

## PRO CORNER!

This is the first of a series of tips from one of our esteemed members.

This issue is from trumpet player, Wayne Bergeron.

### Thoughts on Section Blend

There are different concepts on what makes a section sound great. I have heard some people say that the sounds should all match; however, I disagree. I feel the best sounding sections are made up of sounds that are different in tonal color. For instance, four players, all with a similar bright sound, will not sound as full as a section with different sounds. I'm actually sitting in a section as I write this waiting for my next cue (shhh, don't tell the contractor!). There are three of us, and we're all playing different trumpets, with the 1st on Eb trumpet, 2nd on C, and myself on a Bb trumpet. The section has nice resonance and is full of color. We are all quite different sounding players, with various areas of strengths, and using a variety of trumpets, yet our different personalities and varying sound add greatly to the overall musical picture. If you were painting a picture, you wouldn't use only one basic color, but would blend different tones to bring the color and painting to life. The trick is to fit those tonal colors into the ensemble so they don't stick out of the section.

It's also important to know how loud lower parts fit into the mix. There is a school of thought that says all the parts should be equal volume. Technically this might seem correct, but from a musical standpoint, it would sound like a synthesizer. I can't count the recordings I've done where the person who mixed the recording equalized the volumes of the section too much, thus destroying the life of the section by making it sound small. I feel the 1st part should sit on top of the section, clearly audible. The listener shouldn't have to strain to hear the melody or top voice in the lead part. This is true of any section-saxes, trombones, or vocal etc. The 2nd player is like a wing man (or woman)-supporting the upper voice, but giving the 1st player room to breathe and stylize as necessary. The 3rd and 4th parts play the same role, but should help make the section resonate by locking into pitch and style. These parts also give the section its fullness. You can have an edgy, thinner sounding lead player (no names please! and not optimal in my opinion), but if the section fills things out correctly, that player will sound fuller than when playing alone. When playing inner section parts, I feel it is my job to make the 1st player sound the best I can. I do everything possible to fit into the 1st player's style, and I definitely don't try to play "lead" from the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th chair, especially in volume. Obviously, time, pitch, and stylistic precision come into play as well.

I find, in general, that older recordings capture this idea best because they used fewer mics and the players balanced themselves. Older school sections (circa 1950s/60s) tended to have players who had strong musical personalities and unique playing styles. They didn't sound alike at all, but they knew how to fit themselves into the ensemble.

Check out sections with guys like

Uan Racey: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uan\\_Racey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uan_Racey)

Conrad Gozzo: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conrad\\_Gozzo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conrad_Gozzo)

Snooky Young: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snooky\\_Young](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snooky_Young)

Al Porcino: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al\\_Porcino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Porcino)

Conte Candoli: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conte\\_Candoli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conte_Candoli)

Pete Candoli: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pete\\_Candoli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pete_Candoli)

Here's a link to the legendary Uan Racey playing two of his famous film scores - check out this sound and phrasing! Beauty and vocal-like come to mind: [Uan Racey](#):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUpdupnb6nQ>

Here's a link to a section that had VERY different sounds - Maynard on lead, Conrad Gozzo, the Candoli brothers, and Ray Linn. "The Wild Party"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdHISEZLaqU>

Here's a link to the great Snooky Young showing off his section prowess, as well as his one of a kind plunger style. What a personality! Count Basie "Who Me?"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNZ5ZPq11gc>

Thanks for checking out some of my heroes!