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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE PEDAGOGIC INFLUENCE OF ERNEST S. WILLIAMS  
ON THE TEACHING CONCEPTS OF FOUR AMERICAN TRUMPET  
PROFESSORS

A Document  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of  
DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

by  
DOUGLAS GRANT WILSON  
Norman, Oklahoma  
1999

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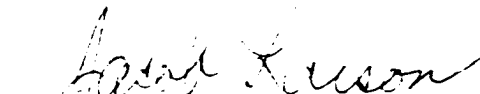
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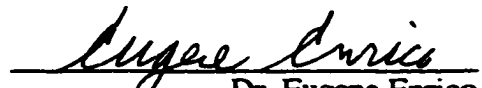
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THE PEDAGOGIC INFLUENCE OF ERNEST S. WILLIAMS  
ON THE TEACHING CONCEPTS OF  
FOUR AMERICAN TRUMPET PROFESSORS

A Document APPROVED FOR THE  
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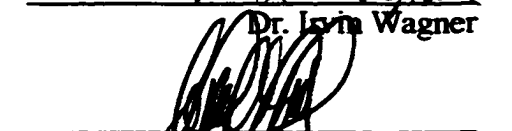
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## **Acknowledgments**

The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions, support, and friendship of those who aided me in the completion of this project.

Appreciation is offered to the members of my committee and especially to my advisor, Dr. Jacob Larson.

Thanks are also extended to Ned Mahoney and Bob Roberts for background material and Robert Bailey for his encouragement and counsel.

The participation of the four individuals profiled in this study; Leonard Smith, Ray Crisara, Robert Nagel, and Leonard Meretta, is greatly appreciated.

I am deeply grateful to my wife, Barbara, and our children for their love and understanding during the completion of this project.

**You pusillanimous incipient phlegmatic rube,  
you shouldn't be allowed to look at music!**

**Ernest S. Williams**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**This survey examines the influence of Ernest S. Williams on the trumpet teaching of Leonard B. Smith (Detroit Concert Band), Raymond Crisara (The University of Texas at Austin), Robert Nagel (Professor Emeritus, Yale University), and Leonard Meretta (Professor Emeritus, Western Michigan University). Ernest S. Williams has been recognized in instrumental music circles as having a great influence on many performers and teachers today. The questionnaire developed for this study was given to each professor through an interview. Transcriptions of the interviews were examined to gain insight into the teaching of each of the respondents respective to their study with Williams. All of the participants exhibited teaching characteristics of Ernest S. Williams and were influenced by him through varying degrees.**

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Trumpet pedagogy is the subject of much debate among trumpeters. One only needs to view the most recent issue of the Journal of the International Trumpet Guild or Brass Bulletin to read the latest "tribute." Dr. Wayne Clark writes, "Great performers have studied with great teachers of their respective instruments. Great teachers, it seems, also have followed a similar path of seeking knowledge and inspiration from a master teacher. The concepts passed on by the master teachers of the past live again in the studios of the master teachers of the present."<sup>1</sup> The truth of this statement is validated with each passing generation, but is generally documented posthumously.

This study will examine the influence of Ernest S. Williams on the teaching content and philosophy of four trumpet professors; Leonard B. Smith, Raymond D. Crisara, Robert E. Nagel, and Leonard V. Meretta. It is hoped this study will aid in the identification of current teaching techniques and serve as a resource for trumpet teachers and students who desire to examine their own methods of teaching and playing.

Ernest S. Williams' influence on the musical landscape of the twentieth century is extensive. He was considered one of the most prominent brass teachers of his day <sup>2</sup> and the success of the alumni of the Ernest S. Williams (ESW) School of Music attests to Williams' career as a music educator.<sup>3</sup> Graduates of the school

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne R. Clark, "The Teaching Concepts and Techniques Utilized by Three American Trombone Professors." (D.M.A. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1996), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald G. Smith, "The Life and Work of the Orchestral Bass Trombonists, Allen Ostrander, and the Development of His Bass Trombone Methods and Solos " (D.M.A. diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1992), vii.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Robert Winking, "Ernest Williams, Virtuoso and Educator: A Biographical Survey of His Preferences and Techniques" (D.M.A. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1992), vii.

have been members of leading musical and educational institutions in America for much of this century. Williams was Principal Trumpet of the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1917 to 1923 and in 1931, founded the Ernest S. Williams School of Music in Brooklyn, New York.

Ernest S. Williams was born in Wayne County, Indiana, near the small town of Winchester on September 27, 1881. He began the study of the cornet at age five with his father, Samuel Williams. By age ten, he was the featured cornet soloist with the Williams' family orchestra. His first professional position was with the When Band, an organization sponsored by the When Clothing Company of Indianapolis. However, with the onset of the Spanish-American War in 1898, he left to serve in the military, becoming first a member of the 158th Indiana Volunteer Regiment Band. At the age of seventeen, Williams became bandmaster of the 161st Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment. During the summer of 1899, Williams studied with Leslie Peck in Indiana<sup>4</sup> and at the urging of Peck, moved to Boston to study cornet with Henry C. Brown and Gustav Strube. After a brief period, Brown suggested Williams forego private instruction, and go to New York to play professionally because, "there was nothing more for the young student to learn except from experience."<sup>5</sup>

From 1901 to 1929, Williams performed with many of the prominent conductors and musical organizations of his day;

John Philip Sousa Band (1901),

Boston Cadet Band (1903 - 1910),

Herman Bellstedt Band (1911),

Pierre Monteux and the Ballet Russe Orchestra (1916),

Victor Herbert Orchestra (1917),

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Chase, "Ernest S. Williams," *New York Brass Conference for Scholarships* (New York: Charles Colin, 1975), 68.

<sup>5</sup>Winking, 3.

Goldman Band (1918 - 1922), and  
Philadelphia Orchestra (1917 - 1923).

In 1929, Williams began an affiliation with Ithaca College, when he was selected as the Dean of the Conway Military Band School. The College and its affiliates later became the Ithaca Conservatory of Music.<sup>6</sup> Williams left the college in 1931 and founded the Ernest S. Williams School of Music in Brooklyn, New York. The school was patterned after the year-round music school, Kneller Hall, a military band school in England which enjoyed a very fine reputation. The Ernest Williams School of Music was a "reflection of the greatest concert Bands in [the] America[n] era; Sousa, Gilmore, Conway et al., and became the basis for the present day university, civic, and military bands."<sup>7</sup> However, the school was short-lived and with the outbreak of the WWII, many students either enlisted or were drafted into military service<sup>8</sup>. The drain of personnel was too much and the school closed in 1943. Shortly thereafter, Williams returned to Saugerties, New York, the location of his summer music camp since 1930. He died there on February 8, 1947, at the age of sixty-five.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 30.

## CHAPTER 2

### DESIGN OF THE SURVEY

This project focuses on four trumpet professionals who studied with Ernest S. Williams. They are; Leonard B. Smith (Detroit Concert Band), Raymond Crisara (The University of Texas at Austin ), Robert Nagel (Professor Emeritus, Yale University), and Leonard Meretta (Professor Emeritus, Western Michigan University). Their length of study was from one to ten years:

|                 |             |              |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Leonard Smith   | 1926 - 1936 | 10 years     |
| Raymond Crisara | 1937 - 1940 | 3 years      |
| Robert Nagel    | 1942 - 1943 | 1 year       |
| Leonard Meretta | 1935 - 1937 | 2 1/2 years. |

A questionnaire was given to each to solicit their perception of Williams' teaching on their careers as performers and educators and to identify their teaching content and philosophy of teaching trumpet. The survey was given in written format prior to an oral interview, either in person or by telephone. The process lasted two to three and one-half hours. Transcriptions of the interviews were examined to gain insight into the influence of Ernest Williams' teaching to the individual's trumpet pedagogy. Questions were limited to the professors' study with Williams and any potential correlation between each of the individuals and Williams. Sixty-one questions covered five areas: background, general study with Ernest Williams, warm-up, technique, and private lessons.

#### LEONARD B. SMITH

Leonard B. Smith has impressive credentials as a musician. He was cornet soloist and first chair with the famous Goldman Band from 1936-1942 and principal trumpet with the Detroit Symphony from 1937-1942. He was the founder and conductor of the Detroit Concert Band (DCB), Inc. and its music publishing division, the Bovaco Catalog, containing more than one thousand entries for the

concert band.<sup>9</sup>

Leonard Bingley Smith was born to Frank and Ethel May Schubert Smith in Poughkeepsie, New York, on September 15, 1915. He came from a musical family. Frank Smith was a pianist and founded the Smith Orchestra, which performed locally. Ethel Smith was a singer and a church choir director in Poughkeepsie. An older brother, Schubert, played the violin. Frank Smith was determined his two sons would have a musical education. At age eight, Leonard Smith was given a secondhand Hileron Cornet which his father had bought for twenty-five dollars.<sup>10</sup> The instrument was made from "spare parts" and was of poor quality. Frank Smith had originally purchased the instrument for his son's cousin. Smith notes, "He didn't do anything with it and after three or four years my father bought it back for fifteen dollars and gave it to me for Christmas."<sup>11</sup>

Smith's first teacher was Robert A. Coon of Poughkeepsie. He was not a cornet player, but was held in high regard. Smith recalls, "He didn't play the instrument, but he did play the Alto horn. He couldn't play the cornet at all, but he could tell me what to do and I would do it. I didn't try to imitate or emulate him, his tone was terrible on the cornet. The only time he would play cornet was to illustrate something for me. He was a fine teacher and musician."<sup>12</sup>

After two years, Coon suggested to Frank Smith that he find another teacher for his son, because Coon had taught the student as much as he knew.<sup>13</sup> Leonard

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<sup>9</sup> Leonard B. Smith, "The 1994-1995 Bovaco Catalog of Band Arrangements for Vocal Songs and Arias, Instrumental Solos and Other Fine Band Arrangements," Detroit Concert Band, Inc., 1.

<sup>10</sup> Vincent Polce, "The Influence of Leonard B. Smith on the Heritage of the Band in the United States," (Ph. D. diss., Ohio State University), 13.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix Two, 57.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix Two, 57.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Appendix Two, 57.

notes this episode had a favorable impression on him since Coon's sole income was derived from teaching private lessons, for fifty cents each! Smith remembers, "I felt that was one of the most wonderful things about Coon. He was a man who needed the money because his wife was ill."<sup>14</sup>

Frank Smith solicited a recommendation from his friend, George Waterhouse, timpanist with the Rochester Philharmonic. Waterhouse suggested Ernest Williams. On this advice, Smith and his father traveled to New York to see Ernest S. Williams and after a personal audition, the young cornetist was accepted by Williams. Smith began his studies with Williams at age eleven and continued for ten years (1926-1936), longer than any other Williams' student.<sup>15</sup>

Smith's performance career is impressive. In 1926, he played in a town band in Poughkeepsie, New York, under the direction of Frank Scofield. He was last chair. In 1929, he was a member and trumpet soloist with the Heckscher Symphony Orchestra in New York. It was conducted by Isidore Strassner and was a training ground for young talented musicians.<sup>16</sup>

At age fourteen, Smith enrolled in the New York Military Academy, Cornwall-on-Hudson, graduating in 1933. Smith visited the ESW summer band camp with the intent to enter the Williams School, but his father wanted him to attend architectural school instead. Frank Smith discussed the situation with Arthur Pryor and decided his son would attend the ESW for one year and then make a judgment about school and career. Leonard graduated from ESW in 1936 with a Certificate in Mastery of Music in Arranging, Performing, and Conducting.<sup>17</sup>

In 1934, Smith began his professional career with the George Barrère Little

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., Appendix Two, 57.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., Appendix Two, 57.

<sup>16</sup>Polce, 20.

<sup>17</sup>Polce, 32.

Symphony Orchestra at the age of nineteen. Smith recalls, "Georges Barrère was the world's foremost flautist. He had this little symphony, a symphonette really. We had two first violins, one second, one viola, one cello, one string bass, one flute, one oboe, one clarinet, one horn, one bassoon, one cornet, one timpani. I toured with him several years. It was one of the most delightful experiences you can imagine."<sup>18</sup> In 1936, Smith became the cornet soloist and first chair with the Goldman Concert Band. A year later, he became first trumpet with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO). Smith states, "In those days, the Detroit Symphony was one of the best business engagements you could have. We had a twenty-one or twenty -eight week season with the symphony and thirty-nine weeks on the radio with the 'Ford Sunday Evening Hour.' That left thirteen weeks, ten of which were with the Goldman Band. I was working year round, back and forth; first trumpet with Detroit and cornet soloist, first chair with the Goldman Band."<sup>19</sup> Smith thought the Goldman band was the finest wind ensemble of its day and believed "there was nothing like it."<sup>20</sup> The experience was a pivotal one for him. He began conceiving a plan for starting his own concert band but was interrupted by WWII.

Smith enlisted in the Navy in March 1942 and was cornet soloist with bands while stationed in Philadelphia and Washington D.C. He was discharged in September 1945, but was unable to return to the Goldman Band, because the position had been filled by James Burke. Smith performed as principal trumpet with the DSO for the 1945 season, but the experience was less than satisfying. Playing under the baton of Karl Krueger, whom Smith called, "the world's worst conductor," he resigned at the end of the season. In 1946, he founded the Leonard B. Smith Concert Band, but changed the name to the Detroit Concert Band, a

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<sup>18</sup>See Appendix Two, 59.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 69.

<sup>20</sup>Polce, 34.

professional organization still operating today. Smith estimates the band has performed approximately three thousand concerts since its inception!<sup>21</sup>

#### RAYMOND D. CRISARA

Raymond D. Crisara holds the Frank C. Erwin Jr. Centennial Professorship in Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin and is a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers. He has been presented the Teaching Excellence Award from the University of Texas at Austin and the American Bandmasters Association's prestigious Edwin Franko Goldman Citation Award. He received an Honorary Doctor of Music degree from the State University of New York - Cortland. He attended the Ernest Williams School of Music and the University of Michigan. He has over thirty-five years of professional trumpet performance in New York in all areas of musical expression: radio, television, recordings, films, jingles, and concerts. Crisara served as Cornet Soloist with the Goldman Band and Band of America. He held principal positions in the Metropolitan Opera House Orchestra, NBC Symphony under Toscanini and the New York staff orchestras. Dr. Crisara performed the world premiere of Karel Husa's Concerto for Trumpet and Wind Symphony (1974) and is active as a clinician for the Selmer Company.

Raymond Dominick Crisara was born to Frank and Margaret Crisara on October 19, 1920 in Cortland, New York, a small town near Syracuse. The elder Crisara was a tool and die maker for the Broadway Motor Truck Company as well as a clarinet player and conductor of the town band. Emphasizing his father's ability, Ray recalls, "I don't know how he did it, but he taught virtually all the players in that band. I grew up in a musical atmosphere because people would come to our house in the evening for their lessons."<sup>22</sup>

Crisara started playing the trumpet at an early age. Crisara reminisces,

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix Two, 74.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix Three, 76.

“When I was ten, I told my father I wanted to play trumpet, so he bought me a second-hand trumpet for ten dollars. It was made in Czechoslovakia and was not a very good instrument!”<sup>23</sup> Frank Crisara encouraged his son to learn music, but neglected to provide lessons. Crisara continued, “Like the cobbler whose kids had holes in their shoes, my dad never had time to teach me. I never had any lessons until I went to Williams’ school, so I learned by osmosis.”<sup>24</sup>

Crisara graduated from high school at fifteen and decided to become a trumpet player. His father had second thoughts and told Ray, “Why don’t you do something honorable, play your trumpet for fun and get a regular job!” But the young Crisara was not deterred: “I was very insistent because I wanted to play the trumpet!”<sup>25</sup> Frank Crisara sought the advice of George Light, the local band director, who was a former student of Williams at Ithaca College and knew of the Williams’ summer camp. Light encouraged Crisara’s parents to send the young boy to the camp so they could see “how I ranked in the general level of young cornet players.”<sup>26</sup> Crisara continues, “ At the end of summer camp, Williams told my folks that if everything fell into place, I had a reasonable chance to make a living with music. My dad decided to send me to the winter school in New York, but my mother thought fifteen was too young to go to New York alone, so I stayed home for a year and went to Williams’s school in the fall of 1937.”<sup>27</sup>

Crisara attended the school for three years and four summer camps, graduating in 1940. Crisara studied privately with three teachers; Williams, Frank Elsass of the Goldman Band and Leonard Meretta. The lessons with Williams were

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 78.

his first on the instrument. Crisara remembers, "The first teacher I had was Ernest Williams at his summer camp in 1936. I also had an extra lesson each week with Leonard Meretta. In my eyes, Meretta was a giant! Lenny was the first chair cornetist and did extra teaching with the Chief [Williams]. I did some additional studying with Frank Elsass, soloist of the Goldman Band, but Williams was my most influential teacher."<sup>28</sup> Crisara's education continued as a teaching assistant for William Revelli at the University of Michigan. However, Crisara returned to New York in the summer of 1941 and auditioned for an opening with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Crisara states, "I auditioned, and was given the job with one stipulation; I was to be coached by one of their conductors for the summer, so I could learn the repertoire. It was a wise thing because there was very little orchestra rehearsal time at the Met. I was at the Met for one and one-half seasons until I went into the Army in December 1942."<sup>29</sup> Crisara was discharged in February 1946, and joined the NBC Orchestra as a staff musician, eventually becoming a member of the NBC Orchestra under Toscanini.

Crisara's career in New York was varied and exciting. In the interview Crisara remembers what it was like to perform over thirty-five years as studio musician, "It was a marvelous way to make a living because I went from Toscanini, Charles Munch, and Ormandy to Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, Paul McCartney, and Alice Cooper. You never knew what to expect until you got to the date."<sup>30</sup> In 1978, Crisara joined the University of Texas at Austin as Professor of Trumpet. Crisara reminisces, "I feel fortunate to have had a career that encompassed many different idioms. I was playing with the very best of the symphony, commercial, and jazz players in New York. I think I'm a product of my upbringing, of

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 81.

Williams, and of my environment. I tell my students, as long as you play this instrument, you're going to learn something about yourself everyday. You really are learning more about yourself than anything else."<sup>31</sup>

#### ROBERT E. NAGEL

Robert Nagel has had an impressive and multi-faceted career. Known primarily as the founder of the New York Brass Quintet [NYBQ], Nagel's career spanned more than three decades, performing with the Little Orchestra Society and the RCA Victors' Symphony under the direction of Leopold Stokowski, as well as numerous recordings, radio, television, and symphonic engagements.

Robert Earl Nagel Jr. was born on September 29, 1924 to Robert and Louise (Poltrok) Nagel in Freeland, Pennsylvania. He started playing the trumpet after hearing a demonstration of musical instruments by the Conn Company at his elementary school. Nagel reflects, "I started on the trumpet at age eight. The music business was so different in those days! The Conn Company had a tiny trailer and would travel to different communities. When they came to my community, they presented an assembly program at my school. The salesman demonstrated all the instruments, and then passed out a notice to the parents announcing a display of all the instruments that night. As a result, my parents bought me a trumpet, and that's how I got started."<sup>32</sup> Nagel studied with a variety of private teachers, including two clarinetists and member of a polka band, but it was not until age twelve that he studied with his first trumpet teacher, Fred Bosworth, third trumpet in the Stanley Theater pit orchestra in Philadelphia. Nagel recalls, "He was educated with a degree in psychology from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and had two sons who played trumpet. He was a good teacher. . . In a way, he was probably the most influential teacher because of the length of time I studied with him and his

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix Four, 103.

thoroughness.”<sup>33</sup>

Nagel also studied with Frank Simon, the renowned cornet soloist and Murray Karpilovsky, principal trumpet with the Pittsburgh Symphony. Nagel comments on the career and impact of Karpilovsky: “Well, he was my second most influential teacher, and I studied with him my senior year in high school. He could have been another Bud Herseth. You name it, he could have been one of the top symphony trumpet players, but he had a very negative personality. He played principal in the Pittsburgh Symphony under Fritz Reiner! If you could play for Fritz Reiner and stay in there [laughs], well that says a lot about you! He had a big sound. It was a loud sound, too, but it was big! He came to New York to freelance and played in the Voice of Firestone radio orchestra. My dad got an orchestra subscription for the entire season to the Pittsburgh Symphony my senior year in high school. We went to all the symphony concerts and heard him play big repertoire, like the Strauss tone poems and such. Karpilovsky had the physical ability to do that repertoire, and play it musically. I learned a lot from him in certain areas. He was very demanding, but patient. He wouldn’t let up until I did something the way he wanted.”<sup>34</sup>

In the fall of 1942, Nagel enrolled at Julliard and had a choice of trumpet teachers between William Vacchiano or Ernest Williams. Nagel remembers, “Vacchiano and Williams were listed in the Julliard catalog as the teachers. I didn’t know Vacchiano, so I studied with Williams. I felt comfortable with Williams because of my background in cornet with Simon. Williams didn’t get into orchestral material, which is what I really needed.”<sup>35</sup> He studied with Williams for the academic year, 1942-43 and was drafted in the summer. Nagel reflects, “I went into

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 106.

the Army and played with the West Point band at the military academy. The first trombone in the band played second trombone with Toscanini in the NBC Symphony. I continued my education working with these experienced people.”<sup>36</sup>

Nagel was discharged from the Army in the spring of 1946 and returned Julliard in the fall to study composition. He completed his bachelors [1949] and masters [1950] degrees in composition and planned to teach in college. His career began to unfold in an unintended direction when he was asked to perform on a chamber concert conducted by a student, Charles Schiff. This was Nagel’s only public performance during the year and proved to be important. Nagel elaborates, “I played Copland’s Quiet City for the first time. Several days later, I received a phone call as I was leaving for class. The gentleman on the phone said, ‘You don’t know me, but I went to the concert and heard you play Quiet City. I liked your playing and gave your name to four contractors in New York.’ Do you know who the four contractors were? NBC, ABC, CBS, and in those days WOR [radio]. NBC and CBS had symphonies and WOR had a symphonette. As a result of his referral, I got a call from the contractor of WOR, who had also been engaged to be the contractor for the Little Orchestra Society. I went down to his office at WOR and played a little of the Haydn Concerto and some excerpts. I played five to ten minutes, that’s all. We went into his office and he said in a very matter-of-fact way, ‘Well, I can give you principal trumpet.’ This was incredible, because I was the only guy who played for him, and he’s offered me a contract with the Little Orchestra Society! I received a contract at double scale for eight pairs of concerts at Town Hall. The Little Orchestra Society was a new orchestra, but within three years, it grew to sixty concerts a year. This was equivalent to orchestras like Pittsburgh or Indianapolis in those days. I worked with the Little Orchestra Society for thirteen years from 1947 to 1960. I just fell into playing in New York. Think

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 101.

about how different it is today!"<sup>37</sup> Nagel also enjoyed a career in contemporary music circles which he attributes to his technical facility received in his early cornet training.

In 1954, Nagel created the New York Brass Quintet, performing with the ensemble for thirty-one years. The group had a profound impact upon brass music setting the standard for other brass quintets to follow.<sup>38</sup> Nagel began with his association with Yale University in 1957, also teaching at; the Manhattan School of Music, Aspen Institute, the Julliard School, New England Conservatory, North Carolina School of the Arts, and Rutgers University. In 1975, with the encouragement of Harvey Phillips, Nagel and Charles Gorham formed the International Trumpet Guild (ITG).<sup>39</sup> He retired as Professor Emeritus in the summer of 1988.<sup>40</sup>

#### LEONARD V. MERETTA

Leonard Victor Meretta graduated from the Ernest S. Williams School of Music in 1937. After several years of public school teaching, he attended the University of Michigan where he received his Masters of Music in 1940. He returned to public school only to be called back to the University of Michigan by William Revelli as the first full time brass instructor in 1942. After three years, Meretta left the University of Michigan to accept the position of Director of Bands at Western Michigan University. His tenure lasted forty-three years until his

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>38</sup> Owen Wells Metcalf, "The New York Brass Quintet; It's History and Influence on Brass Literature and Performance" (D.M. diss., Indiana University), 78.

<sup>39</sup> The ITG developed from the National Trumpet Symposium at Denver University, founded by Mr. Legh Burns (Professor of Trumpet of the University of Oklahoma, Retired.) See Douglas L. Laramore, "A History of the National Trumpet Symposium, 1968-1973" (D.M.A. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1990).

<sup>40</sup> At this writing, Robert Nagel resides in South Carolina, where he teaches adjunct trumpet at the University of South Carolina.

retirement as Professor Emeritus in 1988.

Meretta was born to John and Henrietta Meretta on September 5, 1915. The family lived in Marion Heights, Pennsylvania, where John was a weigh clerk in a coal mining office. When Meretta was three, his mother died and as a result, the family relocated to Zarephath, New Jersey, to be near relatives.

Meretta began his music studies early. He studied piano at age eight, cornet at age nine, and pipe organ at age twelve. Recalling how he received his first cornet, Meretta remembers, "My brother was older and played piano and cornet. My Dad thought he should have a good instrument, so he got the silver-plated cornet my Dad owned. I started on an awful cornet. It leaked and only cost five dollars!"<sup>41</sup> Meretta was self-taught and played in a "junior band." He learned to play by observing the other players. Meretta adds, "We played a lot of marches and the fingerings were all marked above the notes!"<sup>42</sup> John Meretta bought a Conn trumpet for his son's twelfth birthday. Meretta recalls, "[It] belonged to my cousin. It had a slide with a quick change to the key of A and was my instrument for quite awhile. I smile about it now because later in my first rehearsal with Williams in the orchestra, we played Scheherazade, which is written for trumpet in A. This will live with me forever. There were two other students there; I don't know why he had me play. But Williams didn't want me to pull the tuning slide out to the "A" position. He said that was "cheating," but you know how the piece flies! Williams said, 'You trumpeters should be ashamed of yourselves; transpose that music!' "<sup>43</sup>

When Meretta was thirteen, he began to play cornet solos on a "Children's Hour" program on a small, part-time radio station in New Jersey. He would listen to a similar broadcast which featured Leonard Smith on WJZ radio in New York ,

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<sup>41</sup> See Appendix Five, 126.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 126.

because “we were playing the same Clarke solos.”<sup>44</sup> The two began a lifelong friendship when Meretta began corresponding with Smith. Meretta explains, “I wrote to WJZ and got his address. We struck up a correspondence and have been very good friends ever since. Leonard [Smith] always had a personal interest in me and my career after our initial correspondence. He went to the New York Military Academy, Cornwall-On-Hudson, and wanted me to come and be part of the band program, but my father wouldn’t allow it.”<sup>45</sup>

Meretta graduated from high school in 1933 and considered a career in electronics, but decided against it after visiting with a man in the electronics field. Meretta adds, “He said music was more fun!” Meretta worked for several years and then sought advice about continuing his musical studies. Meretta recalled, “I talked to Leonard [Smith] about schools after graduating from high school, and he suggested the Williams School. It was Leonard’s influence that caused me to go.”<sup>46</sup>

Meretta had three trumpet teachers in his career, all of whom played with Sousa; Ernest Williams, Del Staigers, and Louis Anderson. Remembering his studies with Anderson, Meretta states, “He had a music store in Newark, New Jersey just 25 miles away. This was during the depression, too. Let’s see, we’re talking 1933-34, and I was in a high school. I had weekly lessons with him on Saturday. He played along with me from Clarke’s Technical Studies. His personality was easygoing and friendly and he conducted a military band in the Newark area. It was a good band. I played the “Staigers Carnival” with him once on WOR in Newark, and I received much fan mail.”<sup>47</sup> Meretta studied briefly with Del Staigers and commented, “I had several lessons with him, and they were

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 140.

inspirational, but this was during the depression and lessons were \$5.00. That was a lot of money!"<sup>48</sup>

Meretta enrolled in Ernest S. Williams School of Music in the spring of 1935 and commuted from New Jersey. He attended part-time taking three classes: band arranging with Mayhew Lake, trumpet lessons with Ernest Williams, and band. At the end of the term, Leonard Smith encouraged Meretta to audition for the Major Bowes' talent show because "you could get five dollars!" Meretta continues, "I sent a postcard to NBC and almost immediately got a reply to report on a Friday for an audition. I played Staigers' Carnival of Venice and Clarke's Bride of the Waves. Holding the high "C," second note to the end helped make me a winner."<sup>49</sup> Meretta toured with a unit of the Major Bowes' organization for six months, missing the fall term of school, but returned the next spring. The following summer (1936), Meretta attended the band camp where Williams gave Meretta "additional duties" to tutor ten "campers." Meretta explains, "I would give each of them a private lesson and then as a group, they would have a master class with Williams. I would play the piano from volume one of Williams' method, and each would play some of their materials and Williams would comment. I learned how to teach!"<sup>50</sup> One of the campers assigned to Meretta was a sixteen year old boy, named Raymond Crisara. Meretta, elaborates, "Ray was a student of mine that summer at the Williams camp. He played beautifully and was only a graduating senior from high school! That's when I got a very good opinion of Ray!"<sup>51</sup>

The program of study at the ESW was a three year program of only music classes. Students were allowed to enter New York University to complete their

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 140.

bachelors' degree after an additional year of academic study. The summer of 1937 was very busy for Meretta. He received a Certificate from the ESW school on June 10, 1937, while taking summer classes at NYU. Meretta recalls a particularly important concert, "On May 29, 1937, Percy Grainger conducted his Lincolnshire Posy with the Williams' Band at Town Hall in New York. This was the first time the work was performed in its entirety. About a month before at an ABA conference, a band performed five of the six movements, but our concert was the first complete performance. 'Yours truly' was fortunate to play the first cornet part!"<sup>52</sup> Meretta entered the University of Michigan the fall term of 1937 to complete his bachelors degree. Meretta recalled, "I was teaching privately in New York and heard of an opening at the University of Michigan for a teaching assistant. One of my private students wanted to go to college, so I suggested he audition for the position by tape. He played his cornet, and I played the piano. We sent the tape to Bill Revelli. Revelli wrote back and said the position was filled. Following this, I thought the field was wide open and suspected there was something in this student's playing, Revelli didn't like. So I wrote to Revelli, and by return mail, Revelli said I had the job! I think the Williams background and the Major Bowes' experience helped."<sup>53</sup>

Meretta taught beginning trumpet methods to music education majors while attending the university as a full-time student. In the summer of 1938, he entered the master's program while simultaneously earning his bachelor's degree. In the fall, he accepted an offer to become the assistant band director of the high school band in Lenoir, North Carolina. Meretta was impressed with the school system saying, "It was quite a setup; they had their own band buses and building! The director was James C. Harper. Perhaps you wouldn't know that name unless you

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 129.

read his book, Getting Results With School Bands. He was from a wealthy family, and band was his hobby. After World War I, he started the high school band in Lenoir. In college he majored in history and finance. He went to the University of North Carolina and to Davidson College. We went to festivals for our section which was an area between Washington, D.C. and Florida. Captain Harper was dedicated to building an excellent band program.”<sup>54</sup>

Completing his master’s in the summer of 1940, William Revelli called offering him a full-time position. Meretta said, “In January 1942, I joined the faculty at the University of Michigan as their first full-time brass instructor. I taught all the brasses, tuba right on up to trumpet! Now, there are specialists on every instrument!”<sup>55</sup> In the fall of 1945, Meretta left the University of Michigan to become the Director of Bands and Wind Instrument Instruction at Western Michigan University. Meretta commented, “When I started in 1945, there were only four or five faculty; now there are forty-six! I had to teach everything, even the woodwinds and percussion. Thank goodness for my experience at Lenoir, because that is what I had to do in public school. I applied the Williams’ lesson format I learned at the school with all my wind instrument students at western Michigan. The Williams experience helped me again!”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 131.

### CHAPTER 3

#### ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This study will examine the influence of Ernest S. Williams on the teaching content and philosophy of four trumpet professors; Leonard B. Smith, Raymond D. Crisara, Robert E. Nagel, and Leonard V. Meretta. A questionnaire was designed to solicit responses from a variety of questions regarding the teaching of Ernest S. Williams as well as their own teaching. During the interviews, an effort was made to ask each participant identical questions, but responses would often lead to additional questions. As a result of those interviews, a pedagogical picture emerges of the teaching of Ernest S. Williams. To determine the influence of Ernest S. Williams on the teaching of, it is useful to construct an overview of Williams' teaching from the interviews. The reader is directed to the appendices for a complete reading of interviews to gain additional insights.

Four areas will be used to construct a model of Williams' teaching for comparison: Williams' philosophy of teaching, his use of curriculum materials, his demeanor with students, and specific teaching techniques used by Williams.<sup>57</sup> The techniques to be examined are lesson format, group lessons, warmup and maintenance routines, variation of written exercises, slurring, memorization, register, extended techniques, small ensemble playing, the use of horns other than B-flat, teaching classical versus commercial playing, and Williams' strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.

Williams' teaching was based upon the preparation of his students for the

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<sup>57</sup> The teaching techniques discussed here are not inclusive and represent information gathered from the survey. For a complete discussion, the reader is referred to Dr. Keith Winking's dissertation, Ernest S. Williams, Virtuoso and Educator: A Biographical Survey of His Philosophies and Techniques, The University of Texas at Austin, 1993. Dr. Winking has summarized specific techniques used by Williams as described by alumni of the ESW School. These techniques are proper breath management, embouchure control, a complete range, endurance, a thorough knowledge of scales, tone production, proper practice habits, the use of an arched tongue (Tah-ee), transposition, and self discipline with initiative.

rigors of the professional world of music. Trumpet/cornet players of the period performed in concert bands, orchestra, and commercial settings. Williams believed two types of playing were required for professional players: the more desired soft, restrained playing which blended with the strings and woodwinds of the orchestra and solo cornet playing in the concert band; and loud, powerful playing which was required by military trumpeters and dance bands.<sup>58</sup> Williams cautioned players to avoid the latter by saying, "Field-Trumpeters (and many other performers who play loudly all the time) often use the diaphragm to such an extent that the ability for delicate playing in varied ranges, so necessary for difficult solo work and orchestral style, is greatly impaired."<sup>59</sup> Williams' basic premise was for the student to learn the "language of the trumpet" so as to be able to conquer any musical situation. Crisara quoted Williams as saying, "You must learn to do what trumpet players are expected to do. Once you've learned the language, nothing will give you trouble."<sup>60</sup>

Williams' teaching was non-specific, giving the student a general direction in which to proceed. The student was to determine the means by which to attain the desired outcome. Crisara noted that when he asked for such help, Williams would respond, " 'I don't know how you're going to do it. You go work with it, and you'll find out how to do it.' "<sup>61</sup> This view was a central theme for his teaching. Williams' own words reveal an insight into his thinking. He said, "When we are in tune with nature's requirements, the playing of any brass instrument is comparatively easy. Our problems arise when we attempt to do something in a way which cannot be done. Three technics should be synchronized and developed

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<sup>58</sup> Ernest S. Williams, "Problems in the Teaching of Brass Instruments," The School Musician, May 1936, 13-14.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., The Secret of Technique-Preservation (New York: Charles Colin Publishers, 1946), 2.

<sup>60</sup> See Appendix Two, 86.

<sup>61</sup> See Appendix Two, 91.

simultaneously: breath technic, lip technic, and finger technic."<sup>62</sup>

Williams was an insomniac and worked long hours.<sup>63</sup> His students were expected to do the same. Crisara commented on this point, "I've asked other Williams' students what they learned from him. The response was usually, 'I don't know!' We learned a lot from him, but nothing specific. He taught us to work hard! He would teach me late in the evening. He might schedule my lesson at 11:00 at night and I would go down to his studio and be there until 2:30 in the morning! [Don] Jacoby told me, Williams would stay up late writing music and have him come down often at 2:00 in the morning to play through his composition!"<sup>64</sup>

Williams was steeped in the cornet tradition and the majority of his performance career was in a variety of prestigious concert bands of the era. It was not until relatively late in his career that he also performed in several orchestras. He taught from the available literature of the time, which was primarily cornet literature. Before 1937, he predominately used Arban's Complete Conservatory Method for Trumpet augmented by the Saint-Jacome's Grand Method for Trumpet and Cornet, cornet solos of the period, and Williams' own Complete Method for Trumpet and Cornet, volumes I and II published in 1935 and volume III published in 1937. In 1937, he began using newer materials as they became available, adding his own Method for Transposition, Charlier's Thirty-Six Transcendental Etudes,<sup>65</sup> Henri Chavanne's Twenty-Five Characteristic Etudes, Schlossberg's Daily Drills, and Walter Smith's Top Tones. Robert Nagel notes that orchestral studies were not available when he was a student of Williams, but that he did work in William's transposition method. Meretta stated that in his lessons, Williams did not work on

<sup>62</sup>Williams, 13.

<sup>63</sup> Winking, 12.

<sup>64</sup> See Appendix Two, 95.

<sup>65</sup> Although Charlier's Thirty-Six Transcendental Etudes was first published in 1926, neither Smith nor Meretta recall Williams using the text with them.

orchestral materials or transposition. Meretta speculates, "I don't think in those lessons he took up transposition. He directed the orchestra at the school, and I think he felt you got it there."<sup>66</sup> However, Meretta's lessons at the ESW School predate the publication of William's transposition method.

Williams treated his students as individuals and was considered a psychologist and motivator by his students. His was often stern, but fair. Smith remarks, "He knew how to approach each student and make you play. It wasn't just a formula; go ahead and play your lesson, blah, blah, blah. He would get you to play to the best of your abilities." Crisara observes that Williams treated students differently saying, "Don Jacoby was his favorite. Jake earned it, because he was a marvelous player. I'm sure Williams thought of Jacoby in different terms than me. By comparison, I was an upstart. Jake was already a player. If Jake wasn't doing well, Williams would climb all over him and give him a real 'going-over.' If I didn't do well, Williams would say, 'He's doing the best he can.' At the time, Williams conducted the band at New York University and had a few of us play as "ringers." Once while playing, I did something wrong. He looked at me shaking his hands and said, 'You rascal, you. Why do you play like that?' He probably thought that was the strongest term I could accept and still function! Everybody was different."<sup>67</sup>

Nagel had no direct knowledge of Williams' treatment of students, other than himself. However, he did relay a story told to him by another Williams' student, Jimmy Burke. Nagel continues, "They were doing something like the French National Anthem or the 1812 Overture, and Jimmy Burke was probably playing the solo cornet chair. Williams told Jimmy to play the sixteenth note late, as in the French style, with double dotted notes. Burke played almost a thirty-second

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<sup>66</sup> See Appendix Five, 137.

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix Three, 87.

note. The next day, while playing Beethoven's The Consecration of the House, they came to some typical dotted eighth rhythms, but Jimmy played a dotted thirty-second figure as before. Jimmy said Williams stopped the rehearsal and asked, 'Jimmy, what are you doing?' Jimmy responded, 'That's the way you told me to play those figures.' But not in Beethoven! Williams looked at him and said, 'Jimmy, your ignorance is refreshing!' That tells me something of him. I never saw that side of Williams."<sup>108</sup>

Williams' lesson format was centered around the materials he chose for his students, especially Smith and Meretta. Williams' primary material for them was the Arban method. The lesson was structured using the following exercises:

| <u>Topic</u>  | <u>Page</u> | <u>Exercise</u>                    |
|---------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Scales        | 61          | 12, 21, 27, 33, 39, 49, 54, 61, 67 |
| Chromatics    | 79          | 8                                  |
| Flexibility   | 42          | 18                                 |
| Arpeggios     | 142         | 48                                 |
| Intervals     | 125         | all                                |
| Single Tongue | 28          | 19 only                            |
| Triple Tongue | 153         | various                            |
| Double Tongue | 175         | various.                           |

Leonard Meretta recalls his lessons with Williams noting, "I would walk into his studio. He was seated by his desk, and I played my lesson standing. He would say, 'Okay, Leonard, let's do the scales. Okay, page sixty-one: number twelve.' I have in front of me the Arban book. Williams had us perform the following scales starting on page sixty-one; numbers twelve, twenty-one, twenty-seven, thirty-three, thirty-nine, forty-nine, fifty-four, sixty-one, and sixty-seven; four sharps, four flats and the key of C. 'Now, let's do the flexibility study, page

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<sup>108</sup> See Appendix Four, 108.

forty-two: number eighteen.' Then I did the two-octave chromatics on page seventy-nine; number eight and the intervals on page forty-two. Then the arpeggios, some triple, double tonguing. He might omit something of the latter part, but we always ran through the scales! Then I would do the solo and maybe an Arban characteristic study. Sight reading was a rare part of the lesson. In my lessons, Williams only used the Arban and his book, when it came out in 1936. I imagine in thirty or forty lessons, I played those same scales from Arban every week! Then in the Williams' book he expanded on them. Getting back to those flexibility studies [page forty-two, number eighteen in Arban], how wonderful it would have been had Williams expanded those studies with me as he did for Walter. But he was a brass teacher, a band director six days a week, and an orchestra director three times a week. He was running a school and writing a book. When was he going to find time to do more? If you look at page seventy-eight in the Arban, you find the two octave chromatics scales. We did those every lesson! Then he would have me go to page one hundred twenty-five and do the intervals, then arpeggios; I played page one hundred forty-two every lesson, all of them, but only the majors! He never heard me play beyond that point. In the Williams book, he takes it up to high E-flat [page 155]. He didn't do the expanded scale work to E-flat with me until his book came out my last year at the Williams' School. Those high range studies in volume two did wonders for me!"<sup>69</sup>

Leonard Smith remembers a similar experience for his lessons, "When I had my lessons with Williams, he would say to me, 'All right Leonard, now suppose we start with our scales.' I would play number thirty-three in the Arban book, then forty-nine, twelve, twenty-one, twenty-seven, thirty-nine, fifty-four until I finished the scales. He expected me to play those flawlessly, which I had to learn to do! I played the scales, lip slurs, intervals, chords, triple tongue, double tongue, single

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<sup>69</sup> See Appendix Five, 139.

tongue, long tones, and flexibility exercises; those nine phases of the playing. It was very simple because if you do this routine on a regular basis, you covered everything you would see in the professional world. The worst thing people are confronted with is the fear of turning over the page and suddenly seeing something they can't play. But this routine insured success. It gave you confidence!"<sup>70</sup>

Crisara recalls that Williams exposed him to the work of Théo Charlier, Walter Smith, and Henri Chavanne. Crisara continues, "Williams taught from the materials he chose and the challenges they presented. In his teaching, he would cover as much of the language of the instrument as possible and materials which presented that language. His goal was for you to learn how to play any cornet solo or trumpet literature of the period, or literature that might come in the future."<sup>71</sup>

Nagel's lessons with Williams at Julliard consisted of the Arban, Schlossberg's Daily Drills, Charlier's Thirty-Six Etudes, Smith's Top Tones, and Williams's Method for Transposition for Trumpet and Cornet explaining that Williams limited the lessons material to those areas and combining them in different ways. Nagel notes that he did not study orchestral literature, which he thought he needed to do. Nagel adds, "We didn't do any orchestral excerpts. If you wanted to study excerpts, you had to copy them from the score; they weren't published like today."<sup>72</sup>

Williams did not use or emphasize the term, "warm-up", as it is today; instead he concentrated on areas for maintenance and growth and "renewing ones' technique daily."<sup>73</sup> In 1946, he wrote his book, The Secret of Technique-Preservation which covers the essentials for maintaining one's technique with

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<sup>70</sup> See Appendix Two, 65.

<sup>71</sup> See Appendix Three, 92.

<sup>72</sup> See Appendix Four, 110.

<sup>73</sup> Williams, The Secret of Technique-Preservation. 2.

minimal practice.<sup>74</sup> Crisara comments on Williams' approach by saying, "What was important to him was a daily routine of scales, lip slurs, and articulations, including low and high register work."<sup>75</sup>

Earlier in his teaching career, Williams concentrated on the printed exercise and did not vary them for his students. Both Smith and Meretta comment on this very point. In contrast, Nagel notes that Williams did vary the printed exercises with him! This contradiction in methodology can be explained when we recognize that many teachers modify seemingly rigid or limited pedagogical approaches the longer they teach.

Williams was among a number of early trumpet/cornet pedagogues in the 1930's to suggest the use of an arched tongue to facilitate lip slurs and wrote about it in The School Musician<sup>76</sup> and his Complete Modern Method for Trumpet and Cornet.<sup>77</sup>

Memorization was highly encouraged by Williams for the presentation of cornet solos. Smith remarks by saying, "When you stood and played your solos, you never played it with music. You memorized, so you could play it professionally."<sup>78</sup>

The methods of Arban and Saint-Jacome used by Williams in his teaching do not stress high register playing as seen in contemporary settings. Williams wrote only a few exercises in his method book addressing this concept and emphasized

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>75</sup> See Appendix Three, 90.

<sup>76</sup> Williams, "Problems in the Teaching of Brass Instruments, 14.

<sup>77</sup> Ernest S. Williams, Complete Modern Method for Trumpet and Cornet (New York: Charles Colin, 1936), 157. For a more complete reading on this and other cornet techniques, see John Lawrence McCann, "A History of Trumpet and Cornet Pedagogy in the United States 1840-1942" (D.M. diss., Indiana University, 1989).

<sup>78</sup> See Appendix Two, 64.

the use of breath management to facilitate the upper register.<sup>79</sup>

Williams used two different extended techniques to demonstrate embouchure control to his students. He was able to play a scale without the use of valves and was also able to play a three note chord through multiphonics.<sup>80</sup> All of the professors interviewed learned to do the technique but minimized its effect and usefulness, giving no specifics on how to achieve the desired outcome.

The use of small ensembles was limited to trumpet duets, trios, and quartets. Nagel comments on this point by saying, “[Williams] didn’t get involved in anything like that at Julliard. As a matter of fact, nobody did. There wasn’t such a thing. You could have gone through Julliard and never played anything but a trumpet duet.”<sup>81</sup>

Williams taught the language of the instrument and did not concentrate on teaching any specific type of playing such as orchestral literature or commercial music. Music programs of the period were geared towards teaching the large ensembles of orchestra and band, and cornet literature. Although several of Williams’ students had very successful careers in the commercial field (of particular note is Don Jacoby), Williams personally did not like this type of playing and

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<sup>79</sup> Williams, Complete Modern Method for Trumpet and Cornet, 155 and 186-192.

<sup>80</sup> Williams refers to Carl Maria von Weber’s Concertino in E for Horn and Orchestra Op.s 45 (written 1806, published 1815) as the source for this technique. Weber wrote three and four note chords to be played simultaneously by the soloist through multiphonics; Williams, Complete Modern Method for Trumpet and Cornet, 200. This technique is also mentioned in Louis-François Dauprat’s treatise, Method for High-Horn and Low-Horn dated 1824 and translated by Jeffrey L. Snedeker in The Historical Brass Society Journal 9 (1997): 38. Dauprat writes, “multiphonics, which are produced on some low tones of the horn, and are combined with the head-voice that comes from the nose. Punto [natural horn player for W. A. Mozart and others] who did them much better than any who have had a hand in them since, acknowledged the ease and the ridiculousness of them himself. Therefore leave to the charlatans the extraordinary means that suit only mediocrity, that stun only the ignorant, and repulse connoisseurs and true artists equally.”

<sup>81</sup> See Appendix Four, 115.

referred to it as “Bally-hoo”music.<sup>62</sup>

With the exception of Smith, all the professors expressed a desire for Williams to have played more in their lessons. Meretta also expressed a desire for additional literature in his lessons with Williams. Meretta particularly commented, “I wished he had assigned me newer and more literature. The literature was limited to Arban, his studies, and the cornet solo literature of the day. If he had time for research, he might have expanded the repertoire for his students. There were exercises from Arban I did with my students, that Williams did not do. He just didn’t have the time to do them in the lessons. He was an administrator, a teacher and conductor, and gave lessons to all the brass players.”<sup>63</sup>

## THE TEACHING OF LEONARD B. SMITH

Leonard Smith was influenced significantly by Ernest S. Williams and in many ways copied his mentor’s successes. Smith enjoyed a career as cornet soloist, orchestral player, and as the founder and conductor of the highly acclaimed Detroit Concert Band. Smith’s philosophy of teaching is embodied in the literature he chose for teaching and in the manner which he presented it.

Smith carefully defined what he wanted his students to learn through the mastery of prescribed techniques he learned from Williams. Smith reflects, “I would be very insistent in the way they practiced. I call them the nine phases of playing, and I have used those with my students ever since [studying them with Williams]. They would practice the scales; major, minor, and chromatic; lip slurs, intervals, broken chords or arpeggios, triple tongue, double tongue, single tongue, long tones, and flexibility exercises. I found that they cover everything that you

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<sup>62</sup> Williams, “Problems in the Teaching of Brass Instruments”, 13.

<sup>63</sup> See Appendix Five, 139.

have to play. So, in other words, when you are playing in the symphony orchestra, you have to be able to do this, you have to be able to do that, more so than in band, although in band, you have to have much more endurance which has to be developed, I found if my students had this regular practice routine, it was like covering all the bases, and they didn't have to worry."<sup>84</sup> When asked if there were materials Smith used that Williams had not, Smith stated clearly, "I used the materials Williams had used with me. They worked for him, so I didn't feel it necessary to change them."<sup>85</sup>

Smith describes his philosophy and technique in an article in 1956; an advertisement for the former Roth-Reynolds instrument company, which he represented at the time. Smith discusses the requisite areas all trumpet and cornet players need to maintain their technique. They are; the four techniques of breath, tongue, lip, finger; breathing; slurring using an arched tongue; the nine phases of playing: scales, intervals, lip slurs, arpeggios, triple, double, and single tonguing, flexibility exercises, and long tones; and his warm-up.<sup>86</sup>

Smith writes, "Our daily practice routine should be so designed as to enable us to acquire, develop, and strengthen technique. Therefore, we must have a complete command of the several available techniques with which we play our instrument before any real artistic approach can begin. In the playing of the cornet or the trumpet, we encounter and deal with four techniques; breath, tongue, lip, and finger. Each of these is related one to the other. They must be coordinated and synchronized perfectly as one."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See Appendix Two, 64.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>86</sup> Leonard B. Smith, You Can Play Better, Hints on Practicing, (Cleveland: Roth-Reynolds Inc., 1956), 3.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 3.

Twenty years earlier, Williams wrote in The School Musician, "When we are in tune with nature's requirements, the playing of any brass instrument is comparatively easy. Our problems arise when we attempt to do something in a way in which it cannot be done. Three technics should be synchronized and developed simultaneously; breath technic, lip technic, and finger technic. Brasses are not difficult instruments as far as fingering is concerned, but it takes a studious persevering individual to work out an accurate, dependable breath technic."<sup>88</sup> The two articles are very similar in tone and content, indicating analogous thinking between Smith and Williams.

Smith designated his process of warm-up as the "Four Don'ts." Smith notes, "I told my students my 'Four Don'ts' of warm up (see figure 1). When starting out; don't play loud, don't play soft, don't play high, don't play low. Begin with several long tones in the middle register and expand out in these four areas until your lips feel about the same every day you play. Then I would do some chromatics, single tongue patterns with intervals through the seven valve positions, slurs, and some finger-flexing drills. Your lips do not feel the same every day, so you have to accommodate the circumstance by the time you take in preparing, so that your lips will feel today as close as they did yesterday! As I said before, your lips are never the same any two times. Now if a person will believe that, he will accommodate that situation in his warm-up!"<sup>89</sup> Smith encouraged his students to do this warm-up before the lesson and to be prepared to play for him as the lesson began just as Williams had done with him. Smith explains, "He [Williams] would

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<sup>88</sup> Williams, "Problems in the Teaching of Brass Instruments", 13.

<sup>89</sup> See Appendix Two, 66.

Figure 1. Leonard B. Smith's Warm up. Published by the Roth-Reynolds Company for an advertisement for "Contempora Trumpets and Cornets", 1956.

## Leonard Smith's Warm-Up Drills

The following examples are excerpts from the several warm-up drills used and advocated by Leonard Smith. It is recommended that the player enlarge upon those illustrations indicated by asterisks (\*) at will by employing the various valve combinations:

$$(0-2-1-\frac{1}{2}-\frac{2}{3}-\frac{1}{3}-\frac{2}{3})$$

**LONG TONES** — play in order given. Hold each 25-35 seconds. Play about mezzo-forte. No waver or vibrato in the tone. Be especially careful of attack and release of all tones. At first, eliminate the crescendo and diminuendo; later, observe these for each tone.



**SINGLE TONGUING** — also to be played pp, p, mp, f, ff as well as in all valve combinations. Use daily to develop speed.



For lip and back of the tongue flexibility



Used with permission of the author.

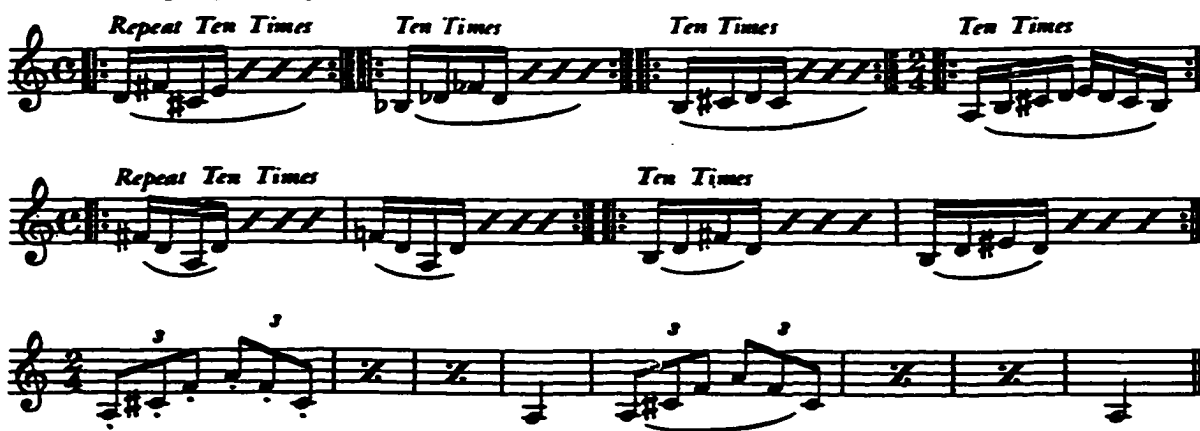
**MARCATO**



m.m.  $\text{♩} = 96 - 144$



Some interesting finger-flexing drills:



Used with permission of the author.

expect you to take the time before you played to be warmed up. It's your business to do your preliminaries outside the job. When you sat on stage for the first number, you were to be ready to play. If you were not, they would get somebody else!"<sup>90</sup>

Additional techniques used by Smith with his students were an arched tongued for slurring, memorization of solo material, and variation of lesson materials. Smith commented he varied exercises assigned to his students, but Williams did not, a point made by both Crisara and Meretta. Smith also notes that he offered more explanation to his students than Williams did for him, "I defined the different techniques more than Williams did with me, so the student knew what he was doing. Williams would say, 'You do this,' and you did it. You didn't know why you were doing it. He didn't take the time to explain it to the student. I probably felt I could give the student the additional information to make it more plausible to him."<sup>91</sup>

With regards to register playing, Smith's concepts are similar to Williams. Although Williams rarely gave instructions on how to achieve a desired effect, Smith would give his students that necessary information. Smith explains further, "The upper register is not difficult if the player prepares himself properly. Many times the teacher can't show the student how to do it because he plays incorrectly himself! You have to be a good example for the students, so they get the necessary information. Now if students couldn't play high, I would have them begin in the middle part of the register and expand upward. I always explained to my students how to do it. If it is not explained to them, they will become frustrated, so you have to explain it. This is the natural process for growth. Your embouchure and high register won't come overnight and neither will your loud and soft register. You

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 68.

have to be willing to take small steps over a period of time. If things aren't working, stop for a couple of days, rest, and then continue. If you explain this to the student, they won't get too frustrated. You have to have your technique developed, so you can play it when and where it belongs. It isn't a question of being able to play a double high C. I know many people who can play a double high C, but they can't play a top G when the conductor calls for it!"<sup>92</sup>

Smith has no particular method for the pedal register since he believes it a novelty, primarily because there was "nothing written for it." Smith elaborates. "I don't see any reason for spending time on it. The purpose of practice is to be able to play what you see in front of you and play it correctly. That's your aim and objective."<sup>93</sup> When asked about the ability to play a three note chord, Smith responded that he had indeed learned how to do it, but it too was a stunt and not worthy of serious study because no literature was written for it either.<sup>94</sup>

Smith performed on the B-flat trumpet or cornet almost exclusively as did Williams. On occasion someone would request a different instrument, most often a C trumpet and Smith would accommodate them, but he was most comfortable on the B-flat.<sup>95</sup>

Like Williams, Smith made no difference between commercial and classical playing. Smith remarks, "What you choose to play later on is your own business. You have to be able to play your instrument as a musician because you are going to be playing with good quality musicians regardless of the instruments you play."<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 69.

## THE TEACHING OF RAYMOND D. CRISARA

Ray Crisara's philosophy of teaching trumpet is very similar to Ernest S. Williams. Many of the phrases Williams used with students, Crisara also uses, such as, "Don't ever forget; it's 90% the man," and "You must capture the importance of this instrument. If you're going to play trumpet, you must have the courage to go for something and know that if you miss it, they're going to hear it for seven blocks!"<sup>97</sup> When asked if Crisara teaches the techniques of Williams the same way as Williams, Crisara responded, "I would say our final goals are very similar. The goal is to have a fundamental knowledge and application of the language of the trumpet. You got to have your technique in place to the degree that you can satisfy virtually anything a conductor would ask you to do. If you don't have those tools, you're not ready to go out and work. I have tried to pass Williams' philosophy on to my students. My current and former students have commented to me that they talk to their students about me and the people who were around me, just as I talked to them about Williams and the people who surrounded him. If this is true, then the philosophy of Williams is being carried on to future generations."<sup>98</sup>

Crisara uses several of the same teaching materials Williams used with him. Williams exposed Crisara to Charlier's Thirty-Six Transcendental Studies, Henri Chavanne's Twenty-Five Characteristic Etudes, and Walter Smith's Top Tones and Crisara uses them with his students for the same reasons. In addition, Crisara also uses Maurice Andre's Twelve Caprices, Vern Reynolds' Forty-eight Etudes, Arban-Maire Complete Grand Method for Trumpet and Cornet -Volume III and Bitsch's Twenty Etudes, because the "rhythms are more sophisticated and present

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<sup>97</sup> See Appendix Three, 85.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 92.

challenges beyond the Arban characteristic studies.”<sup>99</sup> Crisara continues, “My doctoral level students may even run out of material of value. I use the Chaynes, Tomasi, Aaron Harris, Bozza’s Sixteen Etudes, Friese, and Boutry. People who can play these materials have trumpet playing where it belongs.”<sup>100</sup>

Crisara notes that Williams treated his students differently which may be considered contrary to current trends. Crisara does this as well. Crisara states, “Williams read his people well. One he would baby, one he would cajole, and at another, he would rave! It depended on the person involved. I do it the same way. I’ve told a student to put his horn away and go on home! He needed to hear it. To others, I have said not to worry because to scold them would only be adding to the problem.”<sup>101</sup>

As with Williams, Crisara refrains from a concept of warming-up. He prefers to think of this process as a routine of drills and daily maintenance and states the term “warm-up” speaks of an apology! His routine lasts forty-five minutes to an hour, but can be abridged if time does not allow. Crisara explains the process, “I have a specific routine, but I can also modify it, so it doesn’t become boring. I take certain sections of it and have my students do it. The routine depends on the students’ development and is different for everyone. It contains lip slurring, scales, articulation patterns, and register growth. I begin with slow lip slurs. I don’t do long tones. My first exercise is the fifth from low C up to G, the fourth from the G to C including the sixth from G to E. If I have students at this level in their drills, I’m careful to say this is what I do; it’s comfortable for me. If it doesn’t work for them, I do something else or modify it. I do lip slurs up to high F. That register needs to be workable. I do two octave chromatics up to high F, maybe F sharp and

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 96.

G. I do scale patterns out of the Williams' book or the Arban book. If it's from the Arban, I elongate them because the range is limited. I do two octave scale patterns to the tonic, both slurred and articulated. I do diatonic fifths in different keys. I reverse them, so they becomes diatonic fourths. I do triads and reverse them to get sixths. I do them articulated and slurred."<sup>102</sup> The influence of Williams is clearly present, as this routine is similar to the materials presented in Williams's Secret of Technique-Preservation.

When asked about performing from memory for Williams, Crisara said, "It wasn't a requirement, but we often did it. During a public concert, it was expected you would perform from memory." Crisara encourages memory for a student if it improves the performance and added, "My main job is to help the student do his best. If memorizing makes it better, fine."<sup>103</sup>

When the topic of register was discussed, Crisara explained he has his students start in the middle register and expand outward. Crisara does not advocate working in the pedal register because "Williams did not emphasize the pedal register, and neither do I. I don't know many players who play in the pedal register with the same embouchure they play in other registers. For me, improving the practical language of the trumpet is time better spent." Crisara makes no difference in the teaching between classical and commercial students stating, "My job is to produce well-rounded players. I don't think there is a big difference between the two."<sup>104</sup>

Unlike Williams who performed only on a B-flat trumpet or cornet, Crisara does utilize the use of small horns. During his career as a freelance player in New York, Crisara usually carried three horns: a B-flat, a flugel, and a Selmer piccolo.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 93.

Crisara emphasizes the majority of his students play the B-flat trumpet. Crisara continues, "The C trumpet is not the instrument of choice in my studio. The C trumpet is easier to play than the B-flat, so I would rather students study on the B-flat. I teach my students on the hardest instrument and then the other instruments are easier. I believe to do it the other way is wrong. [However,] students use the instrument of choice as needed. If someone has done the Haydn Concerto on B-flat and would like to do it on an E-flat, I would agree. Then we discuss it as needed in a lesson. If a student wants to learn to play the piccolo trumpet, I have him begin with Bach-like scales and chordal studies to become acquainted with the horn. Students may be tempted to over-blow the instrument if they are not careful. I tell my students the ideal situation is to have two piccolo trumpets, because they serve different purposes, one for breadth and warmth and the other for lightness and agility. Regardless of the horn, you still must play musically!"<sup>105</sup>

#### THE TRUMPET TEACHING OF ROBERT NAGEL

Robert Nagel's philosophy of trumpet is to prepare a student to bridge the gap between graduate school and the professional world. Nagel noted that this was also William's goal for him when he was a student at The Julliard School. Nagel's desire is to "round out" a student's playing, but he believes many students miscalculate aspects of their playing. Nagel explained, "Many times, the way a student handled an aspect of his playing was easily acceptable for the professional world. They were not aware of how well they did. I would tell them, 'Hey listen, there are a lot of guys in New York that can't do that, and they're earning a living.' Also, many students didn't know how deficient they were in other aspects of their playing. Many students misjudged the things they did well and the things they

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 94.

didn't do well. I felt my job was to point out both of these areas."<sup>106</sup>

Nagel notes that Williams used only a few materials, but combined them in a manner as to extract additional benefit. Nagel remarks, "The whole year I studied with Williams, he used Schlossberg, some Arban review, and also transposition out of his book, which I think, is the best transposition book for young people, depending on how you use it. I did a few Charlier Etudes and [Smith's] Top Tones. He limited it to those areas and combined them in different ways. We didn't do any orchestral excerpts. If you wanted to study excerpts, you had to copy them from the score; they weren't published like today. I did this in my own teaching as well, by taking an etude and using it as a beginning point to reinforce additional techniques. If an etude was articulated, I'd have my students slur it."<sup>107</sup>

When asked if Nagel had a specific curriculum, he responded yes, but added that it was flexible. He uses solo pieces, technical studies, and orchestral excerpts to develop a student's technique. Nagel uses several of Williams books, the Supplementary Studies for Advanced Students and the Method for Transposition for Trumpet and Cornet. Nagel believes there is nothing superior to the Arban Method, but there are additional materials he will use, such as French materials which go farther with technique than Arban. At Yale, Nagel uses his own Speed Studies, Studies in Contemporary Music, Rhythmic Studies as well as his edited version of Brandt's Thirty-Four Studies (Orchestra Etudes), Falk's Twenty Atonal Studies, Charlier's Thirty Six Transcendental Etudes, the Twenty Etudes by Bitsch, Smith's Top Tones, Balasanyan's Twenty Studies, and 100 Studi Melodici by Caffarelli.<sup>108</sup> Nagel believes there is too much material for students to learn as the demands of playing have increased over time, particularly in orchestral work. Nagel

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<sup>106</sup> See Appendix Four, 114.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 121.

states, "Harry Glantz was playing in a symphony when he was sixteen. The repertoire for the orchestra was limited then. What was he playing, Brahms' symphonies? Maybe an occasional work more demanding. It's harder to be orchestral players today. They have to play solo works, difficult symphonies, and brass quintets as part of their services. Today, the amount of time we have to teach students is limited in comparison to the amount they must learn. You try to acquaint them with everything, so they can follow through later on their own. Teaching wasn't that way in those days. Actually, if I had gone to Williams for a course of study lasting four years, I probably could have covered everything he wanted to teach and do it thoroughly. I don't think you can do that today. There's too much to learn and too much teaching material available to meet that demand."<sup>109</sup>

Robert Nagel recalls that Williams was "business-like" and did not "dabble" in his lessons and conjectures that Williams' state of mind was due, in part, to WWII and the resulting drain of students on the ESW school. Nagel chooses to focus on the playing of his students and not any extraneous issues they may have. Nagel explicates, "This is something about teaching and about my being successful or not successful. I always distanced myself from those issues and would stick to the facts. I shied away from that, because I felt I couldn't read people or situations..."<sup>110</sup>

Several of Nagel's teaching techniques have been influenced by Williams. Williams had Nagel play through an entire etude before he would make a comment about his playing. Nagel uses the same technique with his students to highlight areas of their playing needing improvement. He has students play through an etude and then makes a few comments. He then has the student play the exercise a second time. Nagel continues, "The results were uncanny. On the second time, they

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 116.

wouldn't make the same mistake; they'd miss something new too far away before or after it. Usually they were not even aware of it! The problem was concentration. There's no other explanation for it. It was really funny when I told them what I had done and what had happened. This just points out that much of playing is concentration."<sup>111</sup>

Nagel's approach to warming-up did not come directly from Williams, but an earlier teacher, Fred Bosworth, whom Nagel stated was the most influential teacher for him. However, Nagel notes, "I think since Williams made so much out of Schlossberg's Daily Drills and he had me doing them, it would be that he would subscribe to that type of warm-up. But, by the time I studied with Williams, I already had a comfortable warm-up routine."<sup>112</sup> What is similar to Williams' teaching is Nagel's approach to maintaining his technique. Williams wrote his own text of the subject with the publication of The Secret of Technique Preservation (1946). Williams routine takes approximately forty-five minutes, but can be abridged to thirty minutes and is designed to maintain one's technique through a modest warmup followed by twenty-four major and minor scales. This type of exercise was uniquely adapted to the cornet era of Williams' time. Nagel's concepts about maintaining one's level of proficiency are similar to Williams as they are designed to assist a player in maintaining his performance edge. But Nagel has adapted to the demands of music in the later twentieth century. Nagel reflects, "Over time I had modified Schlossberg as my own playing and the demands of playing had changed. I think you have to add to it. What has changed in my own playing and in teaching, were the demands of playing and the student's ability to go beyond the range, endurance, and flexibility of Schlossberg. I wrote a book called Trumpet Skills, taken from materials I gave to students at Yale, or would do

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 116.

myself. When I put these ideas into a book, I amplified them. There are exercises in there similar to Schlossberg, and I wrote them down just to fill in the book. But when I played them, I had a hard time, because they're not that easy. They are an adjunct or a supplement to Schlossberg. They are a workout and not a warm-up."<sup>113</sup>

Another reason for writing Trumpet Skills was to maintain Nagel's technique because his freelance career in New York was coming to an end and he was primarily performing with the NYBQ. Nagel explained, "Trumpet Skills also came about as a matter of necessity for me to keep my playing in shape. For example, when the quintet had a tour coming up, I would use Trumpet Skills to get into shape to play our two hour concerts. I would grab a few minutes, whenever possible and practice. I practice very concentrated for twenty to thirty minutes. If I hadn't been playing much and was out of shape, I would play two octave scales using thirds (see figure 2). This was very therapeutic for me. In Trumpet Skills, I wrote only two examples, just to give the reader the main idea. But, I would play through all the keys. For me, playing at the top of the staff causes the lips to change constantly, while it adjusts to each new note. This helped me very much. I would also play through a book like Trumpet Skills, Top Tones, Charlier, or Balasanyan (particularly the Balasanyan, because the tessitura is similar to a first trumpet part). I would put as much demand as I could on myself for twenty to thirty minutes, within reason of course. If I could play this way for half an hour, I could play a two-hour quintet concert. My practice put me through a harder workout than the actual performance. Even though the quintet music was difficult, it was relatively short. The Etler Quintet was probably the most tiring piece we played, and it lasted approximately sixteen to eighteen minutes. My practice was almost twice as long, so I knew my playing could stand up to the music. This wasn't the best way to get ready, but it was the most expedient. Most trumpet playing is not difficult, but it is

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 117.

## Thirds

Fast

14.

15.

Figure 2. Exercises 14 and 15 from Trumpet Skills by Robert Nagel, 1982.  
Used with permission of the author.

that one movement that will get you, like the Great Gate at Kiev from Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition. I found the same endurance problem with my students. They would practice very hard two or three hours a day, but how about playing through a couple of Top Tones exercises without stopping? Short-term stamina is very important in the professional world. That's what Trumpet Skills is all about."<sup>114</sup>

Nagel's studio teaching occurred in three settings: the private lesson, chamber music, and in master classes. Nagel used all three venues as successful teaching tools, but had the highest praise for a brass quintet setting. Nagel explains, "I'd have a student come into the studio, and I would work with him. He might sound good in the studio, but when he's playing with others, he would be out of tune and wouldn't know how to adjust. The only way you can tell if a student can hear intonation and do something about it, is in a brass quintet. There are many musical aspects involved in playing in a brass quintet. Another is the ability to match dynamics and balance with other players. You can't get that in a lesson. You can't even get it in the orchestra. There's only one place you can get it and that is in a brass quintet. You can hear their valves. You can hear stylistically the articulation and what the others are doing. I think it is a marvelous tool as an adjunct to private teaching. I can't say enough about it because I personally learned more about my students playing in a quintet than in the studio."<sup>115</sup>

Nagel's approach to high register playing is obtained through the pedal register. He believes it adds in the formation of the embouchure which can be helpful for the student who "wants to screech and specialize in high register."<sup>116</sup> Nagel did note that he was not known as a high note artist.

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 118.

Nagel was not required to memorize materials for Williams and does not require it in his studio either.

Like Williams, Nagel makes no distinction in the teaching of commercial and orchestral players, believing the fundamentals are the same for both types of playing. Nagel does believe there are different priorities for commercial players noting the demands are very broad, in particular sight reading which isn't done in a symphony orchestra [except for pops concerts].

Nagel does teach all the small horns and noted that when Maurice Andre appeared on the solo scene, the use of piccolo trumpets increased.

#### THE TEACHING OF LEONARD V. MERETTA

Leonard Meretta's teaching philosophy was shaped at the Ernest S. Williams School of Music. While at the school, he decided to become an educator. As part of the curriculum, students were required to take arranging and composition. Meretta states, "The first year you composed and conducted your march. I did that with [Mayhew] Lake. It was performed in public. What an experience! The second year, you composed a suite for orchestra. You conducted it in public and competed with other students. The third year I studied under Erik Leidzen and composed an overture in sonata allegro form for orchestra, and conducted it in public. I came in second in that competition."<sup>117</sup> Meretta has composed two trumpet trios, eleven marches, and numerous arrangements. Leonard Smith encouraged Meretta to chose composition as a career, but Meretta chose instead a career in education. Accordingly, Meretta's philosophy of teaching is centered on music education. In 1945, Meretta became the band director at Western Michigan University after teaching three and one-half years at Lenoir Public School and three and one-half years at the University of Michigan. At

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<sup>117</sup> See Appendix Five, 132.

Western, Meretta was required to teach all the instruments as well as direct the band program. Meretta comments, "there were only four or five faculty then; now there are forty six! I had to teach everything, even the woodwinds and percussion. Thank goodness for my experience at Lenoir, because that is what I had to do in public school. I applied the Williams' lesson format I learned at the school with all my wind instrument students at Western Michigan. The Williams' experience helped me again!"<sup>118</sup>

Meretta used Williams' lesson routine with all his private students, but was not limited to it. He added additional materials to serve the needs of his students. In his trumpet studio, he used Arban's Complete Conservatory Method for Trumpet, Williams' Method for Transposition; Clarke's Technical Studies, Setting Up Drills, and Characteristic Studies, Schlossberg Daily Drills, Smith's Flexibility Studies and Top Tones, and Charlier's Thirty-Six Transcendental Studies. Like Nagel, Meretta believes nothing surpasses the quality of the Arban Method, but added the literature used by Williams was limited when compared to today's repertoire.

Meretta reflects that Williams was a different personality on the podium than in the studio. Williams was a product of European conductors and his treatment of musicians was at times "harsh." Meretta believes today's young musicians need variety "because their goals are different, and the world of music has changed!" Meretta continues, "Every student is an individual; no two are alike. You must consider their personalities, how they work, and if they are meticulous like Williams was."<sup>119</sup> Although the manner in which Meretta deals with students is different than Williams, the underlying principle of dealing with each individual is consistent with Williams.

Meretta is one of several professors named in the preface of the book, The

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<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 139.

Secret of Technique-Preservation,<sup>120</sup> but preferred the warm-up designed by Leonard Smith. In addition to the above, Meretta used Clarke's Setting Up Drills, Getchell's Cornet or Trumpet Warm-up, Little's Embouchure Builder for Trumpet, and Voisin's Daily Exercises for Trumpet.

Memorization seems more important to Meretta than to Crisara or Nagel. As a result, Meretta required his students to perform from memory one solo each semester. This point did not go unchallenged by some faculty at Western Michigan, who believed students could learn more literature if they did not memorize.

Meretta personally used Williams "expanding chromatic scales" found in the Williams method.<sup>121</sup> With his students he favored the opening chromatic exercises found in Smith's Top Tones adding, "Walter Smith attributed most of his technical success to playing chromatics, and I stressed chromatics as well with my students, perhaps too much!"<sup>122</sup> Meretta did not stress the pedal register, because of Williams' influence. Meretta notes that Williams could play pedal tones and played a scale without valves in that register.<sup>123</sup>

Like Williams, Meretta makes no difference between the teaching of classical or commercial students. Meretta notes in 1945, there was no major in Jazz studies at Western Michigan University as there is now. Meretta reflects, "We didn't even talk about it. Because in the first place, someone would just organize a jazz band, have fun, and make some money playing dance jobs."<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Williams names several of his prominent students in the preface to his Secret of Technique-Preservation. Among them are Leonard Smith, Raymond Crisara, and Leonard Meretta; Williams, The Secret of Technique-Preservation. 1.

<sup>121</sup> These exercises ascend to E-flat above high C; Williams, Complete Modern Method for Trumpet and Cornet. 155.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>123</sup> It is highly probable that Williams performance of a scale without the aid of valves, noted by all the professors, was in the pedal register. See Appendix Five, 143.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 144.

Meretta taught all the small horns and even included a half semester study of the cornet! Meretta used David Hickman's text The Piccolo Trumpet in addition to orchestral literature to teach this instrument. Meretta also believes strongly in using the brass quintet as an aid to teaching, calling it the "heart of independent learning."

The four individuals interviewed all respect and admire Ernest S. Williams. Each of them demonstrated aspects of Williams' philosophy and techniques in his respective teaching. Each developed a high level of artistry through years of study and practice, continuing to share that artistry with their students.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS

Ernest S. Williams had a profound and lasting effect on many of the leading performers and teachers of the last fifty years in the United States. Each year, the alumni of the Ernest S. Williams School of Music assemble to celebrate Ernest S. Williams' life and influence as a teacher and mentor. It is no small wonder that Leonard Smith, Raymond Crisara, Robert Nagel, and Leonard Meretta all had portentous comments of Williams. Williams' influence on these gentlemen was, by their own admission, profound.

Williams' robust personality and vigorous work ethic are the overriding influences of his teaching on Leonard Smith, Raymond Crisara, Robert Nagel, and Leonard Meretta. These professors have all developed unique careers and styles of presentation, yet each share this common thread and are a living testament to the life and teaching of Ernest S. Williams.

Robert Nagel studied with Williams for the shortest length and in a setting unlike the others. He studied with Williams at The Julliard School having already attained the majority of his technique. Nagel's own comments confirm this, and it is understandable that the impact made by Williams was not as significant as it was for the others. Regardless, Nagel displays several Williams attributes; the use of repetition in lesson materials, a business like approach with his students, and the intent to help students bridge the gap between school and the professional musical world.

Leonard Meretta began his career as a soloist but was attracted to a teaching career, due in part, to his experience at the ESW school. Meretta was deeply impressed with his participation in the Williams' ensembles and comments, "In retrospect, I can't overemphasize the value of the two-hour daily rehearsals and the weekly concerts on Saturday afternoon by the Ernest S. Williams School of Music

Band. You can't get that experience today! You can't duplicate that!"<sup>125</sup> Meretta used this experience and the Williams' lesson format, which gave him a curriculum and method for teaching his students.

Leonard Smith exhibits the highest degree of Williams' influence. Smith was an active private teacher throughout his career, utilizing the Williams' lesson format exactly as he had learned from Williams. Smith was also a cornet soloist and principal orchestral player. Becoming tired of the performer's life (like Williams), he yearned for more control over his destiny and founded the Detroit Concert Band, a continuation of the great band traditions of Williams, Sousa, and Goldman.

Raymond Crisara purposely took Williams' philosophy of music and made it his own. Crisara uses the Williams' approach of maintaining his technique through a routine of daily drills. The Williams' experience, along with thirty-five years as a free lance trumpeter in New York, has made him one of the preeminent trumpet teachers today, as he freely gives of this experience to his students.

Crisara's closing comments say it best, "The trumpet has an emotional and dynamic spectrum wider than any other instrument. You can be as vicious as possible and sound right for the moment, or you can play a lullaby and make it sound as beautiful as a flutist. That's your challenge. A short time ago, a freshman came in and played for me. His playing was good, but it was quiet and introverted. I told him to practice in such a way that when he came back for his next lesson, I would have to say, 'Don't play so loud.' I kept after him, and he improved. Later in the semester, I saw his parents and talked to them about their son. His mother said to me, 'Very seldom would our son look at us when we talked with him. Now, he looks at us right in the eye!' That's what playing the trumpet can do!"<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> See Appendix Five, 135.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 98.

**Appendix One**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**1. BACKGROUND**

1. As an introduction, could you tell me how you began your career?
2. What caused you to select your instrument?
3. Did you start on the cornet or trumpet?
4. Did you have a teacher when you began to study the instrument?
5. Who was your most influential teacher?
6. What made you decide upon music as a career?
7. How did you obtain your first playing position?
8. Are there publications about you or that you have written, of which you are especially proud?
9. What aspects of your teaching do you feel you have been the most and least successful during your career?
10. Were you interested in any other career? What was it, and what changed your mind?
11. What, if anything, would you do differently in your career?

## **2. STUDY WITH ERNEST WILLIAMS**

- 1. Did Williams have a preference between the cornet and the trumpet?**
- 2. Do you have a preference for either the cornet or trumpet?**
- 3. In your teaching, do you use any words, phrases, or techniques of Ernest Williams?**
- 4. How long did you study with Williams? Where?**
- 5. What was your perception of Williams as a performer?**
- 6. What was your perception of Williams as a teacher?**
- 7. Did you have any expectations regarding studying with Williams?**
- 8. Were your expectations justified?**
- 9. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of Williams as a teacher.**
- 10. Was Williams a good teacher for you?**
- 11. Did he treat all of his students equally?**
- 12. Who were other significant teachers during your Williams period, and did you study with any of them?**
- 13. Did Williams tell you who his teachers were?**
- 14. Are there aspects of your teaching derived only from Williams?**
- 15. What are those concepts?**

### **3. WARM-UP**

- 1. Did Williams use or teach a specific warm-up?**
- 2. Do you use or teach this (a) warm-up?**
- 3. Would you describe this warm-up?**
- 4. Has this warm-up routine changed?**
- 5. What was the purpose for the warm-up?**
- 6. Should the warm-up be done before or during the lesson?**
- 7. How much time should be allocated for the warm-up routine?**

#### **4. TECHNIQUE**

- 1. What were the fundamental techniques of Williams' teaching?**
- 2. How did Williams teach these techniques to his students?**
- 3. Do you teach these techniques to your students in the same way?**
- 4. What additional techniques, if any, do you teach to your students?**
- 5. Do you vary these exercises to accommodate the needs of individual students?**
- 6. Do you have specific techniques to aid students in learning the upper register?**
- 7. Do you have specific techniques to aid students in learning the low and pedal register?**
- 8. Do you teach the same way to both classical and commercial students? If not, how do these methods differ?**
- 9. Do you teach the piccolo trumpet and other small horns? How?**
- 10. Do you teach any beginning students?**

## **5. PRIVATE LESSONS**

- 1. Did Williams play during the private lesson?**
- 2. Do you play along with the students during their lessons?**
- 3. What was the length and frequency of a typical trumpet lesson with Williams?**
- 4. Were they class or individual lessons?**
- 5. What type of student did Williams select for his studio?**
- 6. What type of student do you select for your studio?**
- 7. Are there pedagogical materials Williams used you do not?**
- 8. Are there newer pedagogical materials superior to those used by Williams?**
- 9. Do you use electronic aids in your teaching?**
- 10. Do you have a specific curriculum for your students?**
- 11. Did Williams motivate his students to practice?**
- 12. Did Williams require students to perform from memory? Do you?**
- 13. Do you feel private lessons are valuable?**
- 14. Do you believe that private lessons will be eliminated in college curriculums?**
- 15. Is there another experience which can take the place of private lessons, such as group or class lessons?**
- 16. Did Williams use small ensembles in his teaching?**
- 17. Is there any value in ensemble playing for students?**
- 18. Are there any additional comments you would like to add to this interview?**

Appendix Two  
Interview With Leonard B. Smith  
Phoenix Arizona, May 8, 1997

**Good morning Mr. Smith, thank you for visiting with me today.**

It is my pleasure.

**What was your first instrument?**

The cornet. My cousin, Frank Hancock lived in Geneva, New York state, and my father gave him a cornet. He didn't do anything with it, so my father bought it back for fifteen dollars. He put it under the tree for Christmas. I picked it up and gave it a blast and woke everyone up! I was put under the tutelage of a man named Robert A. Coon of Poughkeepsie, New York. He didn't play the instrument, but he did play the alto horn. He couldn't play the cornet at all, but he could tell me what to do, and I would do it. I didn't try to imitate or emulate him; his tone was terrible on the cornet. The only time he would play cornet was to illustrate something for me. He was a fine teacher and musician.

**How did you decide on a career in music?**

My father and mother both had an interest in music. They felt that it was important that my brother and I have an exposure to music and at least become compatible with it and play an instrument. They didn't try to get us into music seriously and make it a career, but just to have an acquaintance with it.

**How long did you study with Mr. Coon?**

Probably two years. He taught me music and harmony. It was quite an interesting experience. I enjoyed it. He told my father, "Mr. Smith, I have taken this boy about as far as I can. He needs another teacher." I felt that was one of the most wonderful things about Coon. He was a man who needed the money because his wife was ill.

**How did you begin study with Williams?**

I needed a teacher after Mr. Coon. My father had a good friend, George

Waterhouse who was timpanist with the Rochester Orchestra. He asked him, who would he recommend. George said Ernest Williams. On that basis, we went to New York to meet Williams. It was a two-hour train ride and then another half hour to Brooklyn from Grand Central. I was introduced to Mr. Williams. I played for him, and he accepted me as a student. What he told me to do I did. I practiced and did all the things he would ask me to do the best that I could. I got along very well with him. My father would take me down to the lessons. If it was a good lesson, he would take me up to the Capital Theater to see one of those beautiful stage shows and the orchestra. If I didn't have a good lesson, invariably I was so dejected that he would take me to cheer me up! Almost every time we had a lesson I went to the theater for a different reason! I enjoyed studying with Williams. I even played taps at his grave.

**Did Williams have a preference for the cornet or trumpet?**

He believed that in the band you played the cornet, and in the orchestra, you play trumpet. I played the cornet, which was fine, but later I played trumpet.

**Do you believe one plays cornet in the band and trumpet in the orchestra?**

Well, for the solo instrument in the band, it should be cornet, always. The sound of the trumpet is more percussive and does not have the canto style or cantabile tone as the cornet. In contrast, the trumpet in the orchestra is almost a percussion instrument. Many times, if you look at the score you will see that the trumpet and timpani are playing together, and the trumpet gives pitch. I learned to play both instruments. I studied the cornet with Mr. Williams, and when it was time to get a new instrument, he selected it, and my father bought it!

**Did you teach privately during your career?**

Oh, yes, always. I had rather a unique situation. I was with the Detroit Symphony as first trumpet from 1936-1941, and I was soloist with the Goldman Band in the

summers of 1936-1941. It was six years with each organization. I enjoyed playing the trumpet in the orchestra, and I enjoyed playing the cornet in band. I never played trumpet in the band; I never played cornet in the orchestra! It worked out well. When I finished the symphony season, I would take at least two weeks and change from trumpet to cornet. Then I would play with Goldman during the summer. The Detroit Symphony played the "Ford Sunday Evening Hour." In those days, the Detroit Symphony was one of the best business engagements you could have. We had a twenty-one or twenty-eight week season with the symphony and thirty-nine weeks on the radio with the "Ford Sunday Evening Hour." That left thirteen weeks, ten of which were with the Goldman Band. I was working year round, back and forth; first trumpet with Detroit and cornet soloist, first chair with the Goldman Band.

**In your teaching, did you use words or phrases Williams used with you?**

Quite possibly. I'm sure that I did because I think that the influence would be there. Certainly not intentionally. I would be learning from the words that he said. But, oh yes, I think so.

**How long did you study with Mr. Williams?**

I studied with him from the time I was eleven, and I went with the Goldman Band when I was twenty-one I think, so ten years, longer than anyone else.

**What was your perception of Williams as a teacher?**

He was wonderful! He knew how to approach each student. He would tell me to do something, and I would do it. I remember one time I was studying with him while my father was sitting there, and I played a turn. I didn't do it correctly, and Williams said, "No, Leonard, that's not quite right." He explained to me and then asked me, "Do you understand that?" "Yes sir," I said. Williams, "All right now you play. . . no, that's not right." Well, I did it wrong two or three times, and

Williams said to me, "What's the matter? Are you dumb?" I wanted to bolt to the closet; you know what I mean! The skeletons in the whole family tree now were rattling! My father was upset and said to Williams, "Maybe you didn't explain it to him. My boy is not dumb!" Mr. Williams responded, "Mr. Smith, I explained it three times and that was enough!" But I was willing to admit it; I didn't understand it. Well, the lesson was over, and we left, and I didn't say anything! We didn't have a lesson for eight weeks. We received a letter from Mr. Williams. It read, "Mr. Smith, I have not seen you or Leonard for some time. Unless I hear otherwise, I will expect to see Leonard on Sunday the eleventh," and we resumed the lessons! I heard my father say years afterward, "You know, that Williams was no dummy!" Williams had used the expression, and I always thought my father had resented the fact that he used the phrase! I'll always remember the word that he used there; it had a little effect on him. Williams was very fair to me, there was no prejudice.

**That was quite a lesson! What was your perception concerning Williams as a performer?**

I never heard him perform. He retired from playing in 1925 or 1926. My first time to study with him was in 1928. He did not perform for me but would play duets with me. He played on what we call a dry lip. A dry lip is unique. Most people play on a wet lip. He'd pick up his horn to his dry lip and excite the life out of you!

**Did you have any preconceived expectations of studying with Mr. Williams?**

No. My father wanted me to have a musical education because he thought for each of us, it was an important part of your well being. My mother was a very fine singer and was in church choir for many years. My father was a pianist and later played trombone in the band. They believed my brother and I should have this experience. My brother played the violin, and I played the cornet.

**Was Williams a good teacher for you?**

Oh, yes! He was a psychologist really. He knew how to approach each student and make you play to the best of your abilities. It wasn't just a formula; go ahead and play your lesson, blah, blah, blah. He knew how to handle his students. With some of them he would take plenty of time to explain something; with others he would give a nod of his head.

**Was there anything you would consider a weakness in his teaching?**

No, I never saw any weaknesses in his teaching. The only thing I would say is I don't think there was anything he did not tell me not to do. He was very thorough.

**Who were the other significant teachers of the instrument?**

Max Schlossberg was probably the best known in New York. He had never been a fine trumpet player himself. He played third trumpet in the New York Philharmonic for years. Harry Glantz was the first trumpet with the N.Y. Philharmonic, but was not the teacher Schlossberg was. As a matter of fact, Glantz studied with Schlossberg. Apparently, Schlossberg had a way of teaching that was quite satisfying to his students. Williams had remarkable success with his students. At one time in New York, practically every trumpet player on a first stand was one of Williams' pupils!

**Did you study with Mr. Schlossberg?**

No, I never really knew him. I knew of him, of course.

**Did Mr. Williams tell you with whom he studied?**

Yes, he studied in Indiana, and I would have to think real hard to remember the name of the teacher. I didn't know the man. It has been way in the back of my mind for a long while. He studied there and then became first trumpet of the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Sousa Band. He did considerable playing. Apparently, Stokowski enjoyed him very much. As a matter of fact, when Stokowski came to Detroit with his wife, I was his driver. The Philharmonic wanted somebody he

could trust to drive him around. I asked him about Mr. Williams. Stokowski said to me, " Oh, yes, Mr. Williams - marvelous trumpet player!" He was just delighted to talk about him.

**Do you think there were aspects of your teaching and playing that were derived only from studying with Ernest Williams?**

Oh, I think so. You see, if you study with a person you admire, you have to ask yourself why. He had the ability to communicate with people. He was very determined and everything was all business.

**Did Williams play for you?**

No, not as such. Occasionally, he would demonstrate something in my lesson. When he did pick up his cornet, he played on what we call a dry lip. I couldn't understand how he could do it after not playing for so long!

**Did you play along with your students?**

Oh, yes, always, only on duets, yes!

**Did you play more for your students, than Williams played for you?**

Of course! I was playing all the time while I was teaching.

**What was the length and frequency of your lessons with Williams?**

We had a lesson every three weeks. I lived in Poughkeepsie, so we would take the train down to New York, a two hour trip. Then a half hour on the subway over to Brooklyn. We would walk up to his place and have the lesson, then the same thing going back.

**How long were your lessons with Mr. Williams?**

They were on Sundays in the afternoon and would last from two o'clock until four o'clock. Sometimes it was three hours, sometimes forty-five minutes, but usually two hours.

**Did you have class lessons with Mr. Williams?**

No, we never had class lessons.

**Did you structure your private lessons the same way?**

No, I would have a regular weekly lesson with my students. My lessons with Williams were over a hundred miles one way, that's why we made it every two or three weeks.

**Could you talk about the type of student that Williams selected for his studio?**

I don't think that I could do that. When I played for him, it was at the recommendation of Mr. Waterhouse. I played for him, and I was accepted as a student. There was no criteria evolved. He didn't ask, "How many flats are in the key of A-flat?" He didn't ask me those type of questions. He felt I had the embouchure, interest, and willingness to learn.

**What criteria did you use for selecting your private students?**

I would hear a person play and also talk to him. You can get a good measure of a person this way. If a person has bad habits, you explain it's going to take awhile to overcome them. If they want to change fine, otherwise, no. Each one is an individual.

**Were there pedagogical materials Williams used you did not?**

I don't think so.

**What materials did Williams use with you?**

I had an Arban book, so that's what we used. I played the scales; major, minor, and chromatic; the intervals, the lip slurs, the chords, the triple tongue, the double tongue, the single tongue, the long tone, and the flexibility exercises. I call them the nine phases of playing, and I have used those with my students ever since.

**Did you use any other materials with your students, in addition to the Arban method?**

With Mr. Williams, I used the Arban and also the Saint-Jacome. The Saint-Jacome has thirty-six Bousquet studies and a dozen fine duets. Each study is a page long

and gets progressively more difficult. Those were regular challenges. Williams would give me one of them and a duet to play alone; then he would play the duet. I never really heard him play with me because I was too busy playing my part as well as I could.

**Did you use these same materials with your students?**

Yes, the Arban and Saint-Jacome, and various solos.

**Did you use any other materials?**

No. I used the materials Williams had used with me. They worked for him, so I didn't feel it necessary to change them.

**Did you use any electronic aids in your teaching?**

No, there were none available. I would use a tape recorder on occasion to illustrate something. I'd play one of the parts on the recorder and have the student take it with him, so he could learn the other part.

**Did you have other curriculum you used with your students to supplement those nine phrases?**

No, I found that they cover everything that you have to play. So in other words, when you are playing in the symphony orchestra, you have to be able to do this, you have to be able to do that, more so than in band, although in band, you have to have much more endurance which has to be developed, I found if my students had this regular practice routine, it was like covering all the bases, and they didn't have to worry.

**Did Mr. Williams do anything special to motivate his students?**

No, if you didn't practice, you got bounced out; that's all! It was very simple.

**Did Williams require students to perform from memory?**

Oh, yes. When you stood and played your solos, you never played it with music. You memorized, so you could play it professionally.

**Did you do this with your students?**

Oh, yes.

**Do you feel that private lessons are valuable?**

That's the only way you can really study! Class lessons are useless because there are too many individual problems that have to be targeted.

**Do you think private lessons will ever be eliminated?**

I don't know. The type of teaching that I did, and Williams did with me, was not comparable to what is done in schools today. Everything was individual. When I had my lessons with Williams, he would say to me, "All right Leonard, now suppose we start with our scales." I would play number thirty-three in the Arban book, then forty-nine, twelve, twenty-one, twenty-seven, thirty-nine, fifty-four until I finished the scales. He expected me to play those flawlessly, which I had to learn to do! I played the scales, lip slurs, intervals, chords, triple tongue, double tongue, single tongue, long tones, and flexibility exercises; those nine phases of the playing. It was very simple because if you do this routine on a regular basis, you covered everything you would see in the professional world. The worst thing people are confronted with is the fear of turning over the page and suddenly seeing something they can't play. But this routine insured success. It gave you confidence!

**Did Williams use any small ensembles in teaching?**

No, only duets with me.

**Were there any trumpet choirs or brass ensembles?**

No.

**Is there a value in using them for teaching?**

Oh....., I think there is a value in it..., yes.

**Did Mr. Williams use or teach a specific warm-up?**

No. He would expect you to take the time before you played to be warmed up.

It's your business to do your preliminaries outside the job. When you sat on stage for the first number, you were to be ready to play. If you were not, they would get

**somebody else!**

**Did you have a specific warm-up?**

Not as such. You see, your lips are never the same any two times. So when I would warm-up, I would put the instrument to my lips and play a few tones. I would start in the middle and play a little louder, little softer, little higher, and a little lower. I would allow the lips to respond. If they didn't, I would take a little longer. I never really had any real problem with warming up. As a good musician, you are expected to be at the rehearsal early and ready to go. You would take the necessary time to prepare your embouchure. Many times I would be in an orchestra rehearsal playing something like a Mozart symphony. I would sit twenty-five minutes and play only two or three notes. You can't keep warming up your lips because you are on the stage! One of the techniques I used was to stuff a small towel into my cup mute and play softly, so no one would hear me. It's just a question of being able to accommodate the situation.

**How long did this take for you?**

The warm-up is a variable because there is no set time. It's a question of your lips responding to what you want to do. I told my students my "Four Don'ts" of warm up. When starting out; don't play loud, don't play soft, don't play high, don't play low. Begin with several long tones in the middle register and expand out in these four areas until your lips feel about the same every day you play. Then I would do some chromatics, single tongue patterns with intervals through the seven valve positions, slurs, and some finger-flexing drills. Your lips do not feel the same every day, so you have to accommodate the circumstance by the time you take in preparing, so that your lips will feel today as close as they did yesterday! As I said before, your lips are never the same any two times. Now if a person will believe that, he will accommodate that situation in his warm-up!

**Did you teach this to your students?**

Oh, yes.

**Has this routine changed over the years?**

No, not a bit!

**Should the warm-up be done before the lesson or during it?**

With the lesson normally. I would tell the student to take a few moments to play some tones in the middle register and play some exercises based on the principles I mentioned before, adjusting them to the student as needed.

**How did you structure your lesson?**

I would be very insistent in the way they practiced. They would practice the nine phases; the scales; major, minor, and chromatic; lip slurs, intervals, broken chords or arpeggios, triple tongue, double tongue, single tongue, long tones, and flexibility exercises. By doing these on a regular basis, you will cover everything in your playing, and if you turn over the page of music, you don't have to worry.

**Did Williams teach these nine phases of playing?**

I defined them as the nine phases; Williams didn't. He would tell you to do something, and if you didn't do it, he'd boot you out! It was very simple and direct. He didn't want to be wasting his time with wind blowers. If you wanted to play it and had trouble playing it, he would coach you. If you didn't do your practicing why, phffffft, you got out of there.

**Has teaching changed through the years?**

Well, you don't have any real incentives. In the days of the depression you had to go out and play. It didn't matter what your age was. You might sit down next to a man forty or fifty years old. You may be eighteen or nineteen, but you have to play as well as he did! Today it is completely different. It is viewed differently because the musician is protected financially. When I was growing up and studying with Williams, you got your job and maintained it as long as you played well. If you didn't, they'd get somebody else. They didn't accept excuses. It was an ice cold

business relationship, because there were trumpet players standing in line waiting for you to make a mistake. When I went with the Goldman Band, I was nineteen. There were people standing in line just hoping I would foul up, so they could have a chance to take my spot!

**Did you use any additional techniques with your students?**

I defined the different techniques more than Williams did with me, so the student knew what he was doing. Williams would say, "You do this," and you did it. You didn't know why you were doing it. He didn't take the time to explain it to the student. I probably felt I could give the student the additional information to make it more plausible to him.

**Did you vary your exercises to accommodate the needs of your students?**

Yes, I did in my teaching, but Williams didn't with me!

**Did you have any specific techniques to aid the student in learning the upper register?**

Yes. The upper register is not difficult if the player prepares himself properly. Many times the teacher can't show the student how to do it because he plays incorrectly himself! You have to be a good example for the students, so they get the necessary information. Now if students couldn't play high, I would have them begin in the middle part of the register and expand upward. I always explained to my students how to do it. If it is not explained to them, they will become frustrated, so you have to explain it. This is the natural process for growth. Your embouchure and high register won't come overnight and neither will your loud and soft register. You have to be willing to take small steps over a period of time. If things aren't working, stop for a couple of days, rest, and then continue. If you explain this to the student, they won't get too frustrated. You have to have your technique developed, so you can play it when and where it belongs. It isn't a question of

being able to play a double high C. I know many people who can play a double high C, but they can't play a top G when the conductor calls for it!

**Did you have any specific techniques to aid the student in learning the low and pedal register?**

I never spent any time teaching the pedal register because it's a novelty. There is nothing I know written for it. I don't see any reason for spending time on it. The purpose of practice is to be able to play what you see in front of you and play it correctly. That's your aim and objective. We use various systems to do this, but your basic goal is to try to play it flawlessly.

**Did Williams teach you how to play a three note chord?**

Yes, I learned to do it, but it's nothing; it's a waste of time really! Now matter how well it's done; it is still a stunt! He never spent any time teaching it.

**Did you make any difference in your teaching between legitimate and commercial playing?**

No. What you choose to play later on is your own business. You have to be able to play your instrument as a musician because you are going to be playing with good quality musicians regardless of the instruments you play. The fact you play a trumpet isn't important. You still have to make it sound compatible with them. My first job was with the Georges Barrère Little Symphony. Georges Barrère was the world's foremost flautist. He had this little symphony, a symphonette really. We had two first violins, one second, one viola, one cello, one string bass, one flute, one oboe, one clarinet, one horn, one bassoon, one cornet, one timpani. I toured with him several years. It was one of the most delightful experiences you can imagine. You had to play your instrument as well as any of the other instruments. He had me play cornet and not trumpet. I had to make it sound compatible with flute, oboe, horn, and everyone else!

**What repertoire did you play?**

Most of it were his arrangements. Marvelous, I often wondered what happened to his music.

**Were small trumpets used back then?**

No. You had the B-flat trumpet, and occasionally you would find a player who'd play the C trumpet. On very rare occasions you would have an E-flat trumpet. I saw an F trumpet at one time.

**Did you play baroque literature on your B-flat trumpet?**

Yes, I played most of it on B-flat; occasionally someone would prefer it on another instrument, and you'd play it on that. I was most comfortable with the B-flat.

**Did you teach any beginning students on the trumpet?**

No, not beginners.

**What was it like to be in Williams' band?**

Williams had a very fine band. He made it sound remarkably well because of his abilities. As players, we did what we were told. We weren't subservient, but we didn't try to inflict any of our own ideas on anything. You didn't have the opportunity or even the desire for it! You learned to play your instrument as well as you could. Williams was quite a taskmaster. He was a good musician in every way. His interpretations were excellent, and he was very demanding. When you'd play a concert with him and got through with it, you knew you had done something special. When I studied with him, he had quit playing. I think I was probably one of the few people he played anything with after he quit playing with the orchestra. He was an excellent player, but I only heard him in my lesson. He played duets with me and would demonstrate on occasion, but I never heard him play professionally!

**How old was Mr. Williams when he retired?**

Oh, I would say maybe fifty, forty-five to fifty.

**How old were you when you went with Barrère?**

Oh, probably nineteen. I was with Barrère for two seasons. But I was unable to continue because I went with the Detroit Symphony.

**Are there any publications about you or that you have written that you are especially proud?**

Well, I don't know about music, but there are some things I performed quite well, like the Ecstasy Waltz and Spanish Caprice. I played the Spanish Caprice many times with the Goldman band. I have written maybe thirty marches. Some of those have gone over quite well. It has been a business. In other words, you write a march to attract some people to something or to some cause. I recently wrote and published a book called On Conducting the Professional Concert Band.

**What aspects about teaching do you feel have been the most and least successful?**

The least successful would be picking the bad students. I think I have always tried to be as diligent as I can in my teaching, to give my student my undivided attention when he or she is there for the lesson. I never would pick up a magazine or read while he was playing. I was always very much aware of what he is doing. I'm watching his lips and playing. I've enjoyed teaching particularly when you get a student who wants to respond. You see many, many students are studying because they are told to study, or they think they have to study. Every once in awhile, you get one that is a delight, like David Zauder, who was the second trumpet of the Cleveland Orchestra. He was first trumpet while he was with me, and I gave him his first job. As a matter of fact, he got off the boat, and I had to use my German dictionary to explain some words to him. That's how long I have known him.

**Who were some of your other students?**

Gordon Small, he was a very fine cornetist. He played for me for years. Dave Zauder, of course, and Jim Underwood, who is first trumpet in an orchestra south of Cleveland. Most of them have gone on to do very well.

**How many students do you think you have taught over the years?**

Maybe a hundred and fifty.

**How many students did you teach at one time? Did you put a limit on the number?**

Oh, probably not more than seven or eight a week.

**Where you ever interested in any other career beside music?**

I don't think so, not really. I don't have any regrets in that way.

**Would you do anything differently in your career.**

I don't know. I don't think of it on that basis because you don't get a second chance! You know in the orchestra if you play, you play. If you don't, they get a new trumpet player.

**Is there anything you would like to add?**

I think that I was very fortunate, in that my parents gave me the instrument and let me enjoy it. They felt that I had enough talent to pursue it and go to music school. I'm glad that I did, because I have enjoyed the experience of music on many levels. In other words, performance with some magnificent conductors, Bruno Walter for example.

**Who were some of the other conductors?**

Oh, Eric Leinzdorf, Franko Ghione, and Victor Kolar.<sup>127</sup> I played with every well known conductor of my day.

**Would you talk about your experience at the Ernest S. Williams School of Music?**

It was a very interesting school. It had all performers, there were no fill-ins. The quality of the players was excellent. Williams had good teaching and conducting techniques. He was relentless in the demands he would make upon you. He

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<sup>127</sup> Franko Ghione (1936 - 1940) and Victor Kolar (1940 - 1942) were two principal conductors with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

wouldn't accept just "good" He'd snarl at you. It was either perfect or it needed more practice. Very simple. There was no gray area. He was a very fair person. He had, I think, a remarkable career. He was one of the soloist with the Goldman Band for many years. He became first trumpet with Stokowski with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He left there and started the School, and that's how I knew him. I studied with him when I was eight. He was quite a remarkable person. He was all business. He'd look up at the air and say, "You pusillanimous incipient phlegmatic rube, you shouldn't be allowed to look at music!" You'd sit back in amazement! He had techniques he would use to get you to play better. He'd say, "That was piano. Can you play it pianissimo?" You'd sit up on the edge of your chair just to prove to him you could do it! He was a very interesting person and enjoyable. At the school we had a three year program that received credit at New York University. You could take one additional year there and receive a degree. It was quite a remarkable situation because we had a very fine band at the school. He would treat everybody as though you were the finest player and you wanted to live up to his expectations. Everybody who knew Williams and worked with him, respected him.

#### **What did you study at the Williams School?**

I took arranging with Mayhew Lake, the foremost American arranger. Everybody had a copy of his book, The American Band Arranger although he didn't ask you to get one. Eric Leidzen also taught there. Pierre Henrotte, who was concertmaster of the Metropolitan Opera, taught us solfeggio and conducting. Solfeggio was a little different then. Today, they teach movable do; if you are in the key of F, F is Do. Henrotte taught a fixed Do, so C was always Do. It is a little bit different than most people understand today. Williams had good quality teachers for every instrument, George Barrère for flute, Wendell Hass for horn, Simon for trombone, all the great players of the day. They all liked and admired Williams.

**Are there plans to continue Bovaco Publications?<sup>128</sup>**

I have a wonderful music library. We have taken good care of it. We make use of that library through Bovaco Publications, so it can be used long after I'm gone. The music library I have is second to none. I have a lot of the Goldman things. I have enough music for fifty-five different concerts! I'll be at the Blossom Center down in Cleveland this July 3rd, 4th and 5th [1997], and we will get the largest crowds of the season.

**How many musicians will be in the band?**

Fifty-five.

**How many concerts had the Detroit Concert Band performed through the years?**

I would say over three thousand!

**Thank you for your time today, Mr. Smith. It has been a very interesting!**

I enjoyed it also; thank you.

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<sup>128</sup> Bovaco Publications is the publication segment for the Detroit Concert Band. It publishes a catalog of over two hundred eighty-eight compositions of band arrangements, and solos (instrumental, vocal songs and arias) with band accompaniment.

Appendix Three  
Interview with Raymond Crisara  
Austin, Texas, May 23, 1997

**Thank you for seeing us today, Mr. Crisara. I would like to introduce my son Chris. He is also a trumpet player.**

Nice to meet you Chris. [Chris] **Thank you.**

Doug, I understand you studied with Bob Nagel at Yale.

**Yes, I enjoyed the experience very much.**

That's good. Bob is a good friend, and we often worked together in New York.

**Mr. Nagel played a recording of your performance of the [Karel] Husa Concerto for Trumpet and Wind Symphony. It was incredible!**

If we have time, I'll tell you about the whole episode.

**We'd love to hear it.**

The tape you probably heard was the premier performance at the University of Connecticut with a select all-star university band. I agreed to do it, but two weeks before the concert, I hadn't yet received the music. I called Husa to inquire about the piece. He said, "It's in three movements, and I'm just working on the last movement. Is there anything you would like me to put in it?" Apparently, he had talked with various trumpet players to determine what was practical for the instrument. When I asked about the register and the physical demands, he said, "It ends on a high F, but it goes up chromatically, so it's really not a problem." He forgot to tell me that before the coda were about one and one-half pages of continual playing. The coda was comprised of a slow sub-divided section with a passage ascending to a high C, followed by several sequential passages, progressing chromatically up to high F, the final note! When the music arrived, I noted a considerable amount of modern notation. Many spots required "improvisation" from the performer, because Husa often used "lines" to connect notes and indicated

direction without specific pitches. It required planning and imagination! A few days before the concert, I received the score from Associated Publishers and phoned the conductor, Arnold Gabriel to discuss it. We rehearsed the morning of the concert from 10:30 until lunch. The concerto is a complex piece, and we only had time to rehearse it section by section. As I was preparing for the performance, I realized we had never played the piece straight through! I had no sense of the pacing or the physical demands and that can be a concern for a trumpet player. Fortunately, the performance went rather well. I performed it here at Austin while Husa was composer in residence for several days. It gave me an opportunity to get to know him personally and to discuss the piece more fully. That's the history of the tape!

**Thank you. How did you begin your career?**

I grew up in Cortland, New York, a small city in mid-New York State located near Syracuse. My dad was a tool and die maker for the Brockway Motor Truck Company. He played clarinet in the town band, and when the conductor left, my dad was chosen to be the new conductor. I don't know how he did it, but he taught virtually all the players in that band. I grew up in a musical atmosphere because people would come to our house in the evening for their lessons. Naturally, I was very curious and often asked if I could play their instruments. I discovered I could make noise with the trumpet and I really liked that! When I was ten, I told my father I wanted to play trumpet, so he bought me a second-hand trumpet for ten dollars. It was made in Czechoslovakia and was not a very good instrument! Like the cobbler whose kids had holes in their shoes, my dad never had time to teach me. I never had any lessons until I went to Williams' school, so I learned by osmosis. Eventually, my dad decided I could be a member of the town band. It was a very good local band with a marvelous first trumpet player, from whom I inherited a valid concept and approach to the instrument.

**Who were your father and mother?**

Frank and Margaret Crisara. My dad immigrated from Italy as a teenager, and my mother was born here.

**When did you go to Williams' camp?**

In the summer of 1936 after graduating from high school. I first knew Don Jacoby at that camp. We were both fifteen years old at the time!

**How many camps did you attend?**

Three, the first in 1936. I worked the next summer [1937] and went to summer camps in 1938 and 1939, and for a short period in 1940.

**Was the cornet the instrument of choice?**

Yes. Because of Williams' background as soloist with Sousa and the Goldman bands, there were more cornetists than trumpeters at Williams' school. Leonard Smith, Frank Elsass, Ned Mahoney, Don Jacoby, and other brilliant cornet players in the image of Williams, were there. In my third year at school, I studied the trumpet seriously at the suggestion of Williams. He loaned me his Conn 22-B trumpet, and I played it through the year. Until that time, I only played cornet at the school.

**Did you have any teachers before attending the Williams' school?**

No. The first teacher I had was Ernest Williams at his summer camp in 1936. I also had an extra lesson each week with Leonard Meretta. In my eyes, Meretta was a giant! Lenny was the first chair cornetist and did extra teaching with the Chief [Williams]. After high school, I announced to my dad that I wanted to be a trumpet player, and he said to me, "Why don't you do something honorable? Play your trumpet for fun and get a regular job!" I was very insistent because I wanted to play the trumpet! My dad called our school band director, Mr. George Light, and they had a conversation about "my decision." Mr. Light had been a student of Williams while at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY. Williams had purchased the music camp from the college and created his own school. Mr. Light suggested I go to camp which

would give me and my parents some idea of how I ranked in the general level of young cornet players. At the end of summer camp, Williams told my folks that if everything fell into place, I had a reasonable chance to make a living with music. My dad decided to send me to the winter school in New York, but my mother thought fifteen was too young to go to New York alone, so I stayed home for a year and went to Williams' school in the fall of 1937. I did some additional studying with Frank Elsass, soloist of the Goldman Band, but Williams was my most influential teacher. Those were the only lessons I had. It would be wrong to say I didn't study with Harry Glantz because I worked with him professionally for many years. You would have to be an idiot not to learn a considerable amount from Harry, and I still learn from the people I work with everyday. I feel fortunate to have had a career that encompassed many different idioms. I was playing with the very best of the symphony, commercial, and jazz players in New York. I think I'm a product of my upbringing, of Williams, and of my environment. I tell my students, as long as you play this instrument, you're going to learn something about yourself everyday. You really are learning more about yourself than anything else.

**What was your first playing position?**

I played with the Seventh Regiment Band for three weeks, summer of 1940. It was an outstanding regimental band in New York City. It was a civilian band affiliated with the Seventh Regiment National Guard and consisted of New York professionals. We rehearsed each afternoon and performed a concert nightly. I was solo cornet in the band and played a solo, virtually every night. It was a very intense experience and the beginning of my career. People from New York, who were important in music, would come to the concerts and listen. Little by little, a reputation started to take shape. At the end of the school year, I had a conversation with Williams which included a discussion about the World's Fair [New York

1939-40]. There was a very good band at the World's Fair with many outstanding players Williams had known for years. I'll never forget his words to me. He said, "Ray, I'm going out to the Fair, and I want you to go with me. We're going to plant an acorn, and maybe we'll get a big tree out of it." I was thrilled to go because he was my mentor. I met Del Staigers, a renowned cornetist, Simone Mantia, a euphonium soloist with Sousa, and many other fine musicians. Later, when Mantia was personnel manager and first trombone with the Metropolitan Opera House, Williams wrote a letter asking if Mantia would have time to listen to me. Mantia called and said he would be glad to hear me play and arranged a time at the Conn Store in Rockefeller Center. At the store, I had been playing for only a few minutes when there was a knock on the door; it was Del Staigers! He asked if he could listen. I played part of a cornet solo, and some excerpts, which included the prelude to Wagner's Parsifal. Mr. Mantia thanked me, and I left. About this same time, Mr. Williams told me William Revelli was coming through New York and auditioning people for the University of Michigan band. I had no work at the moment, so Williams suggested I play for him and Revelli asked me to come to school as a teaching assistant. I did some teaching and played in his band. During the fall [1940], Vincent Bach came to the University and gave a clinic. Vincent had made me a set of screw-rim mouthpieces copied from a Del Staigers' King cornet mouthpiece. At that time, the trend was not to change mouthpieces, so you developed something like this, so the rim was consistent with underparts that could be changed. Revelli had three of us perform Williams' cornet trio, Orion for Bach and he had a conversation with us following the performance. In the middle of the year, I received a telegram from Vincent Bach in New York stating the first trumpet with the Toscanini's NBC Orchestra was having lip problems. Bach suggested I come to New York and audition. The next day, I received a telegram from Simone Mantia saying the same thing, so I went to New York! Mantia met me and took me

to NBC to play for H. Leopold Spitalny (the NBC personnel manager). When I finished playing, Spitalny said I played well, but he felt I didn't have the background necessary to play with the orchestra. That was the best thing he could have done for me because I really didn't have an adequate background for the position. It would have been a terrible mistake. Then Mantia said to Spitalny, "You do as you want, but when we get an opening at the Met, this youngster is going to get a chance to audition." I was a blessing not to get the job at NBC. I went back to Michigan and finished the semester. My first big position came at the end of the school year [spring 1941] when Frank Elsass enlisted in the Navy and left the Goldman Band. Leonard [Smith] and Ned Mahoney suggested that I play for Frank's chair. I auditioned for Goldman, was accepted, and played with the band for two summers. The first trumpet position at the Met opened that summer [1941]. I auditioned, and was given the job with one stipulation; I was to be coached by one of their conductors for the summer, so I could learn the repertoire. It was a wise thing because there was very little orchestra rehearsal time at the Met. I was at the Met for one and one-half seasons until I went into the Army in December 1942. In the Army, I trained with the 100th Infantry Division at Fort Jackson, SC, near Columbia. I was there until the next September [1942] when I was transferred to New York City and a Special Services Band commanded by Captain Harry Salter. We had professional players from various orchestras in New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. It was a fine symphony similar to those of Andre Kostelanetz, and we also played big band jazz. We made films with Stokowski, Kostelanetz, and Marion Anderson and did recordings, radio broadcasts, and concerts. I loved the variety and wanted to make my living this way after I was released from the Army. I became a civilian in February 1946. I wanted to do studio work, so I decided to see the studio contractors at NBC, ABC, and CBS. I went to NBC not realizing it was Lincoln's birthday and a national holiday. Under normal

circumstances, I would have gone in and a secretary would stop me. However, there were no secretaries that day, so I walked into the NBC office and met the contractor! I asked him if there was opportunity to play? He said, "Not at the moment, but I certainly will put your credentials in the file, and we'll see what happens." Then I went to see the ABC contractor who was in the same building. I talked to him, and he offered me a concert at the Waldorf Astoria. It was a presentation concert with the ABC Staff Orchestra. Later that day, I again met the NBC contractor, and he said to me, "I had lunch with a friend from ABC. I understand you're doing a concert for him on Friday night. You treat it as an audition for me." NBC called the next week and asked if I would do a radio broadcast. It was a small orchestra doing montage music for a dramatic radio show. The trombone player on the session happened to have lunch the very next day with Roy Shield, personnel manager at NBC. Several days later, I got a phone call from NBC asking me to come down and see Mr. Shield. There was an opening in the staff orchestra, and Mr. Shield offered me the job. I asked him if I could become a member of the NBC Symphony Orchestra, but he said they would have to consider that in the future. Harry Glantz, principal trumpet of the NBC Symphony, usually took a short vacation in the summer. Shield assigned me to play in his place. I played first trumpet in the orchestra for three or four of the broadcasts. When it was over, Shield told me they would make room for me in the big orchestra. It was a marvelous way to make a living because I went from Toscanini, Charles Munch, and Ormandy to Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, Paul McCartney, and Alice Cooper. You never knew what to expect until you got to the date. I once played a dramatic radio show. It would have been quite normal, except the story line was about an audition for a trumpet position in a new orchestra! I had to do twelve orchestral excerpts for that show! The very first time I played the Ballerina's Dance from Stravinsky's Petrushka, was for the Sid Caesar television show! The

conductor, Bernie Green, called me and said they were doing a show called The Virtuoso Orchestra. He wanted to write a theme and variation solo with cadenza, similar to the The Carnival of Venice and asked if I would do it. It was the first time I had done that show, and I didn't know what to expect. The Ballerina Dance was also on the show and Bernie started the rehearsal with Petrushka for logistical considerations. Everybody was standing there; Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, the orchestra, the director, everybody! The first trumpet was a an excellent commercial player, but was having trouble with the Stravinsky. The taping wasn't getting done. Finally, Bernie asked me if I would do it. I got lucky, and we taped it.

### **Why did you leave New York?**

I spent over thirty-five years in New York, but coming to the University of Texas at Austin in the fall of 1978 had to do with the change in the general atmosphere and environment of music in New York and the country. When rock and roll came on the scene, I thought it would be around for six months, and they would dump it. It didn't dump! My own children said one time, "Daddy, you don't seem as happy in your work. You used to come home and talk about all the people you worked with and the projects you were doing. You were always so enthusiastic, but now you don't even talk about your work." I didn't realize it, but they were right, because there was very little to talk about. Recording sessions were seldom recorded with an entire group; I would often record the trumpet track by myself. Music is also a social art and that was gradually being squeezed out. Much of the work I did was not music as I had known it. I was still very busy, but the most important part of my work was going to the Union to get my checks. But I must tell you; it was still a great way to make a living. My days were always different. In the winter when the river would freeze, I would tell my children not to go to school that morning, and we would go ice skating instead! Other people would go to their eight-to-five jobs during the week and be home on Saturday and Sunday. My schedule was always

changing, I could leave at 7:00 a.m. and not get home until 1:00 a.m. the next day. Overall my family life was probably much healthier than most. Chris, I understand you are a trumpet player? [Chris] Yes. How have you done with those braces? [Doug] Trying to find a comfortable mouthpiece has been difficult. Braces are a problem. I teach at an age level where it's not much of a problem. Most people suggest that you not use wax because the lips feel different every time. The best thing you can do is get used to the pain; that's the only way it can be consistent. The mouth is a great instrument of exaggeration. A thousandth of an inch feels like it's a mile. I suggest you tough it out! Just play, and you'll find your way. Philosophically, I shy away from people who say you have to do this and that. I know fellows who play gorgeously, but visually their method seems unworkable. It can work, though, because we're all different. You will find your own way. I am reminded of a story. [Reynold] Schilke came to the [New York] brass conference some years ago with a young student who performed beautifully. The boy was very good! I told Ren he was to be complimented. Ren said, "This youngster really plays well. It has nothing to do with me. He's very, very talented. The only thing I can do is keep out of his way and hope I don't hurt him!" Aren't those good words? As teachers, we can inspire and give direction, but's up to the student to do the work and determine what they must do to be effective.

**Are there publications you have written, of which you are especially proud?**

I did a band accompaniment to the Arutunian [Concerto in A-flat Major for Trumpet and Orchestra (1949)], which I use occasionally. The most important article I've written was about Bell's Palsy, a viral infection from which I luckily recovered. At an ITG [International Trumpet Guild] meeting years ago, I met a doctor who's hobby was trumpet. He said, "Your article about Bell's Palsy was the best I have read!" He valued it because it was written by someone who had experienced it and

could describe the problems, symptoms, and a method of treatment for recovery.

**What aspects of your teaching have been the most successful?**

The most satisfying is making a musician out of a trumpet player. I tell my students you're really trying to say something; the trumpet happens to be your vehicle. I feel most successful when I hear my students play music, and I think, if I did it, I would want it to sound that way.

**What was the least successful?**

I've never been able to teach anybody to flutter tongue. I don't know of anybody who has.

**Did you teach at the college level while in New York?**

Yes. I taught at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut for three years and New York University for six years.

**What are your duties at the University of Texas?**

My studio extends from undergraduates learning a secondary instrument to masters and doctoral students. I have four part-time teaching assistants who teach the secondaries under my guidance. I teach everybody who is a principal [major]. I spend time with them each and every week. If a student majors in trumpet at the University of Texas at Austin, he works with me.

**Do you do committee work?**

Yes, and there's paperwork constantly. I don't have to do it, but if I'm going to be part of the school, it's not responsible for me to refuse. Three years ago, the University created the Academy of Distinguished Professors. Ten professors are selected annually, and I was chosen in 1997. I don't have any earned degrees. I received an honorary doctorate from the University of New York State last year. It's the only degree I have because I never finished the program at Michigan. When I started playing professionally, I didn't go back. I'm a "dees, dat, and dose" musician. I believe it is important to have people with my background recognized in

an academic environment. Most of the Academy recognizes undergraduate classroom teaching. I'm really not a classroom teacher. I have twenty two classes each week! Each student is a class and a unique challenge. I dig deep into every one of my students because I have a responsibility to each as an individual.

**Was there another career you considered?**

No. I don't think so. I was busy early in my career and enjoyed it.

**Did Williams have a preference for cornet?**

I think so. The bulk of his career was in cornet. He was cornet soloist in the Sousa Band. For the most part, his trumpet playing was in his later years, when he was first trumpet with the Philadelphia Orchestra, under Stokowski. If he demonstrated anything in my lesson, it was always on cornet.

**Do you have a preference?**

Generally, the trumpet is the instrument of choice for most situations, especially for most of the solo and orchestral literature of today. Today, the cornet is very limited in it's use, but I do think the cornet is suited best for the literature written for it; such as the virtuosic solos of Bellstedt, Simon, Clarke, and the orchestral repertoire specific to the cornet such as Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky's L'Histoire.

**Did you ever play L'Histoire?** Yes, several times. The most significant time was at Carnegie Hall for a "Stravinsky Festival," which he attended. But when ever I played it, I did it on trumpet.

**Have you taught beginners?**

Yes, but on a very limited basis.

**Do you use in your teaching, or techniques of Williams?**

Everyday. Williams said, "Don't ever forget; it's 90% the man." That's important. Williams was a master psychologist and could plant ideas in your head. Williams said, and I tell my students, "You must capture the importance of this instrument. If you're going to play trumpet, you must have the courage to go for something and

know that if you miss it, they're going to hear it for seven blocks!" Those are his words, and I think they are true. You must be positive about yourself. The minute you allow negativism to come in, the battle is over. Williams had a very strong work ethic instilled by his father. Walter Smith, a student of Ernest Williams said, "If you're going to play trumpet, you must make up your mind as long as you play, you are going to be a slave to the instrument." You have to play it everyday in order for it to work. Williams believed you must sharpen your technique daily. He said, "You must develop a regimen that recovers your playing everyday." Williams also said, "You have to learn the language of the instrument. You must learn to do what trumpet players are expected to do. Once you've learned the language, nothing will give you trouble." He wasn't a great one for doing orchestral excerpts. If you could transpose and use your head and ears, then you were going to be able to perform. As an example, I would go to record dates ten or fifteen minutes early, do a little maintenance, then sit down and get ready to work. Some of my colleagues would come in and immediately leaf through the book to see if there was something that might give them trouble. I never did that. Because of my Williams' background, most of the things I was asked to play, I had already done. That was part of my language because I laid a firm foundation with Williams years earlier. I played Petrushka without trouble because of Williams. I had it in my back pocket because of the materials he gave me. He taught me through materials more than methods. He gave me materials that worked various areas, but he left it to me to do them. That's the way Williams thought; it was a natural process to him.

**How long was the program of study?**

Three years.

**What was your perception of Williams as a performer?**

I would be in my lesson struggling over something I had worked on for a week. He'd pick up his cornet and play it right on the spot! I have a recording of a solo he

did with the Sousa Band and it's marvelous. At the school, there really wasn't time to do any of his own playing. He never performed when I was at the school.

**Did you have any expectations regarding studying with Williams?**

No. I thought here's a man who knows more than I, and I hope I learn something.

**Would you describe the strengths and weaknesses of Williams as a teacher?**

His strength was setting an example of a healthy work ethic. As far as a weakness is concerned, he was very busy and couldn't give as much attention to his teaching as he might. My first exposure to the Charlier book was at summer camp with Williams. My recollection was that I did a shallow reading of it. Now, I work with Charlier quite intently with my students.

**Was Williams a good teacher for you?**

Yes, very much so!

**Did Williams treat his students equally?**

I know he didn't! Williams read his people well. Don Jacoby was his favorite. Jake earned it, because he was a marvelous player. I'm sure Williams thought of Jacoby in different terms than me. By comparison, I was an upstart. Jake was already a player. If Jake wasn't doing well, Williams would climb all over him and give him a real "going-over." If I didn't do well, Williams would say, "He's doing the best he can." He treated us differently. At rehearsals, Williams would sometimes tell somebody, "You play terribly. Why don't you pack up your horn and get out of here?" At the time, Williams conducted the band at New York University and had a few of us play as "ringers." Once while playing, I did something wrong. He looked at me shaking his hands and said, "You rascal, you. Why do you play like that?" He probably thought that was the strongest term I could accept and still function! Everybody was different. Ned Mahoney told me a story about a performance of Herbert L. Clarkes' trio, The Three Aces. Ned had the "Del Staigers part" which

began with a cadenza. Ned asked Williams, "How do I do this?" The Chief said, "You get to work, and practice. You'll learn how to do it." That's all he said, so Ned learned how to do it.<sup>129</sup> The Chief left it up to you. He was not going to spoon feed you. I think we should all be grateful to him. Of course, I've played difficult music, but I never walked away from anything because it was too hard. Situations which could have been difficult, weren't impossible because of my Williams' training! One time on the Perry Como television show, there was a segment containing The Carnival of Venice. You had to have it in your head and fingers because there was no time to learn it. The guy who can put things together in the shortest time is valuable and will be successful. If you can't, you're a liability, and won't be hired next time. With this background, I tell my students, you have to do this now! You can't have a lip problem. Nobody cares how your lip feels. You play the best you can at that moment. The music should not be limited by your limitations. A trumpet clinic was given here at the university and the guest clinician suggested playing Hindemith's Sonate on C trumpet. When he was asked why, he said it was easier and safe. Later, I told my students, "No good!" I don't want it easier and safe. You do what makes the music sound best! That's Williams' philosophy and mine.

**Did you study with other significant teachers at this time?**

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<sup>129</sup> John E. (Ned) Mahoney confirmed this story adding the following information: The Three Aces was composed by Herbert L. Clarke and intended for, but never performed, at an ABA conference, featuring Walter Smith, Del Staigers and Frank Simon as soloists. Clarke's composition, a "variations" based on thematic fragments of Sousa's marches, featured an opening trio of cadenzas "borrowed" from Smith's Maudie Waltz, Staigers' Carnival of Venice, and Simon's Willow Echoes. Williams had scheduled the trio to be performed with the Goldman Band in New York using three ESW students; Leonard Smith (playing the Smith's cadenza, which contained g<sup>tr</sup>), Ned Mahoney (playing the Staigers' cadenza), and Joe Frey (playing the Simon's cadenza). The scheduled performance was several weeks away, but Williams gave the three students a single night's notice to prepare for a rehearsal the following morning with the ESW band. Mahoney said, "That's how Williams operated. We had to do it very quickly. We stayed up all night learning our parts!"

No. There were many good teachers in New York, but I didn't study with any of them. I studied only with Williams.

**Did you play primarily on the B-flat trumpet?**

Yes. When I went to work, I carried a B-flat trumpet and a flugel horn. After Maurice Andre appeared, the piccolo trumpet became a necessity. Those were the three basic instruments.

**What instrument brands did you play?**

In the beginning, I used a French Besson Fabrication model that I bought second-hand. Its serial number indicated it was built in the early-1920's. Later, for a short time, I played a Benge, but I went back to my Besson until I wore it out. I finished up with a Bach Stradivarius and play it today. This brings me back to an interesting story. Vincent and I became friends during the war. He made me a new mouthpiece underpart because I was using screw rims. It was better than the one I had been using because it had more definition between notes. The backbore in that underpart became Bach's stock backbore. That was 1945!

**What mouthpieces do you play ?**

I'll show you. The first is a poor copy of Del Staigers' cornet mouthpiece made by the King Company. The other is one Vincent made for me in 1945! It's marked a 7B, but is closer to a 5B with a #10 backbore and #24 throat. I've looked at other mouthpieces, but I always come back to this. That's what I use.

**Did Williams tell you who his teachers were?**

No. The only one that I can think of is someone by the name of Brown in Boston.

**Are there aspects of your teaching derived only from Williams?**

Well, there are certain things he would say more often. His teaching was characterized by a mindset more than a physical approach.

**Did Williams use or teach a specific warm-up?**

I don't know about a specific warm-up. What was important to him was a daily

routine of scales, lip slurs, and articulations, including low and high register work. He stressed these areas for maintenance and growth.

**Do you have a specific warm-up you teach?**

I try not to use the phrase “warm-up” because it speaks of apology. I prefer to use the word “drills.” I have a specific routine, but I can also modify it, so it doesn’t become boring. I take certain sections of it and have my students do it. The routine depends on the students’ development and is different for everyone. It contains lip slurring, scales, articulation patterns, and register growth.

**Would you describe your warm-up?**

I begin with slow lip slurs. I don’t do long tones. My first exercise is the fifth from low C up to G, the fourth from the G to C including the sixth from G to E. If I have students at this level in their drills, I’m careful to say this is what I do; it’s comfortable for me. If it doesn’t work for them, I do something else or modify it. I do lip slurs up to high F. That register needs to be workable. I do two octave chromatics up to high F, maybe F sharp and G. I do scale patterns out of the Williams’ book or the Arban book. If it’s from the Arban, I elongate them because the range is limited. I do two octave scale patterns to the tonic, both slurred and articulated. I do diatonic fifths in different keys. I reverse them, so they become diatonic fourths. I do triads and reverse them to get sixths. I do them articulated and slurred.

**How long does that take?**

If I have time, forty-five minutes to an hour. If I don’t have time, I abridge it and cover the same material, but in less detail. Sometimes, there is not adequate time.

**Has your warm-up routine changed during the years?**

It has included more high register. What was high C and high D years ago, has become E and F, so my maintenance routine includes those notes.

**Should the warm-up be done before the lesson or during it?**

It should be done prior to the lesson. If a student hasn't warmed up, I have them play a few notes and get underway. Their playing will indicate how well they're doing. If there are problems in a lesson, we may talk about them and adjust their maintenance routine to address the problems. I like teaching with method books. They uncover problems by indicating what you can and cannot do. If you can play the daylights out of Smith, Charlier, Chavanne, Bitsch, and Maurice Andre's book, Twelve Caprices, then I'm not concerned about your ability to perform.

**How long does the maintenance routine take your students?**

I warn them about over doing it. Williams cautioned that you should put your horn away while you're still functioning well. The dangerous time of playing is when you're over-tired and must play. It can be detrimental and lay the groundwork for bad habits. There are times when you must play when "tired"; then you must use experience and imagination to help you. That's part of being a trumpet player. If you feel a little fatigued after doing maintenance for a half hour, give yourself a rest for fifteen or twenty minutes; then go back to your work.

**What were the fundamental techniques of Williams' teaching?**

None as such. He really was a nonspecific teacher. If you asked Williams how to play something, he would respond with something like, "I don't know how you're going to do it. You go work with it, and you'll find out how to do it." I've asked other Williams' students what they learned from him. The response was usually, "I don't know!" We learned a lot from him, but nothing specific. He taught us to work hard! He did advocate an open throat when playing. He was one of the early people, in his book, to suggest the tah-ee system of slurring. I remember him telling me to be careful about that. He said, "The ee syllable can create a poor sound when overdone. Be sure that everything sounds well." He had specific things to say to me about triple tongue and double tonguing. Generally, the fundamental techniques were directional and not specific. Williams taught from the materials he

chose and the challenges they presented. In his teaching, he would cover as much of the language of the instrument as possible and materials which presented that language. His goal was for you to learn how to play any cornet solo or trumpet literature of the period, or literature that might come in the future. In this way, you were prepared to play no matter what was presented to you.

**Do you teach these techniques the same way?**

I don't use the same words he did, but I would say our final goals are very similar. The goal is to have a fundamental knowledge and application of the language of the trumpet. You got to have your technique in place to the degree that you can satisfy virtually anything a conductor would ask you to do. If you don't have those tools, you're not ready to go out and work. I have tried to pass Williams' philosophy on to my students. My current and former students have commented to me that they talk to their students about me and the people who were around me, just as I talked to them about Williams and the people who surrounded him. If this is true, then the philosophy of Williams is being carried on to future generations.

**Do you vary these techniques to accommodate your students?**

Yes. When I do suggest a change for a student, I tell them it is just a suggestion and an experiment to determine what works for them.

**Do you have any specific techniques to learn the upper register?**

Yes. I start in the middle register and expand the routine until it encompasses the high register. That's what Doc Severinsen does. Frank Scimonelli, a Williams student, had a very good high register, but a non-existent low register. The Chief said, "You have to work on your low register." That's all he said to him!

**Do you have any specific techniques to aid students in playing the low register?**

No. We might have a conversation about embouchure position and the use of materials requiring practice in the low register.

**What about pedal register?**

Williams did not emphasize the pedal register, and neither do I. I don't know many players who play in the pedal register with the same embouchure they play in other registers. For me, improving the practical language of the trumpet is time better spent.

**Did Williams teach you how to play a three note chord?**

Yes. He explained it, but left it to me to develop it. It really isn't very useful in general repertoire. He spent very little time on it.

**Did Williams play a scale without valves?**

Yes, in my lessons. He did it occasionally as a demonstration.

**Did Williams do any buzzing of the mouthpiece?**

No. He played on the instrument.

**Mr. Smith mentioned Williams played on a dry lip.**

I had no idea. That's how much we talked about it.

**Do you play on dry or wet lip?**

A wet lip. Playing on a dry lip is dangerous because it retards and minimizes muscular growth. A dry mouthpiece sticks to the lips like a band-aid and supports the embouchure. When you perspire, there's no muscle strength to hold the mouthpiece in place.

**Do you teach the same way to classical and commercial players?**

Yes. My job is to produce well-rounded players. I don't think there is a big difference between the two.

**Do you teach the piccolo trumpet and other small horns ?**

I don't teach them, but I do teach their repertoire. Students use the instrument of choice as needed. If someone has done the Haydn Concerto on B-flat and would like to do it on an E-flat, I would agree. Then we discuss it as needed in a lesson. If a student wants to learn to play the piccolo trumpet, I have him begin with Bach-

like scales and chordal studies to become acquainted with the horn. Students may be tempted to over-blow the instrument if they are not careful. Most of my students play B-flat. The C trumpet is not the instrument of choice in my studio. The C trumpet is easier to play than the B-flat, so I would rather students study on the B-flat. I teach my students on the hardest instrument and then the other instruments are easier. I believe to do it the other way is wrong.

**What mouthpiece do you use for piccolo?**

When I was in New York, I was using something similar to a Bach 7E. For me, larger mouthpieces tend to be flat in the upper register. In New York, I played a Selmer piccolo and used it in many different situations, not just baroque literature. I'm primarily a lazy guy. When I have a two-week vacation, I don't play for ten days and hope in the next two or three days I can get enough lip, so I can work and not be in great trouble. Once after a vacation, I did run into trouble. I had a recording date with Morton Stevens, the CBS conductor from Los Angeles. It was a huge, Kostelanetz-type orchestra with a roaring brass section and a reed section with saxes and legitimate winds. Circumstances required that I play all of the first trumpet parts. I could see quickly, I was going to be in trouble with endurance because everything was long and the tessitura high. I went to Morty and asked if I could try it on piccolo trumpet. He said if it worked, fine. Thank the Lord I had a Selmer! The Selmer with its breadth and size of the sound played lead over everything beautifully. It really worked! I tell my students the ideal situation is to have two piccolo trumpets, because they serve different purposes, one for breadth and warmth and the other for lightness and agility. Regardless of the horn, you still must play musically!

**Did Williams play during your lessons?**

Not much, but when there was need to demonstrate, he would pick up a cornet and play.

**Did he play along with you?**

No.

**How long were your lessons with Williams?**

They were generally scheduled for an hour. My last year at school, Williams was rounding-out my playing. He would teach me late in the evening. He might schedule my lesson at 11:00 at night and I would go down to his studio and be there until 2:30 in the morning! Jacoby told me, Williams would stay up late writing music and have him come down often at 2:00 in the morning to play through his composition!

**Were there any class lessons?**

No.

**Do you hold class lessons in your studio?**

No.

**What type of student did Williams select for his studio?**

If Williams felt there was promise, he would be interested. There were some students at school who were not strong, but he would give each the same amount of attention regardless of ability. He also had a number of professional players. Mendez studied with him. Mendez could play on two settings. When his lip got tired, he would change to a different setting. He said it was like starting on a fresh lip.

**What type of student do you select for your studio?**

Potential is the most important thing I look for. They have to be able to read music, demonstrate an ability to sight sing, and have a reasonable amount of musical discipline.

**Are there pedagogical materials Williams used you do not?**

For beginners especially, I do not use his book because it moves too quickly. I don't use the Arban with beginners for the same reason; it's too discouraging.

Williams exposed me to Charlier, Chavanne, Walter Smith, and I use them with my students because of my experience with him.

**Are there newer materials superior to those used by Williams?**

They aren't superior, but they go further. I use the Reynolds' Forty-eight Etudes, Arban-Maire Volume Three and Bitsch's Twenty Etudes because the rhythms are more sophisticated and present challenges beyond the Arban characteristic studies. My doctoral level students may even run out of material of value. I use the Chaynes, Tomasi, Aaron Harris, Bozza's Sixteen Etudes, Friese, and Boutry. People who can play these materials have trumpet playing where it belongs.

**Do you use any electronic aids in your teaching?**

I use recordings. If a solo is new, I encourage the student to listen to a recording once or twice and then put it away. I will play for my students, but I want them to develop their own interpretation and not someone else's. On occasion I will tape my playing for a student. We might both record and compare the differences.

**Do you have a curriculum students are expected to progress through?**

I have specific books. The order of them depends on the level of the student. It's customized to the student's needs. Some students are not with me long enough to cover everything I would like. The progress a student makes indicates where we go next. I take my most sophisticated players and repeat the Arban characteristic studies. I expect them to play at a higher level. I've been around a number of years, and I'm still learning. There's no limit to what you can learn. I received an honorary doctorate sometime ago. It took me fifty years! Every time I picked up my horn, it was a recital. There were no marks involved, it had to do with bread and butter. I think that sums it up!

**Did Williams motivate his students to practice?**

One he would baby, one he would cajole, and at another, he would rave! It depended on the person involved. I do it the same way. I've told a student to put

his horn away and go on home! He needed to hear it. To others, I have said not to worry because, to scold them would only be adding to the problem.

**Did Williams require students to perform from memory?**

It wasn't a requirement, but we often did it. During a public concert, it was expected you would perform from memory.

**Do you have your students memorize?**

Not all the time. My main job is to help the student do his best. If memorizing makes it better, fine.

**Do you feel private lessons are valuable?**

Oh, yes.

**Do you believe private lessons will be eliminated in college curriculums?**

I don't know. I don't sense that at our school.

**Can group lessons take the place of private lessons?**

No!

**Did Williams use any small ensembles in his teaching?**

Not formally. We might do a trumpet quartet occasionally.

**Is there value in small ensemble playing?**

Absolutely. No question! One of the best examples of that is brass quintet. In my estimation, brass quintet gives you the environment of solo playing with the discipline of ensemble playing.

**Are there additional comments you would like to make?**

One thing I would say has to do with my philosophy of trumpet playing. I would say this to Chris more than anyone else. You're lucky to be a trumpet player! The trumpet has an emotional and dynamic spectrum wider than any other instrument. You can be as vicious as possible and sound right for the moment, or you can play a lullaby and make it sound as beautiful as a flutist. That's your challenge. Who

leads the brass section, Chris? **The trumpet does.** That's a very good reason for playing the trumpet! A short time ago, a freshman came in and played for me. His playing was good, but it was quiet and introverted. I told him to practice in such a way that when he came back for his next lesson, I would have to say, "Don't play so loud." I kept after him, and he improved. Later in the semester, I saw his parents and talked to them about their son. His mother said to me, "Very seldom would our son look at us when we talked with him. Now, he looks at us right in the eye!" That's what playing the trumpet can do!

## **Appendix Four**

### **Interview With Robert Nagel**

**Albuquerque, New Mexico, May 7, 1997**

**Mr. Nagel, thank you for talking with me today. It's very nice to see you again. I understand you studied with Ernest Williams for only a brief time.**

Yes. I had to go to his school in Brooklyn, on the west side of Manhattan, for my lessons. I studied with him during the school year, 1942 - 1943, and I was his only student at the Julliard School. Williams was preoccupied with the war. He'd mention it from time to time or refer to it in the newspaper. He was somewhat detached, and my study with him was perfunctory. I don't believe he paid a great deal of attention to what I was doing. He did have standards and would let me know if I wasn't playing well. To give him the benefit of the doubt, his heart wasn't in it. I think what was really on his mind was the end of his school, which closed in 1943. I think it affected his attitude.

**Who was your most influential teacher?**

There were two teachers who were the most influential. The first teacher was Fred Bosworth. I studied with him longer than anyone else, from age twelve through high school. He played third trumpet in the Stanley Theater pit orchestra in Pittsburgh. He was educated with a degree in psychology from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and had two sons who played trumpet. He was a good teacher. The other was Murray Karpilovsky, a symphonic player.

**Why was Mr. Bosworth so influential to you?**

In a way, he was probably the most influential teacher because of his thoroughness and the length of time I studied with him. To give you an idea, I studied transposition, and he would save a study for the end of the lesson. I would go through a prepared transposition and would have about ten minutes left. He would

put a book on the music stand, which I had never seen and say, "Let's take No. 8 and play this in E-flat." Because he was a schooled musician, he would play along. We'd play about twelve to sixteen bars and he'd say, "Okay, in D!" He would make the changes more frequent. Four bars in one key, four bars in another. When I finished, my head was swimming. I knew most of the transpositions from just going home and hacking through them. He was probably the biggest influence on me. I had most of my technique together, but he was refining it.

**Who was Murray Karpilovsky?**

Well, he was my second most influential teacher, and I studied with him my senior year in high school. He could have been another Bud Herseth. You name it, he could have been one of the top symphony trumpet players, but he had a very negative personality. He played principal in the Pittsburgh Symphony under Fritz Reiner! If you could play for Fritz Reiner and stay in there [laughs], well that says a lot about you! He had a big sound. It was a loud sound, too, but it was big! He came to New York to freelance and played in the Voice of Firestone radio orchestra. My dad got an orchestra subscription for the entire season to the Pittsburgh Symphony my senior year in high school. We went to all the symphony concerts and heard him play big repertoire, like the Strauss tone poems and such. Karpilovsky had the physical ability to do that repertoire, and play it musically. I learned a lot from him in certain areas. He was very demanding, but patient. He wouldn't let up until I did something the way he wanted. After I studied with Karpilovsky, I studied with Williams, who was my last teacher. After the age of eighteen, I never studied anymore.

**So you received your diploma after only one year at Julliard?**

Yes. I graduated from high school in 1942 and enrolled at Julliard. I received a Diploma in Trumpet in the spring 1943 and then was drafted into the army. Most of the men at Julliard were called to active service the fall semester, which was great

for me. If all those trumpet students had been there, I wouldn't have had as much of an opportunity. I was called up later because my father got an extension for me until the end of the academic year. I received the diploma after only one year, instead of the usual three, because of my training in high school and background in piano.

**What did you do after studying with Williams?**

He died only four years after I studied with him when he was sixty-five. At my age, that's a young man. I don't think he played any longer, although he played once for me and I will tell you about it. I went into the Army and played with the West Point band at the military academy. The first trombone in the band played second trombone with Toscanini in the NBC Symphony. I continued my education working with these experienced people. When I was discharged from the army in the spring of 1946, I had no intention of becoming a trumpet player. I went back to Julliard to study composition the fall of 1946 and received my Bachelors [1949] and Masters [1950] degrees in composition. I was looking for a teaching job in a college, when I just fell into working. At this stage, I look back on my life, and I think somebody else was in charge. At the end of the spring term, a student conductor and friend named Charles Schiff would organize chamber works, like Siegfried Idyll. I was busy with composition and theory and only played a couple of rehearsals with him. The other guys, like [Armando] Ghitalla and Johnny Ware, were batting away at the trumpet, and didn't have time. Charlie called me in the spring and asked if I would you play a concert with him. His father was underwriting an entire concert in Julliard's concert hall. Charlie had one piece with trumpet and asked if I would play. This was my only public performance that year, and I played Copland's Quiet City for the first time. Several days later, I received a phone call as I was leaving for class. The gentleman on the phone said, "You don't know me, but I went to the concert and heard you play The Quiet City. I liked your

playing and gave your name to four contractors in New York.” Do you know who the four contractors were? NBC, ABC, CBS, and in those days WOR [radio]. NBC and CBS had symphonies and WOR had a symphonette. As a result of his referral, I got a call from the contractor of WOR, who had also been engaged to be the contractor for the Little Orchestra Society. I went down to his office at WOR and played a little of the Haydn Concerto and some excerpts. I played five to ten minutes, that’s all. We went into his office and he said in a very matter-of-fact way, “Well, I can give you principal trumpet.” This was incredible, because I was the only guy who played for him, and he’s offered me a contract with the Little Orchestra Society! I received a contract at double scale for eight pairs of concerts at Town Hall. The Little Orchestra Society was a new orchestra, but within three years, it grew to sixty concerts a year. This was equivalent to orchestras like Pittsburgh or Indianapolis in those days. I worked with the Little Orchestra Society for thirteen years from 1947 to 1960. I just fell into playing in New York. Think about how different it is today! I also auditioned for Stokowski to play in the RCA Victor’s Symphony. He used the New York Philharmonic brass section, with the exception of the third trumpet. Stokowski wanted to find a different trumpet player to play in the orchestra, so I took the audition. When I walked into the rehearsal hall, I was the only trumpet player. I auditioned, and got the job. We did recordings and some concerts for about three years. I had a chance to play first trumpet at the Met. The director and I had worked together on Stravinsky’s L’Histoire du Soldat. But I didn’t pursue it. At that point, the brass quintet was going on.

**Did you begin on the cornet or the trumpet?**

I started on the trumpet at age eight. The music business was so different in those days! The Conn Company had a tiny trailer and would travel to different communities. When they came to my community, they presented an assembly program at my school. The salesman demonstrated all the instruments, and then

passed out a notice to the parents announcing a display of all the instruments that night. As a result, my parents bought me a trumpet, and that's how I got started. My band director was Stephen Miescer (a clarinet player), and he had the entire band program in the school, elementary through high school. I started in the fourth grade with three or four other kids. He would come to our school once a week, and we'd take a half hour group lesson from him. My father was busy working and my mother was the one who encouraged me. At the end of the year, Miescer said to her, "Bobby's doing really well. I think you ought to get a private teacher. There's a man in an adjacent town, named Carl Thalheimer. You ought to call him up. He'll teach Bobby." So we went to Carl Thalheimer, and I studied with him for a year. Carl was also a clarinet player. I never got to a trumpet teacher for three or four years, I guess. Both those men were good musicians. The brass quintet [NYBQ] did a clinic at a school, and we just couldn't get it off the ground. The students were reticent to participate, and one of the faculty suggested we each take a turn and tell how we started on our instrument. We'd never discussed it with each other, so we're all listening to the stories. You know, none of us started with the teacher of our own instrument. When I was ten, we moved back to the Freeland area and lived in Hazelton, PA. I studied with my first trumpet teacher, Emmett Kuehner. He played in a polka band on a radio station. He was a good teacher, and I studied with him for about a year. He was the only teacher that really told me something about the physical aspects of playing. I played with an overbite and couldn't play higher than A above the staff. He adjusted my embouchure, so my teeth were even and I started to play with a straighter air stream. He improved my playing quite a bit. We moved back to Pittsburgh, and I studied trumpet with Guy Borelli for a year. Then I studied with Bosworth and Karpilovsky. I played the cornet in school and trumpet in a dance band outside the school situation. I also studied cornet with Frank Simon at the Conservatory in Cincinnati for two summers, when I was in the seventh and

ninth grades [1936 and 1938]. My last teacher was Williams at Julliard.

**Are there publications about you, or that you've written, of which you are especially proud?**

I thought about that, and much of it is in the Yale archives. I think the majority of the things I've written and have been written about me were about my connection with the quintet. I've written several articles. There are some journals I kept when we first went to Europe and so on, and of course, there was a doctoral dissertation on the quintet.

**What aspects of your teaching do you feel the most and least successful?**

I looked at that question and passed it by. I think that's for somebody else to evaluate, like you.

**Personally, you made me stretch as a player, and I'm still playing from the experience!**

I think we all do. It's all accumulative. At Yale, I thought in terms of preparing a graduate level student to make the bridge from student to the profession. The profession is very different. All of you really were in good shape, learning and bright. It seems strange, but I would think twice before I would send one of my students as an innocent substitute to a job in New York. They might work with somebody who wasn't as proficient on their instrument but was very job-wise. It's one thing to play your instrument well, but quite another to deal with seasoned freelance players, because there was nothing set or static about New York! I would feel more comfortable with a person whose playing wasn't refined because I knew how they would react. I was preparing a student for bridging the gap, and there is a gap. Another aspect was many of my students became conductors or composers. At Yale, students were able to see a broader perspective beyond their instrument. It was a wonderful atmosphere. I think I was also successful at Yale because I was

teaching from my day-to-day experiences as a professional player.

**I understand you taught at several schools?**

I was really a freelance teacher! I was chairman of the Brass Department at the Manhattan School of Music for several years. I taught one year at Julliard in chamber music, and several years at Rutgers in Newark, NJ, and the North Carolina School of the Arts. I taught ten years at both the University of Hartford and the New England Conservatory of Music, but my longest tenure was at Yale, thirty-one years. I retired the summer of 1988. Frank [Tirro, former Dean of the Yale School of Music] got it all wrong when he acknowledged my retirement. He said 26 years or something. You can put that in there, too! When the Yale catalog came out it stated, "Robert Nagel, Instructor of Bass!" I received a plaque as an acknowledgment of my service, and it said, "Robert Nagel, Instructor of Bass!" I sent it back and told them to get it right and put an "R" in there.

**Would you have done anything differently if you hadn't been a musician?**

You know, it may sound egotistical, but I wouldn't. As I said before, I didn't really make my career; it was circumstance. I look back on it, and I was at the right place at the right time, most of the time. I could have gone with the CBS staff orchestra. Those guys made a lot of money, but it looked as if it wasn't going to continue. The staff orchestras were being reduced, so playing in television and radio was precarious. In that respect, I might have done more solo work, but the time wasn't right. Maurice Andre and others came later. I always chose to do what I did, even with the quintet. Our recordings featured the composer, rather than the quintet. We did feature the quintet on our first and last albums, but the ones in between were about the composers and the repertoire. That is what made us, too. That was okay.

**Do you think it has changed since then?**

Today, it's all about featuring the performance and the group.

**Do you use any phrases, words, or techniques of Williams?**

There is one thing interesting, and it was the only time Williams played for me. Williams was demonstrating the control necessary for the embouchure muscles. Something came up in the lesson and he made the point to tell me this. He picked up his instrument and played a scale, up to the next octave, without using the valves! It sounded horrible, but he hit the pitches! He did it by forcing the notes with his lips. I don't know exactly how he did it, but I look back at that thing and think it was incredible . I've tried to do it ever since!

**What was your perception of Williams as a teacher?**

He was very matter-of-fact. He didn't pick away at me. He'd let me play through the etude and then he'd comment on it and ask me to go over something else. He was primarily interested in preparing me for the professional world. [Nagel refers to his copy of his Arban book with lesson notes written by Williams.] Going back to my notes, he had me work on controlling my embouchure using the Schlossberg book. I also did a lot of transposition because he felt I needed more for the Julliard School, and I appreciated this. The other area he stressed was technique. I was doing Charlier [Thirty-Six Transcendental Studies]. These don't notes indicate it, but I'm sure I was doing [Smith's] Top Tones. He concentrated on technique and articulation. I worked a lot with Bob Roberts and Ray Crisara in New York; both were students of Williams. People would say that our sound and articulation was similar. I had an experience which made me evaluate this entire concept. Teddy Wise, a friend of mine, said students would study with Sigmund Hering in New York. Hering would have them play an exercise and could tell who they studied with. Evidently, it was the material Williams gave his students, and what he expected from it, that made them play in a certain way.

**Did you have any preconceived ideas about studying with Williams?**

No, not really. Vacchiano and Williams were listed in the Julliard catalog as the

teachers. I didn't know who Vacchiano was, so I studied with Williams. I felt comfortable with Williams because of my background in cornet with Simon. So I felt I was going to proceed more along the same lines I'd been learning. Williams didn't get into orchestral material, which is what I really needed.

**Do you think Williams was a good teacher for you?**

Yes, at that point, but I have to qualify all this. I had a chronic ear condition, blockage of the eustachian tubes and sinus problems. It was particularly bad my first year at Julliard. I would take a lesson with him but wouldn't practice until two days before, trying to get relief. I would really bear down, trying to make up for it and would have a good lesson. When I had adequate time to prepare, I felt my lesson didn't sound comparable to the effort I put into it. But, he was a good teacher for me. I wasn't ready for anything beyond what he demanded technically and physically. He'd let me play through an etude to see if my playing stood up, but he wasn't very helpful to me on orchestral concerts.

**Can you describe the strengths and weaknesses of Williams as a teacher in regard to your own experience?**

I feel this about a lot of teachers. I had good students who studied with Ray Crisara in New York. The first question I asked them was, "Did he ever play for you?" After awhile I stopped asking the question. Maybe something in what the student did made me think to ask the question. Ray was a great player, and all they would have to do to learn a lot at a lesson was hear him play. Ray never played for his students. I understand he does now. Williams didn't play much in my lessons. That is one thing I felt I would have appreciated from him. I guess you could call it a weakness, but a lot of teachers have that. I know that I had that same weakness, too.

**I don't recall you playing very often in lessons.**

No, I played very seldom. Your mind is going because you are thinking about the

student's playing. All of a sudden you pick up the trumpet to play and you're not in gear, and I got embarrassed playing for my students. The thing is it carries over, right? I studied with Williams, and he didn't play, and I don't play. I've heard of teachers who did a lot of playing and their students also carried it over into their teaching. I think it's a factor.

**Do you know if Williams treated his students equally?**

I have no idea. But, I'll tell you a story Jimmy Burke told me. They were doing something like the French National Anthem or the 1812 Overture, and Jimmy Burke was probably playing the solo cornet chair. Williams told Jimmy to play the sixteenth note late, as in the French style, with double dotted notes. Burke played almost a thirty-second note. The next day, while playing Beethoven's The Consecration of the House, they came to some typical dotted eighth rhythms, but Jimmy played a dotted thirty-second figure as before. Jimmy said Williams stopped the rehearsal and asked, "Jimmy, what are you doing?" Jimmy responded, "That's the way you told me to play those figures." [Nagel] But not in Beethoven! Williams looked at him and said, "Jimmy, your ignorance is refreshing!" That tells me something of him. I never saw that side of Williams.

**What was your perception of Williams as a performer?**

I don't know. See again, I talked about his flexibility by playing a scale without using the valves. He played with the Philadelphia orchestra. I don't know what the musical demands were then, but he could play in a symphony or a cornet solo. I think he had a flexibility as a player. I have a technical background in cornet facility and got part of my reputation in contemporary music. My cornet background helped me meet the challenges of contemporary music. I think Williams probably had that ability since he played with the Philadelphia and had cornet background.

**Did you study with any other significant teachers?**

No. I studied with their students. The big teacher in New York was Max

Schlossberg. Harry Glantz was never a teacher as such, but I learned from him sitting next to him in the orchestra. By my recollection, Schlossberg overshadowed everybody as a teacher.

**So people had to come to New York to learn their craft?**

Well, you could say that everything was more centralized then. The conductors came to New York to audition. They would go to New York, Chicago, and LA. They would go to the players, not the players to them.

**Did you know who Williams' teachers were?**

No. I saw in your information there were a couple of teachers mentioned, but I never heard of them. This is typical, too. I don't know how you're going to fare with the other people, but you'll find in talking about teachers back then, few people would have heard of either of them as teachers or players. Back then, teachers were guides. I think things have drifted the other way too much. Today, students aren't able to teach themselves or to analyze their playing and that has also changed the complexion of teaching.

**Do you think there are other aspects of your teaching you derived only from Williams?**

Yes, but he was the last teacher that I had. Williams didn't dabble and was very business-like and organized. He would go from one thing to another. If some aspect of technique in an etude wasn't working, he'd pick out something else similar, and have me work on it. He taught a little bit by the numbers. He'd go through the materials in a progressive way, but would also stick with something until he felt enough material was covered well. Like in here. [Referring again to his Arban book,] It says, "Repeat the difficult passage in No. 5 Charlier. Review the Arban, double tonguing." There are several things in here which meant to review certain Arban exercises. He just kept going progressively, but he wouldn't let things go because there was something else to do. He had me do a lot of review,

and I've done a certain amount of this in my own teaching. Sometimes the student is not at the level of the music. Then, it's fine if they have an exposure to it because they can always come back to it later.

**What materials did you use with Williams?**

The whole year I studied with Williams, he used Schlossberg, some Arban review, and also transposition out of his book, which I think, is the best transposition book for young people, depending on how you use it. I did a few Charlier Etudes. He limited it to those areas and combined them in different ways. We didn't do any orchestral excerpts. If you wanted to study excerpts, you had to copy them from the score; they weren't published like today. I think a factor in the selection of teaching materials back then had to do with the availability of materials. There was a considerable amount of pedagogical and cornet solo literature at that time. I see something in here too, that he gave me a tonguing exercise and had me play it slow. I did this in my own teaching as well, by taking an etude and using it as a beginning point to reinforce additional techniques. If an etude was articulated, I'd have my students slur it.

**Do you remember if Williams played during his lesson?**

No, he didn't. There are duets in here [Arban], but they were for transposition. He had me play the first or second part and transpose it. He did not play at that time. He was kind of quiet and not very physical.

**How often did you study with him?**

An hour lesson each week through the school year.

**Did you ever do any type of class lessons?**

No.

**Do you know the type of student that Williams selected for his studio?**

No, I don't how that worked.

**How did you select students for Yale?**

I leaned toward someone having musicianship more than technical development, unless there was some physical problem in their playing. I always believed we could get the technical things, but if the musicianship wasn't there, it's a hard thing to learn at the graduate level.

**Are there pedagogical materials or methods Williams used you did not?**

They're different today. You didn't have all these French studies; we didn't have contemporary music. Harry Glantz was playing in a symphony when he was sixteen. The repertoire for the orchestra was limited then. What was he playing, Brahms' symphonies? Maybe an occasional work more demanding. It's harder to be orchestral players today. They have to play solo works, difficult symphonies, and brass quintets as part of their services. Today, the amount of time we have to teach students is limited in comparison to the amount they must learn. You try to acquaint them with everything, so they can follow through later on their own.

Teaching wasn't that way in those days. Actually, if I had gone to Williams for a course of study lasting four years, I probably could have covered everything he wanted to teach and do it thoroughly. I don't think you can do that today. There's too much to learn and too much teaching material available to meet that demand.

At Julliard, I received a diploma in trumpet by taking all the music subjects or qualified to pass them. They only expected you to take three years of instrumental study as a total, because it was only a three year course. A four year course would have added the academics. When you took it as a degree course, of course that spread out what you could do in a conservatory's framework. It spread it out over the four years. So it's something to consider.

**Are there newer materials superior to the ones you used by Williams?**

There's nothing superior to Arban; I'll say that right off the bat. I don't think

there's anything that approaches it.

**I don't remember your using it with me in our lessons.**

Probably not. I would only use Arban if it related to problems we were dealing with. I would go back to Arban, like you would go to Schlossberg, to deal with some problem either in orchestral music or in a solo or etude. For instance, I would have a student play page 131 in the Arban [broken octaves and tenths] with a variety of rhythms and articulations in order to address a situation in a student's playing.

**Do you know if Williams had a preference for the cornet or the trumpet?**

I think he was preferential to the cornet. I probably have less to say than the others, but I think when you put it all together, it'll fit in.

**Do you have a preference for the cornet?**

I think the cornet is the instrument of choice in band. I prefer the older cornets over the newer ones which tend to sound like trumpets. Both instruments have their place. I always preferred to hear a cornet in the literature written for it and the trumpet in the orchestra. I must say one thing. L'Histoire du Soldat was written for the cornet. I tried it on the cornet once, but didn't like the way it sounded. The trumpet seemed to blend better, so I used it.

**Did Williams have you perform from memory?**

No. Until recently, students weren't required to perform a recital at Julliard. I received a Diploma (which was all music classes, without academics), and I didn't play a recital! It is an important point. It wasn't a part of the curriculum at Julliard in those days. The soloists of the day were cornetists like Simon and Williams. I didn't go through any solo literature with Williams except for some of his own concerti and sonatas. The program was geared towards the large ensembles of band and orchestra.

**Did you have your students perform from memory?**

No, not really.

**Did Williams teach you to play a three note chord through multiphonics?**

We did it some, because it was in his solo literature.

**Did you ever use any electronic aids in your teaching?**

Yes, but somebody stole it at Yale. Conn had a great thing, the Strob-o-Conn. I was working as a consultant with them and had one. It came in a little box, was very heavy and had a frosted column with different lights to indicate intonation. It was really graphic for students and I used it, until somebody took it!

**Did you have a specific curriculum for your students?**

Yes, I think it's important to have something structured, but flexible. I wanted to develop my students' abilities through solo pieces, technical studies, and orchestral material. I had a mental list of materials, in order of difficulty, I could use in a two year program of study for graduate students and also for undergraduates. Many times it would change depending on a student's ability. I had a goal for them.

**Did Williams do anything special to motivate you to practice?**

No. He didn't know how I was copping out. I don't think he did, but he never said anything about it. If I played an etude poorly, he had me play it again. That's motivation. I better learn it, or he's going to make me play it again that next week. His demands as a teacher were the motivation. You just knew if you didn't play well enough, you were going to be stuck with it another week!

**Did you have any specific plan to motivate students?**

At Yale, my teaching was orientated towards students becoming professionals. I didn't have to deal with that issue because of the environment. I think the maturity of a player gives them motivation. One thing about motivation I found was students didn't realize how well they performed. Many times, the way a student handled an

aspect of his playing was easily acceptable for the professional world. They were not aware of how well they did. I would tell them, "Hey listen, there are a lot of guys in New York that can't do that, and they're earning a living." Also, many students didn't know how deficient they were in other aspects of their playing. Many students misjudged the things they did well and the things they didn't do well. I felt my job was to point out both of these areas.

**How did you help students become aware of those areas?**

Back then, I had a good memory for it. I would keep track of all the things they missed. One thing I would do was at the end of the etude, I'd make a few comments and give them a little rest. Then I'd would have them play it a second time. The results were uncanny. On the second time, they wouldn't make the same mistake; they'd miss something new too far away before or after it. Usually they were not even aware of it! The problem was concentration. There's no other explanation for it. It was really funny when I told them what I had done and what had happened. This just points out that much of playing is concentration. Williams had me play continuously during an etude of exercise. He wouldn't stop me every couple of measures.

**Do you feel that private lessons are valuable?**

Sure they are valuable; it's a one-to-one relationship! I had a student named Terry Schwartz, sounds like Gerry Schwarz but it is Terry Schwartz. He was a good player. I was invited to teach at a seminar in Switzerland several times. They had master class programs to help students bridge the gap between being a student and becoming a professional (three hours every morning for two weeks, with six people.) Can you imagine spending three hours every morning with a teacher. I would work with a student while the others observed. Terry went to this after he graduated from Yale. I thought there wasn't much he could get out of it having worked with him for two years. But Terry said it was helpful for him. They do

master classes in Europe. When Maurice Andre came to Julliard, he wanted to know how the master classes were arranged. I said, " We don't have master classes." He expected to teach all the trumpet players in the class, which was his standard way of teaching. I think there's some really good elements to that. Something about it gives you more focus and concentration. The master class idea or the group class thing works well at the elementary or entry level and also at the advanced level. I don't believe it works well at the middle level. But, I must say I always enjoyed working with master classes as a teacher.

**Did Williams use small ensembles in his teachings with you?**

He didn't get involved in anything like that at Julliard. As a matter of fact, nobody did. There wasn't such a thing. You could have gone through Julliard and never played anything but a trumpet duet.

**What value do you assign to them?**

I'd have a student come into the studio, and I would work with him. He might sound good in the studio, but when he's playing with others, he would be out of tune and wouldn't know how to adjust. The only way you can tell if a student can hear intonation and do something about it, is in a brass quintet. There are many musical aspects involved in playing in a brass quintet. Another is the ability to match dynamics and balance with other players. You can't get that in a lesson. You can't even get it in the orchestra. There's only one place you can get it and that is in a brass quintet. You can hear their valves. You can hear stylistically the articulation and what the others are doing. I think it is a marvelous tool as an adjunct to private teaching. I can't say enough about it because I personally learned more about my students playing in a quintet than in the studio.

**When I was a graduate student, I particularly remember being**

**coached by John Swallow during quintet rehearsals<sup>130</sup>. He was very “emphatic” with me on several occasions, and I deserved it!**

[Laughs. . .] This is something about teaching and about my being successful or not successful. John dealt with the “whole person” in teaching. If there was something negative, he dealt with it. I respect him for that, especially when you’re talking about entering a profession like music. If a student had a bad attitude or wasn’t getting along with another student, John would confront him. I never did that. I always distanced myself from those issues and would stick to the facts. I shied away from that, because I felt I couldn’t read people or situations as well he could.

**Did Williams use or teach a specific warm-up?**

No, I had lessons with Williams in the morning and had to get up early to arrive on time. When I came into the lesson, I was supposed to be ready to play! I got my warm-up routine from Bosworth when I was thirteen. I think since Williams made so much out of Schlossberg’s Daily Drills and he had me doing them, it would be that he would subscribe to that type of warm-up. But, by the time I studied with Williams, I already had a comfortable warm-up routine. I don’t recall much teaching material covering the warm-up before the Schlossberg book was published.

**Do you use or teach this warm-up?**

I always taught with the basic concepts of the Schlossberg. That is, do easy things in the middle register, see what responds, and then start working toward the things that don’t. My own warm-up is minimal, somewhere between ten and twenty minutes. I do as much as necessary to get the bottom register open, so I can tongue soft or loud. I also do the same with my high register. If I have an optimum

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<sup>130</sup> John Swallow joined the NYBQ in 1958 and was a member for twenty-seven years. He currently serves as Adjunct Professor of Trombone and Chamber Music at Yale University and has been on faculty since 1962.

capability, then I'm ready to go. The length of time would vary, but the materials were basically the same. I used flexibility things from Schlossberg (slurring and tonguing). The time and material varied, depending on how my lips were responding.

**Did this remain constant in your teaching?**

Yes, except I expanded the warm-up beyond Schlossberg. I think this is where students go wrong, because many teachers teach a Schlossberg warm-up. Today, the demands of playing are more difficult, especially register. For example, if Doc Severinsen is warming up, the parameters of the Schlossberg are limited for him. He's got to warm-up to double G's or A's. Over time I had modified Schlossberg as my own playing and the demands of playing had changed. I think you have to add to it. What has changed in my own playing and in teaching, were the demands of playing and the student's ability to go beyond the range, endurance, and flexibility of Schlossberg. I wrote a book called Trumpet Skills, taken from materials I gave to students at Yale, or would do myself. When I put these ideas into a book, I amplified them. There are exercises in there similar to Schlossberg, and I wrote them down just to fill in the book. But when I played them, I had a hard time, because they're not that easy. They are an adjunct or a supplement to Schlossberg. They are a workout and not a warm-up.

**Did you want the student to warm-up before the lesson?**

Oh, yes.

**Did you ever go through warm-up material within the lesson?**

I've done a little of that. Mostly I would give them the material and let them do it on their own. Some days you might feel great, pick up the horn, and be able to play. Other days, you want to spend more time. It varies day to day. If a student wasn't getting the idea, I would go through the warm-up with them, especially if they had not been accustomed to that kind of warm-up.

**Were there other concepts you received from studying with Williams?**

Yes, The idea of using the lip trill for making the transition from one harmonic position to another. Williams used the Schlossberg to do this.

**Did you approach these same pedagogical ideas with your students the way Williams did with you?**

I really can't remember.

**Did you vary exercises for the students?**

I think that's fundamental. I would take a page in the Arban, like the octaves and tenths on page 131, and have the student play them progressively faster each measure or play them with the wider intervals than octaves.

**Did you have any special techniques in learning the upper register?**

Pedal register's good for forming the embouchure, particularly for the student who wants to screech and specialize in high register. I never was a high note artist. I started playing with a downward embouchure which creates more resistance on your lip. When I started playing with a straighter air stream, I started improving.

**How do you personally use your Trumpet Skills material?**

When you were a student at Yale [1980-81], it was in the later years of the quintet. I was primarily teaching and wasn't playing as much in New York. Trumpet Skills also came about as a matter of necessity for me to keep my playing in shape. For example, when the quintet had a tour coming up, I would use Trumpet Skills to get into shape to play our two hour concerts. I would grab a few minutes, whenever possible and practice. I practice very concentrated for twenty to thirty minutes. If I hadn't been playing much and was out of shape, I would play two octave scales using thirds. This was very therapeutic for me. In Trumpet Skills, I wrote only two examples, just to give the reader the main idea. But, I would play through all the keys. For me, playing at the top of the staff causes the lips to change constantly, while it adjusts to each new note. This helped me very much. I would also play

through a book like Trumpet Skills, Top Tones, Charlier, or Balasanyan (particularly the Balasanyan, because the tessitura is similar to a first trumpet part). I would put as much demand as I could on myself for twenty to thirty minutes, within reason of course. If I could play this way for half an hour, I could play a two-hour quintet concert. My practice put me through a harder workout than the actual performance. Even though the quintet music was difficult, it was relatively short. The Etler Quintet was probably the most tiring piece we played, and it lasted approximately sixteen to eighteen minutes. My practice was almost twice as long, so I knew my playing could stand up to the music. This wasn't the best way to get ready, but it was the most expedient. Most trumpet playing is not difficult, but it is that one movement that will get you, like the Great Gate at Kiev from Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition. I found the same endurance problem with my students. They would practice very hard two or three hours a day, but how about playing through a couple of Top Tones exercises without stopping? Short-term stamina is very important in the professional world. That's what Trumpet Skills is all about.

**Do you have any techniques to aid students in developing the low or pedal register?**

The pedal register, yes. I have a section in my book covering it. David Hickman does a lot with note bending in his book. Bending notes is also a technique for getting into the pedal register.

**Did you teach piccolo trumpet and the other small horns?**

Yes, all the small horns, especially when Maurice Andre came along. Personally, I did a lot of pieces with piccolo. But I have always thought that you should get everything together in the lower instruments. I had a student who specialized in playing the piccolo, and it hurt his regular playing. I don't think your regular playing is going to hurt your piccolo trumpet playing, but exclusive piccolo playing

or a preponderance of it, will hurt your lower instruments. I tried to keep it in some kind of proportion.

**Have you taught beginners during your career?**

I taught a course at the Inter City School of upper state in Newark, New York during the late '60's. I taught an education course in brass instruments. I worked with beginners for three years and found it fascinating to learn what happens to them when they're trying to get started. That has a real spin-off because people have problems as a result of how they start. If you can understand that, you will know what to do with more advanced students.

**Are there any other comments you'd like to make?**

Let's keep it relative to Williams now. There is an attitude today that considers old materials as being outdated. There's so much material today, I think we bypass a lot of good literature. I had a student at Aspen [Music Festival] once who had difficulty with certain kinds of articulations. He had to really work to get them. I asked him if he ever play cornet solos and he said, "No." I said to him, "If you had learned cornet solo technique, you wouldn't have any problems with this." Cornet articulations are common even in orchestral playing. I remember Jimmy Burke getting called on a date because Jimmy didn't do much freelance playing. There was something really technical, and Jimmy would just breeze through it as the rest of us fumbled it. That foundation still applies to playing after all these years. I mentioned how it applied to the facility I have for contemporary music. Bosworth, Simon, and to a certain extent Karpilovsky, were players known for their technique. But they all stressed the musicianship as the most important aspect. When I recorded the Brandenburg, I was really uptight. It's one thing to play it, which I'd done; that didn't bother me so much, but to sit down and play a recording session is quite another! The recording session was three hours long! We played about sixteen bars, and [Pablo] Casals stopped us because it wasn't what he wanted. He was

talking about how the notes should be shaped and I thought to myself, "That's all I need!" But it got my mind focused on the musical part, and off of the physical part, that it really was a blessing to me. I wasn't thinking about all the notes I had to play and the demands of them, but how I was going to play them. That's a basic concept we all need to learn. It's one thing to be concerned about whether you're going to play to high C, but it's different if your concerned about "how" you're going to play it! Even Emmett Kuehner taught me so much about playing musically. My teachers wanted me to play Schlossberg so it sounded controlled and pretty. I think much of that has gone by the boards. When I played in the dance band, you would hear a model even in the popular music with Tommy Dorsey, Harry James and other lyric players in those days. I think much of that is gone today.

**Was there a difference between commercial and orchestral playing in your teaching?**

Not really. Maybe a little difference in emphasis because the demands in commercial playing are fairly broad. You don't have to sight-read to play in the symphony, but commercially you better be able to do it. You might sit down and play something you've never seen before. Yes, there were different emphases. But the fundamentals of playing are similar.

**Did you use any of Williams methods in your teaching?**

Yes, the Supplementary Studies and his Method of Transposition. I learned transposition from the Sachse book, but orchestral music isn't like that. We didn't have any orchestral repertoire really as a youngster. When I started playing orchestral music, there wasn't a key signature, but there was a B sharp. What I like about the Williams' Transposition book are the accidentals you have to deal with, in the older books, playing arpeggios or up and down the scale. You could begin to play the key or by ear, but Williams's book doesn't deal with it that way. I think it really makes you read.

**What materials did you use at Yale?**

I used my books, the Speed Studies, Studies in Contemporary Music and the Rhythmic Studies. I also used the Brandt Etudes, Falk's Twenty Atonal Studies, Charlier, Bitsch, Smith's Top Tones, Balasanyan [Twenty Studies], and the Caffarelli transposition book [100 Studi Melodici].

**What do you see happening in the music profession at this point in your career?**

In New Mexico, they have cut back on programs for the arts as well as the music. We're very adept at training people in the arts, but there are not many outlets for them. The San Diego Symphony has been up and down for years, but they're down again. The New Mexico Symphony has been struggling for ten years, and it's a good orchestra. Who is going to support these things? The orchestras don't pay for themselves. I think Corporate America must make some kind of shared effort with the government.

**Is the work changing, or is it just disappearing?**

There are orchestras which are successful, but they are getting into the entertainment business with pops programs. That's becoming a very common occurrence. My personal opinion is that when they cater to this, they are going to be stuck with it, and most of the fine classical concert music won't be played. I don't see that there's any way out. It's the same with the Canadian Brass Quintet. They went the route of entertainment because that's what the audience wanted. How could I teach Joplin Rags at the graduate level? I think we need good people in the business, not just the players but people who are knowledgeable in administrative areas. I don't think orchestras are managed well for one thing. At Yale, I encouraged people to have some other strong card in their hand in addition to playing. You have a better chance of getting work when you can conduct the wind ensemble or are experienced in chamber music. I taught at Yale for thirty-one years,

and over the long haul, you get a lot more personal mileage if you can do other jobs besides sit in a studio all day long teaching trumpet. It's not that big a repertoire. The arts can make some impact and thrive in the framework of education whether it's government funded education, public education, or a one of the private institutions. I think the main thing is to keep your options open. I have to tell you a story about Doc Severinsen. We met briefly, and he asked me what size mouthpiece I used. You just don't do that in New York. I've worked with guys in New York and didn't know what horn they played or what mouthpiece they used. They didn't ask me about my equipment, and I didn't ask them about theirs. You went on a job, and you played. I met Severinsen after I played the Shostakovich Piano Concerto at a concert. He waited until everybody had left and started asking me a lot of very personal questions, like what mouthpiece do you play? I asked him if he was a trumpet player, and he said, "Yes. My name's Carl Severinsen." I said, "Nice to meet you, Carl, I play a 1-1/2 C." Severinsen came out to the New Mexico Symphony last year as a guest artist. The orchestra needed an extra trumpet, so they called me. I got to the hall a little early, but Doc was already there. One of the first things he said to me was, "Still playing a 1-1/2 C?" He's got an unbelievable memory. He played a mixed concert of classical and commercial music. You know what he had trouble with? Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring by Bach. Albuquerque is at 6,000 feet. In rehearsal he had a hard time with it, but by the time he got to the performance, he figured out how to deal with it. People liked the concert, and he played it well.

#### **How long did the NYBQ perform?**

After WWII, I played in the New York Brass Ensemble for a few years until it folded, and then I started the NYBQ in 1954. I announced our official retirement at the brass conference at Bloomington, Indiana in 1984, but we played thirty-one years. We did get together occasionally after that, playing a program at Norfolk, CT

[Yale at Norfolk Music Festival] the summer of 1988 and a Robert King special in the summer of 1990.

**What are your parents name?**

Robert and Louise (Poltrok) Nagel. My mother is ninety-seven years old and is still doing very well!

**What is your birth date?**

I was born the 29th of September 1924. I'll be 73 in September. John Swallow had an interesting experience. He had been working in New York with professional players who could be his grandchildren. He said they ask him when are you going to get out of the business and move over! There is a feeling of being unwanted. I went to Tanglewood with Bud Herseth right after World War II. I thought he was my age, but I found out he's four years older than me. He's still playing in the Chicago Symphony. Can you imagine a tougher job physically? Bud is incredible. It's probably an illusion, but when I get in shape, I can play as good as anybody as long as I can keep my concentration.

**What's your playing schedule like now?**

I'm in a brass quintet. We call ourselves the Anasazi Brass, the Ancient Ones! So we get together and play for the fun of it.

**Thank you for your time, Mr. Nagel.**

It has been very nice visiting with you again.

## **Appendix Five**

**Interview With Leonard V. Meretta**

**Telephone interview June 16, 1997**

**Good morning Mr. Meretta, thank you for visiting with me today.**

Good Morning. You know, I was thinking about my last lesson with Ernest Williams which took place in June, 1937. That was sixty years ago this month! There is probably not a day that goes by that I don't think of him. Are you acquainted with the Ernest Williams materials?

**Yes, in particular, his transposition book.**

The first volume of his method book came out in 1936 when I was a student at the summer Williams camp and also a teacher there. I played first chair in the band following Leonard [Smith's] recent graduation. Because I could play the piano, I worked in collaboration with Williams and was assigned as a teacher and accompanist to ten campers [students]. I would give each a private lesson and in addition, they would all have a master class with Williams. The piano accompaniments to the method were a vital part of Williams' teaching. Every week Williams would call me to his cabin, about two hundred yards away, and would have me play the accompaniments to the method book with his trumpet students. If the music says "study," then it is to be played alone. But if the etude says "solo," it has a piano accompaniment! Williams thought it was a wonderful ability that I could play the piano. He was high on that! He even wrote to me about that later, which is why I am emphasizing this point.

**How old were you when you started?**

Lets's see, age nine.

**Did you have a teacher when you began?**

No, I was self-taught, really. I was in a junior band. I learned by observation of other players and how they sounded. We played a lot of marches and the fingerings

were all marked above the notes!

**So you learned by watching the music and the other players?**

Yes, and going by those fingerings. Like Williams, I was self taught in the beginning. My brother was older and played piano and cornet. My Dad thought he should have a good instrument, so he got the silver-plated cornet my Dad owned. I started on an awful cornet. It leaked and only cost five dollars!

**What caused you to select it?**

It was the only cornet available for the price! We had no money! It's amazing how events happen. My brother, John Louis Meretta who became head of the piano department at the University of Cincinnati, preferred to play piano over the cornet. He went to school in Denver and took the cornet with him. My dad bought me a Conn trumpet for forty dollars, which had belonged to my cousin. It had a slide with a quick change to the key of A and was my instrument for quite awhile. I smile about it now because later in my first rehearsal with Williams in the orchestra, we played Scheherazade, which is written for trumpet in A. This will live with me forever. There were two other students there; I don't know why he had me play. But Williams didn't want me to pull the tuning slide out to the "A" position. He said that was "cheating," but you know how the piece flies! Williams said, "You trumpeters should be ashamed of yourselves; transpose that music!"

**Where were you born?**

Marion Heights, Pennsylvania. It was a small mining town about 100 miles northeast of Harrisburg. Leonard [Smith] and I were born on the same day, September 5, 1915!

**What does your middle initial stand for?**

Victor.

**Was your father in the mining business?**

He worked as a weighing clerk in a coal mine, weighing the coal as it came up the

mine shafts. He was also very interested in teaching. Later on, he took courses at an area college and got enough credits to permit him to teach in public school.

Eventually we moved to New Jersey where he taught school and did postal work.

**What are the names of your father and mother?**

Louis Meretta and Henrietta Brennan.

**What was your wife's name?**

Phyllis Grant Meretta.

**How many were in your family?**

Two brothers and a sister. With the death of my mother, when I was three, the family was separated. My older brother and sister went to live with friends in New Jersey. My brother John, my dad, and I joined them later.

**Where in New Jersey?**

You could call it South Bound Brook. Actually the name of the community, which is so tiny, was Zarephath, a biblical name. But when you say South Bound Brook or Somerville, most people in that area have heard of it. I went to school there, primary through high school. At the end of my high school career in 1933, a friend of mine gave me money to buy a trumpet. She thought I was talented and gave me \$100 in a roll of organ music. That was a lot of money then! She said, "Buy yourself a new trumpet." So I got a King, and that's just about what it cost.

**So you started playing on your own without a teacher?**

Yes, at age nine. I had two years of piano before this and as you know, piano is an excellent pre-band instrument. I played my first piano composition at age eight. I called it Make Up. I played it in public on a Thanksgiving program. I started on the piano at age seven and played pipe organ at age twelve.

**Would you tell me how you and Leonard Smith became friends?**

I met him when I think I was eighteen, but I knew of him earlier. At about age thirteen, we were both performing on separate Children's Hour radio programs

broadcast once a week. He was on WJZ in New York, and I was on a part time station in New Jersey. I didn't know him, but listened to him Sunday mornings. We were playing the same Clarke solos. I wrote to WJZ and got his address. We struck up a correspondence and have been very good friends ever since. Leonard always had a personal interest in me and my career after our initial correspondence. He went to the New York Military Academy, Cornwall-On-Hudson, and wanted me to come and be part of the band program, but my father wouldn't allow it. I talked to Leonard about schools after graduating from high school, and he suggested the Williams School. It was Leonard's influence that caused me to go to William's school.

**Which did you first attend, the camp or school?**

The school in Brooklyn, New York. Ernest Williams auditioned me. I started in the spring session of 1935 and went part-time for one semester, commuting from New Jersey three days a week. I took three subjects: band arranging with Mayhew Lake, trumpet lessons with Ernest Williams, and band. I left school the fall semester to play with a Major Bowes Unit. Major Bowes had a national radio program on NBC, Sunday nights from 8 to 9 p.m. It was an amateur talent show. I performed on a Major Bowes program in June 1935 and was a "winner." Major Bowes had ten variety units that toured the United States, and I was in Unit Two. On tour, I played Bride of the Waves four times a day, seven days a week . . . 563 times in six months!

**Then you went back to the Williams school?**

Yes, but I almost went to school in Cincinnati. My brother was in Cincinnati at the College of Music. He really liked it and almost convinced me to finish my music education degree there. George Howard, who started the Air Force Band in Washington D.C., was Dean at the Williams School. He and Ernest Williams gave me a "sales" talk to stay at the Williams school. Williams gave me a \$300 per

semester scholarship for room, board, and tuition! I decided to stay in New York and finish at the Williams School. I came back the next spring term [1936] and went straight through until June 1937. I graduated June 10, the summer of 1937. I also got fourteen hours of credit from NYU that summer and then went to the University of Michigan in September 1937.

**Why did you go to NYU?**

I was familiar with the school because Williams directed the NYU band. The ESW students went Monday afternoons to play in the NYU band, one rehearsal a week for two hours. I was first chair in the band. It was made up of NYU students, but we had ringers from the Williams Band to help. The Williams Band rehearsed every day 2-4 o'clock and gave a concert every Saturday! Doug, this schedule was fantastic! I probably learned as much from the band rehearsals and concerts as I did from Williams private lessons. He was such an artist; it was scary! On May 29, 1937, Percy Grainger conducted his Lincolnshire Posy with the Williams' school band at Town Hall in New York. This was the first time the work was performed in its entirety. About a month before, a band performed five of the six movements at an ABA conference, but our concert was the first complete performance. "Yours truly" was fortunate to play the first cornet part!

**What a wonderful experience! What led to to Michigan?**

I was teaching privately in New York and heard of an opening at the University of Michigan for a teaching assistant. One of my private students wanted to go to college, so I suggested he audition for the position by tape. He played his cornet, and I played the piano. We sent the tape to Bill Revelli. Revelli wrote back and said the position was filled. Following this, I thought the field was wide open and suspected there was something in this student's playing Revelli didn't like. So I wrote to Revelli, and by return mail, Revelli said I had the job! I think the Williams background and the Major Bowes' experience helped.

**So you completed your bachelors degree at the University of Michigan?**

Yes. I received a three year certificate from the Williams school and then completed my fourth year at Michigan, while teaching two hours a day to beginning trumpet students. These were students learning brass for music education degrees.

Incidentally, those were Conn-Victor Model Cornets all with Bach No. 7C mouthpieces! In the summer of 1938 I graduated with a Bachelors of Music degree and started on my Masters program. I went to summer school for four summers.

**Would you tell me about your experience at Lenoir?**

In the fall of 1938, I went to Lenoir, North Carolina to be the associate band director. It was quite a setup: they had their own band buses and building! The director was James C. Harper. Perhaps you wouldn't know that name unless you read his book, Getting Results With School Bands. He was from a wealthy family, and band was his hobby. After World War I, he started the high school band in Lenoir. In college he majored in history and finance. He went to the University of North Carolina and to Davidson College. We went to festivals for our section which was an area between Washington, D.C. and Florida. Captain Harper was dedicated to building an excellent band program.

**You called him captain?**

Yes, in World War II, he was a captain. He loved that title.

**How long were you at Lenoir?**

I was there three and a half years. During the summers, I worked on my Masters at Michigan. I led the way for Williams' students to go to Michigan. (Ray Crisara and other ESW graduates came to Michigan some time later.)

**When did you leave Lenoir?**

In January 1942, I joined the faculty at the University of Michigan as their first full time brass instructor. I taught all the brasses, tuba right on up to trumpet! Now,

there are specialists on every instrument!

**How long were you at the University of Michigan?**

All together, four and a half years. Three and a half full time and then the prior year when I was a teaching assistant. It was wonderful: we had guests like Frank Simon, Morton Gould and Victor Grabble.

**How did you get the job at the University of Michigan?**

Well, let's back up a little. I got a call from Bill Revelli and his boss Earl V. Moore, head of the music department at U of M. I told them that I was flattered to be offered a job at Michigan, but that I was enjoying my job at Lenoir, and I wanted to direct [conduct], too! They said they would give me an opportunity to direct, if I came to Michigan, so I decided to go.

**Did you play under Revelli?**

Yes, during my last year of my bachelors degree and the four summer sessions.

**Were you able to perform at Western Michigan?**

Not much, I just didn't have the time. When I started in 1945, there were only four or five faculty then; now there are forty six! I had to teach everything, even the woodwinds and percussion. Thank goodness for my experience at Lenoir, because that is what I had to do in public school. I applied the Williams' lesson format I learned at the school with all my wind instrument students at Western Michigan. The Williams' experience helped me again!

**Was your Major Bowes tour your first professional position?**

Yes.

**How did you get this position?**

By audition. On Sunday night, Major Bowes had a radio program for amateurs; it was called The Chase and Sanborn Hour named after the sponsor. Leonard Smith encouraged me to audition for it because I could make some money. He told me, "You will get five dollars!" I sent a postcard to NBC and almost immediately got a

reply to report on a Friday for an audition. I played Staigers' Carnival of Venice and Clarke's Bride of the Waves. Holding the high "C," second note to the end helped make me a winner. Shortly after that performance, I played several performances at the Palace Theatre in New York.

**Are there any additional publications by you, of which you are especially proud?**

For a short time, I was editor of the brass column in The School Musician.<sup>131</sup> This was in the '40's, while I was at Michigan.

**I know you've done some composing because I have one of your cornet trios, Aurora.**

The inspiration for Aurora started at the Williams School. I don't know if Ray [Crisara] or Leonard [Smith] told you, but we studied composition for three years while at the ESW. The first year you composed and conducted your march. I did that with Lake. It was performed in public. What an experience! The second year, you composed a suite for orchestra. You conducted it in public and competed with other students. The third year I studied under Erik Leidzen and composed an overture in sonata allegro form for orchestra, and conducted it in public. I came in second in that competition.

**Did you ever think about becoming a composer or arranger?**

Well, Leonard Smith encouraged me in that direction, but I had my goal set on teaching.

**In addition to the two trumpet trios you have written, Aurora and Holiday Polka, are there other compositions?**

Well, I've written about eleven marches and made many arrangements, I could have gone into that more heavily. When I came to Western, I spent my time and energies

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<sup>131</sup> Meretta was a contributing editor for a column entitled "Advice to the Cornetist" from April 1942 until September 1945.

trying to build the Wind Instrument Program. That affected my composing and my performance.

**What aspects of your teaching have you been most and least successful?**

Two things probably; so many of the students I taught are now successful music teachers, and the bands at WMU were a success.

**How about least successful?**

I haven't given this much thought, but I always wanted to improve as a musician and teacher. I wanted my students and bands to do better never feeling quite satisfied. I guess my "batting averages" were fairly high! It was the same with Ernest Williams, his "batting average" was very high. He had Leonard Smith and others who were very good musicians to begin with. Then he took them from that point and made them even better!

**Were you ever interested in another career?**

Yes, in electronics!

**What changed your mind?**

I talked to a man in the electronics field. He said music was more fun!

**Is there anything in your music career that you might have done differently?**

I might have studied conducting more with great conductors. I had a great experience studying conducting with Pierre Monteux. I also wished that I could have played my trumpet more.

**Did you teach your students with the same materials Williams taught you?**

Some. I went along with the times. There are many new recordings, the ITG, new literature like much of the French materials, and a wealth of new tools to help students learn. Today's trumpet students are very fortunate to have a wealth of

literature and recordings and membership in the ITG.

**Did Williams have a preference for the cornet or the trumpet?**

Well, I started on cornet, but played the trumpet shortly thereafter. After playing trumpet on the Major Bowes' tour, I returned to school and played in the band.

Everyone had a cornet except me, but Williams didn't ask me to change. I decided to make a change from trumpet to cornet shortly after!

**Do you have a preference for the cornet or the trumpet?**

No, both are wonderful instruments. For beginners, I recommend starting on the cornet and changing later if they prefer. In band, I recommend cornets on cornet parts and in orchestra, the trumpet. For solo playing, I prefer the instrument that is appropriate for the literature.

**Did you ever hear Williams perform?**

I never heard him live but I do have tape recording Leonard [Smith] gave me. It was beautiful, so artistic with a purity of sound, even on that dated tape. You knew this man was one of the greatest of his time. Here he was, playing in Philadelphia and taking the train to New York to play recordings. Busy, busy, busy! He played the Brandenburg with the Philadelphia Orchestra and I think he played it on a B-flat trumpet! **That is amazing!** Yes, he told me it was all what you got "used to." I am disappointed for not keeping the New York Times article from he gave to me. The reviewer raved about Williams performance. After I read this, I asked Williams why he performed it on the B-flat? Williams said in his experience, the B-flat trumpet was the instrument he was accustomed to playing. As I ponder, I ask, "How did he do it?" He had an uncanny range from low to high. Well, he was just

one of the world's greatest!<sup>132</sup>

**Can you describe the strengths and weaknesses of Williams as a private teacher?**

He was very artistic. You just knew everything he said was accurate. He spoke with authority. You respected him very highly. I can't emphasize this too much. We had such respect for his musicianship. Then too, the way he conducted his lessons in kindness and authority, you just loved it. He had a fabulous musical background. His practice routine was excellent. In retrospect, I can't overemphasize the value of the two-hour daily rehearsals and the weekly concerts on Saturday afternoon by the Ernest S. Williams School of Music Band. You can't get that experience today! You can't duplicate that!

**Did the NYU students perform with the Williams' Band?**

During Monday rehearsals and in an annual concert.

**When did the band perform?**

Saturdays, at the Bedford YMCA Auditorium in Brooklyn, New York.

**Did you have Sunday off?**

Yes. That's when Ernest read the New York Times. He spent the day reading the Times and helping those from the professional world who had embouchure problems and those who wished to continue their study.

**What was his demeanor on the podium?**

Very demanding! At times, he relaxed a little.

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<sup>132</sup>Williams performed the concerto twice in February and December of 1921 with the Philadelphia Orchestra. While it an acceptable fact Williams was an extraordinary trumpeter, it is questionable he performed the work in the original register. It is more probable that Williams performed an arrangement by Felix Mottl published by Breitkopf and Härtel in 1901. Mottl lowered the solo part one octave and divided it between two players. Robert Nagel performed this arrangement and recalled that Saul Caston, Williams' successor in the Philadelphia Orchestra, also performed this altered version. Nagel speculates the Mottl arrangement was the version performed by Williams. For additional information on performances of the concerto, see Keith C. Clark's, "Performances of the Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in the United States," Journal of the International Trumpet Guild Volume 3 (October 1978): 24.

**Were there any weaknesses of Williams as a teacher?**

I wish he had played more for me and assigned me newer and more literature. The literature was limited to Arban, his studies, and the cornet solo literature of the day. If he had time for research, he might have expanded the repertoire for his students. There were exercises from Arban I did with my students, that Williams did not do. He just didn't have the time to do them in the lessons. During my last year at the ESW school, several Williams' books were published. This was a great improvement in the amount of fine trumpet literature available.

**So, Williams did not play much in the studio.**

No, and I wish he had. But he had very little time for practice. As I said, if he had had more time, he could have assigned more etudes or expanded the solo literature. Maybe he knew of other materials and could have augmented his assignments. I don't know how much was available. I'm sorry to say that. Trumpeters from the turn of the century on up to 1940 were immersed in the solos of that period and prior to that, studying primarily etudes.

**Did you have any preconceived expectations of studying with Williams?**

Very little. I went to the Williams' School on Leonard Smith's recommendation and with not much information about the school.

**So you didn't know much about Williams or his school.**

That's correct. I went because I knew Leonard had been working with him privately for several years. He was a lucky person. I studied with Williams based only on Leonard's recommendation. I just thought Leonard was "tops."

**Did Williams treat his students equally?**

I don't know, but the words "personality" and "psychology" come to mind. He was a different personality on the podium than in the studio. He might go around the band at times and pick on one or two students just to keep them on their toes.

He would say something like, "Let me hear that again," or "That isn't very good, you need to practice more." Much of his playing experience was under "old-school" European conductors. Even though they got great results, they were often harsh. I think that "negative" was understandably a part of him.

**Can you describe your lessons with Williams?**

I would walk into his studio. He was seated by his desk, and I played my lesson standing. He would say, "Okay, Leonard, let's do the scales. Okay, page sixty-one: number twelve." I have in front of me the Arban book. Williams had us perform the following scales starting on page sixty-one; numbers twelve, twenty-one, twenty-seven, thirty-three, thirty-nine, forty-nine, fifty-four, sixty-one, and sixty-seven; four sharps, four flats and the key of C. "Now, let's do the flexibility study, page forty-two: number eighteen." Then I did the two-octave chromatics on page seventy-nine; number eight and the intervals on page forty-two. Then the arpeggios, some triple, double tonguing. He might omit something of the latter part, but we always ran through the scales! Then I would do the solo and maybe an Arban characteristic study. Sight reading was a rare part of the lesson. In my lessons, Williams only used the Arban and his book, when it came out in 1936. I imagine in thirty or forty lessons, I played those same scales from Arban every week! Then in the Williams' book he expanded on them. We only had a one-half hour lesson, sometimes one hour. There just wasn't time to do more. As you know, you get frustrated in lessons because you run out of time.

**Did you do any transposition?**

I don't think in those lessons he took up transposition. He directed the orchestra at the school, and I think he felt you got it there. Later, he published a transposition book which is a gem. He told me it was the result of playing in symphony orchestras. During his orchestral career, he would make mental notes of passages and transpositions and it resulted in his transposition method. It wasn't as if he

decided to write a transposition book one day. It occurred over a period of time. I thought that was interesting.

**Was there a specific warm-up Williams used?**

Williams never used the word “warm-up” as you and I use it today. You could call it a warm-up, but it was this routine of learning your scales. He called it bent long tones! You polished them and polished them. Later, he wrote The Secret of Technique-Preservation on this subject.

**Did you use these scales and various Arban exercises with your students?**

Yes, and I also used the “tah-ee” flexibility on page forty-two # 18 in Arban. Later in his book two, Williams expanded those lip flexibility studies and had me do some. Williams had Walter Smith as a student for some time and later Walter Smith came out with a book on it [Lip Flexibility]. Williams said to me, “Walter has come out with a book, and I gave him those ideas, but he [Smith] had paid me his money.” I thought that was interesting. Getting back to those flexibility studies [page forty-two, number eighteen in Arban], how wonderful it would have been had Williams expanded those studies with me as he did for Walter. But he was a brass teacher, a band director six days a week, and an orchestra director three times a week. He was running a school and writing a book. When was he going to find time to do more? If you look at page seventy-eight in the Arban, you find the two octave chromatics scales. Yes. We did those every lesson! Then in his [own] book he takes you up to high E-flat. Then he would have me go to page one hundred twenty-five [Arban] and do the intervals, then arpeggios; I played page one hundred forty-two every lesson, all of them, but only the majors! He never heard me play beyond that point. In the Williams book, he takes it up to high E-flat.<sup>133</sup> He didn't

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<sup>133</sup> See Williams' Complete Modern Method for Trumpet & Cornet page one hundred fifty-five.

do the expanded scale work to E-flat with me until his book came out my last year at the Williams' School. Those high range studies in volume two did wonders for me!

**Williams schedule must has been very full?**

Yes, he was an administrator, a teacher and conductor, and gave lessons to all the brass players. Later, he had some help with the private lessons from Frank Elsass. Williams took no money from the school; he was paid only for the private lessons!

**Did Williams explain why he used these scales?**

Yes. It was important how you used your lips and breath to play those scales. If the lips and breath were right, you would get a good sound. He used the phrase "purity of sound" very often. Williams called these scales "bent long tones." They helped develop finger dexterity, breath control, technique and a smoothness in legato style.

**Has this routine changed through the years?**

It remained much the same, but I added other materials plus my own ideas. I would assign different pages to my students and adapt the routine to my own teaching. I wouldn't just give them Arban; I would also give them Schlossberg, Clarke, and other materials. I would change the materials to keep my students interested. I would vary the menu, but Williams didn't change it for me.

**Do you find that students today need variety in their lessons?**

Yes, because their goals are different, and the world of music has changed! Every student is an individual; no two are alike. You must consider their personalities, how they work, and if they are meticulous like Williams was. I would make up things for them and at times ask them what they wanted to do. I'd try to give them a choice. You try different things to keep their interest and then see what works.

**Do you believe Williams was a good teacher for you?**

Oh, yes, I think so. I had the privilege of studying with him at the right time!

**Did you use Williams' phrases and techniques in your teaching?**

I'm sure I did.

**What words or phrases did you use?**

I just don't know what to say. Williams encouraged us to learn the material on our own. We worked out the mechanical and technical aspects of playing, and he would make general comments to guide us and influence the overall musicality, but the details were our responsibility! I didn't read much about Williams' philosophy, but I had read a lot in the Jacob's Band Monthly and [Clarke's] How I Became a Cornetist. So, no telling whom I'm quoting, but I used the Williams' lesson pattern in basically all of my brass and wind instrument teaching. I think the basic pattern I mentioned was my foundation and "keystone." I did expand on it, though. If you asked me how did the Williams' program compare with the last year of my teaching, I used basically the same objectives except with more variety.

**Who were your private teachers, and how long did you study with each?**

I had three teachers. They were all people who had performed with Sousa: Louis Anderson, for two years; Del Staigers, for just a short period; and Williams for about two and one half years.

**Could you talk about your lessons with Del Staigers?**

I had several lessons with him, and they were inspirational, but this was during the depression and lessons were \$5.00. That was a lot of money!

**Was Mr. Staigers performing with the Goldman Band at this point?**

That's how I knew him. I would go to New York and listen to the Goldman Band in Central Park or at the NYU campus. He would solo with the band. He made recordings of Carnival of Venice and the Bellstedt solo, Napoli.

**Did you study with Mr. Williams after Staigers?**

Yes. I studied with him longer than the other two.

**Were there any other significant teachers at this time?**

I didn't know of them. I thought I had the best with Williams and with Staigers. Those were the names that I heard of, but surely there were a few others in the name orchestras.

**Did you have an opportunity to study with Max Schlossberg at all?**

I met him just before I started with Williams.

**The name Louis Anderson is not familiar to me.**

It wouldn't be. He had a music store in Newark, New Jersey just 25 miles away. This was during the depression, too. Let's see, we're talking 1933-34, and I was in a high school. I had weekly lessons with him on Saturday. He played along with me from Clarke's Technical Studies. His personality was easygoing and friendly and he conducted a military band in the Newark area. It was a good band. I played the "Staigers Carnival" with him once on WOR in Newark; and I received much fan mail.

**Did Anderson or Staigers have the same influence as Williams?**

Oh, no. Williams was the most profound. It was because of the environment. The music school with no academic courses, just music courses! His staff was so professional. It was the total picture. Because of who he was, the school had the cream of New York area musicians as teachers. If you were an oboist, you'd go over to the New York Philharmonic and study with the first chair oboe player. A clarinetist, the same idea. Williams taught all the brasses. He was over in Brooklyn, 153 Ocean Avenue. He paid his faculty on an hourly basis. I have one remarkable memory of that time! If you were good at counterpoint and teaching at Julliard, Williams would ask you to come over to the school two days a week and pay you \$20 an hour to teach! That's how he got Leidzen and all the other great musicians. Everyone was a jewel. The concert master was from the Met. He'd come over and have at least one class a week in solfege. Here we are about eight or ten students all in a circle. He has his violin, his French accent, and away we go with this solfege!

**Did Williams tell you who his teachers were?**

No.

**Did you have a warm-up that your students did outside the lesson, or did they do it in the lesson?**

Both. I used a different one, the Leonard Smith warm-up with a few additions. Do you have a copy ?

No, I don't.

Leonard said it was out of print. What if I send you one?

**Thank you. Did your students do this warm-up before the lesson?**

This varied. Del Staigers said, "Fingers come first." Tying that into all the scales makes sense. If I felt the student was doing well, I'd listen to just a few of them and then go on to other studies.

**How long were your studio lessons?**

From a half hour to one hour. Going back a little to Arban, Williams had me work on page 155, plus the triple and double tongue, and only page 28 #19 for single tongue! Williams thought, if you could do page #19 cleanly, your single tongue got a good work out. That was all the single tonguing he assigned. Of course, one would practice tonguing in solos and etudes.

**What were the general techniques of playing Williams covered in the lesson?**

Well, we covered the Arban studies and etudes, and the cornet style solos of the day. After his book came out in 1937, we added the range studies. (Staigers used the Saint-Jacome and J. L. Small studies, and I used the Small book with high school students. I taught privately several hours each week.)

**What were the salaries like when you started?**

My salary at Lenoir was \$1800.00 in 1938, and it was the highest of any band director in the state. I started in Ann Arbor at \$2200.00. That was 1942. Then in

1945, when I came to Western as an Associate professor, it jumped to \$3600.00. I thought that was really something! I became Director of Bands and Wind Instruments Instruction, and I became full professor in 1954. I retired in 1981 and did some adjunct teaching until 1988.

**From what materials did you teach your students?**

Well, in terms of literature, I taught from Arban, Williams' Method for Transposition, Clarke's Technical Studies, Setting Up Drills, and Characteristic Studies, the Schlossberg Drills, Smith's Flexibility Studies and Top Tones, and the Charlier Transcendental Studies. There is an interesting story about that. Next to my trumpet studio was the studio of the orchestra director and violin teacher. One day, I had a student playing from the Characteristic Studies, and he knocked on my door and asked, "What is that you're playing?" I told him it was a Clarke piece, but he said it was from German composer, Heinrich Ernest Kayser. He showed me the book, and I saw for myself. Clarke had "borrowed" this material for his trumpet text!<sup>134</sup>

**In working with the upper register, did you use any other materials other than Williams materials?**

Top Tones at the beginning of the book. Walter Smith attributed most of his technical success to playing chromatics, and I stressed chromatics as well with my students, perhaps too much!

**Do you have any techniques to teach the low and pedal register?**

I didn't push that much. I would ask students once in a while. There again that must be the Williams influence. He never did that, except he could do it! In my

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<sup>134</sup> Heinrich Ernest Kayser (1815-1888), violinist and pedagogue wrote several studies primarily for violin, in particular Op. 20 © 1910. Herbert L. Clarke (1867-1945) was also a violist and played in his family's string quartet. Evidently, he was familiar with these studies because many of the exercises in his Characteristic Studies for the Cornet (© 1915-1934) appear in the earlier opus of Kayser!

lesson he played a major scale without pressing the valves! I think it was a C scale, but I'm not sure.

**Did Williams teach you how to play the three note chord?**

He talked about it, but I learned to do it on my own. I didn't use it much because it doesn't have any real musical value, and Williams didn't talk about it much either.

**Did you teach the same way to both classical and commercial students?**

Yes, but we didn't get the commercial player like you do in 1997! We have a jazz program now at Western, but there just wasn't that type of major in 1945.

**Was there a difference made between these two types of playing back then?**

We didn't even talk about it, Doug. Because in the first place, someone would just organize a jazz band, have fun, and make some money playing dance jobs.

**So there was no difference in your studio between the two?**

Exactly.

**Did you teach piccolo trumpet and any other small horns?**

Yes, all of them, piccolo, E-flat, some C, and of course B-flat. I wanted all of my trumpet students to play cornet at least for a half semester, too! But at the Williams school, everyone played B-flat.

**Did you use any special materials to teach those small horns to your students?**

Yes, I used Dave Hickman's materials and orchestral literature.

**Did you have any students who enjoyed a professional career?**

Some have, but I have lost track of them. [Laughing], many of my students are retiring! Some of them play in community orchestras and community bands, dance bands, or conduct. Many were teachers in Michigan and in other states. I know of students who could have played professionally, but the professional world is so

limited. I remember a knock on my door and greeting a former student, who was playing in the Battle Creek Symphony. She reminded me that when she was a student and had to play from Williams' book of transposition, she did not like it. She said, "Mr. Meretta, I'm so glad you had me work on those studies!"

**Did you teach any beginning students when you taught privately?**

Once in a great while. I enjoyed teaching beginning students because I loved to see progress. I could be happy with a student who has played for a few weeks, or I could be happy with a senior in college, if I see they're trying and making progress.

**Who were these students?**

Some were from Kalamazoo and others from around the state.

**Did any of them come to the University?**

Some did, yes. I started the band camp here at Western Michigan. Now they call it a Seminar. It has developed beautifully! When we began the camp at Western, the faculty of the college didn't want to do it. I was the only one in the meeting for it. We did it, and it was successful!

**Are your students at Western local to the area?**

We are getting them from all across the country and foreign countries, too.

**Why do you think this has happened?**

Several reasons; growth, reputation, an excellent applied faculty, the band program, and the Western Brass Quintet. The quintet has quite a reputation. They were in China and Russia this past year, and are playing in Sweden this summer at the ITG convention. The Western jazz program is nationally known. The growth is heart-warming.

**What do you think of the future of brass quintets?**

I think they are going to be with us for a long time and are flourishing. The literature is great and new works are being written all the time.

**Did you do any small ensemble playing like this while you were**

**teaching at Western?**

No, I didn't have time in my schedule. I was just too busy with the band program and wind area. In fact, my title was Director of Bands and Wind Instrument Instruction. I had to hire and supervise the people in those areas including the marching band, so I was very busy. If I would have had fewer responsibilities, I would have performed more. I would have loved that opportunity.

**Did Williams play during the private lesson?**

He played very little, and I wish he had played more. Del Staigers did a little playing in his lessons with me. I told him "I just get so much out of your demonstration." Of course, he [Staigers] had to save his lip for all the professional playing he was doing. Oh, you do learn! The value of listening to these types of players cannot be overemphasized. I am a great believer in CD's and what they can do for students.

**Did you play along with your students in their lessons?**

Some. A little with some and more with others, especially those whose sound wasn't good and those whose basic interpretation needed help.

**How long were the lessons with Williams?**

Well, the agreement was thirty minutes, but he would make it longer on occasion.

**All individual lessons?**

Yes.

**Were there any class or group lessons with Williams?**

Only in the music camp. You could call them master classes.

**How often did they occur?**

Once a week at camp. That's when I had those ten students. I would give each of them a private lesson and then as a group, they would have a master class with Williams. I would play the piano from volume one of Williams method, and each would play some of their materials and Williams' would comment. I learned how to

teach! Incidentally, before we go on, do you have the book, The Secret of Technique Preservation by Williams? Yes. Okay, that's a result of the Ernest Williams School of Music! I think my name is mentioned there. I think you would enjoy reading page two in the the text about conservation of lip strength, lip and finger limbering, practice procedures, taking a breath and using it the right way; turn all of it into "pure tone," as Williams called it. You could say that Williams' teaching techniques and philosophy regarding playing is contained in these first few pages and the exercises following!

**What type of student do you think Williams selected for his school?**

Well let's put this into context of the times. Williams started his school in 1931. Of course, there were more cornet players than anything else. Ernest Williams was the big attraction. We had all kinds. The last chair cornetist was of modest ability, but the first chair was Leonard Smith!

**How did you select students for Western Michigan?**

By audition. I had the same as Ernest Williams. I told Don Bullock several years ago before he died that it is fun to teach students who practice. I don't care how well they play if they make an honest effort. That is my own opinion. Yes, we recruited. The summer music camp helped. I was a judge and guest conductor at several festivals and was fairly well known.

**Why did you reject students?**

Limited ability. They all auditioned and still do today. They have to pass an audition before a committee. We can be more selective because more good players try out and we can take the "cream."

**Are there teaching materials Williams used you did not?**

Well, If we compare the materials Williams used in his studio to those you or I used today, I would say they were limited. I would add more variety to my materials as they came on the scene.

**Are there some materials today that are superior to the Williams materials?**

Well then, we are talking about Arban, aren't we. I would use the variety approach by augmenting with materials by Nagel, Walter Smith, or Charlier.

**Did you use any electronic aids in your teaching?**

I would use recordings and a strobo-tuner occasionally.

**Did you have a specific a curriculum for your students?**

Yes, we outlined curricula in the Brass Area with flexibility for each teacher.

**Did Williams have a specific curriculum?**

It wasn't written down as such, but it was a very specific routine, as I mentioned earlier.

**How did Williams motivate his students to practice?**

It was automatic! You entered as a prospective trumpeter in the profession, so you were serious about it! Whereas you might find some music education people who might think that if they play well enough to get by, that's good, because playing the trumpet isn't all they want to do. They might want to play clarinet as well, and feel they are spending too much time on their major instrument! There are a few that way, as opposed to Ray Crisara; he was going to be a great trumpeter. Williams always wanted your best and when you went to the School, you knew it! You did your best and did not ask, "Why am I here?"

**Did Williams have his students perform from memory?**

Some. I performed all of my solos from memory.

**Did you require your students to do memory work?**

At least one solo per semester. My background was that I memorized all my solos. Even faculty [at Western] would argue this point. They felt students could cover more material if they didn't memorize.

**Do you think private lessons are valuable?**

I think the most valuable course in my college career were the private lessons and the ensembles. And I would tell this to my students, too.

**Do you think that private lessons will be eliminated in the college curriculum?**

Oh, I hope not! The private lesson is the most important college subject!

**Is there something else which can replace it, such as group lessons or a master class?**

They are experimenting with a combination of individual and group lessons at Western. Some faculty are very enthusiastic.

**Did this group lesson supplement the lesson or replace that week's lesson?**

Well, both. Three or four students get together with their teacher every third lesson. This replaces an individual lesson, but it also supplements their study with small group work.

**Did Williams use small ensembles in his teaching?**

Very little. I wish he had as I look back. I know we did some of that at Western.

There is one ensemble called the Russell Brown Brass Quintet. It's named after Russell Brown, a retired faculty member now living in Texas. He had a student whose parents won the state lottery and gave a large sum of money to the school. It is used to fund an annual stipend for each quintet member!

**What specifically is the value of small ensemble instruction for your students?**

How can one adequately answer that? It is very important. One-on-a-part playing is at the heart of independent learning.

**What do you think they learn?**

Well, one-on-a-part playing is just like a string quartet. The literature is just fantastic for teaching and learning. I go back to that book written by Gerald

Prescott. It came out in 1936 or 37, Getting Results With School Bands. I used Prescott's ideas in Lenoir! He outlined four areas of a band program: the full band, the sectional rehearsal, the small ensemble, and the solo experience, and how they interrelated. Each part is important.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Well ideas have been floating around all weekend as I was preparing for our session. I believe we have covered most of it. There are more fine trumpet players today in comparison to the 1930's. At the time I got the job at Michigan, there were fewer good players than today. When there is a position open in a symphony, sixty good players come for the audition, and they get a player of the caliber of a Ghitalla, etc! That just wasn't the case then. There are better players today and more of them than when I started!

**Do you believe schools are graduating too many performers for the marketplace?**

Yes. I read something in the New York Times, that the administrations of the Eastman School and Julliard were concerned for students going into the field and recommended they do so with their eyes wide open. We don't talk much how limited the field really is.

**I want to thank you for your time today. It has been wonderful visiting with you.**

You're welcome.

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

### INTRODUCTION

This study will examine and identify the similarities and differences of the teaching techniques of four Ernest Williams students, all of whom are current and distinguished trumpet professors. It is sponsored by the University of Oklahoma and will be conducted by Douglas G. Wilson, a candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

This study will examine the individuals' perception of the contributions of Ernest Williams to their teaching and playing. The procedures used in this study are intended to document the teaching content, style, and philosophies of the selected trumpet professionals. The principal method used to accomplish this will be tape recorded interviews, either in person or by telephone. The interview process will be assisted through a questionnaire designed for this study. The questionnaire will consist of topics covering many of the commonly addressed problems in the studio setting. All recorded interviews will be transcribed and placed in the appropriate section of the dissertation. A model of each participants' methodology and philosophy will be constructed from the findings. These models will be compared and contrasted for any similarities and differences. It will provide a source of information for trumpet professionals and students who desire an examination of their own methods of playing and teaching the trumpet, while insuring the preservation of this information. Your participation in this survey is expected to be approximately one hour.

### POTENTIAL FOR RISKS

There are no potential risks associated with this study and the knowledge obtained and will benefit the musical community.

### ASSURANCES TO YOU

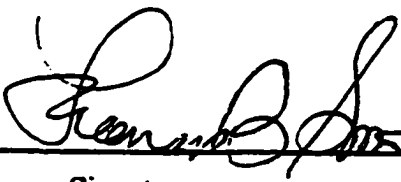
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### CONTACT

Should you have any questions, you may contact Douglas G. Wilson at 918-494-0165.

### ACCEPTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

This research is being conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus, and your signature below indicates your consent and willingness to participate in this project as outlined in this document.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

5/8/97  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated

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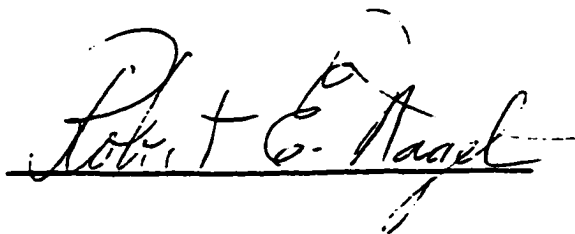
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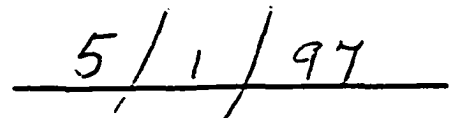
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Leonard V. Meretta

Signature

6/19/97

Dated

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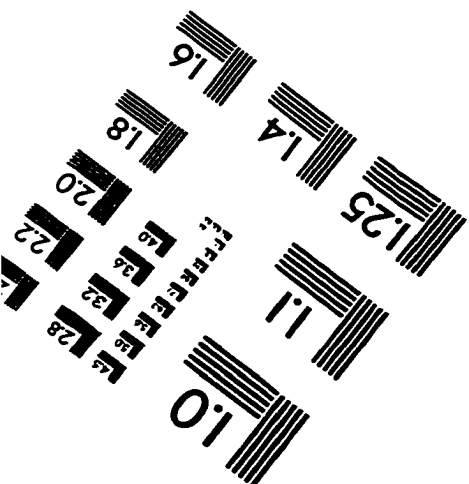
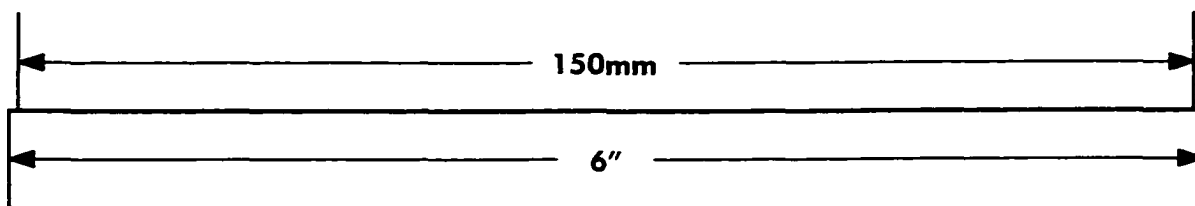
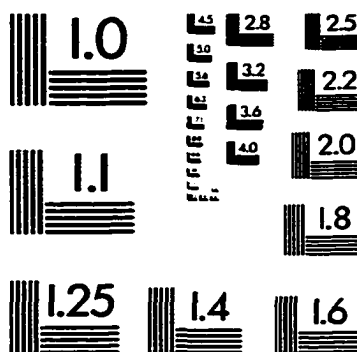
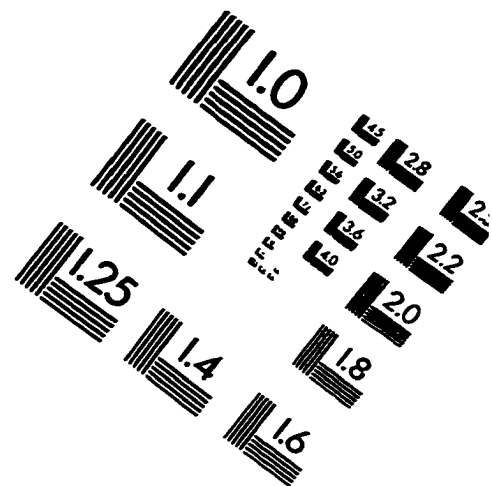
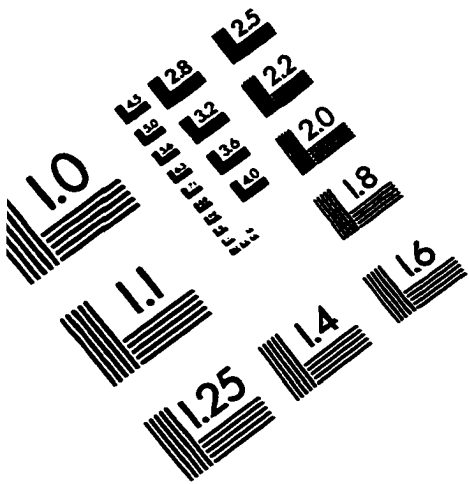
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