

BRASS ARTICULATION- DOUBLE TONGUING



Double tonguing was developed to increase the speed at which a player could re-articulate a series of notes. From the time of Arban to the performances of Herbert L. Clark the technique was practiced and improved to the point where these musicians were able to accomplish fantastic performances of extremely difficult solos. The level at which they entertained their audiences was amazing. Many of these techniques have been lost or at least ignored and few modern players spend the required time developing these techniques. There are exceptions to this statement as illustrated by this video of [Rafael Mendez](#) performing Arban's exercises #19-20 on pg28.

This is a very good example of how smoothly and evenly double tonguing can be implemented into your playing. The sixteenth notes are too fast to be played with the conventional single tonguing technique and the practice of double tonguing is required. When you begin to develop this technique, keep in mind the evenness with which Mendez has illustrated his double tonguing ability. The fantastic playing of this gifted player is the reason I have included his picture on all of these posts related to multiple tonguing.

How do you double tongue?

Double tonguing makes use of the tongue area in the front of your mouth as well as the tongue area in the back of your throat. This back and forth action is what gives the player more speed when tonguing rapid notes. When I say the front and the back, I am speaking of the areas and not a back and forth direction. The front and back of the tonguing move up and down, not forward and backward. You can think of the action of your tongue as you visualize a teeter totter going up and down. The action of the tongue moves the same way.

In the previous post we discussed which syllables are most effective when starting notes and for simplicity sake, I will use the syllable Tah as our preferred articulation. The syllable Tah will begin our first note on G, second line in the staff for trumpet players. Start and repeat the G using your Tah articulation. As you play these notes, try to visualize what is happening inside your mouth. The tip of your tongue first rests on the ridge just behind your upper teeth. As you increase air pressure and then drop the tip downward, the force of the expelled air passes between your lips and starts them buzzing. That is how we single tongue. When we start our next note in double tonguing, we release the air with the back of the tongue as we pronounce the syllable Kah. Notice that the tip of your tongue is low in the front of your mouth as the Kah is sounded. Tah starts with the tip of your tongue and Kah begins with the release of air in the back of your throat. Repeat these two syllables a few times to get the feel of where the air is released.

I have included in this post a series of exercises which will get you started in double tonguing. If you have already been using double tonguing, feel free to skip to some of the later levels. You will also find included recordings of the exercises so that you will have something to guide you.

How do I get started playing the printed examples?

Download written as well as recorded exercises at these locations....

<http://www.thetrumpetblog.com/brass-articulation-double-tonguing/>

<http://www.thetrumpetblog.com/brass-articulation-triple-tonguing/>

<http://www.thetrumpetblog.com/how-to-fill-the-gap-between-single-tonguing-and-double-tonguing/>

Levels 3 and 4 are done in the same manner as level 1 and 2 with one exception. I have included three recordings of level 3 and 4 which increase in tempo. Find the speed which works best for you and continue at that level until you have mastered it. Once you feel comfortable at that level, advance to the next tempo. Once you have accomplished all four levels at the fastest tempo, you should be able to perform well in the middle range and the next step would be to extend your ability upward. High register double tonguing becomes very challenging for there will be a tendency to arch the tongue too much which will gradually cut off the air stream. You will need to consciously try to keep the tongue as low in the mouth as possible in order to correct this tendency.

BRASS ARTICULATION- TRIPLE TONGUING



From the material you have practiced in the preceding post (Double Tonguing) you should have an understanding of the use of multiple articulations. The next level will be using the Tah and Dah attack along with an additional Tah attack. This Tah Tah Kah articulation is called triple tonguing and will serve you well.

The basic pattern for triple tonguing is, as I stated before, Tah Tah Kah, Tah Tah Kah, Tah Tah Kah. Repeat this pattern over and over until you feel comfortable with it. Amazing speed can be achieved with this articulation as illustrated by this video of [William Rimmer](#).

One problem you may have when articulating the T T K pattern is that the first of every triplet will have a natural tendency to be heavily accented. This will give your triplet the sound of LOUD, softer, softest, with the K being the softest. One solution to this problem would be to substitute the K attack on the first note of the triplet and use the T attacks on the last two notes. This will even the accents but will also cause another problem. Beginning the first note with K is more difficult than starting it with a T attack. "Life's tough and then we die". Which ever pattern you use, be sure to keep the three notes as even as possible.

Possible tonguing patterns in triplets-

TTK TTK TTK (Most common pattern)

TKT TKT TKT (Possible but rearticulating two Ts on three and one is awkward)

KTT KTT KTT (Most even)

TKT KTK TKT (This is double tonguing in a triplet pattern and is by far the fastest)

Each of these patterns could be used in any given situation to make the passage easier. Do not limit yourself to the same pattern every time.

HOW TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN SINGLE TONGUING AND DOUBLE TONGUING



We have all run into this situation- The notes are too fast to single tongue and too slow to double tongue. This situation is usually referred to as "the gap".

Normally players find that it is very difficult to effectively speed up their single tonguing when in fact they should learn to more effectively control a slower double tonguing pattern.

Trying to increase single tonguing speed tends to create tension and stiffness in your tonguing technique which is detrimental for increasing speed while, on the other hand, slowing down your double tonguing technique will create more relaxation in the tongue and is much easier to control.