

-Glossary-

Mensur: measurement of the inner dimensions

I.R.D: Inner rim diameter

Part 1 –*How to select the best mouthpiece for YOU*–

Many brass instrumentalists become hungry for learning about a mouthpiece in the process of growing their performance. Yes, that is the first step of improvements. Meeting the best mouthpiece should be one of the most fortunate memories in your music life. However, it is often said and true that finding the best mouthpiece is more difficult than finding the best instrument. It is a too easy way to select your mouthpiece just because your friend or favorite player uses a certain mouthpiece. You must select your mouthpiece by yourself because nobody can precisely feel what you feel.

I : Rx(Prescription) for selecting a mouthpiece

1. Clarify your ideal tone for your music, and narrow down the choice of rim size and cup depth.

Clarifying your ideal tone is the first thing you have to do for selecting a mouthpiece. Generally, the larger mouthpiece is often played for lower registers, and the smaller mouthpiece is played for the higher registers. Deeper cup produces darker and milder tones while shallower cup produces more brilliant and clearer tones. Standard cup depth would be preferred for a flexible performance.

However, for example, it is not a good way to choose a small rim diameter mouthpiece just because you can easily play a higher register. You should select a mouthpiece that you feel comfortable and can easily play your ideal tone.

When you decide the mouthpiece size, it is recommended to refer to descriptions of each models (p.12 ~p.17) or comparison charts (p.19~p.24). Then, select a model that is close to the size of the mouthpiece that you currently play. Medium rim size and cup depth is recommended for beginners who have not clarified an ideal tone yet. TP-5C, HR-5C, and TB-7C is the medium size in our line-up.

2. Select a material of the mouthpiece

There are mouthpieces made of brass, silver, stainless, titan, or plastic etc. The material changes sounds, so you can select a material that would suit your ideal tone. In our opinion, the best material should be brass as well as the instruments. Sound characters of other materials are below.

Silver mouthpieces produce far-carrying, dark, and heavy sound, but it does not harmonically resonate as much as brass. Stainless mouthpieces produce very brilliant sound and would be suit lead performances. Titanium produces a solid and bright tone and does not occur an allergic reaction, however, the sound actually becomes very light. Plastic mouthpieces are cheap and have a lot of colors. It would be fun to collect them.

3. Bring your instrument and check if your instrument and shank firmly matches.

To begin with, all brass instrumentalists need to acknowledge the fact that an instrument and a mouthpiece produce sound as “one-sound-tube”. Instruments and mouthpieces cannot be thought as a separate component. Therefore, it should be the best to try mouthpieces out with your instrument when you select a mouthpiece.

If a taper of a receiver and a shank is different, the primal performance should not be expected. Usually, a mouthpiece does not go into the receiver deeply enough and move in the receiver. This state lowers pitch and produces fuzzed sound.

4. Select a mouthpiece by its rim

Rim is one of the most important parts of a mouthpiece. It is absolutely the first requirement for all brass instrumentalists to select a mouthpiece that has a suitable rim to their own lips.

When you select mouthpieces, you have to comprehensively feel comfortable with the rim diameter, contour, width, and the bite. In this regard, mouthpieces that have a fairly sharp rim bite should be selected because you can play a clear attack and avoid a lot of missed tones. Especially, beginners may feel comfortable with a round rim bite. However, do not select those mouthpieces because they produce a blurred attack.

5. Select a mouthpiece that produces the largest volume by the least work

It is a very important factor for both mouthpieces and instruments whether you can easily produce a large volume. When you try mouthpiece, it should be better to musically play not only scales but also phrases that you get used to as if you are in a public performance. You will be able to feel if the mouthpiece suits you by doing so. Playing for a long time to try mouthpieces paralyzes your sense, so it would be better to select mouthpiece with the first impression. Check if the mouthpiece produces a correct pitch and intonation in the proper state of instrument. The proper length of pulling tuning slide is 10mm to 20mm.

If it is still hard to decide, try mouthpieces when your lips get tired and then select a mouthpiece that still produces sound. This is efficient as a last resort.

6. Get used to the new mouthpiece

Brass instrumentalists often play too much when they get a new mouthpiece, but it takes a long time to cure an exhausted muscle. Keep it in mind to take a rest before muscles are exhausted. All players need time to make a new muscle for the new mouthpiece.

7. To maintain an original quality

It is a good way to put mouthpieces in a special pouch for preventing from their getting hurt. If dropping etc deforms a shank, you need to fix it to get its primal sound quality, and if the rim gets hurt, you cannot control your lips as you want so should buy a new mouthpiece. If you get used to those hurt mouthpiece, your sounds would be hurt as well.

Wipe the mouthpiece with a soft cloth every time after playing, and clean it up once a month with a mouthpiece brush and soapy water.