What is Slow Practice?

- Slow practice provides opportunities to focus on a scale or passage at significantly slowed tempos, to allow the player to focus on fundamentals (posture, smooth fingers, embouchure shifts, support, etc.)
- Slow practice is a great time to practice a passage in new rhythms or meters, with the metronome voicing the "ands", or in different note groupings (think 5s, 6s, or 7s)
- Slow practice gives your brain time to forge new connections, to coordinate fingers, air, embouchure, and tongue smoothly and with decreased tension and motion, making you playing more efficient overall.
- Slow practicing of one passage can change habits, and improve your playing in other passages. This method can greatly improve your technique, articulation, and CONFIDENCE!

Suggestions

- Enjoy the process- slow practice provides time for you to scan your body for tension and better understand how your fingers, tongue, and embouchure coordinate. Through slow repetition you have many opportunities to successfully perform challenging passages.
- Develop an action plan. Once you are able to focus on a particular element (fingers, air, etc.), you should add a metronome, assess your current "successful" tempo, and plan future practices methods to raise the tempo over time. It is essential to prioritize slow "fully-focussed" tempos over faster ones that cause bodily or mental tension.
- Slow practice can uncover unconscious tendencies- observe passages in which you rush, get frustrated or angry, or feel uncomfortable, and recognize and celebrate your accomplishments as you progress. We achieve deeper personal awareness as we develop on our instruments.

Technical (Fingers)
- Pick a scale or short (2-3 bar) passage to memorize.
- Play the passage slurred, with eyes closed, focussing on the motion in your fingers. Can your fingers remain on or near the keys without tension throughout?
- Now change the rhythm to "long-short" or "short-long"again focussing on the smooth motion of the fingers. Change rhythms and groupings to add interest and challenge.

Metronome Fun
- Challenge yourself to play your passage exactly with the metronome at a slow tempo (QN=45 or less). Use smaller subdivision to anticipate the next pulse or articulation.
- "Ladder practice" with various tempos. Start by increase speed 2 “clicks” at a time, then return to starting tempo and jump "rungs", add 4 for one playthrough, then subtract 2 to check your fluidity and comfort.