

Foreword

Through the years William Adam's approach to teaching the trumpet has gone through considerable development, his concepts and his specific methods were grounded in his thorough understanding of physics, physiology and psychology. A great deal of misunderstanding has arisen concerning the "Adam Method"; first and foremost, the Adam method is not one inflexible approach that each student must mindlessly adhere to. Mr. Adam's use of "The Routine" which is generally based on Max Schlossberg exercises was carefully applied to address a particular student's individual developmental needs. The notion that the Adam method can be applied by mindlessly repeating exercises is the single biggest misconception to understanding his approach. The fact is that he would carefully weigh each student's performance to determine if there were any inherent weaknesses, then and only then would he begin to assign very particular applications to his method enhancing both development and maintenance protocols. This is the very reason William Adam resisted the idea of penning a method book; his process requires one on one attention. He believed that successful instruction took place when a student was unaware of any potential problems; then by subtly emphasizing a particular approach to blowing.

Mr. Adam's process would affect a positive outcome. Furthermore, he believed that the vast majority of psychological and physiological problems could be overcome through a positive mental outlook and goal orientation. He believed that the mental aspects of performing must not be overlooked, so he often recommended students read *Psycho Cybernetics*, *Inner Game of Tennis* and other self-help books to better understand the crucial aspects of self-image. His goal-oriented approach strives to achieve a unity between the mind and body, generating one thought solely focused on the particular sound or style being performed. I like to refer to this as the "Three P's": Psychology, Physiology, and Physics; or more simply put, the Mind, the Body and the Instrument.

Young trumpeters begin their foundational journey acquiring intellectual, physiological and conceptual knowledge. The Adam method strives to activate the intellectual and conceptual knowledge in turn developing the

necessary physiological growth; this development if consistently applied will achieve the desired results. This requires that the student focuses intently on the desired “sound” result and not on physical sensations; again he called this “goal orientation.”

Engaging our brain’s memory to internalize sound concepts requires countless hours of listening to all styles of music. Adopting these concepts helps to automate the kinesthetic responses needed to develop the physiology. Once these concepts begin to develop, the final “P,” or the Physics of the trumpet comes into balance with both the Psychology and Physiology of the system.

Finally, the idea that the “The Routine” is simply a set of exercises completely ignores how his method develops the necessary energy and mental capacity to maintain a physically demanding instrument. The real brilliance of his approach is often misunderstood; the mind is the creator of concepts and attitudes that produce the physical activity necessary for proper trumpet playing. Wrong concepts can and will make playing more difficult. Mr. Adam regularly assigned a great deal of transposition, ear training, etudes and solo literature, his application of musicality was and is at the forefront of his pedagogy.

“We are capable of one thing at a time with considerable ease. When we have to be concerned with two things at a time, playing becomes more difficult, and when we are confronted with three things, it just literally becomes impossible. If we keep our minds on a beautiful sound, on accelerating the air through the sound, on not forcing the sound, and forget the embouchure, many problems will disappear”.

From a William Adam Clinic Address