

## ***ENDORSEMENTS***

“This book is an indispensable guide to nearly everything a trumpet (or cornet) player needs to know about playing traditional jazz. It’s taken me a lifetime to learn much of the material in Mr. Thornton’s book – which is a treasure trove of information covering everything from the basics of playing the trumpet, to the theory of traditional jazz, to how to lead a band. This is required reading for anyone interested in playing traditional jazz. It is heart-warming to know that someone cares enough for the music I’ve played and loved for a lifetime to put such a volume together. I could’ve used the book 50 years ago when I started playing!”

**CHRIS TYLE** – Jazz educator, early jazz expert, and trumpet/cornet player who’s recorded 50+ New Orleans style jazz albums

“I have looked at the book and think it is wonderful. You simplify and present many unspoken and overlooked facets of New Orleans trumpet playing. You are creating an approach for building music vocabulary, not only theoretically but also by valued life experiences. I wish you the greatest success!!”

**KEVIN RAY CLARK** – Dukes of Dixieland trumpeter and bandleader

“An excellent book, which deserves to be read cover to cover by any trumpet player, amateur or professional, wishing to learn about New Orleans trumpet. Its use of modern technology is highly useful for today’s student of the genre. Instead of specific manuscript examples of what to actually play, a system of learning and discovery is laid out so a path can be followed to reach the desired aim. The chapter on modern day N.O. trumpeter/bandleader requirements is also very informative and accurate. I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in a valuable insight into the world of the New Orleans trumpet player.”

**PETER RUDEFORTH** - trumpet player with the legendary Chris Barber Band (UK)

"For fans of the music of New Orleans and the History and 'Mechanics' of American Music in general (which hopefully means YOU!), this book is interesting and quite different in approach. There's something in here for beginners, intermediates, and pros alike."

**RANDY BRECKER** - jazz recording artist



# NEW ORLEANS TRUMPET:



## *A Down Home Conservatory Method*

by Jim Thornton

*For all those who dream of playing jazz in New Orleans*

Graphic Design - Chris Goodmiller, Manhattan, KS

Cover art - Chris Volion, New Orleans, LA, <https://gvw.ink/>

©2018 Sher Music Co., [www.shermusic.com](http://www.shermusic.com)

P.O.Box 445, Petaluma, CA 94953

All Rights Reserved. International Copyright Secured. Made in the USA

No part of this book may be reproduced, posted online or duplicated in any way without written permission from the publisher.

ISBN 978-0-9976617-1-2

## Acknowledgments

I would like to express sincere thanks to not only every person identified by name within this book (and there are many) but also to a few who specifically helped me with the writing process. So, thanks to BooBoo for her loving and masterful proof-reading and editing, Jim Wildman for his steadfast positive encouragement, Rob Pearce for asking the right questions, Jason Mingleorff for his excellent pedagogical review, Matt Bell for patiently helping me with the music examples and chord charts, and Connie Jones for that much-needed music lesson. I'd also like to thank Andrew Fox, Jr. for teaching me that “the band that parties together plays together” and for getting me my first paid gig.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife for loving me and taking such great care of me and our children.

This book's dedicated to my dad—who I miss every day.

JGT

Algiers Point

April 17, 2018



# Table of Contents



1. Overview.....	6
2. Be a participant.....	7
3. To get the most of this book.....	8
4. The “not-teachable” part.....	8
5. Guns, horns, and discipline.....	9
6. My journey to New Orleans.....	13
7. In New Orleans, faking it doesn’t cut it.....	16
8. Studying Satch.....	17
9. Suggested technology and resources.....	20
10. New Orleans and a Rusty Old Horn.....	22
11. How does a trumpet work?.....	23
12. Playing high notes.....	27
13. Trumpet versus cornet.....	28
14. How does traditional jazz work?.....	30
15. Why trumpet players have trouble conforming to the chords.....	31
16. The keys to the kingdom.....	32
17. The “numbering” system(s).....	34
18. Defining the box and jazz freedom.....	38
19. Major triads--the magic of 3.....	38
20. Improving the odds.....	40
21. The major triads.....	41
22. Point notes and moving notes.....	42
23. More magic of threes, sensory dissonance, and the hot five notes.....	44

24. Sensory dissonance . . . . .	45
25. Minor and other types of triads . . . . .	49
26. Diminished triads . . . . .	51
27. Augmented triads . . . . .	52
28. Major seven chords and everything else . . . . .	52
29. Finding the patterns . . . . .	53
30. Understanding the hot five and seven notes . . . . .	55
31. Learning tunes . . . . .	58
32. Playing the melody . . . . .	60
33. Tricks . . . . .	60
34. Soloing . . . . .	64
35. Backing up other soloists and backing up vocalists . . . . .	66
36. Transposing . . . . .	67
37. The lava cake test . . . . .	68
38. Basics of traditional jazz . . . . .	70
39. Corsetry and music . . . . .	70
40. Leader duties and communication . . . . .	71
41. Handling sit-ins . . . . .	74
42. The job . . . . .	76
43. Just because you can . . . . .	77
44. Because you can, you should . . . . .	80
45. Bibliography . . . . .	81
46. Concert Charts . . . . .	83

## 1. Overview

This New Orleans Trumpet Method uses traditional New Orleans jazz to teach various core concepts of music and trumpet playing. It is designed to be read cover-to-cover. I hope you find what I write to be entertaining, inspiring, and thoughtful.

This Method uses an approach similar to the proverb, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." When I was young and eager to have new method books, I remember, with each new book, skipping ahead and looking for the hardest part and seeing if I could play them. There is no easy or hard part of this Method. It can be as easy as you make it or as difficult as you can dream. Give a trumpeter a sheet of notes and he can learn to play it; teach that trumpeter how music works and he can play anything.

If you are a beginner, you can certainly work through the concepts taught in this Method as you are learning to play. However, this Method is best suited for high school or college-level players who already know how to read music and who know the basic mechanics of playing the instrument. This book is really intended for aspiring trumpet players who desire to take their playing to another level, well-beyond playing just the notes on the page. This book is aimed to assist you in mastering the basics of playing early jazz on the trumpet. It is specifically written for the player who doesn't just want to fake it anymore, but who wants to play with mindfulness, consistency, and skill.

When compared to other musical genres, New Orleans traditional jazz (or trad, as it's often called) provides one of the best frameworks for learning about music. There are hundreds of great tunes that fall under the heading of trad, and these tunes all share a similar simplicity and emphasis on melody that makes the genre quite useful in teaching fundamental truths about music and how improvisational solos might be played correctly over a particular musical structure.

Despite what you might have been led to believe about traditional New Orleans jazz, this music is not difficult to understand or to play. Trad jazz is much simpler than many perceive it to be. I attribute this fact to two things: first, a number of great players are not great teachers, and second, no player wants you to take his gig.

Louis Armstrong put it best and bluntly, "Don't f%\$! with my hustle." He clearly did not want anyone to know what he knew or to mess with his gigging in any manner. He was rumored to have covered (and Freddie Keppard certainly did cover) the fingers of his right hand with a white handkerchief to keep aspiring trumpet players from stealing his licks. He viewed playing trad as a hustle. While there was no deception related to Armstrong's brilliant playing, it did not hurt for audiences to believe every solo he played was extemporaneous, when it was actually far, far from being so. In keeping with this purposeful mystique, Louis Armstrong also said, "If you have to ask what jazz is, you will never know."

Just like a magician doesn't want to share his tricks, trad players can be private as to how this music is actually played. I'd like to share with you all the tricks I have learned on my musical journey so that you too can participate in the hustle that is New Orleans jazz trumpet.

Open (no valves pushed),

- Add one increment, push just the middle 2<sup>nd</sup> valve
- Add two increments, push just the 1<sup>st</sup> valve
- Add three increments, push both the 1<sup>st</sup> valve and the middle 2<sup>nd</sup> valve
- Add four increments, push both the 2<sup>nd</sup> valve and the 3<sup>rd</sup> valve
- Add five increments, push both the 1<sup>st</sup> valve and the 3<sup>rd</sup> valve
- Add six increments, push all three valves (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>)

These increasing lengths allow the trumpet to play open G within the staff, down chromatically to C#, as follows:



This same logical pattern repeats itself when descending lower, starting on low C below the staff:



The same pattern can be used for the higher notes, but most players use alternate fingerings and they are recommended. Starting on G on top of the staff, these are the recommended fingering:



Starting on high C above the staff, these are the recommended fingerings:



When you understand about these tube lengths, it's easy to change your pitch by a half step up or down. This is really important, **because in jazz**, if you hear that you are playing a wrong note, you are often only off by only a half-step.

CORNET CHOP SUEY.  
 A Jazz Box Tune - By Louis Armstrong

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece "Cornet Chop Suey" by Louis Armstrong. The score is written on ten staves. The first staff is marked "Read" and "A Jazz Box Tune". The second staff is marked "1st. CHORUS". The third staff is marked "PATTER". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 13.2. "Cornet Chop Suey" (Copyright Deposit E580818, 18 January 1924.)

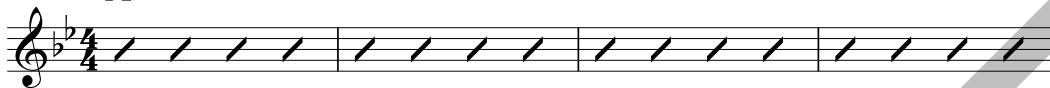
In New Orleans trad, playing fewer notes is more musically elegant. The pace is more relaxed, and even in fast tempo tunes, the notes should never feel frenetic. Ideally, rhythmic complexity, syncopation, and space should have at least equal weight to tonal choice. Add complexity through your rhythm more than through your choice of point note pitches. Surprising syncopation is always allowed.

For me, understanding the chord structure allows me to think less linearly about soloing. I think about blocks of notes, phrases, pauses, sounds that go together, and those that don't. Now, it's no longer a struggle for me to pick just the one, next "correct" note. Rather, I enjoy the challenge of picking and playing the "best" next notes.

# Group 1A-Bourbon Street

Medium Up Swing

**A** Ab



# Group 7C-I Want a Little Girl

Slow Swing

**A** G G<sup>7</sup> C Cm

5 G E<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> G E<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup>

**A** 9 G G<sup>7</sup> C Cm

13 G E<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> G C G

**B** 17 G<sup>7</sup> C

21 E<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup>

**A** 25 G G<sup>7</sup> C Cm

29 G E<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> G D<sup>7</sup>