

Making Everything Easier!™

# Trumpet

FOR

# DUMMIES®

## Learn to:

- Maintain and care for your instrument
- Read music and learn to play songs in a variety of styles
- Play along with the audio samples on the CD

**Jeffrey Reynolds**

*Trumpet teacher, conductor, and performer*



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# Trumpet For Dummies®

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**by Jeffrey Reynolds**



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## About the Author

**Jeff Reynolds** has been a trumpeter for almost 50 years, since the first day of band class, when the trumpet seemed to be a magical gift, possessed of supernatural powers. Since then, he has performed all manner of engagements, from funerals to weddings, from jazz gigs and dances to orchestra concerts. He has toured North America with ballet companies, played fanfares for Shakespeare plays, played onstage in tights for a pantomime and in tails for the great symphonies of Beethoven

and Mahler, and entertained the folks at country-and-western bars. He once popped out of a (fake) cake to play “Happy Birthday” for the president of a corporation. In spite of, or because of, all these various engagements, he retains a great pleasure in playing the trumpet and has an insight into the whole spectrum of music making available to the modern trumpeter.

As long as he has performed, Jeff has taught, from the Grade 8 beginners he started with (when Jeff was a whole grade more advanced) to doctoral students at the University of Toronto, where he has taught for 30 years. Explaining, analyzing, encouraging, and cajoling hundreds of students over the years has given him another kind of insight: the understanding of how to communicate trumpet playing to others. Teaching has always been as important to Jeff as playing, always as challenging and rewarding. Many of his former students are professional players and teachers.

## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to all my students who have taught me so much of what I know, and how to teach it, and to all my teachers, for all the rest. In particular, the late Vincent Cichowicz was a model of humanity, musicality, and communication whose influence is always with me.

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# Introduction

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Aliens visiting Earth after human life has disappeared might be confused by many of the random objects lying around: tape cassettes (there's a whole generation of humans already confused by them), eyeglasses, and even trumpets. But I believe they would soon discover — assuming that they have lips and lungs or facsimiles thereof — that trumpets are for making sound, and a whole new culture of trumpet playing would eventually emerge. People — and I'm betting aliens, too — love to make sounds with their mouths and the trumpet has always been endlessly fascinating. A trumpet instantly commands attention. The legendary New Orleans trumpeter Buddy Bolden's brazen sound attracted people in throngs, as did the music of Louis Armstrong in Chicago. Trumpets have been called the "voice of God." They've led armies and crumbled mythological walls. So, of course, you want to try playing the trumpet. Why *wouldn't* you?

I was attracted to the trumpet in high school, and I found it compelling from the very first day. The combination of its clear, strong voice; its beautiful look; and the way I felt holding one in my hands was hard to resist. My first trumpet was a \$35 pawnshop special — and it was the best Christmas present I ever received. I couldn't *wait* to play it. Not only did I play my new trumpet every chance I got, but my whole family wanted to try it, too.

The thrill of simply making that initial sound has never worn off, and the skills and technique, the musical inspiration, and, for me, the professional career, became added layers of a rewarding experience. This book is an introduction to many aspects of the trumpet — from how trumpets are made and how sound is produced, to what to look for when shopping for an instrument of your own, to starting to play and developing your technique,

to continuing your trumpet journey as your skills advance. I hope that you feel the same excitement about playing the trumpet that I do, and that you retain that excitement throughout your life.

## About This Book

This book is a reference, which means that you don't have to read it from beginning to end. You can dive in wherever you want and find the information you need. You also don't have to memorize this book — it isn't a textbook, and there won't be a pop quiz.

I provide all kinds of examples — both on and off the accompanying CD — to guide you in your own trumpet playing. And I give you tried-and-true strategies from my years of experience both as a trumpet player and a teacher. This book has all the information you need to get started as a trumpeter and take your trumpet playing to the next level.

## Conventions Used in This Book

I don't use many conventions in this book, but there are a few you should be aware of:

- ✓ When I introduce a term, I put the term in *italics* and define it shortly thereafter (often in parentheses).
- ✓ The action parts of numbered steps are in **bold**, so you easily can find what you're supposed to do.

- ✓ Web addresses are in monofont, to make them stand out from the surrounding text. **Note:** When this book was printed, some Web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that we haven't put in any extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. So, when using one of these Web addresses, just type exactly what you see in this book, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist.
- ✓ The track numbers of items on the CD appear above the paragraph where the item is mentioned or, if a corresponding piece of music appears in the book, at the top of the exercise or before the song title.

## What You're Not To Read

What you read or don't read is, of course, entirely up to you, but not everything in this book is critical to your understanding of the subject. The Technical Stuff icon marks information that expands on a topic or gives technical detail that you may prefer to skip (see "Icons Used in This Book," later in this introduction for more on this icon). Sidebars (the text in gray boxes) are asides — they're interesting but not essential, so if you're short on time, you can safely skip them.

## Foolish Assumptions

As I was writing this book, I made a few assumptions about you:

- ✓ **You're interested in music and attracted to the trumpet.** Even though you may not have any previous

experience, you have a more-than-passing desire to learn more about music and, specifically, how the trumpet fits into the musical world.

- ✓ **You have a trumpet and you're interested in trying to play one.** If you don't own a trumpet of your own, I assume that you're willing to borrow, rent, or buy an instrument, a mouthpiece, and all the equipment, such as maintenance products and a music stand.
- ✓ **You may not read music, but you're open to the possibility of learning to do so.** You're eager for new experience, and the prospect of learning a whole new language is exciting and stimulating for you.
- ✓ **You have a place to practice.** You need somewhere to play where you won't constantly be told to stop or go away. If you don't have a place to play your trumpet, you're willing to find one (whether that's in a music studio or an abandoned coal mine).
- ✓ **You have a stereo or a computer with good speakers.** The CD that comes with this book adds a very helpful dimension to your understanding of the trumpet. Because you'll be given the opportunity to play along with the CD, it's important to have speakers that are good enough that you can hear the CD while you're playing.
- ✓ **You're serious about learning about the trumpet, but not too serious.** Throughout this book, I give you tunes to play that are fun and entertaining, and tell amusing anecdotes about trumpet playing and trumpeters. I have fun playing the trumpet, and I hope you will, too!

# How This Book Is Organized

The chapters in this book are divided into five parts. Here's what each part covers.

## Part I: Ta-Da! A Prelude to Trumpet Playing

Part I is your introduction to the brass family. I fill you in on the role of the trumpet in culture and in people's imaginations. I describe the mouthpiece and its importance. I tell you how the valves work, and then I introduce you to the first steps that you take as a trumpeter. I cover the anatomy of the trumpet and the *natural overtone series*, nature's good vibrations that make trumpet playing possible.

Part I also provides information on choosing the best trumpet and mouthpiece for you, including renting versus buying, used versus new, and the type of finish. I even recommend specific models you may want to consider.

Finally, Part I introduces you to reading music. I explain the language of music and show you the way to begin using the written language to help you further your trumpet knowledge and skill.

## Part II: The Noble Sound of the Trumpet