Note Targets and Lotus Mouthpieces

Joel just bought his first Lotus mouthpiece - "Any advice for acclimating from traditional equipment?".

Getting to the low end to the pitch, pushing the mouthpiece away from your chops; making sure that you see that every note - People talk about note targets, as if it were hitting bull's eye in the middle of a circular dartboard. But for me, I see notes as much more in 2D, as a triangle, and in 3D as cones; where the fattest, juiciest, richest sound you're gonna get is at the bottom of the note. Actually, I can't even give this example, with Tom Clary's lovely cup mute in, because everything sounds equally resonant. But open horn, you can tell it's like (exemplifies with sounds) And as soon as you drop down to the low end of the pitch, it's like boom!, there's the note - the *real* note.

And really, you just gotta get down to the real part of that note, both in terms of the small physical things here, and the big physical things, the overall, the posture, your general physical state of being. Just be chill, be cool, and get to the low end of the pitch; and flex your lips forward, and that's where you'll find the biggest, fattest sound.

Very few mouthpieces actually offer equal-tempered octaves, and when you finally experience a mouthpiece that puts the harmonic series where it really belongs, then you've gotta circumvent the existing muscle memory; actively, consciously get to the lower part of every note - in the upper register especially - where you'll start to see those dividends, being paid off.

So that's what acclimating to a Lotus mouthpiece is all about. It just makes things that much easier, as long as you commit to not doing anything more than necessary to produce that tone. That's what this is all about. That's what my whole life-long-journey has been about, since I was in my twenties, my early twenties. Before then, it was how to become great. I'm aspiring to become a master, to master the horn.

But, part of mastery means that you have to reconcile the differences between wanting to play super efficiently, and wanting to make the machine with the fewest-moving parts, but at the same time, knowing that there are things about the equipment that are holding you back.

* Intonation, as governed by the geometry of your mouthpiece
* Noticing that when you play loud on most trumpets, they go flat, and when you play really soft on most trumpets, they go sharp. So you've got this constantly changing floor, underneath you.

In order to call yourself a master, in order to master those circumstances, you have to program all this extra stuff in your body, to compensate for all those things. It is what it is, if the horn goes flat when you play loud, then you need to develop a way to play loud and introduce a little bit of tension or more inward pressure or whatever is necessary to keep the pitch up.

And Lotus was born out of that desire for me to, not just talk about efficiency on some conceptual level, and then say "Yeah sorry, your equipment won't really allow that now, will it?". So that's what this is all about - making it so that you and I don't need to program all of that extra stuff; all of that extra work. Put in all of those extra hours to coordinate all of those other things and "isms" and the Valsalva maneuver, and the inward pressure, and the excessive pivoting of the horn on your face, whatever.

All these things are just to compensate problems with the gear; and so that's what my journey into trying to provide you with better solutions is all about. It's about fixing those problems, and giving you gear that doesn't have those problems so that you don't have to worry about it. You can just spend a lot less time than you would otherwise, honing your technique, so you can spend more time thinking about the music. That's what's up.