

Trumpet



The Be-Bop Range Book

A creative approach to developing range, technique and improvisational skills.

By Eric Bolvin



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Table Of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	i-iv
Chromatic Approach	
Range Arc 1 - Major ii-V-I with chromatic passing tones	1
Range Arc 2 - Major ii-V-I with chromatic passing tones	3
Range Arc 3 - Major ii-V-I with diminished scale	5
Range Arc 4 - Major ii-V-I with passing tones	7
Range Arc 5 - Dorian lick with passing tones (Randy)	9
Whole Step Approach	
Range Arc 6 - Dorian lick with passing tones (Freddie)	11
Range Arc 7 - Dorian lick with passing tones	13
Range Arc 8 - Minor ii-V-i with altered scale (Clifford)	15
Range Arc 9 - Dorian lick with passing tones (Freddie)	17
Range Arc 10 - Turnaround lick (Blue)	19
Minor 3 rd Approach	
Range Arc 11 - Major ii-V-I lick with passing tones	21
Range Arc 12 - Descending ii-V lick with passing tones (Lee)	23
Range Arc 13 - Minor ii-V-i lick with passing tones	25
Range Arc 14 - Minor ii-V-i lick with diminished arpeggio (Chet)	27
Range Arc 15 - Turnaround (Randy)	29
Major 3 rd Approach	
Range Arc 16 - Major lick with passing tones	31
Range Arc 17 - Major ii-V-I lick with passing tones (Tom)	33
Range Arc 18 - Major ii-V-I lick with altered tones (Tom)	35
Range Arc 19 - Blues changes lick with ghost notes (Freddie)	37
Range Arc 20 - Major ii-V-I lick with altered scale	39
Perfect 4 th Approach	
Range Arc 21 - Blues lick with passing tones (Lee)	41
Range Arc 22 - Minor lick over changes (Fats)	43
Range Arc 23 - V altered to I lick	45
Range Arc 24 - Major ii-V-I lick with passing tones (Blue)	47
Range Arc 25 - Major ii-V-I lick with altered & passing tones	49
Tritone Approach	
Range Arc 26 - Tritone sub lick with passing tones	51
Perfect 5 th Approach	
Range Arc 27 – Break lick with passing tones (Freddie)	53

Introduction

Increasing Range

Trumpet range and developing it is one of the most common and controversial subjects among trumpet players, teachers and authors. Without delving too far into the physical and scientific aspects of trumpet playing, allow me to paraphrase the great Yogi Berra;

“The upper register of the trumpet is the same as the middle and lower registers, just different.”

All trumpet playing is a coordination or “balance” of three things: air, tongue level and embouchure. It is through sensible, intelligent and consistent practice that we develop the skills necessary to play throughout the entire range of our instrument.

Purpose Of This Book

Although “hitting the high note” may be the quest for many trumpet players, a more useful and musical goal is developing a large “playable range”. This means being able to articulate and play musically and dynamically throughout the entire range of the instrument. This is accomplished through the use of “**Range Arcs**”, which are musical phrases that cover a large range. In addition to building our playable range, we are working on technique and adding to our jazz vocabulary.

I originally developed the concept of Range Arcs in **The Modern Jazz Trumpet Method**. Many players have commented on how useful these studies are, so I decided to expand on it here. For more rudimentary range, flexibility and endurance study, see **Tongue Level & Air**.

The Approach Note

I have found that how we approach the highest note of a musical phrase is critical to range development. This aspect of range development is presented here in a progressive, creative format.

Exercises 1-5 use the “**Chromatic Approach**”. This means that the highest note of the arc is approached from a ½ step below. The exercises continue, adding a ½ step to the **approach note** every five exercises.

Articulation & Phrasing

All exercises in this book are to be played in a swing style. However, if you are having trouble with an exercise, sometimes playing it straight may help. Jazz articulation should also be employed throughout. What does that mean exactly? Jazz trumpet articulation is as spontaneous and individual as an improvised solo. Honestly, if I have to think about it, I can't do it. The best advice is to listen to the trumpet players quoted in this book and to as much jazz trumpet as you can. Transcribe and

play solos while emulating their style and articulation. Immersing yourself in this will result in your own personal style of articulation.

Jazz articulation on trumpet is also born out of necessity. Some slurs in a line may just not be possible so you must tongue. This will be revealed when you start some of the exercises that contain wider intervals.

How To Use This Book

Each exercise group consists of a **Range Arc**, **Range Builder** and **Range Builder Extended**. Each group should be practiced for at least one week before moving ahead to the next one.

Range Arcs

The **Range Arc** is the original lick. Many of these have been borrowed from some of the great jazz trumpeters of all time; Freddie Hubbard, Clifford Brown, Lee Morgan, Chet Baker, Tom Harrell, Randy Brecker, Fats Navarro and Blue Mitchell.

You should begin with the key that is marked with an asterisk * ; it is an easy key and range and will help you familiarize yourself with the lick. Practice slowly at first and then work for speed. Once you are familiar with the * lick, start at the beginning of the Range Arc. Work on each key until you get it smoothly. Repeat as needed and rest between each key. Take the D.C. and play 8va through the indicated key (see the box at the end of the Range Arc) that takes you to High C. Rest for 15 minutes.

Range Builders

After resting, you are ready for the **Range Builder**. These are shorter exercises based on the Range Arc, but they end on the highest note. Hold the last note a little longer. Only play each key one time and rest between each. When you reach the end take the D.S. and play 8va and go as far as you can *while still being able to play the line cleanly and in time* and always resting as much as you play. You may make three attempts when you reach your limit, although it's a good idea to stop before you're tired. Rest for 15 minutes!

Range Builders Extended

The final exercise is the **Range Builder Extended**. These generally start at the bottom of the trumpets range and continue up as much as two octaves or more. Always play these in one breath. If you can only play a couple at first, that's OK. Try to add one more when you are feeling good. Repeat these until you can play them cleanly from top to bottom, then move on to the next key. The goal here is to cover a large range

in one musical phrase. Remember we are trying to develop playable range over the whole horn, not the ultimate high note. Long rest.

Summary Of How To Practice

A. Range Arcs

1. Start with the key marked *
2. Play slowly at first, then work for speed.
3. Repeat each key until clean, then rest.
4. Take the D.C. and stop at the indicated key.
5. Rest for 15 minutes.

B. Range Builders

1. Play each key once.
2. Hold the last note.
3. Rest between each key.
4. Take the D.S. and play 8va.
5. Go as far as you can.
6. Rest for 15 minutes.

C. Range Builders Extended

1. Play in one breath.
2. Repeat as needed.
3. Continue as far as possible
4. Try to add a key every couple of days.
5. Long rest.

About The Author

Eric Bolvin is a trumpet player, educator, author, composer and producer living in The San Francisco Bay Area. He is the author of thirteen books, is the composer of over 20 big band charts and many combo arrangements and has five CDs under his name.

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The Big Book Of Pentatonics And Fourths
Lesson Plan & Manuscript Book

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The Saint-Jacome Manual
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