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Applicability of periodization to orchestral audition preparation on trombone: a case study

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APPLICABILITY OF PERIODIZATION TO ORCHESTRAL AUDITION PREPARATION ON
TROMBONE: A CASE STUDY

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
In partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

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Abstract

The process of auditioning can seem daunting because of the high standards of performance required to win. Brass players have a finite amount of time they can practice each day because of the small muscles of the embouchure. Despite the vast amount of information available on preparing for a brass orchestral audition, little has been written on how to organize a practice schedule leading up to the audition. An analysis of literature in the major brass journals confirm which strategies have been considered to be most important when preparing for an audition, but an important component from the world for athletics is often overlooked. The concept of periodized training from the sports world is introduced as a way to guide the auditioner in implementing these strategies to prepare in the most efficient way possible. With a periodized plan, the brass player will be better able to identify and focus on their own audition-specific strengths and weaknesses. This will provide a template that could help avoid injury and support peak performance when it matters most: at the audition. Interviews with professional trombonists offered in the appendices provide a unique perspective on auditions and their individualized approach to each audition.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

I have always been intrigued by the similarities between sports and music. Every four years, Olympic athletes compete against the best athletes in the world. Virtually all of these athletes have a dedicated staff of coaches and trainers that provide a tailor made preparation plan based on their athlete's needs. This staff provides constant feedback and makes small alterations to the training plan to maximize their athlete's progress while minimizing the risk for injury. These athletes and their team pour their hearts and souls into training for years to compete at a high level in an event that sometimes lasts mere seconds.

Those wishing to become orchestral musicians face a similarly daunting task. The musician spends many years simply learning how to sound good on their instrument, and many more years learning how to communicate all the nuances required to make a musical performance enjoyable to hear. After all of those years of study, the potential livelihood of an aspiring orchestral musician comes down to performing at an extremely high level for a short amount of time. This event is what is known as the orchestral audition.

The orchestral audition is a pressure-filled event for many reasons. There are a small number of openings each year for orchestral positions that will provide suitable living wages for a musician. The chances for winning are worsened due to the fact that the audition landscape is saturated with many more musicians than there are positions (vacant or not). Thus, the amount of highly trained musicians looking for a limited amount of work raises the standards of playing at any audition. The slightest variation in rhythm, the tiniest intonation issue, or a tone unworthy of the highest praise, are all criteria for which musicians are summarily eliminated at auditions. So what does it take to perform with Olympic-level precision at an orchestral audition? An Olympic-level preparation plan.

The plan presented in the Chapter 2 is based on a periodization model popularized by Tudor Bompa¹. A version of this training model was used by the Germans as early as the 1936 Olympic Games².

¹ Tudor O. Bompa, *Periodization Training for Sports*, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1999.

The two goals of periodization are to break a larger training plan into smaller phases and to structure those phases in a way to develop the highest levels of physical performance as possible³. I believe the principles of periodization can be successfully adapted to audition preparation by assigning different aspects of audition readiness to successive phases of “training,” or in the case of a musician, practicing. A glossary of periodization terminology is provided in Appendix 1.

Chapter 3 identifies the different features of audition readiness. The first part is a literature review of articles from all of the brass journals pertaining to audition preparation. These features include practice strategies for learning the audition material and improving the skills specific to performing well in an audition. The annotated bibliography of the literature review can be found in Appendix 2, followed by an index of the audition preparation techniques from the literature review in Appendix 3. The second part of Chapter 3 applies the concepts of periodization from Chapter 2 to provide a schema for the implementation of audition preparation techniques. Interviews with professional trombonists are included in Appendix 4 to gain further insight into how professional players approach orchestral auditions.

Unfortunately, musicians don’t get the benefit of having personalized coaches and teams of trainers to help them prepare every step of the way. The closest thing most musicians have to a coach is perhaps a private teacher, who they meet with for only an hour each week. Thus it is up to musicians to prepare their own plan, monitor their own feedback, and make the changes needed to continue progressing at an efficient rate. I have provided an example of a periodized plan as it pertains to audition preparation in Chapter 4, as well as some additional thoughts to aid in the implementation of the plan.

During the first year of my graduate studies at LSU, I took a class called “How to Win an Orchestral Audition.” Our textbook for the class was James Loehr’s *The New Toughness Training for Sports*⁴. Having played athletics my whole life, I was immediately interested in learning how the sports world could influence the musical world. The book covered many topics, including periodization. I

² Tudor Bompa and G. Gregory Haff, *Theory and Methodology of Training*, 5th ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2009, 126.

³ Ibid., 126.

⁴ James E. Loehr, *The New Toughness Training for Sports*, New York: Plume, 1995.

thought this concept was intriguing and began searching out more information on how auditioners could use this plan to help them prepare for auditions. I found many thoughts on how to learn excerpts and how to practice dealing with nervousness at an audition. All of this information was helpful, but I had a hard time organizing it all into a cohesive plan – I felt like I did not have time to do everything I needed to do.

In 2010 I received my copy of the *International Trombone Association Journal* and saw that a very successful young trombonist had written an article titled “Thoughts on Audition Preparation⁵.” I was delighted to see that someone had written about actually organizing their audition preparation rather than just how to use a metronome. Seeing Mr. Sprott’s article rekindled my interest in audition preparation and I decided that I wanted to investigate periodization further than Loehr’s book. This document is intended for intermediate to advanced trombone players who have some experience with playing orchestral excerpts who may be preparing for orchestral auditions. What follows are my thoughts on how the principles of periodization training can be applied to orchestral audition preparation.

⁵ Weston Sprott, “Thoughts on Audition Preparation,” *ITA Journal* 38 no. 3 (July 2010):14-19.

Chapter 2 - Periodization Principles and Terminology

Winston Churchill once said, “Those who plan do better than those who do not plan even though they rarely stick to their plan⁶.” Most individuals who decide they want to compete at a high level do not lack ambition or work ethic. They are motivated to put in the amount of time and energy it takes to perform well because they have a goal. Whether that goal is to participate in a single competition or to compete during a block of time, the biggest concern is often how to use their time most effectively between the decision to compete and the actual competition, to provide the best possible outcome. The purpose of any training plan should prepare the individual to peak physically at the time of competition. A periodization program is the ideal method of planning because it not only provides a step by step plan to optimize training based on the demands of the particular activity or sport, but it also leaves room to account for the unique needs of each individual. So even when the plan needs to change, the individual can be confident that his preparation will give him the greatest possibility of success.

Periodization refers to a type of preparation for a major event or competition that is organized by varying training loads to produce peak physical performance in a competition⁷. Periodization was born out of Hans Selye’s model, the General Adaptation Syndrome, which was used by many European athletic coaches in the 1950s. Selye noted the difference between biological stressors that were beneficial and harmful to the body. The desirable stressors lead to increased muscle and strength, whereas the adverse stressors could cause tissue breakdown⁸. The process of planning a program for an athlete to maximize the use of positive biological stress for peak performance and to minimize the negative stress that leads to overtraining and injury is what is now known as periodization.

What follows is a description of a periodization plan, starting with the overarching organization. The annual plan contains 3 macrocycles: preparatory, competitive, and transition. The Periodization of Strength refers to the type of strength training that will compliment each of those 3 macrocycles and is

⁶ Richard H. Carson, “About Planning Quotes,” About Planning, <http://www.aboutplanning.org/quotes.html> (accessed April 5, 2012).

⁷ The application of periodization to orchestral auditions will be illustrated in the next chapter.

⁸ Christopher C. Frankel and Len Kravitz, “Periodization: Latest Studies and Practical Application,” University of New Mexico, <http://www.unm.edu/~lkravitz/Article%20folder/periodization.html> (accessed February 5, 2012).

comprised of 5 phases: anatomical adaptation, maximum strength, conversion, maintenance, and transition. The subsequent discussion will define the terms pertinent to planning and finalizing the individual's periodization plan.

Universal Features and Principles of Periodization

The purpose for developing a training protocol has many benefits. A structured plan that balances physiological stress and recovery will aid in injury prevention. Periodization can also provide a structure that addresses short and long term goals for the individual. Dr. David Pyne, Senior Physiologist of the Australian Institute of Sport, offers these 8 common features to periodization that should be remembered while planning and executing the plan:

1. The training program is designed based on the long-term performance goal for the season.
2. Training loads are increased progressively and cyclically.
3. The training phases follow a logical sequence.
4. The training process is supported by a structured program of scientific monitoring in the areas of physiology, biomechanics, psychology, and physiotherapy.
5. Recovery or regenerative techniques are used intensively throughout the training program.
6. Emphasis on skill development and refinement is maintained throughout the training program.
7. The improvement and maintenance of general athletic abilities is an underlying component of the training program.
8. Each phase of the training program builds on the preceding phase.⁹

Additionally, Siff and Verkhoshansky provide eight interrelated principles in the scientific considerations of sport preparation that should be incorporated into a periodized plan. The eight principles with explanations are as follow:

1. The Principle of Awareness – Essentially this refers to the ideological and philosophical aspects of the situation as well as the need for the athlete to become an educated participant in the training process.¹⁰

⁹ David Pyne, "The Periodisation of Swimming Training at the Australian Institute of Sport," *Sports Coach 18* (Summer 1996): 36.

¹⁰ Mel Cunningham Siff and Yuri Verkhoshansky, *Supertraining* 4th ed. (Denver: Supertraining International, 1999), quoted in Stephen R. Norris and David J. Smith. "Planning, Periodization, and Sequencing of Training and Competition: The Rationale for a Competently Planned, Optimally Executed Training and Competition Program,

This principle describes the fact that the individual should take an active role in the process of understanding why the different aspects of the periodization plan are implemented. This includes demonstrating the knowledge of how each phase will build on the one before it and why each microcycle is important to the achievement of the performance goal. Individuals are more likely to follow the plan if they know why each step is in place.

2. The Principle of All-Around Development – This point embodies the need for an underlying general athletic ability that is supported by a strong psychological profile.¹¹

The reason an individual must maintain an overall athletic ability is to remain a balanced performer. Although specificity in training is extremely important for the motor demands of a particular sport or activity, a training plan devoid of general fitness maintenance and development will compromise the ability of the individual to perform at a high level. The level of general fitness will affect training aspects such as training session length, the amount of intensity or effort able to be used, and how quickly and effectively the individual will be able to recover both during and in between training sessions.

3. The Principle of Consecutiveness (or Consistency) – This “classic” overloading principle addresses the progressive increasing of the intensity and volume of physical work, as well as the degree of difficulty of motor skills.¹²

This principle considers the importance of progression in training. If the individual plans too much volume, intensity, or difficulty early in the program, they risk overtraining that could lead to forming bad habits, ineffective training, or injury. On the other hand, if training is not incrementally increased then the individual will not successfully improve at an efficient rate.

4. The Principle of Repetition – This component is founded on “Pavlov’s 3-stage theory for development of conditioned reflexes” and is similar to the stages applied in teaching sports skills:
 - a. Development of knowledge

Supported by a Multidisciplinary Team.” In *Enhancing Recovery: Preventing Underperformance in Athletes*, edited by Michael Kellman, 124. (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2002).

¹¹ Ibid, 124.

¹² Ibid, 124.

- b. Development of motor ability
- c. Development of automatic motor response¹³

A highly competitive sporting event can cause a rise in adrenaline that stimulates the body's autonomic nervous system. Commonly referred to as the "fight or flight" response, a rise in adrenaline adversely affects the fine motor control needed to successfully perform difficult, precision tasks. This is why it is so hard for a basketball player to make free throws during a game that is tied with only one second left.

A way to combat this unwanted effect in performance is to develop a skill to the point that it becomes automatic. This follows the model of learning what the movement or skill is (a), performing that movement or skill enough for your muscles and mind to learn it (b), and finally repeating the movement or skill enough to where you can successfully complete the task seemingly automatically, without having to consider each small part of the task (c).

To continue with the basketball free throw analogy, the individual would first have to learn the aspects of the free throw: decide where to stand, develop a personal ritual, learn the correct form, etc. Next the individual would shoot many free throws while considering the different things they have just learned. Finally, the individual would have shot and made enough free throws with the correct form to be able to perform the task without having to cognitively consider each aspect of the shot. This will ensure automaticity and will give the individual a higher chance of success while under pressure.

- 5. The Principle of Visualization – The ability of the athlete to "visualize" the correct technical movements of the activity in question is extremely important in the training process. This process is aided by personal and expert demonstrations and tools such as film and video analyses.¹⁴

The importance of visualization is important to both training and performance. While the individual is learning new techniques or skills in training, they must have a good mental picture of how it should be performed. The use of feedback from coaches, other athletes or training partners, and media can

¹³ Ibid, 124-25.

¹⁴ Ibid, 125.

be extremely helpful in this process. Visualization can also aid the individual in preparing for a performance without placing a demand on the physical system of the athlete.

6. The Principle of Specialization – This principle emphasizes the need to be exposed to and practice under similar conditions to those operating during competition. This recognizes the fact that competition is extremely important in the training process. In addition, special exercises or drills to aid in the development and honing of motor skills, tactics, and other specific components required to compete efficiently and effectively in the sport should be included in a well-designed program.¹⁵

Performing effectively in a sporting event or any skill based activity demands that the individual has a working knowledge and exposure to the skills needed for that particular event. A football player who plays quarterback would need to include specific drills that include accuracy in throwing and being aware of defensive players closing in around him. A basketball player who plays shooting guard would need a heavy emphasis on shooting and ball handling. Both players need to maintain a high level of physical fitness, but the skills each needs to be successful in their particular sport will vary. Their training should reflect the development of those skills unique to their own sport.

7. The Principle of Individualization – As mentioned previously, the concept of athletes as distinct individuals is a central scientific tenet. Athletes will react and adapt differently and over individual time frames even when presented with “identical” training regimes. Hence, trainers must formulate individualized training programs with sound monitoring systems to evaluate individual responses to training load.¹⁶

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of a periodization program is that it must be individualized. This means not only making an original plan that takes into account the individual’s performance goals and biological considerations such as the ability to recover, but to have the flexibility to change certain parts of the plan as the scenario unfolds. If the individual comes to a planned high intensity training day of the program but feels extremely worn down, there should be no question to adjust that part of the plan to a lower intensity or rest day.

¹⁵ Ibid, 125.

¹⁶ Ibid, 125.

The individual should also have a reliable trainer or training partner that can help monitor his progress. This will ensure that the individual is not just adhering to the plan for the sake of following it rigidly. It is also the responsibility of individuals to be honest with how they feel during each phase of training. With these monitoring systems in place, the individual should be able to progress at an economical rate while avoiding the perils of overtraining.

8. The Principle of Structured Training – This central principle suggests that the training process should be arranged as an [organization of cycles used in periodic phases]. As stated earlier, training design will tend to follow preparatory, competitive, and transition stages of varying duration and it is this principle that has generated the term *periodization*.¹⁷

The importance of having a structured system is the crux of periodization. This will allow the training to be methodical and in accordance with the stage in which individuals find themselves. Whether introduced to new skills in the preparatory stage or honing in on specific training while leading up to a competition, there is always a reason for doing the training at that particularly phase of the plan. The athlete and/or coach will have a good idea coming into each training session where they are coming from and where they are going. Once the competition goal is set, so is the amount of time for preparation. Using the model and ideas laid out in this chapter, a flexible plan can be developed and executed to achieve a high level of performance when it matters most.

Long Term Planning: Annual Plan and Periodization of Strength

One of the most often used periodization plans was presented by Tudor O. Bompa in 1999¹⁸. He posited that the two main long term aspects of periodization are the annual plan and the periodization of strength. The annual plan separates the periodization plan into different phases of training that lead to a

¹⁷ Ibid, 125.

¹⁸ Stephen R. Norris and David J. Smith, “Planning Periodization, and Sequencing of Training and Competition: The Rationale for a Competently Planned, Optimally Executed Training and Competition Program, Supported by a Multidisciplinary Team,” in *Enhancing Recovery: Preventing Underperformance in Athletes* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2002), 123.

major event or competition. The Periodization of Strength portion organizes strength training to achieve the greatest efficiency of training gains to satisfy the needs of the specific sport¹⁹.

Annual Plan

The annual plan is more manageable when it is divided into smaller training phases. The annual plan for most sports can be separated into three different phases: Preparatory (preseason), Competitive (season), and Transition (offseason). Each of these phases can be further subdivided into smaller units, the most critical being the microcycle. The Preparatory phase is a time for the individual to attain the “physiological foundations²⁰” needed to excel at the particular sport. This includes achieving a baseline level of fitness that will allow the body to respond to harder training. The Competitive phase is when the individual should focus on improving the skills that are specifically required for the competition. The Transition phase occurs after the competition or season is completed. It allows individuals to recover and restore balance to their training schedule. The length of each training phase is decided by the number and type of competition on the individual’s schedule, in addition to the amount of time the individual needs to improve the requisite strength and skills for the specific performance goal.

Figure 1 demonstrates the different phases and cycles of training. This instance of periodization only has one competitive phase so the individual will only peak once per year. This particular instance of periodization is called a “mono-cycle.²¹” Other periodization plans can call for two or more competitive cycles such as the “bi-cycle or tri-cycle.²²” The number of competitive cycles can be changed based on the needs of each individual’s schedule.

¹⁹ Tudor O. Bompa, *Periodization Training for Sports* (Champaign, IL, 1999), 83.

²⁰ Ibid., 84.

²¹ Bompa, 84.

²² Ibid., 84

	The Annual Plan																			
Phases of Training	Preparatory						Competitive						Transition							
Sub-phases	General preparation			Specific preparation			Pre-Competitive		Competitive				Transition							
Macro-cycles																				
Micro-cycles																				

Figure 1. The Annual Plan²³

Periodization of Strength

Figure 2 shows how the periodization of strength has a distinct order of training phases that overlaps with the phases of the annual plan. First, the anatomical adaptation, maximum strength, and conversion phases of the Periodization of Strength occur during the preparatory phase of the AP. Next, the maintenance and cessation phases are implemented during the competitive phase of the annual plan. Finally, the transition phase happens at the same time as the transition phase of the annual plan.

Periodization of Strength for a Mono-Cycle (C = Cessation of Strength Training)					
Preparatory			Competitive		Transition
AA	MxS	Conversion to P/M-E	Maintainance of *P *M-E	C	Compensation Training

Figure 2. Divisions of Periodization of Strength within the annual plan.²⁴ Anatomical Adaptation (AA); Maximum Strength (MxS); Conversion to Power/Muscular Endurance (P/M-E); Maintenance of Power and Muscular Endurance (*P and *M-E); Cessation (C)²⁵

²³ Bompa, Figure 6.1, 84.

²⁴ Ibid, Table 6.2, 85.

²⁵ Explanations of the abbreviations in this table are discussed below.

Anatomical Adaptation

The Anatomical Adaptation phase should begin after the transition phase is complete and at the start of the preparatory phase. This timing gives individuals an opportunity to restore balance to their sport's specific training for the competition phase and also to prepare their body for the strenuous workload in the late preparatory and early competitive cycles of the annual plan²⁶. For example, a soccer player relies heavily on using his lower body during the competitive phase of training. The Anatomical Adaptation stage allows the player to restore balance by focusing more on training his upper body.

In addition, the soccer player would also focus on training that strengthened his core (abdominal and lower back) and smaller supporting muscles. This ensures that the soccer player will have a strong foundation and won't exhibit any muscular imbalances that could cause injuries or inefficiencies during the later phases of training. Anatomical Adaptation is also an opportunity to work on the weaknesses of an individual. This phase is a particularly effective time to sharpen weaker skills or areas of training because there is no stress of competition.

The length of the Anatomical Adaptation phase can be decided using a few guidelines. The length of the Preparatory phase will help determine the extent of the Anatomical Adaptation because the Maximum Strength and Conversion phases must also occur within the Preparatory phase. The individual's own needs for conditioning should also be taken into account when choosing the length of the Anatomical Adaptation phase. If the individual has not spent as much time conditioning in the past, he will need a greater amount of time to allow his body to adapt to the physiological stresses experienced during this phase. Conversely, an individual who has spent a great amount of time in the past strength training will need less time. Finally, the importance of strength in the given sport or activity will determine the length of this phase accordingly²⁷.

²⁶ Ibid., 85.

²⁷ Bompa, 87.

Maximum Strength

The next phase to be considered in the Periodization of Strength is the Maximum Strength phase. True to its name, the goal for the Maximum Strength phase is to attain the greatest amount of strength possible for the individual in the allotted time. The reason for developing Maximum Strength is because most sports or activities need power, muscular endurance, or a combination of both. Because power is the result of speed and muscular strength, it makes sense to train for strength first and then use speed to make the conversion to power²⁸.

The length of the Maximum Strength phase in a mono-cycle is usually 1 to 3 months and is determined by the individual's needs as well as the demands of the activity²⁹. Football requires great strength to perform well and would demand a longer maximum strength phase. Soccer does not place as much emphasis on strength so a shorter maximum strength phase would be logical. The last consideration in determining the length of the maximum strength phase is the amount of competition the individual has scheduled in the annual plan. A bi-cycle plan would cut the duration in half and a tri-cycle plan would cut the duration to a third. Since more competitions shorten the time of each larger cycle within the annual plan, the Maximum Strength phase would be affected accordingly.

Conversion

The third phase of the Periodization of Strength is the Conversion phase. As previously mentioned, this phase involves the conversion from maximum strength to power and muscular endurance. The principle of specificity is paramount in this phase. The type of demands for the sport or activity will guide in the planning of proper training during this phase. The individual should implement specific training strategies that emphasize power or muscular endurance depending on the needs of the sport. For activities that require a significant amount of both power and muscular endurance, the training should reflect the proper ratio that is present in the sport³⁰.

²⁸ Bompa, 87.

²⁹ Ibid., 87.

³⁰ Ibid., 88.

The length of the Conversion phase should take into account whether power or muscular endurance is more important in the training. Bompa suggests the conversion to power generally takes 4 to 5 weeks, whereas the conversion to muscular endurance can require as many as 6 to 8 weeks because “the physiological and anatomical adaptation to such demanding work takes much longer³¹.” In the larger annual plan picture, the Conversion phase will generally occur at the end of the Preparatory phase and lead into the Competition phase.

Maintenance

The start of the Competition phase begins with the fourth phase of the Periodization of Strength: the Maintenance phase. The intent of the maintenance phase is to uphold the level of strength achieved in the previous phases of strength training³². Similar to the other phases, the type of strength training should reflect the needs of the particular sport. The frequency of Maintenance training should be relatively small so more time and energy can be spent on skill work specific to the competition. Because the number of strength training sessions will decrease closer to the competition, efficient training is very important to avoid detraining. The effects of detraining will be discussed shortly.

There is an aspect of the Maintenance phase that occurs in the days or week leading up to the competition called the Cessation phase. Strength training should be avoided so the individual can be refreshed and rejuvenated both physically and mentally as much as possible. The individual may want to perform movements or activities that will mimic the exact demands of the competition, but should avoid any training that will inhibit recovery from all the previous training. This will ensure the individual is ready to perform at her very best.

Transition

The final phase of the Periodization of Strength is the Transition phase. This phase acts as a bridge between the Competitive phase and the Preparatory phase of the annual plan. The main objective

³¹ Bompa, 88.

³² Ibid., 88.

of this phase is to recover from the physical and mental stresses of training and competition³³. This is achieved by lowering the intensity and frequency of training and by not competing. Serious athletes should plan a transition phase that lasts close to 4 weeks, but no longer than 6 weeks.

Similar to the Anatomical Adaptation phase, this is a time where the individual can begin working on reversing the muscular imbalances encountered with competition. For instance, a pitcher uses his dominant throwing arm much more than his non-throwing arm during the competitive phase. The Transition phase is a time when the pitcher can begin strengthening the non-throwing arm to develop a more balanced muscular system. The individual should be careful not to cease all activity during the Transition phase, or he may risk completely detraining.

Detraining occurs when an individual stops all training for an extended amount of time. Although this may be well intentioned for recovering from competition or training, detraining can result in the loss of the strength and skills gained during the Preparatory and Competitive phases. The amount of muscular loss depends on the duration of inactivity. Muscular degeneration occurs because lack of activity causes a breakdown of proteins and a decrease in the production of testosterone, both of which are integral to muscle growth and maintenance³⁴. To avoid complete detraining during this time, the transition phase should be viewed as a progression from the Competitive phase to the Preparatory phase in which the individual is active enough to avoid detraining but resting enough to aid in recovery.

Organizational Terms

Coaches and scientists have somewhat differing terminology for the components of periodization. For clarity, the most globally accepted terms will be used in this document. The following terms explain the smaller components of the periodization plan. This section will cover basic organizational terms that describe different lengths and types of the units that make up the larger plan. A training session refers to one workout, training, or practice session. Each training session should have a predetermined goal and

³³ Bompa, 89.

³⁴ Ibid., 90.

can be broken up into four main sections: the introduction, warm-up, main part, and cool down³⁵. The introduction is the time at the beginning of the training session where the individual sets the goal for the session as well as gathers all the necessary equipment. Next, warm-up time should be used to prepare the body for activity by raising the body temperature. The individual can also mimic some specific movements from the main part of the training session during the warm-up to act as a transition between the two parts³⁶.

In the main part of the training session the individual works towards the planned strength, skill, and tactical goals that were predetermined for the day. Finally, the cool down is an opportunity for the individual to transition the body to a rested state. The individual should perform light exercise for a short duration of time to aid in the removal of lactic acid from the body. This will help the individual to recover faster for the following day of training³⁷.

The frequency of training refers to how often one will train during a given microcycle (Loehr)³⁸. The frequency of training should be determined by where the individual is in the annual plan. It may be more beneficial to train more often during the preparatory phase and less often in the microcycle directly before a competitive event. Specificity refers to how similar the exercises are to the actual demands of the event or performance goal. A training session with high specificity for a football player that plays wide receiver would involve a ball catching drill or learning to run routes that will be used in games.

A microcycle describes a small grouping of training sessions. The typical allotment of time for a microcycle is a week, but can be extended or shortened by a few days. The most typical microcycles use a progressive load principle where the individual is exposed to increasing amounts of training followed by periods of rest³⁹. Both intensity and volume of training will be defined in the Program Design section following the discussion of the micro- and macrocycle.

³⁵ Bompa, 71.

³⁶ Ibid., 71.

³⁷ Ibid., 74.

³⁸ James E. Loehr, *The New Toughness Training for Sports*, (New York, Plume, 1995), 122.

³⁹ Ibid., 74.

Figure 3 illustrates the low-intensity microcycle. This microcycle progresses from low (L) to high (H) intensity training from Monday to Wednesday, followed by a day of “easy” work on Thursday allow for some recovery. Friday and Saturday are medium (M) intensity days before the individual would take a complete rest (R) from training to fully recover before the next microcycle begins.

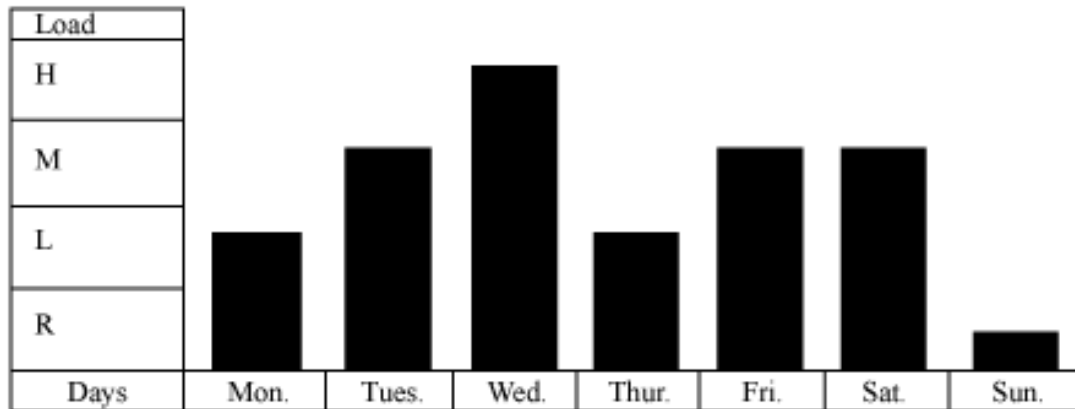


Figure 3, Low-intensity microcycle⁴⁰

Figure 4 shows a medium intensity microcycle. This microcycle incorporates two high intensity training days on Tuesday and Friday. Monday and Wednesday are low intensity days to allow the individual to have enough energy to complete the more demanding second part of the week. Sunday should be a complete rest day to allow for physical and mental recovery between microcycles.

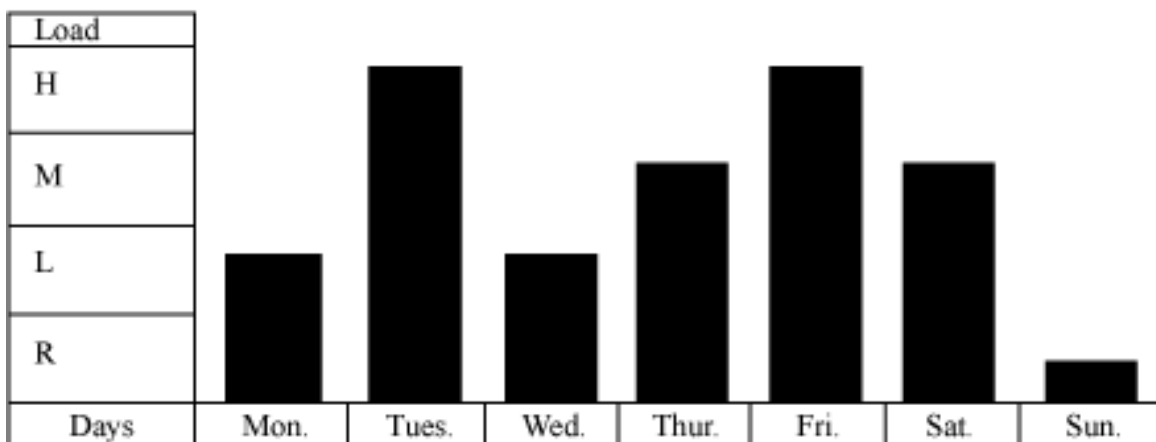


Figure 4, Medium-intensity microcycle⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid., Figure 5.2, 76.

⁴¹ Bompa, Figure 5.3, 77.

The last type of microcycle that is described by its load increments is the high-intensity microcycle. **Figure 5** shows how this microcycle begins with an alternation between medium and high intensity days from Monday through Thursday. The individual should plan a low intensity day on Friday to gain some recuperation before the third high intensity day of the week on Saturday. Again, Sunday should function as a day devoid of strenuous training activity.

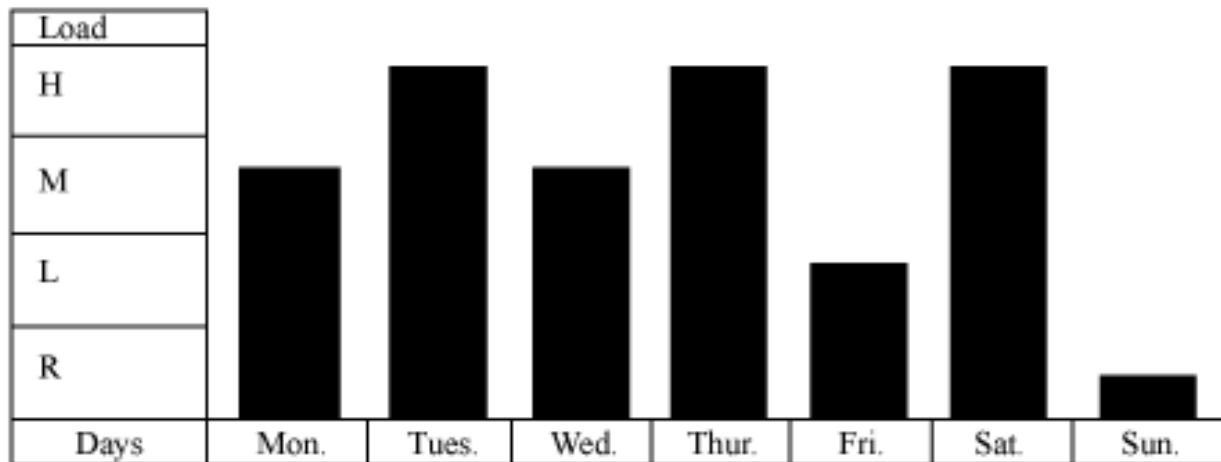


Figure 5, High-intensity microcycle⁴²

Special Types of Microcycles

There are also some special types of microcycles that are named for the goals they seek to fulfill based on which phase of training the individual is in. The introduction microcycle is an educational microcycle used to expose the individual to new ideas or techniques that are unfamiliar⁴³. This may include introducing fundamental skills needed to perform the training sessions efficiently and would probably take place during the early stages of the preparatory phase.

The restorative microcycle is used to aid in the recovery process⁴⁴. The duration of the restorative microcycle depends on the individual's need for recovery. This microcycle relies heavily on active rest strategies and prepares the individual to enter the next microcycle in a recovered state. This microcycle

⁴² Ibid., Figure 5.4, 77.

⁴³ Dave Tate, "The Periodization Bible: Part 1: The Old Testament – Linear Periodization," http://www.elitefts.com/documents/periodization_bible__part_1.htm (accessed November 3, 2011).

⁴⁴ Ibid, 1.

could take place anytime the individual is feeling particularly over trained and is especially effective as a transition between macrocycles.

The competitive microcycle is the time period leading up to the event or competition⁴⁵. This microcycle typically lasts 3 to 7 days before the competition and involves a lower training volume and intensity. The amount of specificity in training would increase during this microcycle as well.

An effective training protocol has logically planned microcycles that follow the format of the annual plan. However, microcycles are generally the most flexible aspect of the program and can be changed as needed within the framework of the larger cycles of the plan to accommodate individual needs. A series of microcycles should be grouped together for a common purpose within each phase of the periodization plan, which results in macrocycles.

Macrocycle

The macrocycle describes the grouping of a distinct amount of microcycles that ends in attaining a specific performance or program goal⁴⁶. For example, if the individual is in the preparatory stage of training for a competition, he could use 3 introductory microcycles in which he was introduced to new exercises. The result would be a macrocycle that has made the individual more familiar with unknown exercises and prepared him for the harder training to come. The macrocycle also follows a similar principle of progressive loading that is used in the microcycles. Figure 5 illustrates how each microcycle increases in intensity until the final low intensity microcycle. This is an opportunity to use a restorative microcycle to recover before beginning the next macrocycle.

⁴⁵ Tate, 1.

⁴⁶ Norris and Smith, 125.

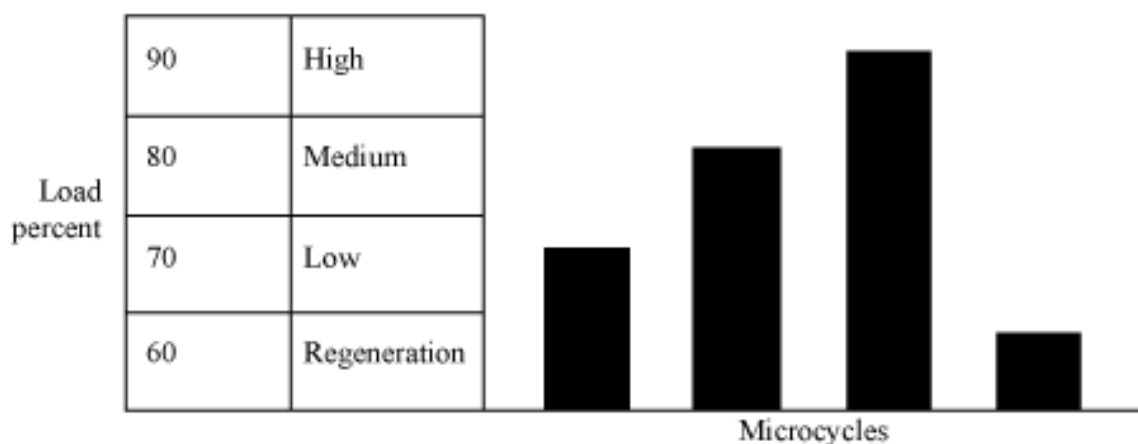


Figure 6, Macrocycle: Progressive increase in training load of microcycles followed by recovery microcycle⁴⁷

Program Design Terms

An understanding of program design terms will allow the individual to structure training within the microcycle and macrocycle. Training volume is the quantity of work performed in a session or over a given cycle. This includes the number of exercises, sets, and repetitions involved in the training session or cycle. Individuals are strongly encouraged to keep records of training volume to monitor progress. The training volume will change based on what cycle the individual is in and how they are feeling physically. A high volume of training is used to build muscular endurance or maximum strength as a result of the high number of repetitions, sets, and/or exercises. Medium training volume is used for different aspects of power due to the lower amount of training and increased rest interval.

As the individual nears the peak physical level of performance, overall training volume becomes very important. According to Bompa, “Athletic performance improves only by constant physiological adaptation through training volume increments. As athletes adapt to higher volumes of training, they experience better recovery between sets and training sessions.⁴⁸” The result of this increase in volume allows the individual to make further strength and endurance gains leading up to the performance goal.

The increments in volume will largely depend on the individual’s own biological response to training, as well as the specifics of the sport or activity such as how much strength and/or endurance is

⁴⁷ Bompa, 75

⁴⁸ Ibid, 43.

needed to perform at a high level. A sudden increase in training volume can be damaging and may result in unnecessary fatigue, inefficient muscular work, and possible injury. A periodized plan in which the training volume is being monitored will avoid these unwanted aspects of overtraining.

Another key factor in planning training sessions is the intensity of training, or load. This describes the mass or amount of weight lifted. On a more general basis, it is “a function of the strength of the nervous stimuli employed in training, [and] is determined by muscular effort and central nervous system energy expended⁴⁹.” Therefore, the main aspect of training attributed to intensity is effort.

Exercises

The number of exercises also plays an important role in the periodization plan. If too many exercises are planned, the result could be overtraining and fatigue. The number and kinds of exercises should be chosen in accordance with specific factors. One such factor is the performance level of the individual⁵⁰. An older, more experienced individual can handle a higher number of exercises. However, this same individual may find more benefit in having a fewer number of exercises while focusing on applying a greater degree of specificity. The needs of the sport or activity will also determine the number and kinds of exercises. Finally, the phase of training will also dictate the number of exercises. At the beginning of a certain period, the number of exercises may be increased to build a solid foundation and to emphasize endurance. Again, the end of the cycle may employ fewer exercises that are more specific to the performance goal.

The order of exercises is important within the training session. They should alternate between muscle groups and copy the motion or skills involved in the actual activity. This could also help with the motor learning aspect of completing the actual performance goal at a higher level. Two ways of structuring the order of exercises are the “vertical” and “horizontal” sequences⁵¹. The vertical sequence refers to completing one set of a given exercise and then continuing to the next exercise on the list until

⁴⁹ Bompa, 45.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 46.

⁵¹ Bompa, 47.

the first exercise comes around again. The horizontal sequence calls for the individual to complete all sets of a given exercise before moving on to the next exercise.

The number of repetitions in a given set is determined by the kind of effort that is required and the goal of the movement. For maximum strength, the repetition count would be low (1-7). For an emphasis on power, the repetition scheme would be moderate (5-10). The number of repetitions for muscular endurance depends on the duration the movement ultimately needs to be performed. Short duration would require 10-30 repetitions, medium duration 30-60, and long duration 100-150⁵².

The number of sets depends on the number of exercises one wishes to complete in a training session. A set is a predetermined number of repetitions followed by a rest interval. The number of sets decreases as the number of exercises, repetitions, training volume and intensity increases⁵³. The number of sets also follows the same logic as training volume in regard to the phase of training. A higher number of sets may be used in the earlier training phases, and would probably taper off and become fewer in number but more specific as the competitive phase approaches. During the competitive phases, training volume and number of sets should decrease so energy demands are spent mostly on technical aspects of performance while maintaining a certain level of strength.

Rest

The rest interval is an extremely important aspect of the periodization plan. A predetermined rest interval is crucial to avoid unneeded physiological and psychological stress during training. When effort is expended during a set, the rest interval restores energy to successfully complete the next set or exercise. The length of the rest interval will determine the amount of energy that is restored. The duration of the rest interval depends on many factors, including the individual's level of conditioning and the amount of energy used during the exercises⁵⁴. The rest interval should be determined for both between sets and days of training.

⁵² Ibid., 48.

⁵³ Ibid., 48.

⁵⁴ Bompa, 49.

The rest interval between sets is crucial for some very important physiological processes that replenish the chemicals bodies use for energy. Bompa explains this in detail:

During a rest interval, a high-energy compound of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) and creatine phosphate (CA) to be used as an energy source is replenished proportionate to the duration of the rest interval. When the rest interval is properly calculated, lactic acid (LA) accumulates more slowly, enabling the athlete to maintain the planned training program.⁵⁵

A rest interval that is too short results in the build-up of lactic acid, which is what leads to the unwanted feeling of soreness in the muscles. Some sports or activities may require the tolerance of lactic acid. The periodized plan can address that by planning days of training that will expose the individual to a greater build-up of lactic acid. Some key points should be remembered during these training sessions. A 30 second complete rest can restore up to 50% of the ATP/CA that has been depleted. A 60 second rest interval for several sets of high repetitions (15-20) is not enough to restore the muscle's energy source and could lead to greater unneeded muscular tension. A rest interval of 3 to 5 minutes, or longer, will allow for almost complete regeneration of ATP/CA. If an individual trains to exhaustion, even a 5 minute rest interval will not be enough to replenish the expended energy⁵⁶. The obvious consequences of training without sufficient rest are soreness, pain, fatigue, muscular and technical inefficiency, and possible injury.

The rest interval between training sessions depends on the conditioning level and recovery ability of the individual. Keeping records of how much rest is required to feel recovered in between different kinds of training sessions could guide the planning of future rest intervals. The phase of training and type of energy also contribute to how much rest should be taken between sessions. Higher intensity or longer training duration will require a greater rest interval. It is important to remember that well conditioned individuals will recover faster, especially as the competitive phase approaches⁵⁷.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 51.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 50.

⁵⁷ Michael Kellman, "Planning Periodization, and Sequencing of Training and Competition: The Rationale for a Competently Planned, Optimally Executed Training and Competition Program, Supported by a Multidisciplinary Team," in *Enhancing Recovery: Preventing Underperformance in Athletes* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2002), 6.

There are some different strategies the individual can employ while resting. Active recovery refers to exerting psychological effort while relaxing physically or vice versa⁵⁸. An example of which is to study film of a master tennis player performing a perfect forehand stroke over and over. The body gets to rest but the mind is still engaged in furthering its development. Another type of active recovery is cross-training. A power lifter may play a game of basketball, or a football player might play a game of tennis. These individuals remain active but do not tax the main muscular system they usually use in training. Also, moderate activity after exercising is thought to speed recovery due to the “aerobic metabolism of lactic acid to provide ATP to meet the energy need of performing the light-to-moderate exercise⁵⁹.” The absence of lactic acid will lessen the feeling of soreness allowing the individual to perform at a higher level during the next training session.

Passive recovery involves a total rest from physical or psychological stress involved in the usual training activity. This includes nourishment with healthy food, quality sleep, and leisure time activities such as watching a movie or reading a book. Passive recovery can be highly subjective as the individuals should do what they know works best for them⁶⁰.

To review, the first step in organizing a periodization plan is to consider what the competition or sport the individual is training for and what her current experience level is in that activity. The next consideration for the plan is to map out when the competition occurs. Working backwards from there, the individual should determine the goals for the training cycles leading up to the competition on a short long and long term basis so the planning of training sessions and exercises for the micro- and macrocycles can take shape. During the execution of the plan, the individual should be sure that he is monitoring the stress of training and the resulting need for recovery. Based on the success or failure of meeting the predetermined goals for each phase and cycle, the individual can make modifications to the plan.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ William J. Kraemer, Steven J. Fleck, and Michael R. Deschenes, *Exercise Physiology: Integrated From Theory to Practical Applications*. (Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins Health, 2012), 53.

⁶⁰ Kellman, 9.

Chapter 3 - Literature Review and Application of Periodization Principles

The primary purpose of this chapter is to synthesize the pertinent information I found in my literature review and how that information can be applied to a periodized plan for audition preparation. As a trombonist, I decided to view this topic through my own particular vantage point. Therefore the majority of the reviewed literature (Appendix 2 and 3), including my choices for interviews (Appendix 4), comes from this perspective. The journals I reviewed represented each brass instrument: *International Trumpet Guild Journal*, *International Trombone Association Journal*, *Horn Call*, and the *International Tuba and Euphonium Association Journal*. I used the index of each journal as well as a search for audition preparation material in JSTOR, Dissertation Abstracts, and WorldCat. Every attempt was made to gather relevant information dating back to the beginning of these publications. The results of my literature review revealed the fact that authors broadly discussed these four categories: Planning, Excerpt Preparation, Audition Performance Simulations, and Practice Away From the Instrument.

Planning

It is clear through my research that it is important to have a predetermined plan for audition preparation. This discussion of planning ranged from how individual practice sessions were organized to having an idea of the overall practice strategy for an audition. Wilson wrote that having a structured plan is essential for busy musicians because it is easier to make small changes to a long term schedule than to constantly come up with a new short term plan⁶¹. Weston Sprott posed the idea of grouping excerpts by their physical demands as a way to structure both short-term and long-term planning⁶². Several sources went so far as to offer specific timelines of their suggested preparation leading up to an audition. The most common amount of time allotted for preparation was 8 weeks⁶³ while Kleucher offered tips for 4

⁶¹ Andrew Wilson, "Performance Preparation: A Systematic Approach," *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 61 (June 2011): 61-62.

⁶² Weston Sprott, "Thoughts on Audition Preparation," *ITA Journal* 38 no. 3 (July 2010): 14-19.

⁶³ Kevin Lyons, "Auditioning in Atlanta," *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 76 (October 2006): 76; James West, "Preparing the CSO Audition: Reflections from Chris Martin," *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 54 (June 2006): 54; Sprott, 14-19.

weeks before the audition⁶⁴. Martin and Sprott took the timeline one step further and divided their 8 weeks into 3 subdivisions of preparation time⁶⁵.

An advantage of organizing a preparation plan into a timeline is the encouragement of goal setting. The obvious long term goal of winning the audition can be broken into short term goals such as becoming familiar with unfamiliar excerpts⁶⁶, building enough strength and endurance to practice the audition material for greater amounts of time⁶⁷, and practicing the actual act of auditioning by performing mock auditions (as reported by over half of the sources reviewed). The choice or timing of different short term goals will vary from one individual to the next, but the presence of a predetermined plan provides the structure for successful completion of the ultimate goal.

A benefit of having an organized plan for audition preparation is the avoidance of injuries or unnecessary fatigue leading to poor performance. Players become injured or are too fatigued to practice or perform at their best, no amount of preparation or planning will help them win an audition. One common strategy cited for avoiding injuries was the observance of rest periods during or between practice sessions⁶⁸. These rest periods allow players to avoid overstressing the musculature of their embouchure, which could lead to injury. Brief periods of inactivity during a practice session can also serve as a mental break from the intense concentration needed to practice efficiently⁶⁹. As the audition date draws closer, many players use something called tapering to ensure they are not overly fatigued for their audition⁷⁰. Chris Martin reduced his practicing to 1 or 2 daily sessions before winning the principal trumpet position in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. That reduction of muscular effort allowed him to avoid any unwanted fatigue while maintaining his ability to perform at a high level on the audition day.

⁶⁴ Melinda Fitch Kleucher, "The W-I-N-N-E-R Approach to Auditions," *Horn Call* (October 1992): 81-84.

⁶⁵ West, 54 and Sprott, 14-19.

⁶⁶ Sprott, 16.

⁶⁷ Milton Stevens, "Winning an Orchestral Trombone Audition," *ITA Journal* 15 no. 1 (1987): 30.

⁶⁸ Michael Caldwell, "Applying Marathon Training Principles to Trumpet Practice and Performance," *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 58 (March 2006): 58-60; Sprott, 14-19; Joseph D. Goble, "On Audition and Contest Preparation for Wind Instrument Performers (The Unwritten Rules)," *ITEA Journal* 29 (Winter 2002): 79-81.

⁶⁹ Sprott, 14-19.

⁷⁰ West, 54 and Sprott, 14-19.

Excerpt Preparation

The first step to successfully preparing for an audition is to make sure you have the correct music to prepare. This may seem like a simple point, but many auditioners practice using orchestral excerpt books. Richard Decker mentions that these books are often wrought with errors, and that all efforts should be made to get an original part⁷¹. Cherryclassics.com offers a CD compilation of real orchestral parts for low brass and trumpet players⁷². Auditioners could also contact the personnel manager of the orchestra for which they are auditioning and request the parts for the excerpt list.

An easy way to be eliminated at an audition is by failing to follow the printed information on the excerpt, such as written musical directions, dynamics, and articulation markings. Milton Stevens recommends translating all the musical directions on the page so they do not sound unprepared or unknowledgeable in the audition⁷³. In addition to musical directions, six articles stressed the importance of playing with good rhythm, tempo, intonation, and sound quality. An effective way to receive feedback on the musical aspects of preparation is the use of a recording device.

At least half of the articles reviewed discussed the importance of recording practice sessions and mock auditions⁷⁴ to receive feedback on how effectively the music is being communicated. Kevin Lyons and Jeff Funderburk both described their recording routines as a constant comparison between their own playing and the playing they were trying to emulate from professional recordings (3,14)⁷⁵. Decker provides a great list of aspects to consider while listening back to a recorded excerpt: an even tone quality including beginnings of notes; intonation problems including the problem notes of the player's instrument; accurate rhythm, especially within the rests; and observation of marked articulations and dynamics⁷⁶. Whether auditioners choose to record virtually all of their practice sessions⁷⁷ or to only record

⁷¹ Richard Decker, "Thoughts on Auditioning," *Horn Call* (April 1985): 31-32.

⁷² Gordon Cherry, "Cherry Classics," <http://www.cherryclassics.com> (accessed May 5, 2012).

⁷³ Stevens, 31.

⁷⁴ Refer to Appendix 3.

⁷⁵ Lyons, 76; Jeffrey Funderburk, "Audition Strategy," *ITEA Journal* 18 no. 3 (1991): 52.

⁷⁶ Decker, 31-32.

⁷⁷ Sproutt, 11-14.

a few minutes⁷⁸ remains a personal decision, but the use of a recording device was one of the most often-cited preparation strategies.

The use of a metronome and tuner were also mentioned regularly as essential preparation tools. These tools were mostly spoken about in general terms for improving rhythm and intonation. Buck reports that some auditioners may become over reliant on them⁷⁹. This over-reliance could lead to a decreased ability to develop an inner pulse or a discerning ear for intonation. These tools could be especially helpful when creating exercises to improve difficult technical aspects of excerpts⁸⁰.

Another effective way to cultivate a strong sense of rhythm and intonation is to play along with recordings. Not all auditioners have the luxury of regularly playing in an orchestra while preparing for an audition. Even those who do won't get to play much of the repertoire on the audition list. Funderburk describes the technique of playing with recordings as a very effective way to become familiar with the music on a larger level than just the specific part you spend most time practicing⁸¹. Another similar technique aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of how the excerpt fits into the whole piece is to follow the score and sing the excerpt while listening to a recording⁸².

Audition Performance Simulation

There is more to preparing for an audition than just being able to play the music successfully in the practice room. The actual audition is a high-pressure situation that can cause auditioners to make mistakes they would not ordinarily make. For the most part, the auditioners must play each excerpt at their best on the first attempt. The auditioners must perform the excerpts in an order previously unknown to them in an unfamiliar room in conditions that are certainly unlike those in the comfort of their own practice room. The best way to prepare for such an event is to practice under as many as the same conditions as possible, or what is called the mock audition.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Buck, "The Orchestral Flute Audition: An Examination of Preparation Methods and Techniques," DMA Dissertation, Rice University, 2003.

⁷⁹ Buck.

⁸⁰ Stevens, 30-35.

⁸¹ Funderburk, 52.

⁸² Buck.

The “mock audition” was the preparation strategy that was most mentioned in the literature review. These mock auditions can be performed for a recording device⁸³ or for a live “committee” of musicians or colleagues⁸⁴. They should share as many similar aspects as a real audition as possible. These include having a proctor to give instructions, a committee or recording device behind a screen, and a random list of the excerpts to be performed.

The significance of practicing with a random list or purposely difficult order was mentioned six times in the literature review. Some ideas for generating a random list included letting the mock committee choose the order⁸⁵, writing the names of the excerpts on note cards and choosing them at random⁸⁶, and devising a “chop’s⁸⁷ worst nightmare⁸⁸” order that includes difficult transitions between styles or physical demands. Another important aspect of the mock audition is to perform them in as many different acoustical environments as possible. Doug Yeo suggested choosing different rooms to practice the difficulties of adapting one’s dynamics to the room⁸⁹.

The importance of one-attempt practice is reflected in the fact that five articles mentioned its relevance in preparation. Perhaps the most extreme example was posed by William Vermeulen. He incorporated something called the Audition Board with his orchestral audition preparation class. Students earned a check on the Audition Board next to certain excerpts when they could play them perfectly in time and in tune with no mistakes. They earned a second check by successfully playing the excerpt perfectly without any prior notice. A third check was earned in the same manner as the second; but if that attempt was missed the student lost the second check as well⁹⁰. This may be an extreme version of one-attempt practice, but it illustrates the importance of being able to perform an excerpt successfully on the first attempt.

⁸³ William G. Lucas, “The Orchestral Audition,” *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 38 (May 1999): 38-43.

⁸⁴ Richard Chenoworth, “Audition Basics,” *Horn Call* (February 1996): 39-42.

⁸⁵ Stevens, 30-35.

⁸⁶ Heather Victoria Rodabaugh, “Preparation For Orchestral Trumpet Auditions: The Perspectives of Three Prominent Orchestra Players,” DMA Monograph, The University of Oklahoma, 2008.

⁸⁷ ‘Chops’ is a slang word among brass players referring to their embouchure.

⁸⁸ West, 54.

⁸⁹ Doug Yeo, “Symphony Auditions: Preparation and Execution,”

http://www.yeodoug.com/resources/symphony_auditions/yeoauditions.html, Accessed October 19, 2011.

⁹⁰ William Vermeulen, “Audition Success: A Pedagogical Approach,” *Horn Call* (February 1996): 51-58.

Practice Away from the Instrument

The final category of audition preparation examines strategies that can be used away from the instrument. There is only a finite amount of physical exertion the auditioner can expend on audition preparation, especially for brass players. Two major areas of preparation that can be incorporated without taxing the physical energy system are familiarization and mental practice.

The second most often cited preparation strategy (just behind mock auditions) in my literature review was the idea of becoming as familiar as possible with the music on the audition list. Familiarization moves beyond knowing the notes and rhythms of each particular excerpt. Many sources mentioned the importance of knowing how each excerpt fits into the contextually larger picture of the whole work. The most common techniques that referred to familiarization were score study and listening to recordings of the whole work. Score study should involve analyzing the musical structure of the whole piece to see how the excerpt fits into the larger work⁹¹ and researching composers to glean important aspects of their musical style⁹². An easy way to incorporate listening into the preparation plan is to use practice breaks as an opportunity to listen to the repertoire⁹³. Elizabeth Buck and Richard Decker both noted that an important element of familiarization was to listen to many recordings of the same piece by different ensembles to gain an understanding of the accepted median tempo for each excerpt⁹⁴.

The two most cited strategies for working on mental toughness were visualization and self-affirmations. Kleucher offered two visualizations that she considered important to have at your disposal in an audition situation⁹⁵. One was to practice visualizing yourself in a place where you are very relaxed and care-free; the second was to visualize yourself playing at your best. She recommends that visualizations must include as many senses (sights, sounds, etc.) as possible and that they must be practiced often so they can be called upon at will.

⁹¹ Funderburk, 52.

⁹² Christopher Rose, "An Orchestral Audition Preparation Handbook for Bass Players," DMA Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2011.

⁹³ Sprott, 30-35.

⁹⁴ Buck.

⁹⁵ Kleucher, 81-84.

Another mental preparation strategy mentioned in my literature was the self-affirmation. Self-affirmations can promote a healthier sense of self and provide some positive relief from the constant analysis and error correction that comes with carefully preparing excerpts. Vermeulen suggested starting with a concept or performance idea one struggles with and changing it to a positive affirmation in the present tense. He further suggests writing it on a card to read 10 times each morning and night⁹⁶. For example, if one struggled with confidence they could write, “I am a confident auditioner.” Others believed in a more general strategy of giving yourself credit when one plays well and to build on that confidence leading up to the audition⁹⁷.

Sports-Music Connection

At least a quarter of the sources I reviewed mentioned the connection between preparing for a sporting event and a musical performance. Whether the comparison referred to a marathon⁹⁸ or an Olympic event⁹⁹, the similarities between preparing for an audition and a sporting event are evident. Both preparations require some amount of planning, feedback, and goal setting to have a successful result. Sports and music both demand the participant to have better than normal strength and endurance, to be mentally tough, and to be virtually perfect for a short amount of time¹⁰⁰. Sprott made the insightful analogy that even Lance Armstrong did not train every single day as though it were the Tour de France, but rather had a thoughtful and well-paced preparation program¹⁰¹.

The second section of this chapter will present a broad overview of how some strategies and techniques from the Literature Review could fit into a periodized plan for an orchestral audition. The following chapter will provide an example plan that could act as a basic model for an audition preparation guide.

⁹⁶ Vermeulen, 51-58.

⁹⁷ Lucas, 38-43.

⁹⁸ Caldwell, 58-60.

⁹⁹ Stevens, 30.

¹⁰⁰ Vermeulen, 51-58.

¹⁰¹ Sprott, 14-19.

Periodization Applied to Audition Preparation

It was evident in my literature review that the development of some type of organized plan would be helpful in preparing for auditions. Two of the most successful auditioners that incorporated a predetermined, blocked out plan were Weston Sprott and Chris Martin. Many aspects of their plan mimicked the 3 phase model discussed in Chapter 2. The 3 phases of the periodization plan from Chapter 2, (Preparation, Competition, and Transition) can be adopted by auditioners to improve their preparation for orchestral auditions. A major advantage to using the Periodization Plan is the management of smaller goals leading to the ultimate goal of winning an audition.

The following discussion uses the organizational concepts from the periodization model presented in Chapter 2¹⁰², as well as the preparation strategies discussed in the literature review from the first part of this chapter. An example outline of the Periodization Plan for musicians is outlined in Chapter 4.

Phase 1 – Preparation

The first stage of the periodization plan is the Preparation phase, which is broken into the following sub-phases: General, Specific, and Conversion. One goal of the General sub-phase should be to gain strength and endurance that should allow the auditioner to adopt a heavier training volume¹⁰³. Like a basketball player who may need to develop the upper body strength to shoot from a longer distance from the basket, the auditioner should be able to exceed the physical demands (range, tongue speed, and dynamics) needed in each excerpt. For range, the auditioner should be able to play at least a minor third higher or lower than the highest or lowest note in the audition repertoire. For example, if the highest note in the audition repertoire is a D₅¹⁰⁴, the auditioner should be comfortable playing an F₅. For tongue speed, the auditioner should have the ability to play 10 metronome marks faster than the fastest excerpt on the

¹⁰² Refer to Chapter 2, p. 11, Figure 1: The Annual Plan.

¹⁰³ Kleucher, 83.

¹⁰⁴ Robert W. Young, "Terminology for Logarithmic Frequency Units," *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 11 no. 1 (1934): 59-69. (Scientific pitch notation used by The Acoustical Society of America; C₄=middle C)

audition list. Finally, the auditioner should strive to develop a wide dynamic range so they can exhibit greater control over loud and soft volumes¹⁰⁵.

The development of such physical aspects of the excerpts could be accomplished by scheduling a low-intensity macrocycle (which is comprised of a number of low-intensity microcycles). This macrocycle would encourage a progressive increase of training load while allowing the embouchure to become stronger without overstressing the musculature. It should be remembered that this phase also coincides with the concept of Anatomical Adaptation.

Because there are no competition demands during the period of Anatomical Adaptation¹⁰⁶, another goal of the General sub-phase should be to work on any general weaknesses¹⁰⁷. It also provides the opportunity to learn or relearn any excerpts on the list that are foreign to the auditioner. Like a right-footed soccer player who has a weak left foot, auditioners should find the weaknesses in their general approach. For example, players who have a weakness of playing in time or in tune, the use of a metronome, tuner, and recording device would be highly encouraged during this time¹⁰⁸. The days with lower training loads provide an ample opportunity to incorporate strategies¹⁰⁹ found in the “Practicing Away From the Horn” and “Familiarization” sections discussed in the first part of this chapter.

The second sub-phase of the Preparatory phase is the Specific Preparation period, which coincides with the Maximum Strength aspect of the periodization plan. Although muscular development of the embouchure is needed to perform at optimal levels, the primary goal for the auditioner during this sub-phase should be to become as technically and musically proficient with the audition list as possible. The observance of allowing enough rest periods between training sessions should ensure that the auditioner can recover enough to train efficiently. To maximize training time while avoiding overtraining too early in the preparation process, I recommend instituting a medium intensity macrocycle during this

¹⁰⁵ Vermeulen, 57.

¹⁰⁶ Refer to Chapter 2, p. 12.

¹⁰⁷ Wilson, 62.

¹⁰⁸ Lyons, 76.

¹⁰⁹ Refer to “active rest” in Chapter 2, p. 24.

time. This continues with the idea of progressively increasing the training load mentioned in Chapter 2¹¹⁰. The practice sessions during this time should be especially focused on playing with steady rhythm, correct intonation, and a representative style and tone quality associated with each excerpt. Like a tennis player who carefully studies the strokes of master players, the preceding musical considerations should be guided by the auditioner's careful study of the score, the repeated listening to sound recordings, and receiving constant feedback from either a teacher or recorded practice sessions.

The third sub-phase of the Preparatory phase is the Conversion phase. During the Conversion phase, the principle of specificity is extremely important¹¹¹. The auditioners should plan their practice sessions to emulate the physical and mental demands they will face at the audition, such as playing many excerpts in a row in a stressful situation. Practice sessions should include the development of randomized audition lists. These lists should be played as they would be at an audition: straight through with a “one-attempt” mentality. The planning for a conversion phase could remain within a medium-intensity macrocycle, or could progress to a high-intensity macrocycle. The high-intensity training days within the microcycles provide an opportunity for a large amount of specificity training by allowing the auditioner to practice many “rounds” in a day. This is the same idea as a football team taking the skills developed in previous stages and placing them in the context of scrimmages that emulate real game situation.

The surrounding lower-intensity days could be used for more “Familiarization” and “Mental Practice” techniques discussed in the first part of this chapter, or for continued work on technically difficult excerpts. During this time, the inclusion of self-affirmations and visualizations should become daily practice^{112,113}. This provides a sufficient amount of time to get comfortable with the mental techniques so the auditioner can effectively use them in the proceeding Competition phase.

¹¹⁰ The result of increasing the volume of training leads to further strength and endurance gains. Refer to page 20 of this document.

¹¹¹ Refer to Chapter 2, p. 13.

¹¹² Kleucher, 83.

¹¹³ Vermeulen, 57.

Phase 2 – Competition

The Competition phase is the second large phase of preparation in the periodization plan. The Competition phase can be divided into two sub-phases: Pre-competitive and Competitive. The Pre-competitive sub-phase is the preparation leading up to the actual audition. The main goals of the majority of the preparation to this point has been to build strength and endurance for training purposes, and to learn the excerpts well enough to perform them successfully with the minimal amount of attempts. Like a traveling soccer team who schedules “friendly” matches in the weeks leading up to the season, the primary goal of the pre-competitive sub-phase is to become as comfortable as possible with performing in an audition situation. Like a traveling soccer team who schedules “friendly” matches in the weeks leading up to the season. The practice sessions in this sub-phase should rely heavily on the strategies from the “Audition Performance Preparation” section outlined earlier in this chapter, particularly the mock audition.

It is important to note here that the pre-competitive sub-phase coincides with the Maintenance period. During the Maintenance period¹¹⁴, the frequency and intensity of any practice sessions should be decreased so the most time and energy can be spent on mock auditions. This is also important so the auditioner is not overly fatigued or in any way risking injury in the time leading up to the audition. Similarly, a defensive lineman would not schedule workouts primarily consisting of lifting the maximum amount of weight possible two weeks before the conference championship game. For this reason, one should use either a medium-intensity macrocycle if they feel well rested or a low-intensity macrocycle if they are not.

The second sub-phase is the Competitive phase, or the short amount of time leading up to the audition. Within the final week or days before the audition, the auditioners should employ the competitive microcycle in their preparation. Training frequency should be drastically reduced and be very specific to the audition. The Cessation¹¹⁵ (or taper) period should be used to recover as much as possible from the

¹¹⁴ Refer to Chapter 2, p. 14.

¹¹⁵ Refer to Chapter 2, p. 14.

preparation up to this point. Any strenuous practicing or other activities that would keep the auditioner from feeling rejuvenated should be avoided. With this in mind, the auditioner should take care to have all traveling accommodations in place to avoid excess stress. Additionally, in the absence of more strenuous physical training, a bigger emphasis on mental practice during this time may be beneficial.

Phase 3 - Transition

The Transition phase¹¹⁶ is the third and final large phase of the periodization plan, which begins after the completion of the audition. For a musician, this phase does not need to be as long or pronounced as it would be for an athlete. However, there are some applicable aspects for musicians who have just prepared rigorously for an audition. Whether it is more physically or mentally driven, some recovery is needed. If there is not another audition directly on the horizon, the auditioner may benefit from either a relaxed playing schedule (preferably not including orchestral excerpts), or a short period of no playing at all. This time period also gives the auditioners time to reflect on what aspects of their preparation succeeded and which ones could be improved upon. Thus, one of the largest benefits of the making an organized plan in the first place is that it gives a tangible record of what can be improved, repeated, or avoided in the preparation for the next audition¹¹⁷.

Conclusion

As a result of my Literature Review, I have shown that there was agreement on basic aspects of effectively preparing for an orchestral audition. Most who have written on the subject agreed that the metronome, tuner, and recording device were essential practice tools. The auditioner should be intimately familiar with the audition music; the required excerpts should be understood not only on a performance level but also how they fit contextually into the larger work of which they were a part of. Mock auditions were considered extremely important as a source of feedback and audition-specific preparation. The importance of having a plan was also repeated often. I included a basic overview of how periodization could be applied to preparing for an audition in how it related to short and long-term goal achievement. I

¹¹⁶ Refer to Chapter 2, p. 14-15.

¹¹⁷ Lucas, 39.

posited that the principles of a periodization plan served as a very effective model for a predetermined practice plan for audition preparation. In the following chapter, I will provide an example of a Periodized audition preparation plan that can be used as a template for auditioners.

Chapter 4 - The Plan

The focus of this paper is to provide a template for those preparing for an orchestral audition. The generic Periodization Plan discussed below was purposely left in a generic, skeleton format. The reason is because specific preparation needs are unique to each auditioner. Those who have trouble playing quickly articulated excerpts such as *William Tell* will need to devote more time to preparing these types of excerpts. If the auditioner does not have the strength or technique in the high range to practice excerpts like *Bolero* or *Rhenish* regularly, a majority of preparation time might be spent on developing ease and facility in that register. Inexperienced auditioners will need more time to familiarize themselves with the music¹¹⁸ whereas seasoned auditioners may benefit more from simulating the audition experience¹¹⁹.

There are some considerations that should be made before the planning can begin. Orchestral openings and auditions are regularly announced on the website, musicalchairs.info and in the *International Musician*, a monthly publication of the American Federation of Musicians. Once auditioners choose the audition they wish to play, they should immediately send their resume and intent to audition to the personnel manager of the orchestra. After the auditioners receive the audition list, they should acquire the real orchestral parts (and scores, if possible) from which the excerpts on the list were chosen. At this time, the auditioners should also begin collecting as many reputable recordings of the music on the audition list as possible. Once auditioners have received confirmation of their audition date or time, all attempts should be made to make travel arrangements, including transportation and housing accommodations. This will help them to avoid any unnecessary stress closer to the audition, allowing them to focus as much time and energy as possible on preparation. At this point, the auditioner should be committed to taking the audition.

Once all of the preceding considerations have been satisfied, the planning can begin! The auditioners should count backwards from the audition date and decide how much time they will spend on

¹¹⁸ see: “audition board” in Vermeulen, 51-58 in Appendix 2

¹¹⁹ West, 54.

preparation. The ideal amount of preparation time will vary from one individual to the next. One of the benefits of using an established preparation plan is that after the completion of each audition, the auditioner can use the plan as feedback to continue to establish the optimal amount of time spent on each stage of preparation. The following outline uses a 10 week timeline, but can and should be altered to suit the needs of the individual auditioner. The auditioners should use the strategies outlined in Chapter 2 during their preparation.

It is strongly recommended that the auditioner keep a written record of practice time, rest time, and the amount of intensity used in practicing. This record should be kept on the following levels of practicing: within a single practice session; during a day of practicing; and over the course of a practice week (microcycle). The amount of intensity can refer to both total time spent playing and also the physical demands of the material practiced. This record can help auditioners monitor how each of these facets affects their progress and can guide any changes that are deemed necessary mid-plan.

The importance of rest intervals were covered in Chapter 2. Longer rest periods should be used to counteract intense practice sessions or days. The concept of individualization is an important factor in the scheduling of rest intervals. I advise that auditioners begin with a conservative approach and schedule rest intervals often in a practice day. This also allows the auditioner to use the rest interval for active recovery strategies. One of the most oft cited and an important non-playing strategy is the familiarization of the audition material by listening to recordings and studying the scores of the entire pieces.

The following graph is an example of the template auditioners could use to structure their preparation plan. The Sample Audition Preparation Plan follows the three-stage periodization model discussed in Chapter 2. The amount of time and intensity the auditioner should spend in each phase should be based on what aspect of preparation needs the most attention at that time. The general suggestions for goals are taken from the literature review in Chapter 3 and have been provided to demonstrate that each phase and subphase should be goal oriented.

Sample Audition Preparation Plan

Phase of Preparation	Time period	Intensity of training	Goals
Preparatory - General	2 weeks	Low-intensity microcycles	Learn unknown excerpts; refresh known excerpts; concentrate on technical weaknesses
Preparatory - Specific	3 weeks	Low- and medium-intensity microcycles	Musical and technical proficiency
Preparatory - Conversion	2 weeks	1 week –High-intensity microcycle 1 week – restorative microcycle	One-attempt practice; randomized lists; introduction of mental practice techniques (visualization, self-affirmation)
Competitive - Pre-competitive	2 weeks	Medium-intensity microcycles	Mock auditions; continued mental practice
Competitive - Competitive	1 week	Competitive microcycle	Taper- feel mentally and physically fresh; increased mental practice
Transition	Time between completed and future auditions	N/A	Recover physically and mentally; review plan and make alterations

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

Much had been written on audition preparation techniques and methods, but there was a lack of information on how to structure and monitor those strategies. My goal, to introduce the basic guidelines and terminology of the Periodization Plan, was intended to show how a structured practice guide could be organized into different phases of preparation. Each phase had specific goals that were supported by considerations such as anatomical adaptation for physical readiness through progressive training volume, training intensity, and rest periods to assure the best performance when the stakes were the highest. This was achieved by limiting the occurrence of overtraining and by completing shorter-term goals as a means to the ultimate end goal: winning the audition. The use of the Periodization Plan encouraged consistent progress and the use of feedback to guide future progress. The literature review was used to determine what the best content for such a plan should be.

My literature review illuminated many valuable aspects of successful audition preparation strategies. Through this review, I revealed that many successful musicians who had written on auditioning agreed on some key aspects of preparation. The judicious use of a metronome, tuner, and recording device were considered a central part of learning and perfecting the audition repertoire. The acquisition of true copies of orchestral parts, scores, and various recordings of the audition music were essential to a key aspect of preparation: to become as familiar as possible with the music on a more intimate level than only knowing the notes and rhythms of each excerpt. The Periodization Plan provided a structure for how much to physically practice each day and week, which in turn provided an opportunity to plan for non-physical practice such as listening and score study. The Competitive phase of preparation provided the auditioner the opportunity to work on skills specific to auditioning that were deemed important in much of the literature. This included the skill of performing the excerpt correctly on the first attempt and the ability to quickly adapt to different acoustical environments. Finally, the use of mental practice techniques such as visualizing and positive self-affirmations throughout the preparation process could have an important impact on peak performance at the time of the audition. I showed there was ample opportunity for this mental practice when there was less physical practice required.

It bears repeating that the principle of individualization was paramount to the success of the Periodization Plan. Undoubtedly, there would be a certain amount of guessing and uncertainty prior to developing an audition plan for the first time. A sample plan was provided merely as a framework to consider when applying the concepts of periodization to audition preparation. The duration and intensity of each practice session or week should vary by each individual based on their previous conditioning, experience, and audition experience. New auditioners who required more time to learn the excerpts might need a longer amount of time devoted to the Preparatory phase. Experienced auditioners may need less time performing mock auditions. The most important aspect of the Periodization Plan was the documentation of the course of action chosen so the auditioners can constantly improve their preparation, thus improving their chances of winning the next audition.

Future Research and Limitations

The concept of periodization has been accepted and celebrated in athletics for quite some time. The fact that it is relatively new when applied to music suggests that there are some opportunities for future research. The present study was mostly concerned with the physical application of periodization to audition preparation. There is ample information on both sports and music psychology as it pertains to performance enhancement and anxiety that could further enhance a structured preparation plan.

There are also different versions and organizations of periodization plans. This paper is largely based on a linear, Block Periodization model that is meant to be applied to specific sports. I believe this model is most appropriate because audition preparation is similar to preparing for a specific sporting event¹²⁰. Other versions of periodization worthy of further consideration include: Daily Undulating, and Periodization for Endurance Athletes.

The example template was purposely kept general to highlight the fact that individuals would benefit filling in the specifics of their own plan. I believe the most effective learning takes place through experience, but perhaps a daily or even hourly plan would provide the new auditioner with a quicker way to get started using the plan.

¹²⁰ Sprott, 15.

I purposely omitted any discussion of specific excerpts so the focus could remain on the how principles of periodization could aid in the development of a preparation plan. As was previously mentioned, this document is intended for trombone players who have some experience with excerpts and who have access to private teachers. The importance of having a knowledgeable teacher to help guide the auditioner throughout the preparation process cannot be understated. Weston Sprott¹²¹ provides an example of how to group specific trombone excerpts in his article, which is outlined in the Literature Review (Appendix 2). How to group specific excerpts within a practice day or week is another individual, experimental aspect of developing a personalized plan, and is ultimately the decision of the auditioner. As long as records are kept and progress monitored, auditioners should eventually find their ideal pattern or method of practicing individual excerpts.

There are some limitations to the application of the principles of periodization training to audition preparation. It is hard to quantify strength in brass musicians, other than the observation of the ability to play comfortably in a certain range or dynamic. It can be argued that this ability is more of a skill or learned technique rather than the result of muscular strength. In this light, the emphasis of the Periodization of Strength, particularly developing Maximum Strength, in Bompa's plan for athletes¹²² may not be important for musicians. The attention paid to the physical aspects of preparation in this document in no way attempts to undermine the importance of playing musically. I maintain the most important aspect of any performance, even in an audition, is the ability to play musically. A technically perfect audition devoid of any feeling or expression may not necessarily guarantee a successful audition¹²³. In the end, the application of the Periodization Plan is intended as a way to encourage physical readiness so the auditioner is free to play in the most musically expressive way, and to provide a structured preparation procedure for the developing musician.

¹²¹ Sprott, 14-19.

¹²² Bompa, 87.

¹²³ Gibson, 21.

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Appendix 1 - Glossary of Periodization Terminology

The page numbers refer to where you can find each term in this document.

Active Recovery (p. 17) – exerting psychological effort while resting physically, or vice versa; also, engaging in an activity that does not tax the same muscles or physical system engaged in the primary sport or activity.

Anatomical Adaptation (p. 4-5) – period reserved for physical adaptation to increased training load and for weaknesses to be addressed; part of the Preparatory phase of the annual plan.

Annual Plan (p. 2) – a predetermined training plan, usually lasting a year long, divided into three phases: Preparatory phase, Competitive phase, and Transition phase.

Cessation Phase (p. 7) - where training time is decreased leading up to competition

Competitive Phase (p. 2-3) - 2nd phase of the annual plan; emphasizes competition-specific training leading up to and including the actual competition; sometimes considered the “season;” The Maintenance phase of the Periodization of Strength occurs during this phase.

Competitive Microcycle (p. 12) – special type of microcycle that involves a lower training volume and intensity, but emphasizes specificity training; often used during the Competitive phase of the annual plan.

Conversion (p. 6-7) – conversion of maximum strength to power and/or endurance, depending on the demands of the given sport or activity; development of skills specific to the given sport or activity; part of the Preparatory phase of the annual plan.

Frequency (p. 9) – how often one trains during a microcycle

Intensity/Load (p. 14) – the amount of effort exerted in a training session or over a given cycle; how hard or how much effort one uses while training.

Introduction Microcycle (p. 12) – special type of microcycle that is used to expose the individual to new ideas or techniques that are unfamiliar; often used during the Preparatory phase of the annual plan.

Macrocycle (p. 12-13) - a grouping of more than one microcycle that has a predetermined goal.

Maintenance (p. 7) – only enough strength work to maintain current strength levels; most training is geared towards the practice of sport-specific skills; includes the cessation phase; part of the Competitive phase of the annual plan.

Maximum Strength (p. 5-6) – development of as much strength as possible as it pertains to the given sport or activity; part of the Preparatory phase of the annual plan.

Microcycle (p. 9-12) – a small group of training sessions, usually a week in length; normally defined by the overall intensity of the training week; low-intensity (p 10); medium-intensity (top p 11); high-intensity (bottom p 11).

Number of Exercises (p. 14-15) – amount of exercises, drills, or activities planned for one training session.

Number of Repetitions (p. 15) – important for determining what aspect of strength the individual is trying to improve; low repetitions and higher intensity for strength, higher repetitions and lower intensity for endurance.

Number of Sets (p. 15-16) – refers to the number of repetitions completed at one time; is followed by a rest interval.

Order of Exercises (p. 15) – the order in which one performs the exercises, drills or activities.

Passive Recovery (p. 18) – total rest from physical or psychological stress normally involved in training.

Periodization of Strength (p. 4) - component of the annual plan that pertains specifically to strength and endurance training as it relates to the given sport or activity; divided into 5 phases over the annual plan:

Preparatory Phase (p. 2-3) - 1st phase of the annual plan; involves developing physical adaptation to training and the introduction of basic skills; sometimes considered the “pre-season;” 3 phases of the Periodization of Strength occur during this phase: Anatomical Adaptation; Maximum Strength; and Conversion.

Rest Interval (p. 16-18) – period of rest in between exercises, sets, training sessions, or training days; important for recovery and energy restoration; **between sets** (p 16); **between training sessions** (p 17).

Restorative Microcycle (p. 12) – special type of microcycle that focuses on recovery techniques; often used during the Transition phase of the annual plan, or whenever the individual feels over-trained.

Specificity (p. 9) - how similar the exercises are to the actual demands of the event or performance goal.

Training Session (p. 9) – one workout, training, or practice session; usually divided into 4 sections: introduction; warm-up; main part; cool-down.

Training Volume (p. 13) - quantity of work performed in a training session or over a given cycle; how often or how much one trains.

Transition (p. 7-8) – post-competition phase where the goal is to recover and restore any imbalances from training; coincides with Transition phase of the annual plan.

Transition Phase (p. 3) – 3rd phase of the annual plan; occurs after the competition and is focused on recovering physically and mentally; sometimes considered the “off-season;” coincides with Transition phase of the Periodization of Strength.

Appendix 2 - Annotated Listing of Audition-Based Wind Literature

Trumpet

1) Caldwell, Michael. "Applying Marathon Training Principles to Trumpet Practice and Performance." *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 58 (March 2006): 58-60.

In this article Michael Caldwell describes how since he began training for and running marathons he has discovered some principles that carry over from running training to practicing for trumpet performance. The 5 principles he discusses are: 1) form; 2) breathing; 3) relaxation; 4) avoiding injury and 5) speed means nothing. Although he doesn't go into detail about how he has worked on these things in his running, he offered some thoughts on how they apply to music.

Caldwell states the correct form means playing with perfect posture, a great functioning embouchure, and the ability to play in all ranges and dynamics with a good sound. For breathing, he not only suggests breathing efficiently in a physiological manner, but also considering phrasing and pacing. The relaxation principle doesn't receive much translation except to maintain as much physical relaxation while playing as possible. To avoid injury while practicing, Caldwell advises that many rest periods should be observed. The "speed means nothing" philosophy is described as working on music "slowly and meticulously" to ensure accuracy and observation of all the nuances in the music.

Caldwell states that these physical-based principles are not the only things required to be a good musician, but believes that the enforcement of those principles would make a performer of any level better. He also briefly discusses how at mile 20 in a marathon the runner must make a commitment to completing their goal of finishing the race. He likens this idea to having high expectations for oneself as a musician and to believe that one can succeed in one's goal for each practice session and performance.

2) Lucas, William G. "The Orchestral Audition." *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 38 (May 1999): 38-43.

William Lucas is a trumpeter for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Lucas writes, "Going to an audition without feeling like the job is yours, even before you get there, is a risk... preparation is the first step towards limiting risk." One of the mental techniques Lucas discusses is the idea of imaging. He likens the concept of imaging to that of being in the zone in athletics. In order to develop confidence, he suggests going through the audition in one's head and picturing oneself winning the job. Another mental strategy of mental preparation Lucas recommends is self-affirmations. He believes that one must be one's own best judge and to give oneself credit when one believes one plays really well.

Lucas recommends the book *Peak Performance* by Charles Garfield, but does not include any of the specific techniques from the book. For more specific physical preparation strategies, he advises that everything should be written down: notes from lessons and auditions, ideas while listening to music, what one wore, and what and when one ate. He states that even the smallest detail could make a big difference in one's preparation.

Specifically regarding auditions, Lucas writes about the importance of knowing one's music and practicing auditioning every day. He states that one needs to "become a librarian" and gather the required excerpts from actual parts. He likes the idea of assigning the excerpts a number based on the frequency with which they are asked at an audition. Using those numbers, he suggests

creating different audition lists every day to use as a mock audition. Lucas advises tape recording the mock audition and treating it like a real audition as much as possible. The recording can then be used to judge the mock audition based on either technical accuracy or psychologically (how one felt as the excerpt came up on the stand). These tapes can then determine what weaknesses need to be addressed in future practice sessions.

3) Lyons, Kevin. “Auditioning in Atlanta.” *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 76 (October 2006): 76.

In this article Kevin Lyons offers his preparation strategy for an orchestral audition. He begins 6 to 8 weeks before the audition and organizes all the music on the audition list into a booklet. He carries the booklet at all times in case he gets extra time to practice during a rehearsal break. His first 2 or 3 weeks of preparation begin with practicing the music with a metronome and tuner. He stresses the importance of recording oneself during this phase and uses the following order as a recording routine: play the excerpt, listen to the recording, listen to a different recording that one would like to emulate, and then recording oneself again to check for progress. For goal setting, he recommends considering the following basics of a successful performance in order of importance: sound, rhythm, intonation, correct notes, and musicality.

The next phase of his preparation involves recording oneself performing mock auditions. Lyons advises treating each day like an audition day where you wake up, warm up, and record an audition. He then takes a break and then listens back critically to decide what he needs to work on. The last phase of his audition preparation is playing for different people. He suggests playing for people who play different instruments to mimic the reality that there will be non-brass players on the audition committee.

4) West, James. “Preparing the CSO Audition: Reflections from Chris Martin.” *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 54 (June 2006): 54.

In this article, James West interviews Chris Martin on his experience of preparing for and winning the Chicago Symphony Orchestra principal trumpet audition. Martin reveals that he begins preparing for his auditions 2 months in advance, which are broken into 3 blocks. The first month consists of “intensely studying” the audition material he is less familiar with, as well as reintroducing the standard excerpts to himself. In this first phase, Martin spends between 90 minutes and 2 hours a day on his audition material, leaving himself enough time for maintenance sessions and rehearsal time with his current orchestra.

The second phase of Martin’s preparation is what he calls the “Performance Practice” phase. He stresses that this stage takes careful planning and discipline to be effective. He shortens his practice time into 3 to 5 sessions lasting from 30 to 60 minutes. These sessions consist of recreating the demands of playing an audition round by creating as many varied repertoire lists and scenarios as possible. He includes the following examples of these varied practice sessions: a round of 6 standard excerpts played once and recorded; a round of less standard and more challenging pieces; and a “chops’ worst nightmare” round that involves consecutive excerpts of very different styles or dynamic ranges. All of these different situations help him to develop the “one shot only” approach to performing the excerpts in an audition.

The last phase of Martin’s plan is to taper his practice sessions down to 1 or 2 a day in the week leading up to the performance. He believes this helps to avoid any physical injury or unwanted fatigue while still maintaining enough of his form to play well on the audition day. Martin also mentions he spends some time reading books on mental focus and relaxation techniques. He

highly recommends *Fight Your Fear and Win* by Don Greene as a book to help deal with stressful situations.

5) Wilson, Andrew. "Performance Preparation: A Systematic Approach." *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 61 (June 2011): 61-62.

Senior Master Sergeant Andrew Wilson was the former principal and solo cornet with the United States Air Force Band in Washington, DC. In this article he discusses the importance of having a written out practice plan due to the ever-changing schedule of the performing musician. He stresses that because rehearsals get changed and new gigs come up unexpectedly, it is easier to make small alterations to a plan rather than not having one at all.

Wilson's main point is to have a written schedule of what to practice and for how long. He gives an example of his daily warm up and maintenance routines. He suggests changing the exercises each week and writing them down for quick practice room reference. The list of exercises provided have a specific order and aim to address the aspects of playing he considers need daily attention, such as long tones, articulation studies, flexibility exercises, scales, and volume training.

Wilson suggests that having a written record of a warm up and maintenance routine will help to monitor what has worked well and what has not worked well as far as daily exercises are concerned. The written record can illuminate which aspects of playing need more attention, making practice time more efficient. He believes this systematic approach of planning and feedback will help someone to prepare as maximally as possible.

Horn

6) Chenoworth, Richard. "Audition Basics." *Horn Call* (February 1996): 39-42.

In this article, Richard Chenoworth offers his thoughts on preparing for and performing an audition of any kind. He begins by stating that "pre-planning, practice, and preparation" are essential for playing a successful audition. Chenoworth suggests playing for family, friends, and musicians who play other instruments to gain perspective on the overall musical success or failure. He also recommends preparing in different ways to be flexible for unforeseen circumstances. One of these recommendations is to play in different venues and rooms to simulate the differences in acoustics that could occur at different auditions. Another suggestion he offers is to practice auditioning in front of a blank screen or for different "panels" of people to imitate different rounds at an audition.

Chenoworth maintains that the most important aspects of performance to prepare in the practice room are good rhythm, solid intonation, and a pleasing tone quality. If these are not strongly established in the practice room, they will definitely eliminate one in an audition where playing problems can be exacerbated. For him, preparation before an audition would include listening to the works extensively to be familiar with the pieces of music on the audition list. This includes listening to the works extensively to become familiar with "consistent idiomatic occurrences," such as unmarked tempo adjustments or dynamic changes. In addition to listening to the whole piece of music, he recommends studying the entire score of the piece rather than just the excerpt.

A few additional pieces of advice include acquiring the real parts to the music and being part of an ensemble while preparing for an audition. The real parts to the music won't include mistakes or omissions of other important parts of the pieces as one might find in excerpt books.

Chenoworth stresses the importance of playing with others to learn how to function in a group and to be attentive to the musical aspects of performance in real time such as phrasing, balance and intonation.

7) Decker, Richard. “Thoughts on Auditioning.” *Horn Call* (April 1985): 31-32.

Mr. Decker’s article contains some discussion on orchestral auditions and how to prepare for them. The bulk of his information discusses how to get invited to an audition with regard to the resume, screening tape, and letters of recommendation. He stresses the importance of sending in the resume and any other audition material requirements as soon as possible to guarantee a spot in the audition. Decker advises to stress major orchestral experience on the resume and to attach letters of recommendation if the resume might not be strong enough on its own to result in an invitation.

In regard to actual preparation advice, Decker lists some general strategies to aid in making practice sessions more beneficial. He suggests getting the real parts to all of the music on the list and avoiding the use any excerpt books because they may contain errors. With the real parts, one should listen to many recordings to become intimately familiar with the music. He notes to be especially familiar with the standard accepted tempi of the music because derivation from commonly accepted tempi is an easy way for audition candidates to be eliminated. The ability to hear the rest of the orchestra in one’s head while performing the excerpts is another important factor in playing the excerpts convincingly.

Decker believes the consistent use of the metronome, tuner, and recording device will lead to successful audition. He lists the following performance considerations to concentrate on while listening back to a recording of a run-through of an excerpt: an even tone quality including beginnings of notes; intonation problems including the problem notes of one’s instrument; accurate rhythm, especially within the rests; and observation of marked articulations and dynamics. His final piece of advice also speaks to the importance of gaining insight by way of feedback: acquire the audition comments from the judges after the audition has concluded. This is the ultimate form of objective feedback and can help guide the preparation for the next audition.

8) Kleucher, Melinda Fitch. “The W-I-N-N-E-R Approach to Auditions.” *Horn Call* (October 1992): 81-84.

W - Warm-up thoroughly before the audition
I – Intense concentration is essential while you perform...
N – Notice all aspects of the music
N – Negativism leads inevitably to defeat
E – Extra energy can be created from nervousness
R – Relax all your muscles and take a few deep breaths before you start to play.

Ms. Kleucher offers this preceding acronym as an overall approach to audition success. Although she rarely references the acronym throughout the article, she does offer other important audition preparation tips. Her preparation advice begins with acquiring all of the music for the auditions, as well as at least one recording for each piece. Using the music and the recordings, she suggests studying carefully the dynamics of the pieces. This is important because some excerpts look on the surface as though they should be played loudly. However, in the context of the piece they may not need to be that loud. Another important consideration when studying the music and recordings is to develop an understanding of acceptable tempi ranges for each piece.

Another preparation technique Kleucher encourages is to practice the list in a random order to simulate the audition process. She recommends writing each excerpt on a 3x5 note card and drawing cards from a hat to form a random performance order. Only one attempt should be made at each excerpt to further simulate the demands of the audition. She also suggests that each run-through should be audio recorded so you can learn from each recording afterward.

Kleucher regards handling nervousness as a major factor in audition success or failure. She considers visualization as a very effective way to handle nervousness in a positive way. She suggests two visualizations in particular to bring either a sense of relaxation or a feeling of energy, two facets that are each important in an audition situation. The first is to imagine a time and place where you feel completely at ease. The second is to imagine yourself playing and performing at your best. It is important to include as many senses (sight, smell, etc) as possible in these visualizations. She suggests that with practice, either feeling of relaxation or positive energy can be called upon at will.

Another practice strategy she mentions in regard to nervousness is the mock audition. She suggests playing for friends and colleagues in as many situations as possible. This includes playing behind a screen or directly for a committee. Another consideration is to play in different rooms with varying acoustics. Kleucher goes so far as to suggest playing after eating a large meal or after putting cotton in one's mouth; anything that can simulate the feel of playing at your best while feeling uncomfortable is considered a valuable practice strategy.

Kleucher offers her take on organizing the preparation one month before the audition. Four weeks before the audition, all music and recordings should be acquired. Much of the practice should be geared towards building endurance to the point where one can practice up to 4 hours a day. A mock audition should be performed once this week. Three weeks out, one should begin memorizing the excerpts and should perform 2 mock auditions. Visualization should be in regular practice during this time. In addition, this is the time to consider how many hours before playing one should eat. Two weeks out, the embouchure muscles should be in great shape with the ability to play the excerpts many times through without becoming fatigued. In the last week before the audition, one should be rehearsing one's solo with an accompanist every day in case one has to play with one at the audition. The excerpts should be memorized and the performance of a mock audition at least once a day is encouraged. Two days before, she recommends a very strenuous day of playing. The following day one should only warm up and do any necessary traveling to the audition.

9) Vermeulen, William. "Audition Success: A Pedagogical Approach." *Horn Call* (February 1996): 51-58.

Vermeulen's article describes a horn class he began at Rice University that teaches horn players performance skills as well as practical audition skills. The students are required to have one private lesson per week as well as participation in a horn ensemble and horn class. Vermeulen uses the horn class to provide additional performance opportunities as well as to address specific horn performance issues. The horn ensemble helps students develop balance and pitch. He believes this aspect is especially important to audition preparation because the final round of an audition usually consists of being able to play balanced and in tune with a section. An additional intonation tool that is used in the program is the CD-based Tune-Up System™ by Stephen Colley.

Vermeulen states that his program could be divided into 3 areas: Being active versus reactive; physical preparation; and mental preparation. He suggests that the difference between being

active and reactive is the difference of playing within an ensemble and playing in an audition situation. In an ensemble, being reactive to the conductor and the musicians around you is desired. However, in an audition situation, it is more desirable to be active in the sense that all the musical aspects of the performance need to be internally motivated. In other words, the pitch, articulation, dynamics, phrasing, etc should be generated from within.

For physical preparation, Vermeulen likens the symphony audition to “short-distance running.” The audition would be in contrast to playing a long demanding symphony as a marathon, or a concerto as a medium-distance run. This speaks to the importance of being able to change playing styles immediately in addition to being almost perfect for a short amount of time. Vermeulen holds as many as 8 mock auditions in one semester in his class. He believes the students become much more familiarized with the actual audition process. This translates to being more comfortable in the audition situation having been through the process many times.

Vermeulen also institutes something called the Audition Board. This is a table showing all of the students’ names cross-referenced with audition material (solos and excerpts). A check is placed next to a particular excerpt or solo once it has been performed for Mr. Vermeulen at an acceptable audition level – in time, in tune, with no notes missed. A second check is obtained when the excerpt is played in the same manner but with no warning. He mentions having awakened a student in the middle of the night to test for an excerpt. Finally, a third check can be acquired when the excerpt is performed in the same situation as the second check; however if the student fails on his first attempt for the third check, the second check is removed as well!

An interesting concept that Vermeulen discusses with his class is “The Envelope and the Principle of Non-Offense.” This is a dynamic consideration that a student should never play louder or softer than they are able to sound good in an audition. This is a two-fold process that encourages the students to constantly widen their “envelope” (dynamic capability) while learning not to exceed their envelope during an audition.

The mental aspect of Vermeulen’s program is to use biofeedback and positive self-affirmations. For the biofeedback, students are hooked up to a program that encourages their brainwaves to reach a state where enhanced learning can occur. While in this state, the students use different visualizations or aural models of great performances to aid in their development. He also has his students write future wishes in the present tense on a card to be read 10 times in the morning and at night. For example, if students wanted to perform with more ease, their card would read, “I perform with great ease!”

Trombone

10) Gibson, Tom. “Thoughts to Ponder: Auditioning- A View From Behind the Screen.” *ITA Journal* 26 (Summer 1998): 20-21.

Gibson provides a unique perspective on the audition experience by reporting what he had observed at a recent audition while behind the screen with the judges. He comments that most players sounded timid and overlooked easily observable musical directions in the music. He addresses 3 major aspects of what he believes could lead to a more successful audition: preparation, equipment, and presentation.

In the audition, Gibson noticed a bulk of the players’ problems were rhythmical, especially in slower, lyrical excerpts. He urges future auditioners to work with a metronome to ensure steady rhythm and to help avoid the tendency to use too much *rubato*. Gibson strongly encourages the

use of a recording device to ensure that all of the musical directions are followed precisely. He notes that too many times he heard players adding a slur when they should have been tonguing, or that marked tempos were not adhered to. Gibson mentions the lack of preparation for sight-reading was immediately apparent in the audition. He suggests to practice sight-reading music of different styles and to be comfortable with fast scalar patterns. The committee agreed that most of the candidates sounded like they were playing equipment that was too big for them.

Gibson admits that equipment considerations are largely individual, but suggests the results of the oversized equipment were large, dark sounds but with “tubby” and unclear articulations. He also comments that many player’s use of large equipment led to a loss of control and endurance in the high range. He comes to the conclusion that one should only use what is “just big enough to do the job.” Gibson also provides some general advice on presenting a successful audition such as focusing on the music while playing and remembering the love of music to avoid feeling too nervous.

11) Sprott, Weston. “Thoughts on Audition Preparation.” *ITA Journal* 38 no. 3 (July 2010): 14-19.

Sprott’s article is a collection of ideas on preparing for an orchestral audition. He discusses how to find out about auditions, which auditions to take, physical and mental preparation, a detailed preparation routine, and advice for the day of the audition. Sprott recommends becoming a member of the American Federation of Musicians to receive a monthly magazine called the *International Musician*. This magazine, in addition to the website, musicalchairs.com, advertises open positions. Once one has decided to take an audition, Sprott suggests to begin preparing about 8 weeks in advance.

Sprott likens preparing for an audition to Lance Armstrong preparing for the Tour de France: Armstrong “doesn’t bike like he’s going to win the Tour de France EVERY DAY. Rather, he has a long training regimen that lasts for months leading up to the big race so that he can be in peak form at the right time.” In this vein, Sprott organizes his preparation into 3 phases.

The first phase involves planning and gaining familiarity with the list. He separates the excerpts based on their physical demands: high, low, fast, loud, lyrical, technical. He strives to work at least one excerpt associated with each physical demand once a day. This forms the basis for his practice regimen for the rest of his preparation. Once the planning is complete, he uses the first week of preparation time to solidify the notes and rhythms of the excerpts he is least familiar with. Following the practice of unfamiliar repertoire, he will take a break and come back to playing excerpts he likes the most in order to get him in the mood for practicing excerpts again. Sprott recommends listening to recordings of the repertoire as much as possible during any breaks and free time.

The second phase of his preparation lasts for about 4 or 5 weeks. During this time, he is sure to practice excerpts in the manner he organized them. If a list has around 20 excerpts, he will spend each day working on 6 or 7 excerpts in the following way: first, a 30 minute warm-up and fundamentals session; next, a recorded 15 minute session on one single excerpt with a specific goal in mind (rhythm, pitch, sound, etc.); then, a 10 minute evaluation period during which he listens back to his playing and makes notes on his music (these notes provide goals for the next session); and finally a 5 minute break to rest his mind and embouchure. He recommends to practice in this way over the course of a day, divided into 2 or 3 larger sessions. After a break lasting of several hours, he will have his last practice session of the day in the evening. This last session is comprised of a short warm up, 30 minutes of practice on a solo and section excerpts, followed by drawing excerpts out of a hat at random to simulate the audition process. He employs

this practice method 6 days a week, taking the 7th day only playing a little and recovering. The overall scheme looks like this: Monday – Day 1; Tuesday – Day 2; Wednesday – Day 3; Thursday – Day 1; Friday – Day 2; Saturday – Day 3; Sunday – Rest.

The final phase of Sprott's preparation involves tapering and practicing performing. He believes it is more important to feel well-rested leading up to the audition than cramming in more practicing. To practice performing, he makes sure to practice playing excerpts through with a "one shot" mentality. This is important to simulate the realities of getting only one chance to play the excerpt in the audition.

12) Stevens, Milton. "Winning an Orchestral Trombone Audition." *ITA Journal* 15 no. 1 (1987): 30-35.

In this article Milt Stevens provides some overarching advice for those who are on, and wish to be on, the orchestral audition circuit. Mr. Stevens introduces some startling yet concise numbers on those wishing to win an audition: the chances are about 1 in 50. To this end, he states the winning of an audition "takes a superhuman effort" and that the preparation should be similar to the same "dedication as trying out for the Olympics." Mr. Stevens provides the following advice on improving the odds of winning.

For long-term goals, Stevens advises that a large collection of recordings of the orchestral repertoire should be constantly added to. An orchestral style and sound can be gleaned from these recordings. Stevens adds that studying the music and getting lessons from a respected symphony musician would go a long way. He also believes the on-the-job experience of playing in an orchestra is important for two reasons: performing as many works as possible well help to develop the "instincts" of an orchestral player and the fact that those with underwhelming resumes will probably not get invited to many auditions.

Another long-term consideration Stevens advocates is to learn the audition material well in advance of taking an audition and then to not play them for a time. Coming back to the material for the second time often provides a "greater mastery and insight" of the excerpts. This return to the material could happen anywhere from a few weeks to a couple of months before the audition and is what Stevens considers the "big push."

During this push Stevens recommends practicing 2 or 3 sessions a day for about an hour and a half each session. This is the time when he states that one must build strength and endurance in one's embouchure in able to play in all ranges and dynamics with control. For troublesome parts in excerpts, he suggests making short one line exercises that progress from easy to harder than the excerpts themselves. Stevens is also a strong advocate of tape recording practice sessions (and playing the recordings back at various speeds to identify technical issues) in order to hear what the committee will be hearing.

Some other practice considerations Stevens touches on are the importance of translating all musical directions in the music and the importance of fixing rhythm and pitch problems. He states how not knowing exactly what the musical directions mean makes the candidates sound like they are unprepared and unfamiliar with the music. He also advises that pitch and rhythm problems are easily fixable working carefully with a metronome and tuner as well as listening back to recorded attempts at an excerpt. Any excerpt that is out of time, out of tune, or uncharacteristically performed per the printed directions will lead to the immediate dismissal of the candidate.

Stevens suggests setting up mock auditions with friends or colleagues in the weeks leading up to the audition. He describes how letting them pick the order of the lists will simulate the randomness of an audition. They can also provide feedback on musical elements of the performance as well as poise and stage presence. The experience of performing mock auditions also gets the candidate used to the pressure situation of taking an audition.

13) Yeo, Doug. "Symphony Auditions: Preparation and Execution."

http://www.yeodoug.com/resources/symphony_auditions/yeoauditions.html, Accessed October 19, 2011.

Long time symphony trombonist Doug Yeo addresses many aspects of audition preparation. The article is broken up into the following sections: Introduction; Musical Preparation; Musical Curiosity; Getting an Education; The Audition System; Getting Invited (Part I and II); Before the Audition; Audition Day; While on Stage; Between Rounds; Section Playing; If You Get Cut; and Final Thoughts. As evidenced by the table of contents, Yeo presents many aspects of preparation besides just the physical preparation of excerpts. The article is written in a conversational style.

For specific audition preparation techniques, Yeo suggests playing mock audition for friends to keep the pressure of performance a regular occurrence. He advises to play these mock auditions in as many rooms as possible to get used to the different dynamics. To devise different lists, he encourages the use of randomly selected 3x5 cards with each excerpt written on them. Yeo states that if any excerpt on the list is feared, then it has not been practiced enough.

Another very useful aspect of Yeo's article is the link to commonly asked bass and tenor trombone excerpts listed in order of frequency asked. Many of the excerpts are linked to separate web pages that offer performance and practice suggestions. In addition to physical preparation, Yeo also advocates building a large library of recordings of the standard repertoire performed by as many different reputable orchestras and conductors as possible.

Tuba

14) Funderburk, Jeffrey L. "Audition Strategy." *ITEA Journal* 18 no. 3 (1991): 52.

In this article, Funderburk posits that the trouble that most people who take auditions have is losing control as a result of nervousness. The two types of control he touches on are physical and mental control. Physically, he states that when someone is nervous the physical result is an increase of muscular tension that can lead to shaking or poor breathing. The mental affect is a loss of focus or concentration that leads to inaccurate, unmusical playing.

Funderburk's remedy for keeping control during an audition is to prepare in a variety of ways. First and foremost, he stresses the need to know the complete work of music for each excerpt. This includes comprehending the musical structure so there is no doubt how one's particular part fits in with the rest of the orchestra. His suggestion for learning the music this well is to listen to it as much as possible, play with the recordings, and to compare a recorded example of oneself playing and the recording to see how similar you can make it sound.

Another recommendation Funderburk offers is to practice technically difficult aspects of an excerpt in an isolated context away from the music. In this case, different exercises can be developed to address specific problems in an excerpt. He believes this will allow a more musical performance of the excerpt after the technique is cleaned up.

Funderburk's final piece of advice is to become as familiar as possible with the audition process in both a specific and general manner. Specifically, he believes knowing as much about the performance venue and how the audition is run will be helpful in maintaining control. Some considerations he lists are: knowing what kind of room or hall the audition will be held in, how far away the committee will be, and how long the warm-up period will be. Generally, he advises the practice of an actual audition situation to see how you respond both physically and mentally. He believes that a prior knowledge of these results can help you learn how to cope with each facet of nervousness.

15) Goble, Joseph D. "On Audition and Contest Preparation for Wind Instrument Performers (The Unwritten Rules)." *ITEA Journal* 29 (Winter 2002): 79-81.

In this article, Joseph Goble provides some advice on preparing for an audition or performance. He believes that a musical approach should be the most important consideration in an audition. He mentions that a successful performance is the result of spending a lot of time in the practice room, but does not offer any formal structure to organize that time. The main aspects of performance Goble elaborates on are tone quality, intonation, vibrato, articulation, dynamics, tempo and rhythm, sight-reading, and the performance itself.

Like most teachers, Goble considers the tone quality to be the most important musical element of a performance. He suggests a daily practice of long tones, melodious *études*, and other lyrical pieces of music to work on tone. He also ties breathing and intonation into making a desirable tone. His advice for intonation is to work with a chromatic tuner to learn the pitch tendencies of one's particular instrument. For breathing, he stresses planning out all of the breaths for the piece, as well as making an "Oh" sound during inhalation. He does not mention anything about vibrato's place in an audition, but only to use it if it is "appropriate to the style of music being performed."

Goble goes on to discuss articulation and the importance of starting each note cleanly. He advises to strive for a full tone on each note, even during rapid passages. He also suggests playing multi-note passages by stressing the notes on the beat and letting the notes that follow come out of that energy. His recommendation for dynamics is to play solo dynamics one marking louder than ensemble dynamics. He cautions against playing with a narrow dynamic range and provides ideas on when to get louder or softer based on the phrase.

For speed and rhythm, Goble makes clear that speed is not the final consideration. In accordance with his previous advice, he guides the performer to consider the style of music being performed when deciding how much space to put between certain rhythms. His sight-reading advice is to check the key and time signature, as well as locating patterns and accidentals.

For the day of the performance, Goble believes it is useful to be "well prepared, well rested, and having a generally good self-image." He suggests to arrive at the venue with plenty of time to warm up, and also to have enough time to warm down a little before the actual performance. His final advice is to be positive and maintain focus.

16) Young, Jerry Allen. "Words From the Wise: The Road to the Successful Orchestral Audition (For Washington, D.C. Military Bands and Selected Major Orchestras)." *ITEA Journal* 31 (Fall 2003): 64-65.

Jerry Young initiated a study in 1998 that involved gathering as much information as possible about auditioning for Washington, DC military bands and selected major orchestras. This

article is a summary of the interviews he recorded with many important performing artists in regard to audition preparation. He asked each of the interviewees five questions and summarized their answers.

In response to the first question, “What has enabled you to enjoy success as performer and teacher—both musically and non-musically speaking?” Young reports that two major themes emerged from the answers: constant dedication to refining the fundamentals of playing the instrument, and allowing oneself to “have a life” outside of performing. The latter theme was reported as being more important as one became more established in one’s career.

There were also some consistent responses to the second question, “What prepared you to win the auditions you have won over the years?” One common response was to know the context in which each excerpt occurs. This comes as a result of carefully listening to and studying the piece the excerpt comes from in its entirety. Another repeated response was simply “preparation.” Young describes the elaboration of many responses as including the ability to “consistently play in time and in tune with absolute clarity.” The answers to the third question, “How do you advise students that come to you to prepare for orchestral auditions?” were very similar to the responses to the second question.

The fourth question was, “Do you see/hear audition repertoire on the horizon that is becoming standard audition repertoire that the profession doesn’t think of as such today?” There was no absolute “yes” to this question, but several respondents gave examples of pieces they thought may become more standard in auditions. The fifth and final question was, “What general advice do you have for anyone preparing for an audition?” Young states the answers to this question were invariably a reiteration of answers to previous questions but still believed it was important to ask. This is because they all came back to stressing the importance of playing as musically as possible and staying true to one’s own musical ideas. To work on this aspect, a few people suggested taping their performances of excerpts or playing for colleagues in order to receive feedback.

Dissertations

17) Buck, Elizabeth Y. “The Orchestral Flute Audition: An Examination of Preparation Methods and Techniques.” DMA Dissertation, Rice University, 2003.

Buck’s dissertation takes a closer look at audition preparation from the viewpoint of professional orchestral flute players. Buck interviewed almost 50 flute players and found there were common suggestions for general preparation and specific excerpts. The most repeated answers to the questionnaire included practice techniques related to music in addition to “extra-musical” considerations for preparation.

Among the most repeated answers were to use a tuner and metronome. These tools were considered by most to be imperative practice tools to ensure good intonation and rhythm. A few of the respondents warned against using a metronome too much, which could lead to a loss of inner pulse.

Another extremely common response was the importance of being familiar with the entire piece of music. They suggested studying full scores of the pieces and to “listen as much and as often as possible.” One interesting practice technique was to follow the score and sing the flute part along with a recording, or to sing the accompaniment to a specific excerpt while following along with the flute part. This technique was said to give a greater understanding of the context of the flute

excerpt in regard to the whole piece. Also, many different recordings of the same piece should be listened to in order to gain insight into median tempi ranges and dynamic considerations.

Buck reported that many players use different strategies to practice the audition itself. These strategies included playing mock auditions for colleagues and recording practice sessions. It was suggested many times that the mock audition could be broken up into rounds. Practicing both behind a screen and for a committee face to face was also recommended. These mock auditions should take place in different rooms to get used to adapting quickly to varying acoustics in different venues. There were many differing views on how to record practice sessions. Some respondents believed in recording and listening back often, while others suggested only recording a few minutes and leaving a significant amount of time (from a few hours to the next day) before listening back. The latter view claims to aid in critiquing the tape in a more objective manner.

Many of the respondents compared audition preparation to the preparation of an athlete for a competition. Some aspects of “extra-musical” training included eating a healthy diet, getting consistent exercise, mental preparation such as visualization or meditation, and reading performance enhancement literature from the sports world. Most of the specific advice pertained to exercise. Many survey participants reported encouraging aerobic exercise of some sort. Exercise was thought to condition the lungs and airways, perhaps contributing to better lung functioning.

18) Manfredi, Guglielmo. “Perspectives on auditioning: An examination of professional horn players on auditioning.” DMA Dissertation, University of Miami, 2011.

Guglielmo’s dissertation seeks to familiarize readers with the audition process of a French horn player. He analyzes different aspects of the audition process such as equipment considerations, common repertoire asked, preparation approaches of different horn players, and interviews with players that gain their perspective on the various aspects of auditioning. He believes that a successful audition is the result of the auditionees’ having the knowledge of what will be expected of them in an audition situation.

His section on preparation is a summary of what has been written in the *Horn Call* journals and on various players’ websites on the subject of audition preparation. Many of those articles appear in this literature review section. The concepts discussed in Guglielmo’s paper include being familiar with the audition repertoire through the study of scores and recordings; gaining endurance to be able to practice many hours; performing mock auditions; and some mental considerations such as visualization.

19) Rodabaugh, Heather Victoria. “Preparation For Orchestral Trumpet Auditions: The Perspectives of Three Prominent Orchestra Players.” DMA Monograph, University of Oklahoma, 2008.

Rodabaugh’s monograph is the result of interviewing 3 orchestral players who represent the experiences of playing in an international, national, and regional orchestra. The interviewees are Robert Platt, Marie Speziale, and John Rommel. Rodabaugh asked each of the respondents about their general preparation philosophy and how they prepare 5 of the most asked trumpet excerpts: Bach *Magnificat*, BWV 243 “Magnificat anima mea;” Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra*, V (Finale); Debussy “Fêtes” from *Trois Nocturnes*; Gershwin *Piano Concerto in F*, II; and Strauss *Don Juan*, opus 20.

The following is a collection of the general preparation strategies reported by the interviewees. One practice strategy mentioned was to separate practice sessions into “practice” times and “performance” times. The practice portions include working out technical problems in each excerpt. The performance portions should be a one-take performance of the excerpt without stopping for any reason. In contrast to this opinion, one respondent quoted Adolph Herseth by saying, “Never practice, always perform.” This makes playing under pressure a regular occurrence so the audition won’t be as different from practicing. The same respondent thought excerpts should be a regular part of the musician’s practice, and that studying the excerpts needs to occur a considerable time before the audition list is released.

Another preparation recommendation was to practice the audition list in several different orders to be accustomed to difficult stylistic or technical shifts. This could be accomplished by writing the name of an excerpt on a card, and choosing the cards at random to form different lists. One interviewee advised to continue to practice literature that is harder than any of the excerpts on the list in order to place a larger musical and technical demand on the player. This technique should also maintain the conditioning of the auditioners and relieves the pressure of having the excerpt list as the only music they are working on.

Some final suggestions included playing mock auditions and becoming as familiar as possible with the repertoire. One respondent mentioned that mock auditions may be more effective if they are played for people that will induce the greatest amount of nervousness from the auditioner. In this way, they will get practice performing while nervous. The book *Psycho-Cybernetics* by Maxwell Maltz was also recommended to help auditioners train their thinking during stressful situations. To become familiar with the repertoire, it is advised that the entire pieces of music are learned. This can be done by listening to many recordings and studying the score.

20) Rose, Christopher. “An Orchestral Audition Preparation Handbook for Bass Players.” DMA Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2011.

Rose’s dissertation is intended for experienced college or freelance musicians who are interested in taking professional orchestral auditions. He discusses how to find openings, the preparation involved, audition processes and procedures, and how to either keep the job once you’ve won it or how to handle a loss. His specific advice on preparation considers both non-musical and musical techniques.

For non-musical preparation, Rose suggests that exercise is important. He believes this is because exercise helps to cope with an elevated heart rate during a stressful situation such as auditioning. He also advises that musicians should be careful to warm up and stretch before practicing or performing to avoid injury.

Rose talks about musical preparation in the form of solos, excerpts, and sight-reading. He discusses the importance of choosing a solo that is representative of the musician’s playing. The solo should contain both lyrical and technical aspects to show different aspects of performance. For excerpts, he recommends learning as much as possible about the music. This includes researching the composer, the genre of music, the time period it was written, and the associated musical style. He states this is particularly important in regard to dynamics. He gives the typical advice of using a tuner, metronome and tape recorder to track progress.

For the metronome, he gives specific advice to record a practice session of an excerpt both with and without the metronome to observe how successful the timing and rhythm of the excerpt is. He believes that if the music is not practiced with the slowest setting on the metronome, than they

have not started slow enough. After judicious use of the metronome and tuner, Rose advises to study as many reputable recordings of music as possible to gain a deeper understanding of the piece as a whole and how each excerpt fits in to the bigger picture. His sight-reading advice is very simple: sight-read different music each day.

Appendix 3 - Index of Audition Preparation Techniques from Reviewed Literature

The numbers provided after each category reference a source from the literature review (Appendix 2).

Audition Specific/Simulation Practice

Dynamics, Awareness and Expansion – 7, 9, 15, 17, 20

Mock Auditions – 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19

Tape – 2, 3, 8, 17

Committee – behind screen and open -3 (also for different instrumentalists); 6, 8, 17

Play in different rooms – 6, 8, 13, 17

Playing while uncomfortable – 8

One-Attempt Practice – 4, 8, 9 (practice board); 11, 19

Random Lists – 2, 4, 8, 11, 12, 19

Note cards; have mock audition committee choose order

Sight-Reading Practice – 10, 15, 20

Extra-musical

Aerobic Exercise – 17, 20

Develop Life Outside Preparation – 16

Equipment Considerations – 10

Practice of Literature Not On the Audition List – 19

Resume/Tape/Rec letters/Where to Find Job Openings – 7, 11

Mental

Biofeedback/Brainwave Training – 9

Consideration of Nervousness – 8, 14

Mental/Focus/Relaxation – 2, 4

Visualization – 2, 8, 17, 18

Self-affirmations – 2, 8, 9

Recommended Literature – *Peak Performance* by Charles Garfield (2); *Fight Your Fear and Win* by Don Greene (4); general performance enhancement literature (17); *Psycho-Cybernetics* by Maxwell Maltz (19)

Planning

Avoid injury/Poor performance – 4, 20

Goal Setting – 2, 3, 4, 11, 12

Grouping of Excerpts – 11

Maintenance Routine – 4, 15, 16

Organized Plan – 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 15 (plan all breaths)

Provided Timeline – 3 (8 weeks), 4 (8 weeks, 3 blocks), 8 (4 weeks), 11 (8 weeks, 3 phases), 12 (2-3 sessions a day 90 minutes each)

Record Keeping – 2

Rest Periods Encouraged – 1, 11, 15

Tapering – 4, 11, 15,

Practice Away from the Horn

Familiarity With Music – 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20

Listening to recordings; many different recordings – 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 20

Research composer, style of time period, musical structure – 14, 20

Score study – 4, 6, 14, 17, 18, 20

Practice/Preparation Excerpt Specific

Feedback – 5, 7

Recording – 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 20

Comments from judges after audition – 7

Lessons from Professional Orchestral Players – 12

Develop Exercises for Difficult Parts of Excerpts – 12, 14

Metronome – 3, 7, 12, 17 (but not over-reliant), 20

Musical Aspects of Successful Performance – 3, 6, 7, 12, 15, 16

Rhythm/time, tempo, intonation, sound, phrasing, articulation

Observe Written Directions of Music (tempo, articulation, etc) – 1, 7, 12

Play with Recordings – 14, 17
real parts to music – 2, 6, 7, 8

Recording – Goal Setting – 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20

Tuner – 3, 7, 12, 15, 17 (but not over-reliant), 20

Practice/Preparation – Other

Play/Practice with Others – 6

Rehearse Solo with Accompanist – 8

Tune-Up System for Intonation – 9

Sports/Music Comparison – 1, 9, 11, 12, 17

Appendix 4 - Interview Transcripts

The following interviews were conversations with professional trombone players who have been successful winning auditions. An effort was made to get the perspectives of trombone players from a variety of performing ensembles that required winning an audition for the job. The ensembles represented include an international orchestra, a major symphony orchestra, a regional orchestra, and an opera orchestra. The purpose of the interviews was to see how successful players prepared for winning auditions in general, and to observe the similarities and differences in their approach with aspects of the Periodization Plan. Each interviewee gave their verbal consent to being interviewed, recorded, and published.

Jeremy Wilson Interview Second trombone, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra Skype Interview, December 23, 2012; 10:00am EDT

Chris Green: Can you discuss what your preparation was like for the Vienna audition?

Jeremy Wilson: I had the luxury of knowing about the audition something like 3 months in advance, because the audition was at the beginning of May, and I got my official invitation in late February or early March. From the best that I can remember, about the first month or so, was spent just learning the excerpts. Doing lots and lots of listening, trying to musically match what I thought the Vienna Philharmonic would want to hear. In my case, I had never really studied the excerpts that much. I had a lesson on Bolero, a lesson on Mahler 3, Tuba Mirum – the very very basics. There was a list of probably 25 excerpts that I had never had a lesson on, didn't really know the pieces that much. I'm not really proud of that fact, it's just where I was at the time.

My first month was spent learning the excerpts, getting to know them intimately. About the second month, in March, I started working on putting the excerpts together with a section. We got two or three excerpts book together and started having 3 trombone and tuba sectionals when we had the chance. I did a lot of playing excerpts on second [part], then switching over to play the excerpts on first [principal part]. We switched around as much as we could so I could really get to know the piece, really know the function of each chord, really know the function of each part.

Also at that time, I started studying a little bit with Jan Kagarice. We started doing these lessons once a week where either Vern [Kagarice] or Jan would work with me up close, and the other person who wasn't working with me up close get further away. We did these lessons in a larger rehearsal room to get more space.

I would get feedback – the person up close would say, “Change this about your articulation,” or “make this longer or shorter.” The person at the farther point away from me in the room would say, “Ok, this would come across, or this didn't come across.” You know, in an audition situation you aren't just playing for people in a tiny little practice room. You're playing for people who are twenty yards away sometimes.

The third month, is when I really started being much more methodical with [the preparation]. We actually scheduled 2 sessions a week in the big room, 2 sessions a week where I was playing in the section, and then every day I would go through all the excerpts with recordings behind me. I would turn up my stereo as loud as it would go, and play along with the recordings. I would start the recording 40 or 50 measures before my excerpt started, go through my excerpt, and continue playing after the excerpt to get context and to make sure matched the musical style of the excerpt to the whole piece. I would do that once with all the excerpts once. Then I would go through all the excerpts using the fish bowl technique.

At the end, the last two weeks before the audition, I would do those two things and then I would do a third cycle where I would purposefully try to simulate nerves. I would run around the house – go outside and do a couple of laps around my house – and then come in and straight away do my excerpts with the fish bowl technique. I wouldn't allow myself that much recovery time; I would allow myself to get my breath back, but my heart rate was still up. I was hot, sweating, had dry mouth – very similar to what you might experience with nerves. I just wanted to be able to cope that, should that arise. That actually proved to be very valuable to me. In a basic sense, those were the three periods you might say, of my preparation.

CG: Do you feel like all that transferred over to a successful audition?

JW: Well, when it came to audition time, a lot of things went wrong. I was very nervous – I was fine up until about 48 hours before. Then I was completely finished come audition day. Also, it was easter time, so in early April during my second Easter service I was [playing in], I got a sharp pain in my lip and I ended up with what I can only describe as a blood blister. It came up right in the top left of my embouchure, right where the mouthpiece was, which forced me to switch mouthpieces for some of the higher excerpts. Usually once or twice a day I would have to prick the blood blister with a pin to let out the blood. Not what you want before an audition. Now I'm telling you all this to say that all the preparation I did, even with those factors, I felt so utterly prepared. When it came to audition day, a lot of what happened was very automatic, because I was so well prepared.

CG: Do you usually play some kind of daily routine or warm up?

JW: I usually distinguish between warm up and practice. That's just a matter of philosophy. But yes, I do have a daily warm up and a few exercises that I try to do every day, for at least 5 days a week. For my warm up, philosophically, I feel that a warm up is literally just loosening the lips up and getting the air moving. It should literally take between 30 seconds and 2 minutes. And then after that, I try to switch over to a mentality of practice. I feel like if I have to have 30 minutes of warm up, where does that leave me if I end up having to play Bolero some day? You sit on stage for 15 minutes before you play anything. It's more of a mentality thing. I do have a practice routine that I try to do, even if I'm Christmas vacation or something where I'm not really practicing – just to maintain that connection neurologically and physically – for 20 or 30 minutes a day.

CG: How did that routine change, if at all, when you were in your preparation for the audition?

JW: At that time I was not really [doing] a routine. I was playing so much every day, that I could pick the horn up and after two or three long tones, I could feel ready to go again. I really never cooled down – I don't know if that makes any sense. In hindsight I probably should have taken some time off, especially with an injury. But I wanted to be so utterly prepared, so I really didn't take much time off and I was playing so much not only in preparation for the audition, but for my other duties as well. I was still in the

North Texas Wind Band, the 1 o' Clock Lab Band, a quartet, plus all my lessons and things I was doing every day. I would have to say that during the audition preparation, I don't recall ever having a major warm up routine or practice routine that I did every day.

CG: Did you ever alternate heavy and light days? You don't sound like you had the chance to do that with everything going on.

JW: I probably should have made that work. In hindsight, if I had to do it over again, I would have probably kept the methodology – I would have been very systematic and methodical about how I did it, but I probably would have alternated heavy and light days. I would have done the cycles through the excerpts, and maybe the next day just do one cycle through the excerpts. At the time I didn't, I just went at it constantly.

CG: You've talked a little bit about your macro cycles in terms of the 3 months leading up to the audition. I was wondering if you could touch more on the micro cycles – or the day to day. Could you just take me through a typical day during one of those cycles?

JW: One thing that I did was I dropped all of my academic classes. I basically kept my ensembles and my lessons. I only had two classes – I think they were History of Wind Band Literature and maybe a conducting class. I dropped those – it was early enough in the semester that I was allowed to drop but they still showed up on my transcripts. I decided to do that so I could free up some time to be prepared. I actually had several days during the week where I only had a responsibility in the afternoon at about 1:00pm.

So for me, a typical day might be get up and have breakfast, work around the house a little bit. Then I would probably do a 2 or 3 minute warm up with some long tones and lip slurs. Then I would start with the David Concertino. In European auditions the solo piece carries much more weight than many American auditions. So I started usually with the David Concertino, playing through it, fixing a few things. I would use the hour glass technique where I started big, went to a few small things, then went back to the big. I would usually go through it, fix a few things, then go back through it again. Take a short break, then go through those three cycles of excerpts [preparation] that I was talking about.

The David Concertino would take 30-45 minutes, then I would take a 15 minute break, and then go through all three cycles of excerpts. Usually each cycle would take 30 minutes with a small break in between. By that time it was time for lunch and I would get ready to go over to campus for my afternoon responsibilities at school. That was a typical day. Usually if I had a coaching session with Vern or Jan, or if I had a section playing hour, it was between my responsibilities in the afternoon or evening at school.

CG: Did you ever group the excerpts by physical demands? Or was it more of a random process?

JW: I tried to be as random as I could. I can't remember ever actually sorting everything into different categories. There were 5 or 6 excerpts that were kind of my "problem excerpts." I had to stay after every day and kind of work on. For me it was the high stuff and the quickly articulated stuff. Excerpts like Bolero, William Tell, Wozzeck, and Berg 3 pieces. Those last two were quite high and had lots of high E's. I could not play those over and over and over. I basically did a lot octave down practice on those things to the style, articulation, and timing. Then I would play as is once or twice. I don't remember grouping them into physical demand groupings. I mainly remember doing a lot of fish bowl technique. I had a tendency at the time to be able to take any excerpt, and play it very well the second time. So for me, what I really had to practice is the first time out it had to be really good.

CG: So you identified what you needed to work on, and tailored your practice towards that?

JW: Oh yeah definitely. I need to work on nerves, and without getting into musical specifics, I needed to work on articulation and doing it well the first time out. Those were the challenges for me.

CG: You talked a little bit about the hour glass technique, did you ever make any other kinds of specific goals within one practice session? Say you are working on Bolero, did you set specific goals each time you practiced it? Or did you have more of an overarching goal you were going for?

JW: I can't actually remember! It's been 5 years now (laughing)! As far as I can remember, the main thing for me was that I was musically appropriate. I worked on things like diction, articulation, doing exactly what's on the page. For me the two things that were sought in my audition that I knew would be expected of me – especially being an American trombone player – were clarity and musicality. Because American trombone playing is viewed here as the opposite of that – unmusical and unclear.

It's not a very flattering view. Now in hindsight, I can understand why. It has to do with articulation, slide speed, different things like that. The big thing for me in each practice session was to be as musical as possible while having my technique beyond – I didn't want my technique to get in the way of the music. So musicality and clarity – that was the biggest thing for me. I wanted to get rid of any glissandi or any ambiguous articulations.

For instance, the David Concertino. The lyrical melody that happens 3 or 4 lines in, Americans tend to put a big slur over that. That's the way I had played it for years (sings the melody connected and slurred). If you actually look what's on the page (sings melody with exact articulation marks), there's actually articulations on there. I knew that I had to do those and make those clear. Once I learned the excerpts, I knew the excerpts. It was just a matter of making sure what was in my head was clearly communicated, and that the musicality was clearly communicated. On a few things like that, I had to re-train what was in my head to what would be acceptable to the committee in Vienna.

Another big thing for me was getting rid of my vibrato. That wasn't that hard [to get rid of] on excerpts, but on the David I was a big vibrato guy. Absolutely no vibrato is allowed in Vienna. You may have been looking for more big concepts, but for me specifically, each practice session was to get it right the first time, and within each piece to be as clear and as musical as possible.

CG: Periodization plans stress highly individualized approaches, so I think you obviously a testament to that. You knew what you had to work on the most for you specifically, and went for it.

JW: Right. I would say I knew the things I did well. I've always been a lyrical player more than a "technical player," so things like the 2nd movement of the David are right down my alley. Things like the 1st movement of the David are not. So, I definitely weighted my practice onto those things – and I got more repetitions on things – that I knew were my weaknesses.

CG: You talked about how your teachers gave you a lot of feedback. Did you ever use a recording device or any other means to get feedback on your own?

JW: You know, at the time when we were formulating a plan at the beginning when I got my audition invitation, we made recording a very big part of the plan. In all reality, I can explain why, but it wasn't. I

had basically in each of those three months, February, March and April before the May audition, I had one big recording session. In that session I would record 2 or 3 run-throughs of half a dozen excerpts that I would then send to Ian [Bousfield] (principal of the Vienna Philharmonic). He would report back to me and say, “Here’s what you need to change, this one’s fine, this one’s fine, change this, change this...” But in all reality I only recorded for that purpose to send to him for his feedback.

That was invaluable because there were things that I was really working away on and Ian would say, “It’s fine, leave it how it is.” Then I knew I could kind of push that particular thing to the side and just maintain it. Maybe because I had that and three faculty members listening to me at least once a week and giving me feedback – I never really felt like there was something missing because I was not recording two or three times a week. It’s mind-boggling to me that I did not do that! But I didn’t, I don’t really know why.

CG: Did you do any mock auditions before the real audition?

JW: No I didn’t. I [played in] a couple of masterclasses. There was one session where several people were preparing for a competition and I was preparing for the audition, so they got three or four of us together and we would critique each other. But as far as a mock audition, no I never did that.

CG: Did you taper your face before the audition at all?

JW: You mean as far as laying of the horn a little bit before? I did. I came to Vienna ten days before the audition and spent quite a few hours each day sightseeing, looking around Vienna. I really didn’t have a place to practice. The hotel [let me practice] in the laundry room in the basement. I was allowed to have that for like an hour each day. I basically would go down, run through everything, fix a few things, run through everything again and then be done.

I didn’t specifically say, “I’m only going to do an hour to keep my lips fresh.” But it was a product of the circumstances. There was a taper compared to the last couple of weeks of my preparation in Texas before I flew over.

CG: Did you travel to Vienna that early so your body could acclimate to the time change?

JW: Yes, and also Ian had said, “If you come over early, I would like to work with you.” So I went over [to Vienna] and gave myself 2 or 3 days to get over jet lag. Then I went to Ian’s house and got a few lessons with him. I got a lesson with Hans Strockner, the bass trombonist of the Vienna Philharmonic. I had 2 or 3 days of free time, a few days of lessons, and then a few days between the lessons and the actual audition.

CG: As far as psychological considerations goes, did you do any visualization or anything else to deal with nerves? Did you do any other specific psychological training?

JW: I did do some visualization. Whenever I would go through my fish bowl technique I would make sure that I tried to visualize myself in the audition environment. I did a lot of mental practice, mental visualization in the times that I could not practice. Even on the flight on the way over to Vienna. It actually just helped to calm me, to go through all the excerpts in my head. I did that several times on my flight over. Otherwise, I didn’t do anything else. I kind of relied on Jan Kagarice to get inside my head and work some things out. I was a mess until about 3 or 4 weeks before hand.

CG: Just with nerves?

JW: (Laughing) Yes! It’s funny because I’ve always been a guy who was pretty sure with my life as far as, “I’m going to do this, and then the next logical thing is this, etc.” I had planned in being in Texas for about 5 years. I wanted to get my masters and my doctorate. My wife and I bought a house. My wife went for a job that was her dream job, and the day that she found out she got that job was the day I got my audition letter from Vienna. We were very happy at North Texas, involved in a lot of things I was happy with. So when all this came about – the way Ian was wording his invitation and wording the things he was saying – it was not, “Hey we are having an audition, why don’t you come?” It was more of, “I heard you play and I want you. Now all you have to do is not choke, is not screw it up,” – was how I interpreted it.

So that first month, February, was very emotional because that is when my wife and I were trying to decide if we would want to move to Europe. To decide if we wanted to leave everything we knew – our friends and family – to leave this life that we were starting build for ourselves here. So that first month or

so I was preparing with the goal of coming to Vienna, learning a lot, having a great experience, and hopefully coming in second place. That was actually kind of what I wanted.

Then in March, I went up to ETW [Eastern Trombone Workshop] and took part in a quartet competition up there, participated in some masterclasses up there, and just talking to other people that are in the trombone world and telling them about this opportunity I had, I realize what a huge opportunity it was. It then went to the opposite side of the spectrum to where I felt like I had to win. I thought, “If I don’t win, my life is over. I’m never going to get a chance this good again.” That was equally sort of destructive, because in either way [of thinking about the audition], I was not really focused on winning. One way, I was not focused on winning, and the other way I was so focused on winning that it was destroying me. I was not allowing myself to be musical and playing went downhill.

It was in April where I felt more of a balance. I felt like I really wanted to win, but if I didn’t knew I had learned a lot and I’ll come back and do what I was planning on doing in Texas. I feel like that equilibrium that I got to is actually what allowed me to win. I wanted to win, but I didn’t have to win. I showed up to the audition and looked across the candidates and saw half a dozen Austrian kids. They were all just white as a sheep because as an Austrian, this “the job.” There was job better than that in their eyes. They were like I was in March – I could see them thinking, “I have to win this or my life is over.” They didn’t even have a chance before they started. I was ok because all I wanted to do was represent myself well. The only think I wanted to do was not embarrass myself.

CG: You mentioned in hindsight you might have planned more recovery time in your preparation.

Did you ever feel burned out or over-trained at all by the time the audition happened?

JW: I think that’s what was happening to me in March. I was trying so hard and playing so much – that’s about the time I got injured, in late March or early April – I got injured and I was starting to feel burned out like I wanted to throw my trombone against the wall. I felt like the mental problem came first. The emotional problem, or I guess you could say the psychological problem, happened first. That led to over-practicing, to unintelligent practicing and things like that. By April I was just enjoying what I was doing. I

would say there was some burnout there, but it wasn't at the end, it was more in the middle [of the preparation time].

CG: I think that about answers all of my questions. Do you have anything else you would like to add as far as preparation techniques you think would be helpful?

JW: I think the overarching concept that I would say would be helpful to anyone auditioning would be that – at least in a European context – music wins. It is not the person who executes the audition the best who wins. I think [Europeans] kind of view music here that if you execute it, you kind of “execute” it. Musicality wins the day. I've been told that by people who were on the jury, “You did not play perfectly, but you played musically and showed us at least what was possible with your technique, and that's why we gave you the job.”

I think there is something that Americans can learn from that. The things that we chase, the things that we value, the priorities that we hold, tend to be things that in Europe, the birthplace of Western music, are not really valued or at least the values are in a different order. They want to know you can communicate, that you can play music clearly, and then we care how high or fast or low or slow you can play. Use your technique so that it enhances the communication of the music. That's what I learned throughout the whole process, that was a big overarching thing. As far as preparation goes, I think setting goals is important. When you set goals, the way you get there becomes apparent.

Paul Pollard Interview
Bass trombone, New York Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
Phone Interview, January 12, 2012; 9:00am EDT

Chris Green: Could you cover your basic approach to orchestral audition preparation?

Paul Pollard: First of all, do you have the orchestral excerpts CD that Jim Markey and I recently recorded and released?

CG: No, actually I don't.

PP: Well, Jim Markey, who is the bass trombonist for the New York Philharmonic, and myself recorded basically a bass trombonist's guide to orchestral excerpts and auditioning for orchestras. It's a dual CD set. At the beginning of each CD, his and mine, there is a few minutes of us just discussing our general approach for preparing for an orchestral audition. We didn't really consult each other on what we were going to say. But if I listen back to them, it was shocking how similar what we had to say was.

To begin with, we both mentioned if you want to be a successful auditioner, if you want to win an audition, you have to know the music. You have to develop a library of recordings that you know very well. That's essential. It's shocking how few people that audition for orchestras actually listen to the music every day. Not only do you need to know the music to win an audition, but you're going to be miserable sitting in an orchestra if you actually win it if you don't have a love for the music! It's like someone wanting to be a pro football player who doesn't really love football, who doesn't really have a passion or a love for football. That's just not the case. The guys that play basketball or football, or bikers or runners; whatever sport you want to mention- they actually follow their sport. They watch it on television; it's their life, they live it. If you want to be an orchestral player, DVDs and recordings are a huge part of it. That's the first thing.

My personal approach to auditioning, beyond that, relies heavily on the metronome, the tuner, and the recording device. I think auditions boil down to time, intonation, and sound quality. And there is no way you can develop the kind of sense of time, the intonation, and the sound you want if you're not using those 3 things on a daily basis to prepare the orchestral excerpts. I think that's very important.

CG: If you know an audition is coming up, is there a certain amount of time that you block out to prepare for it?

PP: That's a tricky question. The reason I say it's tricky is if you've never worked up an audition or have never played an audition and worked up excerpts, it could take a long time. I think my personal general rule for preparing an orchestral audition is as soon as I know what the list is, if it's 6 months, 1 years, or 6 weeks in advance, I start working on it. I start obsessing about it. It just makes sense to do that. If you need to win a job, if you want to win a job, you need to start obsessing about the excerpts. You need to record them every day; play them with a metronome and a tuner. As soon as you get the list. To be honest with you, orchestral auditions most of the time have the same excerpts on them. You know, there are some minor variances from list to list. But every tenor trombone audition is going to have *Mozart Requiem*, *Bolero*, *Hungarian March*, *William Tell*, and *Ride of the Valkyries*. I mean every audition is going to have those excerpts on it. If you're a serious player really wanting to win an audition, those core excerpts have to be in the core of your psyche.

It was my approach before I won an audition to play those core excerpts for my instrument every day. I played through them every day because I wanted them to be as natural and as part of who I was as a player as possible. As natural as riding a bike or something.

The excerpts were part of my daily practice routine. I would play long tones, and then run *The Rhenish*. I would play long tones in the low register, then I would run *Das Rhinegold* one time. I would play my major scales, and then run *Hungarian March* one time. Even when an audition wasn't imminent, I had the excerpts going.

I'll relay a quick story to you. Before I actually won a job, I was at a masterclass being given by a major orchestral player who had just won a job, one of the biggest jobs in the world. The question was asked, "How long in advance did you start preparing for your audition?" This was a position in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra that they had just won. That person's answer was, "20 years ago!" Meaning when that person had made a decision 20 years prior that they wanted to be an orchestral player, they were in audition mode all the time. Everything they were doing- musically and their daily routine-

was geared towards winning an audition. I think the people that have shown an ability to win auditions consistently are doing that. It's their life. It's a lifestyle. Auditioning is a lifestyle.

CG: You spoke a little about your daily routine already. Could you go into a little more depth about what that is and if it changes while you're preparing?

PP: I'm a "routine" guy. I mean there are guys out there that have been successful taking auditions that have a random approach to the instrument. I'm sure there are. But the guys that I know closely that are consistent as musicians and as players have a consistent routine that they go back to every day. That shores up the foundations of their playing. It's the same way an athlete has a routine and figures out how their body responds to what they do, that prepares them to do their sport. I feel musicians need to develop the same kind of routine that prepares them to do what they do.

I think there's a huge parallel between sports and music. Athletes have a daily routine. They wake up at a certain time, they stretch, they do their cardio, they lift weights, they ice their knees. The super athletes like Jerry Rice, Tiger Woods, and Michael Jordan. Guys that are iconic in the sport they perform in. Their routines are legendary and I think it should be the same way for a musician.

CG: Could you talk a little about how you structure a single practice session during your preparation?

Do you set specific goals within one day or week of practicing?

PP: We each have to figure out what our individual goals need to be. I usually have 3 sessions a day. I was always an early riser. I would wake up in the morning and do my routine- my long tones, my slurs, articulation studies, Rochut's in different octaves. In the afternoon I would come back and have a session on orchestral excerpts. At night I would come back and have a session on any solos I was working on. You know, I was completely obsessed with getting a job before I had one.

I'm from a blue collar family and didn't have a lot of help in regards to going to school. I had to get a job and there was no plan B. I needed to make money because I didn't have help from my family. I was getting after it in a big way.

So during my orchestral excerpt session, especially early on when I was just getting introduced to the excerpts, I might just work on one orchestral excerpt for the whole session. I can remember *Fountains of Rome*, which is a very technical excerpt, and sit there and work on it for 2 hours! I remember some of my early lessons with Charlie Vernon. He talked about how sometimes he would practice one note for 2 hours! If there was a note that he was trying to perfect the sound quality of, that he was trying to make it sound like the rest of the notes did on the horn like a low B natural on the bass trombone, he would play that one note- long tones on that one note- for 2 hours! Just trying to get the sound he wanted on that note. So I guess that kind of pertains to goal setting. My general approach to playing an excerpt was to play it as much as I needed to make it perfect.

Getting closer to the audition, maybe a week or two, I would have sessions at some point where I would- hopefully I had gotten each excerpt up to speed- I would have sessions where I would print of the name of the excerpt on a little piece of paper. Then I would put them all in a bag and pull them out randomly and play the list. In an audition, if you aren't prepared to play the list in any order- I mean they can go from extreme loud to extreme soft or a technical excerpt to a low excerpt- you have to be able to switch gears real fast. They can be on the list really randomly. So I would try to create that situation of randomness just to prepare myself for something like that.

Along those same lines, when I'm preparing for something that is high pressure where I'm going to be nervous, I want to practice getting my heart rate up before I play- whether it's a solo or excerpts. I might do pushups or run in place for a while to get my heart rate up and then figure out how to play under those circumstances. Let's face it, you're never going to be completely calm in an audition. It's one thing to work up an excerpt in the practice room and make it perfect when you're not nervous. But it's another thing to play it when your heart is beating really fast.

CG: Do you ever plan heavy versus light days in regards to face time on the horn? Or do you think you should be able to reach some kind of conditioning and keep it the same from there?

PP: That's what I did. I never took a day off! Like I said, I had to get a job. Jerry Rice didn't take days off. Jerry Rice didn't take any days off. Have you heard anything about his training routine?

CG: His workouts are legendary from what I understand.

PP: In the offseason, his training sessions were harder than when he was playing. I know professionals that when they have a day off, they might not touch the horn. But for me, if I have a day off, that's the day I really have a big practice session. I'm not sure if that approach would work for everybody. But if you're playing properly without too much tension, if you're using your air properly- let's face it. The trombone is not that physically demanding. It might be more demanding than some other instruments, but playing the trombone is not like running a marathon. You just sit there and move your right arm while you blow air. It's not that physically demanding. I would say that if a person doesn't have the physical ability to have 2 hour practice sessions, there's something wrong with their approach. That's my opinion. If they start to break down before two hours, in my opinion they're using too much physical work and they're not using their air- something about their approach is not working.

I'm surrounded by people that can play 4 hour operas [in the New York Metropolitan Opera Orchestra]. It's possible to develop that.

Tony Wise Interview
Second trombone, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra
Phone Interview, March 17, 2012; 8:00pm EDT

Chris Green: Can you take me through your basic approach to audition preparation? When you have an audition coming up, about how long do you take to prepare for it?

Tony Weiss: That all depends on the situation. As far as sports and music being related, athletes have the entire off season to prepare. They might play the first few games of the season a certain way, but by the time they get to the Final Four, they're in a tournament playing very often and you might not have as much time to prepare. I guess it could be very similar to auditions. Sometimes, people would wait and say, "I'm only going to just do this one audition, this one big audition when it comes up." Then perhaps if it's 6 or 7 months away they take a 2 month period to kind of get ready for it.

Then other people are kind of on this cycle where they're just going to take everything that's out there. Whether that's 2 auditions in one month and then go 3 months without taking one, then another one the next month and 2 the month after that, etc... They are sort of preparing all the time for anything that could possibly come up.

In the past 2 or 3 years I've been kind of a combination of both of those. I initially started out the first way; I was trying to just kind of go for the one job and pick my spots. I had more time to prepare when I did this. I feel the amount of time I used was about 8 or 9 weeks. Once I started just taking everything, I decided that I would take all the excerpts that were going to be asked on all of the auditions and keep them in a regular rotation every day. I knew when any of those came up on whatever audition, I would be ready. The things that I would have to work on would be other excerpts that weren't on my normal lists. Since I was taking 2 auditions in a month, and then having a month off, and then taking another one, etc., as many as 6 or 7 auditions in a 5 month span. At that point you don't feel like you're preparing for just one audition. You're just preparing to play that repertoire and your instrument to the best of your ability.

CG: For the sake of simplification, if you were preparing in the first way you discussed of singling out one audition, how would you block out time period of say, 8 weeks, leading up to an audition? Or would you just prepare in the same way leading up to the audition?

TW: I would probably block it out. I'm a pretty "table and chart" oriented person. I've gone as far as knowing what time I was going to audition, like a morning audition, and I would prepare so I knew I could play my best in the morning. That meant that I would wake up a little earlier starting about 2 weeks out from the audition. So my regular schedule from 8 weeks out would be to pick the top 5 excerpts that I thought would be asked at the audition out of maybe a 20 excerpt list. I would take those top 5 that I was certain they would ask at some point and have those ready. Then I would maybe break it down by taking 2 or 3 excerpts per week until I hit them all at the 4 or 5 week out [from the audition] point.

At that point I would just have lists on rotation. So I would pick something that would be a feasible list that they would pick. They are realistically only going to hear 5 or 6, at the most 7, excerpts per round. So I would create mock lists of 6 or 7 lists, keeping some of the lists very standard. On a standard list I would assume they're going to start with *Tuba Mirum* and end with *Ride of the Valkyries*. I've taken so many auditions I know what kind of a standard list looks like. So that would be one out of maybe 3 lists. I could hit all 3 lists in one day.

I could wake up and do a 25-30 minute warm up, go to orchestra and play my standard 3 hour orchestra rehearsal deal, and then play one of my three lists right after the rehearsal. Then I would go have lunch, maybe take a nap, wake up and do another list. Work through a few things on the excerpts, and then do one more list before I went to sleep. Then at 2 weeks out, if it was a morning audition, I would make sure I would play that list I thought I would see in prelims at around the time I thought that audition would be.

CG: When you were becoming more familiar with the repertoire, can you talk a little bit about how you would structure your practice sessions or your practice week?

TW: I think I probably differ from a lot of people in this way. For instance, I think a lot of people take something like *Bolero* and say, "I just have to worry about these first 6 or 7 measures and then the rest of

it is good,” or, “I really need to work on my articulation in this excerpt.” I kind feel like if I those parts of my playing working, then the excerpt is just being able to play the music. Because I know that I can articulate it, I know I can play those notes that are in those first 6 bars. So for me, if those things are working on the instrument it’s just about applying the musical part of it and being able to have Bruckner sound like Bruckner, have Mahler sound like Mahler, and Mozart sound like Mozart.

For me, it was just more of trying to stay as musical as possible because in preparing for an audition, that’s the first thing that goes. You’re thinking so much, “I can’t mess up, I can’t drop a note, I can’t play anything out of tune,” all the things that you can’t do. That ends up being very detrimental to the artist part of playing the instrument and what makes it so interesting. I find that even playing solos that are not on the list, and things that are different force me to apply different musical ideas to something that I’ve played 1000 times, so hopefully it sounds like I’m only playing it for maybe the 50th time.

CG: In that vein, is there a daily routine or daily warm up that you normally use? Does that change when you are in the midst of preparing for an audition?

TW: I do have a daily warm up that I do. It is really simple. It consists of an F scale and a Bb scale in half notes, and I play 3 different times with 3 different articulations. I actually feel like I’m swimming, because to properly swim a lap the breathing has to be so perfect. It matches the stroke so when you’re turning your head to breathe and taking that stroke, you have to have that breathing and what your activity is to be coordinated with each other. Something as simple as a half note scale [sings:] one, two, three, four, BREATHE, one, two, three, four. I try to get that breath to be so effortless and natural. That warm up for me is always very consistent, and I keep it very simple to really work on the sound quality, the breathing, and the intonation.

I’ll do things that are a little faster to make it a little more difficult to time the breathing- where I don’t have as long to find that natural breath. And then the only time I would deviate from that would be if I wanted to emulate waking up late for an audition. If the alarm doesn’t go off at the hotel and I have to run to the audition without any time to warm up, and I just have to be on and be able to go. So I want to

emulate that worse-case scenario, too. Then I would maybe I have a few days where I don't have my normal warm up, where I just have to play a list while I'm cold. That way I know what that feels like.

CG: Do you believe in alternating heavy and light days, or do you think you should be able to practice the same way day in and day out?

TW: I let my face dictate that. I let my chops let me know. There are times I get peer pressured into playing longer than I want to, but for the most part if my chops feel like I can keep going then I will keep going. If they feel like they need to rest and I know I have something important or something at a certain time the next day, I keep that mind as well. With that being said, I already play in an orchestra and that job kind of dictates my schedule a lot of times. When you're in school, there's a certain amount of juggling. When I was in school I took my first audition. So I had to juggle the school work with preparing for the auditioning. Obviously the auditioning part got the short end of my attention.

If you're out of school, and either freelancing or teaching, and preparing for an audition there is a different juggling act that goes into the scheduling. Then you have to have enough time for your school, your kids, or whatever it is, and then you also to be able to take the audition to prepare. So as a teacher maybe you only try to have 2 or 3 students a day so you have enough time to prepare. With the orchestra, it is completely different because you're basically playing Tuesday through Saturday. You have 6 hour days with pretty heavy rehearsals or doubles with concerts. You're looking at having a routine that's kind of built into the orchestra's schedule.

For me that routine has turned into getting to rehearsal early and doing my normal warm up for 25 or 30 minutes and looking through all of the licks I have for that day in the orchestra. I play the one rehearsal or both rehearsals if there's two, and then running a list once or twice within the day. If I do that and work a little bit of a solo or a Rochut [book of *Melodious Etudes*], I feel like I've accomplished a lot, especially on a double rehearsal day.

My practicing might be a little bit lighter on a day that I have a concert, where we'll have a dress rehearsal and a concert in the same day. I won't run two lists and a solo, instead at the end of the concert after everyone goes I'll play a solo or two and then put it up for the night. Then, Sunday and Monday is

when you can either choose to recover (depending on how the week was) or put in a little more time. Like I said, I just let my chops dictate. I do take days off so to answer your question, yes that would be a light day or a recovery day. In general I keep it pretty steady because it's muscle memory. When you take a day off the gym and come back to work out, the first day is always a little off. I feel exactly like that on the instrument.

CG: At any point did you feel it was beneficial to group excerpts by physical demands or musical characteristics. Either by balancing them by practicing all of the high range excerpts or my low range excerpts, or making sure you have some type of variance in the excerpts you chose to practice together.

TW: Yeah, I think that when I was talking earlier about making the mock lists, that's when I would try to have the most variance in the list. Because I knew as a mock list, they would want to hear things that were varying. You want to put something loud, something soft, something low, something high, to get it all in there. I do know what you're saying with the other way of organizing them.

Earlier in my audition preparation when I was really learning everything I would say, "Ok, all of these excerpts are soft, all of these are loud." And I would make lists like that. If I was playing a 2 or 3 hour rehearsal of *Pirates of the Caribbean* where we just played loud for like 2 hours in a row, my loud chops would feel awesome. I would blast some *Mahler 3* and all the big excerpts and play them when I knew that's when I was sounding my best with that stuff. Quite honestly I would do quite the opposite, too. If my soft chops are feeling horrible right now, I would play all of my soft excerpts like *Organ Symphony*. That way I would cover my bases for when I either felt great and was at my best or challenged myself when it didn't feel good.

CG: Do you use any kind of mental practice techniques such a visualization or anything like that in your preparation.

TW: Um, not so much. I think the only thing, and you might not call this visualization, is I try to hear almost the entire excerpt being played by the entire orchestra in my head before I play it. Because I've found that most of the comments I was receiving were: "You didn't think about the tempo first," or "You

started in one tempo and then eventually got to the right tempo,” things like that. Those comments were telling me that I knew how it went, but I didn’t think about it like 100% before. For me, that was something that I sort of took into consideration. I thought that when I got to a certain spot I really felt comfortable. So I would sing those 3 or 4 bars in my head as a way to set up my tempo. So I had a few epiphanies in my house like that. That’s the only type of visualization I do. I know that the proctor’s on the stage probably think some of these guys who come on stage- I’m sure they have some interesting stories about what people do. I just want to hear it in my head exactly how I want it to go, and then I know how to go from there.

CG: Do you record yourself or play mock auditions for people leading up to an audition?

TW: Yes I record myself. Mock auditions, I should probably do more of. The problem I have with mock auditions is I used to do a lot of them when I was in school. I would get a lot of comments from a lot of different people and I would take those comments like they were 100% completely the truth. You can take all that information and really start to overanalyze it. “You played this too long,” or “that wasn’t legato enough,” or “you didn’t crescendo enough here.” So you can start to think, “Am I doing anything right?”

Sometimes that’s a little bit more detrimental. There are some times where I won’t necessarily play a mock audition, but I’ll be working on a few excerpts and I’ll know what my weakest one is, and what makes it the weakest. Then I’ll take that excerpt and play it for a colleague and play it for them and ask for their feedback. If I play it for them and they think it sounds great, then I don’t question it. But if I take it to them and they say, “Yeah I hear this,” and it was the same thing I was thinking, then I know I need to address it. I might ask, “What can I do to fix that?” Then we can just work on it together and it usually just works itself out. So a lot of times that can sort of function as a mock audition for me.

I think you can get to a point where you’ve performed on stage so many times or taken so many auditions that the nervousness isn’t there as much- the exhilaration is still there- but maybe not the nervousness as much. I don’t really feel I need the mock audition to simulate feeling nervous. At some

point I feel like I've played for a lot of people and now I'm just playing for myself. I know what my potential is and I know what I want it to sound like, and then I just go for it.

CG: Would it be fair to say that you should be careful what kind of feedback you seek out close to an audition?

TW: Yeah I think so. There are going to be all of those opinions- even those on the panel. There's something to be said about getting comments at a mock audition from some guy whose opinion you don't really respect. But then that guy could be on the panel, too! So, what he has to say could come back to get you because there could be a guy just like him on your panel that has the same opinion. All the comments are probably necessary, but I would caution again trying to apply every single one of them.

You can look at the comments and pick out some general things that are consistent in the comments. A lot of times you know how you played in the mock audition and how you can improve that to make it closer to your best run. Quite honestly, at some point you've played all the excerpts so many times and you've listened to them so many times, you have the idea of what you want it to sound like. And if you didn't achieve that you should know it. There are some times when you play and you say, "Yeah, that's it! That's what I'm going for!" That's unfortunately very rare but it does happen.

CG: Is there any time of year that you consider the "off-season" for playing or preparing auditions? Is there a time when you just generally take it easier on the horn?

TW: Yeah I think the orchestra season is kind of conducive to that. I think a lot of orchestral musicians take the opportunity to do summer music festivals or take opportunities to play just to keep it going and honestly- to keep it fresh. Since you play with the same people 9 months out of the year, it's nice to go to a different city and play with other people. I personally have no really exhausted that outlet.

This summer I'm going to Malaysia- I'm a finalist for the second trombone position out there. The final round is actually 2 months long- 4 weeks of concerts and 3 weeks of recording session. So that's my trial, that's also my different group of people to play with.

CG: What about just purely on a physical basis?

TW: I guess I just resort to letting my face dictate that still, unless I have a planned vacation where I'm not going to play. I feel like however much time I take off, it takes me double that time to get back to where I want. If I take a week off, it will take a week and a half or two weeks before I feel like I'm back to where I was before the break. I try to avoid it, is what I'm saying I guess.

CG: Can you touch on one or two considerations that you feel are most helpful to helping you prepare for auditions, and maybe something you've tried that didn't help as much?

TW: The top things for me in auditioning are: (1) consistency in the routine of the warm-up and playing of the excerpts, having that consistency and knowing that if I get there with enough time I know what I'm going to do as far as warming up and taking a few minutes before I have to audition to feel like I'm ready. (2) As far as recording, I do record myself but I don't necessarily think that's a huge part of it. Obviously listening back, you always hear something the second time around, so recording is definitely important.

Tim Higgins Interview
Principal trombone, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra
Skype Interview, January 19, 2012; 7:00pm EDT

Chris Green: Can you start by talking about how you prepare for an audition, both your general take and maybe some specific aspects of your preparation?

Tim Higgins: Yeah sure, I can do a little bit of both for you. At the beginning of my process, I started taking maybe a month or two months ahead of my audition date with an open-ended goal of, let's just get better. Part of it was to learn how it took me to prepare, and part of it was just to figure out what to do! All the regular things that you would hear from everyone: I would practice to play in tune, in time, with a good sound. Then I would see what the result would be in an audition. My preparation eventually morphed into something far more specific than that. I learned, before I got a real specific process, that one month wasn't enough time. Three months was way too much time, and two months seemed about right.

The only job I won was this one [Principal in the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra]. For this audition I prepared for about a month and half before the audition. On paper it was two months, but there was a holiday break and there and some other weird things happened. So maybe realistically, it was about a month and a half of playing.

After a few auditions I realized there were certain factors that as much as things are out of control, there are ways to practice to be in a little more control during an "uncontrollable" situation. One of those things is practicing the excerpts in a random order. You don't know what order they're going to be in. You won't know how you're going to feel that day or what it's going to sound like in the audition room. It could smell funny in there or be a weird temperature- it could be anything. So I came up with something based on a method Mike Broylance gave me called *Tuba Boot Camp*.

Basically I took all of the excerpts about 2 months before the audition date and broke them up into 3 different piles. I put every excerpt on a note card and that's how I would later come up with random piles. I would then organize the piles so they had even amount of high range, low range, slurred, tongued, etc, so each pile was well balanced. Then I would go very slowly through the piles, taking maybe 3 days

per pile. I would choose them at random and I would only be able to play each excerpt once. I wasn't allowed to play that excerpt again until I had gone through the whole pile. That took care of under-practicing and over-practicing certain excerpts.

After I went through each pile maybe 2 or 3 times, I would reorganize the piles into two piles and do the same thing. Only now I would work a little faster through the piles. When I had 3 piles I would work with maybe one or two excerpts in a practice session. Then when it got down to 2 piles, I was playing 3 or 4 excerpts per practice session. All this time, I would slowly build up tempo, go back and forth from the mouthpiece to the horn, building up dynamics and honing up what I'm wanting and listening to out of the excerpt the whole time.

Eventually I would get down to one pile and get to where I was getting through that whole pile once each day. Right around this time, it's usually a week or a week and a half out from the audition; I start setting up mock auditions. I will do maybe 4 or 5 of them and make sure I get people that make me really nervous. People who know my playing and what my strengths and weaknesses and who are comfortable telling me if something sounded like crap or needed tweaking. At this point I would also start simulating the audition process by deciding what I'm going to wear that day. I would wear that for the mock auditions. I would make sure to have a proctor and having them sit very close by while I played. I would be in some separate room for an amount of time and have someone come get me. Then maybe have someone who isn't a trombone player call out the list or have a trombone pick the list, and just do 3 rounds that day.

Through the whole process- both mock auditions and practicing- I'm recording constantly and listening back to be my own teacher. When it gets down to the day of the audition, there were a lot of mental games I would play. Instead of panicking and hearing everyone warming up I would just keep telling myself that everyone sounds good for a door. I would think the only thing I can control is how I feel about my playing right now and can't control what's going to happen in the room. So as long as when I pick up the horn, I feel happy with the sounds I was making, it would calm me down enough to be confident just to go in and do what I need to do.

Walking in to the audition, I try to create a performance. I imagine the committee as an entire audience, and that I get to control everything that they get to hear. From the moment I start playing, even between excerpts, that is part of the excerpts, and I'm just piecing together a multi-movement work for them. So I'm now doing the first movement, then how much silence do I want to put in between movements, how much energy do I want to draw from them by how long I make them wait or don't wait before the next excerpt. Then it kind of takes away from that, oh crap I have to start and stop and start and stop. It's just one piece, one idea. It gets me out of the practice room mentality of analyzing everything. That's basically my ideas on how to do it.

CG: Do you have a daily routine or warm-up that you normally play? Does it change at all while you are preparing for an audition?

TH: For a warm up I would usually play with drones. Kodaly has these exercises called *Sing Correctly*. They are real simple exercises designed for two singers to sit next to each other and be able to lock in on intonation. It starts off with just octaves, then adds a 5th, then a 3rd, a 4th, and all that sorts of stuff. I would drone and do some of those, focusing on pitch, tone, and ease of air. That was probably the one thing I did most of the time. Occasionally I would do some type of articulation exercise but I would usually try to avoid those. I liked combining working on technique with working on the excerpts. So any time I was playing *Hungarian March* and I was creating an exercise for it, I was basically doing an articulation exercise anyways. If I wanted to isolate some scales and do a specific articulation- I was doing one that I picked off another excerpt. If I wanted my articulation to be like *William Tell*, so I would do exercises in the morning that were *William Tell*-related instead of just checking off random articulation exercises. That way I could integrate technique with working on the excerpts.

CG: Can you talk a little bit about goal setting on a short and long term basis as far as within one practice session and maybe over a practice week?

TH: There's often times a gap between students and professionals in that professionals know both exactly how they want to sound and how they actually sound. There's no ambiguity there. But professionals will also know exactly how they want to get there. And so at the beginning of my process, when I look at the

process and I'm writing them on cards or playing through them just to see where I'm at, I know exactly how I want it to go. It's more like driving down the football field instead of saying, "Ok, I'm going to have these notes in tune by the end of the practice session." I wasn't highly specific like that, I just knew exactly how I wanted them to sound. So every time I picked up the horn to play, it was an evaluation: I would ask, "Well why didn't it sound that way?" and "What is it that's getting in the way?" And if there was a problem then obviously there was some trial and error to see what was getting in the way. But there was never an individual goal for one practice section, more of just moving the tape.

CG: You said you balanced the excerpts so there was a balance in each pile. Are you a believer in alternating heavy days with light days, or do you think every day be pretty similar?

TH: I look at it on the whole, like I'm a runner. Some days you just don't want to run. So you don't go 10 miles, you run 8 miles instead. There are other days you want to do more, so you do more. As long as overall you're getting stuff done, a day isn't going to make much different. A week will, a month definitely will. For one day, I didn't worry about it too much. If I needed to take an afternoon or a day off, I did. That was just based on how I was feeling both mentally and physically, it wasn't a big deal.

CG: Do you taper your face time or practice time before an audition?

TH: Yeah a little bit. I think as the audition gets closer I just get more and more sick of it- sick of the process. So in a way, I was going to just get my work done and then pick up something like an etude or something I haven't played in a while- maybe a solo, just to keep your mind fresh. Unless the audition is in town you're going to lose time to traveling and probably get your taper then. Sometimes it helps in the process to take a Saturday off and then come in Sunday and record yourself playing a mock audition round. That way you get used to how that feels and how you respond to that. If it's a huge deal to take a day off and then come back 100%, you should practice getting back to 100% from nothing.

CG: I was going to ask if you planned recovery stages, but it sounds like you kind of take them as they come.

TH: Yes, that's correct.

CG: You talked about burning out a little before the audition or becoming sick of the material. Is there anything you can do to combat that?

TH: That definitely happened to me in the earlier stages of figuring out how long it took for me to get prepared. It can be bizarre- the first audition I took I practiced for about a week and ended up advancing, but not winning. Another audition had a shorter list and I felt better about it- better as a player and more confident and I only had 2 weeks to prepare, and I didn't advance. I still don't know what happened there specifically. I know my ability to hear myself in that second audition was not as honed as it should have been.

The burnout happened when I took like 3 months to prepare for the audition. There was nothing I could do- I could not bring any sort of energy back into once I hit that point. So it was more of just knowing when to push yourself and when not to.

CG: It sounds like it's highly personal as far as how much time each person might need. Would you agree with that?

TH: Definitely. I use this analogy now a lot: running a marathon. I don't know if you done that or trained for that? Do you know what I'm talking about?

CG: Yes, I've run a half marathon.

TH: So you know what I'm saying, you cannot go guns blazing unless you know you can. A lot of people say if you're going to win gold you have to give 100% the whole time and that's a Gatorade/Nike way of thinking. I'm not the world's greatest runner, but I know when it's ok to push myself and when it's not. A lot of those distance running analogies apply to audition training a lot.

One thing that helps me out a lot is thinking about someone who's on a diet that cheats. You can't just go cold turkey, it's human to cheat. You have reward yourself. I hate practicing and auditioning, but I have to give myself some kind of reward at the end of the day. I like just picking up a Brahms song or a Rachmaninoff song- it doesn't matter that it isn't perfect but just to allow your musical personality to kind of let loose. That helps a lot. I'll be very critical of myself- I'll want to get every single note perfectly- but sometimes the 7th sixteenth note is always wrong and I want to just hone in on that. But sometimes I have

to step back and think, “You know, I’m really getting a good sound on this excerpt. I don’t like how it sounds over here, but I do like this.” Just to be able to pat myself on my back just for a moment let’s me relax and enjoy it, and I try to apply that to the other areas of my practicing. I’m not going to say stuff like, “No one sounds as good as me!” but to be able to identify what I like is helpful. I sense a lot of young players not doing that a lot. It’s almost like, if one thing is off they feel worthless.

CG: Do you use any kind of mental practice techniques when preparing or think any are helpful?

TH: In general, I try to think in analogies almost constantly. Lately the idea of geometric shapes and having them orbiting, what color it is, how fast is it moving- that’s a visualization I have for my sound right now. For dynamics I always think about the candle; if I’m blowing against the candle what angle do I want to keep the flame at? Maybe a string coming out of mouth, threading it through the instrument with my air, things like that.

For the actual audition, I don’t know, I don’t know if I necessarily have visualizations for that moment. I think of the room having an aura and there’s an energy reaching out from me to the committee. That energy is really the only thing I have control of. The best example would be if they put *Bolero*, *Organ Symphony*, *Ride of the Valkyries*, I’m going to take my time to get into *Bolero* mode. I’m going to hear the snare drum and hear the end of the preceding woodwind phrase while I have my horn up. I’ll bounce a few times and then go. When I finish that excerpt, I start setting up *Organ Symphony*. In my head I start a few bars before the entrance, but I wait until the energy in the room is like down to the level of a lake in the morning- just nothing- and then I come in right on top of that. When I finish that, I imagine the committee is writing down stuff like, “Oh this was out of tune,” or whatever. But I want to catch them off guard and start the *Ride of the Valkyries*. I want to surprise them and take them immediately into that excerpt like, “Where did those horses come from!?” The energy of the excerpt is not only from the tempo and articulation, but because I caught you off guard.

Those are some visualizations I do. Before the San Francisco audition, I was in the warm up room listening to Barenboim’s Berlin *Bruckner 8* recording, movement 1, because I would get so jazzed up and exciting. That’s what got me going. But to keep myself from being overwhelmed in the warm up room, I

listened to Radiohead, and I just zoned out to songs of theirs I liked. Just sitting in the room listening to Radiohead, the personnel director had to shake me because I was already in my own little space. I wanted to be in my own little world with nothing effected me.

CG: Can you talk about what preparation strategies were most helpful or which ones you feel might be a waste of time?

TH: The most helpful thing to do is get my nerves up by playing for people. I was living in DC before I came out to San Francisco and so I got the National Symphony brass section together before a concert and got them to listen to me playing a list. I had a good friend on the mock committee as well as some guys from the Army Band that listened to me all the time. They've listened to me nonstop. So they knew exactly where I was, what had gotten better or worse. And they were brutally honest, and it's exactly what I needed. I would also have people on the committee like, the girl I had a crush on. That puts a lot of pressure on in a different way. That gave me people I knew or would like to know on the committee. I was going to be staring at people I had never met before at the real audition so it couldn't get any worse. That was the best thing I could have done for myself.

Nothing jumps out right now as something that really didn't work. Of course there was probably something but nothing that really sticks out right now.

Vita

Christopher Evan Green was born March 8, 1983 in Sarasota, Florida. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Music from Florida State University in 2005. In 2006, he moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan where he served as the Graduate Teaching Assistant for the trombone studio at Western Michigan University while maintaining a private teaching studio. He graduated from Western Michigan University in 2008 and received his Masters of Music in Trombone Performance. While working towards the Doctoral of Musical Arts degree at Louisiana State University, he also minored in Kinesiology. This led to completing research on the Alexander Technique as well as applying principles from the athletic world to music performance.