

## What is a Good Sound?

This area is a bit harder to define because a good sound for lead-trumpet in a jazz band is quite different from third-trumpet in your concert band. The most important issue here is knowing what you want to sound like...then trying to imitate that sound.

First, let's discuss the four "qualities" of a trumpet sound (as paraphrased from David G. Monette)

A. Shape: All sound has a shape. Round, wide, narrow etc. The player must have an idea in his/her mind about what shape they want their sound. This concept is variable based on what type of performance environment the player is in.

B. Bright vs. Dark: All sound contains a certain amount of high and low frequency wavelengths. A sound with more low frequency than high frequency will sound "Darker". The inverse is also true for a "Brighter" sound. Dark sounds carry further (imagine a foghorn) while bright sounds sound better in smaller venues. As with shape, the player must change their sound to meet the needs of the performance space.

C. Edge: All sound has an "edge". It may be crystal clear like a triangle, or cloudy like a French Horn, or raspy like a suspended cymbal. Lead trumpet in a jazz band often has an "edgy" sound, whereas an orchestral player often has a darker more powerful sound. Players must know what they want to sound like, then modify their approach to imitate that sound.

D. Core: This is the most important and least understood of all aspects of sound. The core is the center, or the "meat" of a sound. Core is where the power of a sound exists. Core is compromised when a player plays with a spread aperture and/or is "lipping" the pitch around.

The bottom line is that a good sound is variable- based on the needs of the music and the venue it is performed in. In order for students to make a good sound, they must first know what a good sound sounds like! Then, assuming there are no embouchure or air issues, they must try to imitate the sound image in their head! Obviously, students should do a lot of listening to create a clear image of what they want to sound like.