

## **Bridging the Gap: The Earliest Trumpet Methods & Their Influences in Modern Trumpet Pedagogy**

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The earliest trumpet methods were written over four centuries ago, yet many critical pedagogical concepts have remained consistent to the common era. Distinct similarities between the methods of Cesare Bendinelli and Girolamo Fantini appear in the writings of Jean-Baptiste Arban and persist in even the most recent trumpet pedagogy methods. The use of specific articulation syllables, for instance, find their earliest forms in Bendinelli's method, as does a unique focus on changes in syllables and tongue placement ("ah" to "ee") to adjust pitch and register. The use of these syllables as the basis for flexibility studies and lip slurs appear in these early methods as well. These early pedagogues may not have realized precisely or scientifically what was occurring within the mouth acoustically, but their descriptions within their writings indicate a keen awareness of the topic and the importance of imparting it to students. This article will explore a few pedagogies of our earliest manuscripts in trumpet pedagogy and draw parallels with our modern trumpet methods as it relates specifically to vowel changes and fluctuations within the oral cavity to produce varied pitches.

Bendinelli's method remains the first to reference and connect the notion of syllabic uses and changes in oral cavity shape to alter pitch. These concepts are further explored in Fantini's method and help to connect these early methods with modern trumpet pedagogy. Most modern trumpet methods focus on the syllables "ah (aw)" and "ee" to further highlight the change in the tongue level and the oral cavity while teaching lips slurs and flexibility on the trumpet. Allen Vizzutti's 2007 annotations to Arban's trumpet method, for instance, use "tah", "tu", and "tee" in a way remarkably consistent with Bendinelli's use of "dan", "ten", and "tin."<sup>1</sup> This directly relates to the change in tongue position in varied registers.

The consistency we see between the early pedagogical writings of Bendinelli and Fantini and modern trumpet pedagogy instruction demonstrates an underlying truth about the nature of mouth shape and tongue placement in playing the instrument. Whether these early pedagogues arrived at their observations independently or through some common influence, both Bendinelli and Fantini clearly understood the importance changing syllables and being conscious and consistent about it, much like the use of these vowel sounds in singing. Modern science and MRI technologies have done much to reveal the exact processes that occur in our mouths as we play brass instruments, but these early musicians arrived at the underlying idea in ways to achieve the desired results intuitively.

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<sup>1</sup> Arban/Vizzutti, p. 130

Further research and study of these earliest trumpet methods can lead to other insights not only about consistency of approach, but also fundamental truths about how we approach the instrument today.

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