. Once camp season gets under way, you will also have the option to ask a veteran member or a brass staff member for help.

At the first camp, don't think of your “audition” as only the portion(s) where you perform your prepared materials in front of the staff as an individual. The entire camp is your “audition.” How you learn and apply information in rehearsal is something else we are looking for, as well as your attention to detail and your general attitude. The audition process does NOT end with the first camp. Final decision regarding the Arsenal Brass Section will start being made during the January Camp. As stated above, your attendance, attitude, and preparation will be strong determining factors for receiving a contract.

EQUIPMENT

Arsenal will aim to provide instruments for all member of the brass section, however, due to the generally high number of applicants at auditions, we will not have instrument for everyone and we ask that all prospective members bring their own instrument. If you do not have access to an instrument, you must email us at contact@arsenalperformingarts.org immediately so that we can see whether or not we can have one available for you.

TRUMPETS/MELLOPHONES: Please bring your own instruments (Bb trumpet, F mellophone) to at least the first 2 camps. We aim to have Corps instruments available following the January Camp. You must bring your own mouthpiece to all camps.

BARITONE/EUPHONIUM: Please bring a marching baritone or euphonium to at least the first 2 camps. We aim to have Corps instruments available following the January camp. Trombone players may audition on trombone, however, they will be expected to perform on a marching baritone/euphonium during the camp. You must bring your own mouthpiece to all camps.

TUBAS: Please bring a marching tuba or sousaphone to at least the first 2 camps. We aim to have Corps Tubas available following the January Camp. Students who bring sousaphones will be asked to perform on a marching tuba at some point during the audition process. You must bring your own mouthpiece to all camps.

MOUTHPIECES: Staff will, at a later date, designate specific mouthpieces that are to be used by each section. In some cases, certain players may be assigned to something slightly different based on individual anatomy, preference of a private instructor, etc. For now, bring whatever mouthpiece you have, and be prepared to be potentially asked to use the “stock” mouthpiece that comes with the corps’ horns.
NOTE: ALL BRASS MEMBERS will be expected to wear black cotton gloves during rehearsals, especially when handling corps instruments. You will probably go through several pairs of gloves over the course of the season and it is important that your gloves remain in good condition. Gloves that are dirty or contain holes are never acceptable.

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

POSTURE

To be most efficient when marching and playing, the body should be in an upright and balanced position. Improper posture will hinder your brass playing, especially in terms of your air and your overall control. When playing your brass instrument while standing, weight should be evenly distributed on both feet. Your upper body weight should be lifted up from your waist, NOT leaning on the lower part of your back. Your shoulders should be “down.” It is common for people to have their shoulders “creep up” without them realizing it. The bell of your horn should be 10 degrees above parallel (to the ground) at all times. In terms of hand position, fingertips go on top of the valves (making a C-shape with the right hand) in order to push the valves straight down. The palms of your hands should away from the horn in such a way that allows you to create a straight line from the knuckle, along the top of the forearm to the elbow. It is important that you begin to think about SEPERATION OF UPPER AND LOWER BODY. Lifting your weight off of your hips creates more room in the upper body to take in more efficient air. It also helps prevent marching and maneuvering from affecting your sound.

Posture will be gone over in depth at camp and constantly reinforced. For many of you, the amount of details and attention to said details in terms of posture will be greater than what you are used to. It is KEY that you do your best to adapt and learn as quickly as possible. Once you have these new habits down, it'll not only feel much better, but you will likely sound much better. Especially while on the move!

One of the most important parts of being in a corps hornline is this: CONSTANTLY ask yourself...

“How do I LOOK?”

AIR AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES AND THEIR APPLICATION

Our ability to accurately and efficiently use our air supply is key to our great sound as a brass line. Air should always be efficient, controlled, and solid. It should never be forced or unstable. Like the pendulum of a grandfather clock, the air is always moving. NEVER allow your air to stop movement, aka capping. This happens when a person inhales and then stops the airflow before exhaling. This inevitably causes numerous problems including tension, timing issues, and explosion of air during the exhale, to name a few. When breathing in, the air should feel cold on the back of the throat. Your oral cavity should feel open, almost as if you were yawnning, or perhaps trying to fit a softball into your mouth and then down into your lungs. (Please do not actually try that.) Timing of the breath is one of the most important aspects of playing in time with the ensemble. Your breath should occur either one (1) or two (2) counts prior to the attack of the note. This will be designated based on the tempo and the context. You should practice both options for the majority of these exercises. Note that low brass (especially tubas) will make use of the two (2) count breath far more
often. Breathe, then play... Your internal subdivision (mental metronome), the breath, and the beginning of the note are all one through-line. As a unit, if we breathe together, we are MUCH more likely to play together.

Reasons a performer likely entered early:

- Shallow or out of time breath
- Poor subdivision
- Forced the air instead of inhaling and exhaling in time

Reasons a performer likely entered late:

- Capped breath (stopping the air between the inhale and exhale
- Poor subdivision
- Their feet are slow
- Their tongue got in the way/they didn’t get it out of the way fast enough
- They didn’t set their air speed
- Their embouchure wasn’t set

We’ve just talked about approaching attacks, not it’s time to talk releases. Many ensembles are generally good as starting notes together, but far less ensembles END notes together and in a uniform fashion. It is common to hear “blown” releases (1 or more players hold over), and it is also common to hear a release where the sound changes.

A clean, square release point will ring for a moment even after the air has been released. Strive to make the note ring! A few things to think about when creating proper releases:

- NEVER close or move the jaw when releasing a note
- NEVER stop the air by closing the throat
- NEVER change the shape of the oral cavity (inside your mouth) during the release

In terms of how we DO release notes, it will generally be one of the following:

1. The lips stop buzzing and the air stops relatively quickly (usually ½ a count)
2. We make a slight but deliberate inhalation to stop the note

The second one typically creates the CLEANEST releases. However, at times it can sound too abrupt, depending on the staging and the orchestration.

Air SPEED helps with range and slotting of notes on your instrument. When playing higher you will use faster air; slower air for lower notes. In addition to tessitura, air is essential to dynamic differences in musical passages. You should always use fast air with a large aperture for louder dynamics and fast air with a smaller aperture for softer dynamics. However, the column or width of the air is always very large and moving forward. The column of air can be described as the amount of moving air. In playing your instrument, it is always advisable to get as much air into the horn as possible. The more air you can get into the horn, the warmer and richer the sound quality will be coming from the bell.
EMBOUCHURE DEVELOPMENT

Mouthpiece “buzzing” is part of our brass routine. The benefits of mouthpiece buzzing include: being able to isolate embouchure and tone production problems, improved aural skills, and less lip fatigue. On most days, we will do at least some extent of playing on the mouthpiece. There will be much attention placed on how you produce that sound and its overall quality. While it is true that having the mouthpiece on or off of the horn changes the resistance, the quality of sound on the mouthpiece directly correlates to the player’s tone quality when the mouthpiece is added to the instrument. Therefore, developing a dark, resonant, and full sound on the mouthpiece should be a priority. There are numerous articles written about embouchure development for each of the instruments. We strongly recommend that you find and research these articles so that you may apply the information to your specific instrument. With that being said, here are some basic embouchure fundamentals that apply to everyone:

- The corners of the mouth need to be firm and strong
  - Tubas can actually overdo this – they should just make sure everything is ROUND and open, and that the lips are fully buzzing
- The mouthpiece should be placed as close to perpendicular on the lips as possible – not too “upstream” or “downstream”
- Both lips should have enough flesh on the mouthpiece to allow for a full and robust buzz
- Always bring the mouthpiece to the same place on your lips (unless you’re playing pedal tones on low brass, but that’s a completely different animal)
- The jaw should always be open – especially in the low register
- The teeth are apart
- The air initiates the buzz; the tongue defines the sound

LONG TONES

There are several benefits from playing long tones every day. Along with mouthpiece work, this allows the muscles in your face to loosen up, familiarizes you with the sensation of the lips vibrating (buzzing), and helps you get comfortable with the instrument. Primarily, this is an opportunity for the player to concentrate solely on tone quality, breath support, and intonation. Without the distraction of rhythms and notes, the player can focus on playing in tone with his or her section and throughout the ensemble. Long tones are essential to establishing a solid center of pitch for the warm-up. Balance and blend are key factors to this portion of the warm-up. Players should be listening for intonation, blend of tone, intensity, as well as quality of sound. While playing they should be actively listening for how their sound interacts with the sounds of the instruments around them, and then use that information to focus on blending their tone and intensity with the surrounding sound.

LIP SLURS AND FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Lip slurs play a huge part in the development of any brass player’s flexibility. The ability to move fluidly from partial to partial while maintaining accurate pitch is essential. Providing a consistent air stream throughout the musical line will allow the player to attain this fluidity. The exercise should not be thought of merely as an exercise, but rather as a musical phrase. Each musical line should
have purpose, movement, and arrive at a destination. Like endurance, flexibility will only improve with regular practice over time. When practicing lip slurs, always use a metronome and strive for equally spaced notes – in time and steady. Make all the notes equal volume; don’t allow the top note of a lip slur to pop out.

**STYLES AND ARTICULATION**

Articulation on a brass instrument is created by a combination of the tongue and air.

We will begin by defining a “normal” (no articulation marking) note and how to execute this articulation. Having great tone on a brass instrument requires an open oral cavity as well as having the tongue out of the way. So, a syllable that can facilitate these things is key. We use the syllable “dawh” for a few reasons. While “dah” is quite standard and commonly taught, a potential problem is that when saying “dah,” the tongue position could be in a number of places. For that reason, we say “daWh.” The “w” isn’t drawn out, but it does get the tongue down and out of the way. Say “dah.” Now say “dawh.” You should be able to feel a definite difference in tongue position.

While “dawh” is our standard syllable, music demands variations in articulation as well. Different types of articulation are also best defined through the usage of syllables, as listed in the chart below. “Dawh” is our basic syllable, and every other articulation relates to it. Knowing the difference between a given articulation and the “normal” one and knowing how to execute it is the key.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articulation</th>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>normal</td>
<td>dawh</td>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>doo</td>
<td>Smoother beginning, more connected</td>
<td>Dawh</td>
<td>Same syllable as standard, front half of the note is louder than the back half. This is done with AIR, not tongue!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legato</td>
<td>dawh</td>
<td>Same beginning, half the length. Air does not stop if there are more notes to follow.</td>
<td>Dawh</td>
<td>Same syllable as standard, front half of the note is louder than the back half. This is done with AIR, not tongue!</td>
<td>Dah</td>
<td>Twice the emphasis (using air), half the length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staccato</td>
<td>dawh</td>
<td></td>
<td>accented</td>
<td></td>
<td>marcato</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 Count Tones

\( \frac{\text{1}}{\text{1}} \cdot 120 \text{ and up} \)

Trumpet in B♭

Mellophone in F

Euphonium

Tuba

\( \frac{\text{1}}{\text{1}} \cdot 5 \)

\( \frac{\text{1}}{\text{1}} \cdot 9 \)
3 Note Remmington Descending

\( \text{\textit{Tempo}} \quad \text{\textit{D}} \quad = \quad 120 \text{ and up} \)

\( \text{Trumpet in B-flat} \)

\( \text{Mellophone in F} \)

\( \text{Euphonium} \)

\( \text{Tuba} \)
3 Note Remmington Ascending

\[ \text{\( \frac{\text{t}}{\text{t}} = 120 \text{ and up} \)} \]

Trumpet in B♭

Mellophone in F

Euphonium

Tuba

Tpt.

Mln.

Euph.

Tba.
Lip Slurs

Lip Slur 1

Open Valve Series

Trumpet in Bb

Mellophone in F

Euphonium

Tuba

2nd Valve Series

Continue down the valve series and back up as designated

Lip Slur 2

Open Valve Series

Tpt.

Mln.

Euph.

Tba.
Open Valve Series

Lip Slur 3

Continue down the valve series and back up as designated

Open Valve Series

Lip Slur 4

Continue down the valve series and back up as designated
Trumpet in Bb
Mellophone in F
Euphonium
Tuba

Upper Neighbor Slurs

\( \frac{d}{d} = 120 \text{ and up} \)
Repeat back up the series
Ascend back up the valve series
Technique

$\frac{\text{\textasciitilde}}{\text{\textasciitilde}} = 120 \text{ and up}$

Open Valve Series

Trumpet in B♭

Mellophone in F

Euphonium

Tuba

2nd Valve Series

Tpt.

Mln.

Euph.

Tba.
1st Valve Series

Tpt.

Mln.

Euph.

Tba.

1 & 2 Valve Series

Continue back up the series to the open valve series.
Articulation AND Technique

\[ \text{\( \frac{\text{d}}{\text{t}} = 120 \text{ and up} \)} \]

Any of these articulation exercises can be done using normal (no articulation marking), legato, or staccato articulations.

A.T. 1

Trumpet in Bb

Mellophone in F

Euphonium

Tuba

Continue down the valve series and back up as designated

A.T. 2
Tuning Sequence

Trumpet in B♭

Mellophone in F

Euphonium

Tuba

Tpt.

Mln.

Euph.

Tba.