

Alex Iles Arban's Daily Routine

1. Mouthpiece/Buzzing....p. 19 #9 [on mouthpiece]
2. Sound...p. 108 #44-47 [ala Bordogni, great for sight-singing/playing and buzzing too]
3. Slower Slurs and Intervals... p 45 #3-11, p 47 #16 and 17, p 135 #8-12
4. Slow Articulated Playing...p 45 #1 and 2, p 93 #1 [1/8 note=60 or slower]
5. Faster Slurs/Trills...p 48 [#18-26]
6. Faster Articulated Playing [the subject I draw out of Arban's most]...p 53 #31-60, p. 93 [#1-23] p 110 [#48-54--no grace notes], p136 #13-47...triplets and 1/16's]
7. Slow Scales...p 63-90, try starting with one or two keys/day every week for a few months...1/8 note=50
8. Faster Scales...p 24 #28-45, p 28 #47-50, "Major Scales" p. 63 [1-16 are different patterns in Bb, the remaining keys have 6 patterns each...I like to take one key through all 6 of these patterns in a practice session then I'll make up or derive my own patterns in that key. Unfortunately, this edition of Arban's only goes through the flat keys...you should do the sharp keys too. "Chromatic Scales" [p.80-90] I might read one exercise then do it again starting on different notes.
9. Faster/Wider Intervals p. 126-127 [a personal favorite!]...If you want a good timbre/consistency exercise [courtesy of Roy Main], play p 127, top to bottom [no repeats if you like], "mf", with a good solid tenuto attack, then shift over to p 128 and read it from the bottom up. Rest for a couple seconds every couple of lines. As you play this every day for a couple weeks, you will eventually get through the whole thing without needing to rest as much. Start at about quarter=72 if you are an intermediate player, and work it up day by day, week by week, month by month to 160 or more. Strive for an even resonant sound at all times through all registers. p 128-134 expand on this exercise...wider jumps, faster rhythms.

10. Multiple Tongue...some source of disagreement here. Arban starts with triple tonguing. I started with double. Whatever you chose to start with, be consistent and always be able to cross your single and multiple tongue speeds to avoid developing a "crack" between the two techniques. Anyone who complains about a tempo "being in the cracks" didn't practice multiple tonguing correctly. Arban's exercises provide a good outline for one way to develop multiple tonguing. p. 162 #1-14 are triple tongued triplet patterns on a single note. Don't rush your way through these. Play them very SLOWLY [quarter=60-72 at first]. You can experiment with articulating TTK, TKT, TTT, TKK, KKK [again, thanks, Roy Main!!]. Get the T's and K's to be equally clear. They can then become interchangeable. On p 167#[16-46] you start triple tongue across one, then two intervals, the next step in the process. p. 175 [#47-76] is the application of triple tongue on scales and intervals. You can go back to the Fast Articulation exercises for more triple tongue practice too. The Double Tongue section then moves through the process a little quicker [maybe Arban figured that if you made it this far with triple tonguing, you should pick up double pretty quickly]. But in this section, there are some nice mixed articulation [double tongue/slurred] exercises to expand your fast articulation repertoire. Again, crispness, clarity and great sound should be a higher priority than speed when working on this section.

11. Rhythmic Accuracy/Style...p 30 [1-18] "Syncopation" section. Strive for clear [un-rushed, un-draggy] time on these. Slide and tongue work together p 35 [#19-37]...this is in my "top ten" of single tongue exercises!! I make most of my students work on these religiously! Start very slowly. Each exercise focuses on a different rhythmic "groove". Make them LOCK in rhythmically. Then, when you encounter these kinds of rhythms in other music, you will have already done the hard work. I myself often do 3-4 of these a day, striving for clear and precise rhythm, THEN speed them up. Single tongue speed and sense of time are closely related. Do things with efficiency, good time and a clear resonant sound [even on detached notes]. Eventually, you will be able to play them faster with less effort.

12. Arpeggios: p 60 [#68 and 69] major chords, taken through various inversions. On #69, all the keys right there in front of you!! No excuses!! p 151 major [#s 48, 50 and 52], minor [#s 49 and 51], dominant 7th [#53] and diminished 7th [#55]. Again, all keys are right there! Get to work, even if you start REALLY slowly. I like to do 3-4 keys at a practice session. Let's them soak in! Strive to be comfortable doing these all by ear. Close your eyes and BLOW!

This leaves the famous "Characteristic Studies" and the "Airs and Variations" at the back of the book. As you do the more tedious work above, jump into these technically challenging pieces once in a while. Working steadily, in a pretty short period of time, there should be some pieces in there for you to tackle. Each "Characteristic Study" emphasizes a certain musical challenge...one might be mostly chromatic, another might challenge your multiple tonguing, another tests your arpeggios, etc. If so, you can go back to main volume to work out the loose ends you find.

Single out phrases in the Characteristic Studies and the Airs/Variations to add to any of the categories above.

Focus on developing proper technique that will help you make music, never just for the sake of technique itself.

Be curious and creative, ESPECIALLY when you work on "exercises" and "drills".