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Abstract

This interview with international trumpet soloist Robin Paillet examines the practice routines, artistic mindset, and preparation strategies that shape his development as a performer. Paillet describes a structured daily routine built on warm-up fundamentals, slow and careful technical work, and an emphasis on eliminating doubt before performance. The discussion explores the balance between technical consolidation and musical intention, the role of rest and focus during competition periods, and the challenges of interpreting contemporary repertoire without existing recordings. Additional themes include the influence of theatre, literature, and jazz on artistic sensitivity, and the differences between projecting as a soloist and blending within an orchestra.

Keywords: trumpet pedagogy; deliberate practice; competition preparation; artistic imagination; musical interpretation; performance mindset.

Abstract (Spanish)

Esta entrevista con el trompetista solista internacional Robin Paillet analiza sus rutinas de práctica, su enfoque artístico y sus estrategias de preparación como intérprete. Paillet describe una rutina diaria estructurada basada en fundamentos de calentamiento, trabajo técnico lento y cuidadoso, y un énfasis en eliminar la duda antes de tocar en público. La conversación aborda el equilibrio entre consolidación técnica e intención musical, el papel del descanso y la concentración en periodos de competición, así como los desafíos de interpretar repertorio contemporáneo sin grabaciones disponibles. También se comentan la influencia del teatro, la literatura y el jazz en la sensibilidad artística, y las diferencias entre proyectar como solista y fundirse dentro de una orquesta.

Palabras clave: pedagogía de la trompeta; práctica deliberada; preparación para competiciones; imaginación artística; interpretación musical; mentalidad interpretativa.

Study Routine

How do you structure your practice on a daily basis? Do you follow a strict routine or adapt each session depending on what you feel needs the most attention? My daily work is structured in several parts. I always begin with a 15-minute warm-up, which includes some buzzing on the mouthpiece, long tones, a bit of articulation and flexibility, all with the goal of waking up the muscles, the body, and the mind. Then I move on to a technical program, which can change and evolve over time, but I really enjoy doing simple things that help me feel at ease on the instrument. A few examples of the books I regularly use in my technical practice include Method Number 1 Warm-Up by Anthony Plog, Fitness for Brass by Fritz Damrow, as well as more traditional methods like Clarke, Arban, and Balay. I adapt this technical work depending on what I need at that moment and how I'm feeling physically. After this, the rest of the day is dedicated to repertoire, concertos and concert programs that I need to prepare.

Competition Preparation and Focus

How do you organize your work over time? Do you include mental strategies such as meditation or specific concentration exercises in this process?

What matters most to me is eliminating all doubts when I play. To do that, I work very slowly on my concertos to build total security and confidence. The goal is to achieve a high level of technical perfection. But beyond the trumpet, it's essential for me to think about the music itself, which is why I focus a lot on phrasing, dynamics, and the emotions I want to convey, so I can play as musically as possible. To summarize: I work very slowly and carefully throughout the preparation period so that, by the time I'm running the piece in full, I can focus entirely on the music and not worry about the technical side anymore

Do you maintain a diverse playing schedule or do you clear your schedule and focus on the competition similar to an Olympic athlete?

When preparing for a competition, I believe it's essential to focus completely, like an Olympic athlete. It takes not only a lot of practice, but also a lot of rest. That's why I try not to

overload myself with other projects during this period and to stay focused on the main goal: the competition.

How do you balance other performance obligations during the competition preparation process?

It can sometimes be hard to turn down exciting performance opportunities — but I believe it's necessary. Staying focused on the competition helps ensure healthy and effective preparation, and also helps avoid arriving too tired at such an important moment.

In these contexts you sometimes face a newly composed piece without any recordings — as happened in the ARD competition — how do you approach studying a premiere from scratch and shaping your own interpretation?

I find it fascinating to work on a contemporary piece with no available recording. At the ARD competition in Munich, I began by breaking the piece down into small technical sections to locate the most difficult passages. At the same time, I tried to find meaning in the music, to build a story, to understand what the piece meant to me and what I wanted to say with it. In an international competition, I think it's essential to go beyond just playing the notes and focus on communicating something personal and expressive. That's how we can stand out. **3.**

Influences and Listening Habits

Which trumpet players or musicians have influenced you the most? And outside the trumpet world, what kind of music do you listen to, and how does it feed into your interpretation? The trumpeter who has influenced me the most is without a doubt Maurice André. But I've been inspired by many musicians, including my teachers, Marc Geujon and Alexis Demailly in Paris, as well as Reinhold Friedrich and Markus Klein in Karlsruhe. I also admire other trumpet players such as David Guerrier, Omar Tomasoni, and Miroslav Petkov, as well as musicians from other genres, like the jazz pianist Brad Mehldau.

Parallel Activities

Do you pursue other activities such as reading, painting, or different art forms? If so, in what ways do these experiences enrich your musical imagination and performance? As a child, I did theatre for about 10 years, it's an art form I still love very much. I also really enjoy reading and listening to different kinds of music. My father listens to a lot of jazz, and he passed that on to me. I believe theatre, literature, and all other art forms help develop one's artistic sensitivity. As I mentioned earlier regarding musicality, I think being open to other disciplines allows us to grow and refine our own artistic expression.

Creativity and Inspiration

When approaching a new score, where do you draw inspiration from? Do images, stories, or personal experiences play a role in shaping your interpretation? When I discover a new piece, I try to feel what the composer wanted to express. Sometimes I create a story in my mind or visualize certain images that resonate with me. These personal associations help me convey something powerful and meaningful in my interpretation.

What differences do you find between performing as a soloist and playing within an orchestra? How do you adapt your sound, presence, and mindset in each context?

This is still quite new to me, since I'm still a young musician and only recently began performing both as a soloist and within orchestras. But I think one of the main differences is the sound: as a soloist, the sound needs to be more present and project clearly above the orchestra. In contrast, when playing in an orchestra, the goal is to blend in and become part of a collective sound. The mindset is also very different.