



**ICA 2013 Montreal  
Montreal, Canada  
2 - 7 June 2013**

**Musical Acoustics  
Session 1pMU: Player/Instrument Coupling**

## **1pMU2. Simulating different upstream coupling conditions on an artificial trombone player system using an active sound control approach**

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Recent research suggests that the ability to finely tune vocal-tract resonances during trombone playing may constitute an important aspect of performance expertise. Artificial player systems, designed to reproduce the behaviour of a real player, often neglect this component by not providing any control of upstream resonances. However, they offer great experimental platforms for quantitative studies on sound production mechanisms, allowing independent adjustment of certain control parameters. An active sound control method was designed to improve high tone support and investigate different conditions of coupling between the artificial lips, the downstream air-column and the upstream cavity during sustained tones played by an artificial valve-trombone player system. Upstream input impedance at the fundamental frequency was controlled through real-time adjustment of the phase and amplitude ratio between the acoustic pressure generated on both sides of the lips. The phase difference between the upstream and downstream pressures was swept linearly while maintaining different conditions of upstream energy and fixed trombone fingering. Observations during this procedure included: 1. significant fundamental frequency variations in the neighbourhood of a downstream impedance peak; and 2. variation of the downstream energy and optimal phase tuning with regard to the mechanical efficiency of the lip-valve system.

Published by the Acoustical Society of America through the American Institute of Physics

## INTRODUCTION

Recent experiments on trombone players have highlighted performers' ability to create strong vocal-tract resonances and influence the regenerative process at the playing frequency, particularly in the high register of the instrument [1]. This vocal-tract tuning involves both amplitude and phase adjustments of the upstream system impedance at the fundamental frequency of the sound [2]. In order to evaluate the influence of amplitude and phase independently from each other, we propose to simulate the acoustical effect of upstream airways using an artificial trombone player system with an active control method inspired from previous experiments conducted on brass players [3]. This paper presents the experimental method, as well as first results revealing the high potential of this technique regarding the study of upstream coupling in wind instruments, improvement in the control of artificial brass player robots, and identification of artificial lip mechanical parameters.

## METHODS

The active acoustic control method was implemented on an artificial brass player system developed at IRCAM [4]. This robot allows for precise feedback control of different control parameters: lip tension via adjustment of the volume of water inside the latex lips and the force applied by the mouthpiece on the lips, quasi-static flow via adjustment of a servo-valve connected to the artificial mouth cavity. A number of transducers also enable real-time monitoring of various state variables:  $P_d$  and  $P_u$ , the downstream and upstream acoustic pressure, measured respectively in the mouthpiece and in the mouth cavity,  $P_m$  the quasi-static mouth cavity pressure,  $F_e$  the force applied by the lips on the mouthpiece in the longitudinal direction,  $S_{lip}$ , the opening area of the lips measured by light transmission method,  $P_{l1}$  and  $P_{l2}$  the quasi-static water pressure in the artificial lips.

In order to simulate different conditions of acoustical coupling with the upstream cavity at the fundamental frequency  $f_0$  of the sound, we rely on the assumption of air-flow continuity at the reed junction allowing to write Eq. (1) in the frequency domain (where  $Z_d$  and  $Z_u$  denote the input impedance of the downstream and upstream system respectively). By performing feedback control on the amplitude ratio and phase difference between  $P_u$  to  $P_d$ , we are therefore able to control the amplitude ratio and phase difference between downstream and upstream input impedances  $Z_d$  and  $Z_u$  at the playing frequency.

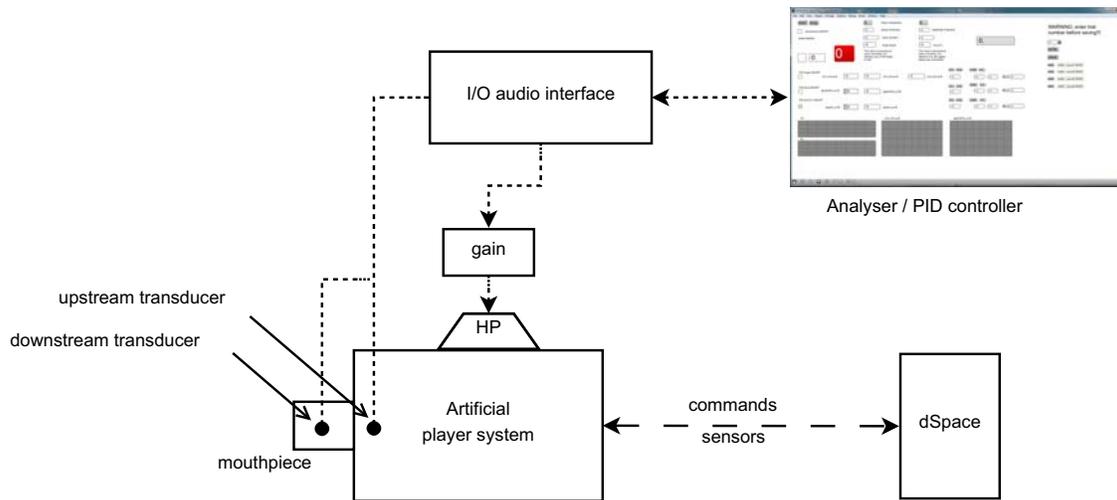
$$\frac{Z_u}{Z_d} = -\frac{P_u}{P_d} \quad (1)$$

The active control algorithm is implemented using the programming environment Max/Msp. The setup presented in Fig. 1 involves a downstream pressure transducer (Endevco 8507C-2) mounted in the mouthpiece cup, an upstream pressure transducer (Endevco 8507C-5) mounted in the mouth cavity just upstream from the lips, and a compression driver mounted on the mouth cavity. The feedback algorithm is implemented according to the following procedure:

- Once the system starts oscillating, the instantaneous fundamental frequency  $f_0$  is extracted from the  $P_d$  signal using the Max/Msp external fiddle~.
- A sinusoidal signal at frequency  $f_0$  is generated in the mouth cavity, where the amplitude and phase driving the loudspeaker are called  $A_c$  and  $\Phi_c$ .
- A Max/Msp subpatch performs extraction of the instantaneous amplitude and phase at  $f_0$  from the  $P_d$  and  $P_u$  signals.
- $A_c$  and phase  $\Phi_c$  are adjusted by a PID controller (proportional-integral-derivative controller), implemented in a Max/Msp subpatch, according to user commands on  $\left|\frac{P_u}{P_d}\right|$  and  $\angle P_u - \angle P_d$ . The PID coefficients were tuned empirically prior to experiments.

This method enables independent control of the amplitude ratio and phase difference between  $Z_d$  and  $Z_u$  at the fundamental frequency of the sound during sustained tones. In this study, we focus on the highest pitch

tone (A4b) we could produce without active control. As the volume of the mouth cavity is relatively large, the signal from the compression driver largely overrides the inherent acoustical effect of the mouth cavity at this playing frequency.



**FIGURE 1:** Diagram of the experimental setup. Signals from the downstream and upstream pressure transducers are recorded by an audio interface running at 44.1kHz and used for the active control. The artificial player commands and control parameters are transferred through a dSpace module working at 1kHz.

In this paper, we report the results obtained according to the following protocol:

1. Find a proper control parameter setting (input volume flow, lip tension) to obtain a steady and clear tone without active control.
2. Preset active control parameters to the observed phase difference between  $P_u$  and  $P_d$  resulting from the weak coupling with the mouth cavity.
3. Set a command value for  $|P_u|$  (constant upstream acoustic energy condition) or for  $\left|\frac{P_u}{P_d}\right|$  (constant  $Z_u$  to  $Z_d$  amplitude ratio condition).
4. Turn the active control on.
5. While maintaining a constant amplitude condition, sweep linearly the phase difference  $\angle P_u - \angle P_d$  over a range of  $240^\circ$ .

## RESULTS

### Experiment 1

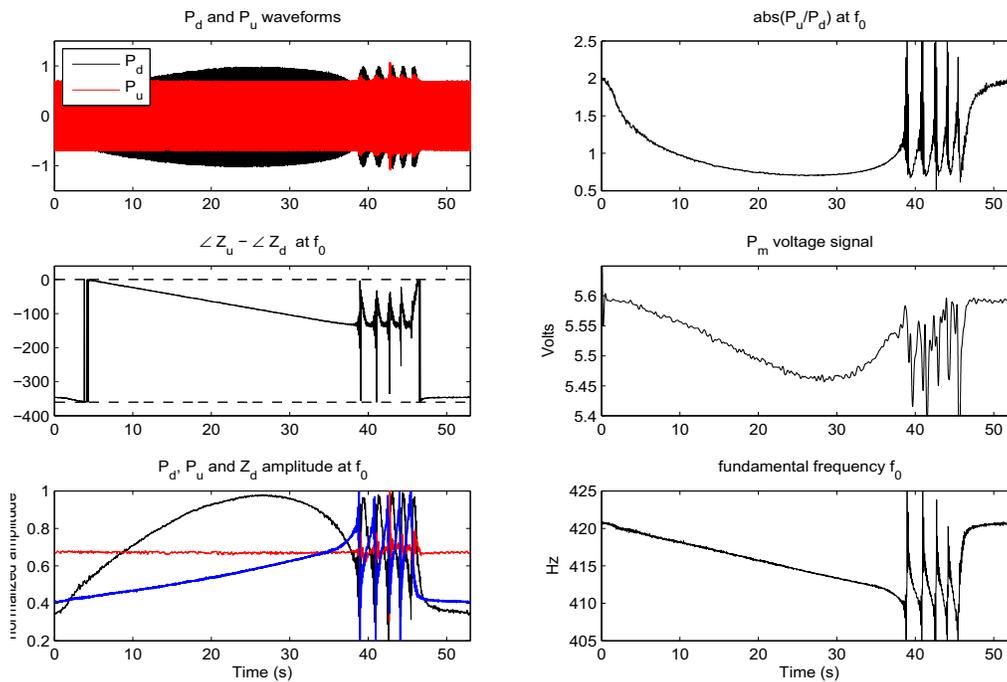
Data from a 60 seconds recording with constant upstream energy condition ( $|P_u|$  is a constant) are presented in Fig. 2. As the pressure transducers are capturing both acoustic and quasi-static pressure, the quasi-static mouth pressure  $P_m$  is derived from low-pass filtering of the upstream transducer signal simultaneously input to the dSpace (running at 1kHz). We first notice that the linear sweep of the phase difference  $\angle Z_u - \angle Z_d$  and the constant upstream acoustic energy are well achieved for the first 38 seconds. The system maintains stable oscillations for 38 seconds before entering into a more turbulent regime, certainly due to the destructive phase tuning imposed by the controller and not supported by the lips. At time 46 seconds, active control is stopped and the lip oscillations return to their initial, sustained condition.

Regarding the stable sounding section (from 0 to 38 seconds), we observe that despite a constant acoustic energy on the upstream side, the linear phase shift induces significant  $f_0$  variations, as well as a maximum

of downstream pressure energy correlated with a minimum of quasi-static mouth pressure. From the measurement of the complex input impedance  $Z_d$  of the trombone, we observe that this downstream pressure maximum does not match with a  $|Z_d|$  peak value. This observation suggests that this maximum in downstream pressure is not due to an increase of downstream support but rather to a beneficial phase tuning of  $Z_u$  relative to  $Z_d$  at  $f_0$ .

## Experiment 2

Data from a second experiment with constant  $\left|\frac{P_u}{P_d}\right|$  condition are presented in Fig. 3. As in the previous experiment, significant  $f_0$  variations are observed with variations of the phase difference  $\angle Z_u - \angle Z_d$ . A maximum of downstream and upstream energy is observed around  $t=28$  seconds, matching with a minimum of quasi-static mouth pressure.

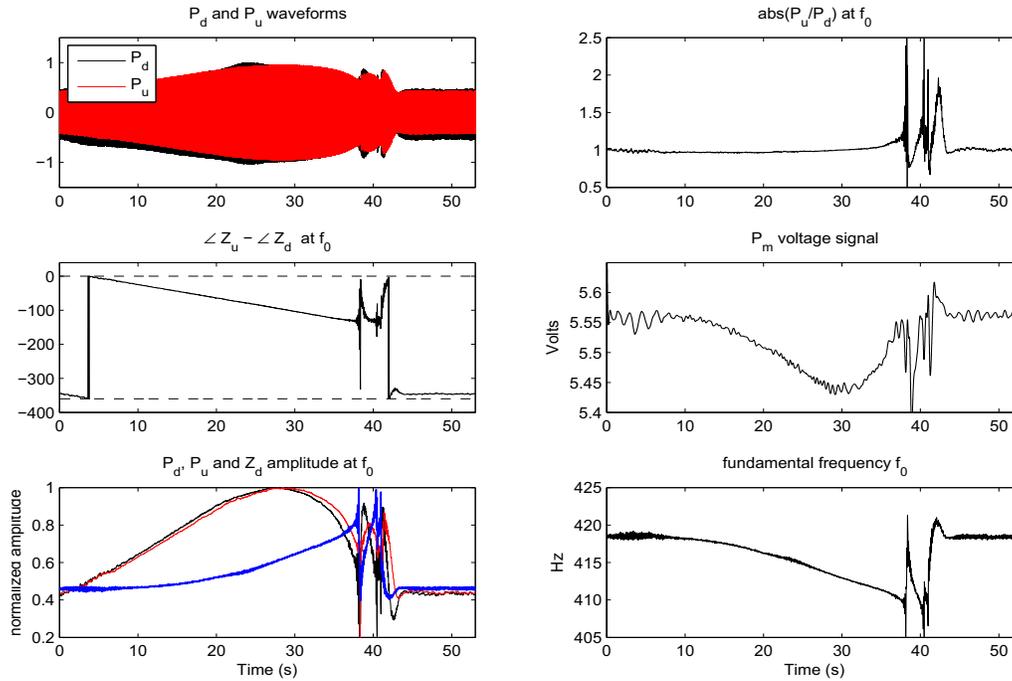


**FIGURE 2:** Sustained A4b with linearly varying phase difference between  $P_u$  and  $P_d$  at  $f_0$  and constant acoustic upstream energy. Left column from top to bottom:  $P_d$  (black) and  $P_u$  (red) waveforms; phase difference between  $Z_u$  and  $Z_d$  at  $f_0$ ;  $P_d$  (black),  $P_u$  (red) and  $Z_d$  (blue) normalized amplitude at  $f_0$ . Right column from top to bottom:  $P_u$  to  $P_d$  amplitude ratio at  $f_0$ ; quasi-static mouth pressure  $P_m$  (output voltage of the transducer), instantaneous fundamental frequency  $f_0$ .

## Comparison between Different Experimental Conditions

Two other experiments were conducted according to the protocol of experiment 1 ( $|P_u|$  is a constant) but with different values of upstream energy in each experiment. For all experiments, the amplitude of the pressure difference across the lips  $\Delta P = P_u - P_d$  and  $P_d$  amplitude were plotted against  $\phi = \angle Z_u - \angle Z_d$  and against  $f_0$ . The frequency and phase  $\phi$  at  $|\Delta P|$  maximum and  $|P_d|$  maximum were extracted. Results are presented in Table 1. In the four conditions, we note that the phase  $\phi$  was swept linearly by the same amount ( $145^\circ$ ) before stable lip oscillations could no longer be maintained.

Focusing on the three first conditions, we observe that an increase in the level of upstream energy increases the  $\Delta f_0$  range covered, as well as the range of variations of the quasi-static mouth pressure. Although



**FIGURE 3:** Sustained A4b with linearly varying phase difference between  $P_u$  and  $P_d$  at  $f_0$  and amplitude ratio of  $P_u$  to  $P_d$  maintained constant and equal to unity. Left column from top to bottom:  $P_d$  (black) and  $P_u$  (red) waveforms; phase difference between  $Z_u$  and  $Z_d$  at  $f_0$ ;  $P_d$  (black),  $P_u$  (red) and  $Z_d$  (blue) normalized amplitude at  $f_0$ . Right column from top to bottom:  $P_u$  to  $P_d$  amplitude ratio at  $f_0$ ; quasi-static mouth pressure  $P_m$  (output voltage of the transducer), instantaneous fundamental frequency  $f_0$ .

**TABLE 1:**  $f_0$  variations, frequency and phase  $\phi$  at which the pressure difference across the lips is maximum, frequency and phase  $\phi$  at which the downstream pressure is maximum, maximum and minimum values of  $P_u$  to  $P_d$  amplitude ratio, and quasi-static mouth pressure variations (in % of the maximum value of  $P_m$  recorded during the stable part of the tone), extracted in three conditions of constant upstream energy (normalized to the condition of maximum upstream energy) and one condition of constant upstream to downstream energy ratio. For all conditions,  $\phi$  was swept linearly over a range of  $145^\circ$ .

Condition	$\Delta f_0$	$f(\Delta P_{max})$	$f(P_{d,max})$	$\phi(\Delta P_{max})$	$\phi(P_{d,max})$	$\frac{P_u}{P_d}  _{max}$	$\frac{P_u}{P_d}  _{min}$	$\Delta P_m$
$ P_u  = 59\%$	6.5Hz	416.6Hz	414.5Hz	$-36^\circ$	$-88^\circ$	1	0.54	1.6 %
$ P_u  = 85.6\%$	10Hz	417Hz	414.2Hz	$-45^\circ$	$-90^\circ$	2	0.7	2.5 %
$ P_u  = 100\%$	14Hz	417.5Hz	414.1Hz	$-44^\circ$	$-91^\circ$	3	0.78	3.0 %
$\left  \frac{P_u}{P_d} \right  = 1$	8.5Hz	416Hz	414Hz	$-67^\circ$	$-92^\circ$	1.1	0.96	2.2 %

$P_d$  and  $\Delta P$  energy peaks occur at different  $\phi$  values across experiments,  $P_d$  and  $\Delta P$  peak frequencies are observed at relatively similar values. These observations support the two following conclusions: 1) Given a constant amount of acoustic energy provided from the upstream side, an optimal phase tuning of upstream airways may significantly increase the acoustical efficiency of the lips and maximize the downstream acoustic pressure generated. It may also slightly reduce the quasi-static blowing pressure required to maintain a given level of oscillations. 2) Stable peak frequencies observed may suggest that lip motion is maximized at a given playing frequency, possibly matching with a resonance frequency of the lip-reed system.

Simultaneous measurement of lip opening area  $S_{lip}$  would enable calculation of lip transfer function  $\frac{\Delta P}{S_{lip}}$  and possibly determine whether observed peak frequencies correspond to a lip mechanical resonance. Although  $S_{lip}$  monitoring was performed during our experiments by light transmission method, some uncertainties remain regarding the synchronization between  $S_{lip}$  and pressure transducer signals, as well as regarding the exact relationship between photo-transistor signal and the absolute lip opening area. Solving

these issues will enable investigation on the possible application of this active control method to the estimation of lip resonance frequency under playing conditions.

## CONCLUSIONS

We have presented a method for the simulation of different upstream coupling conditions during sustained tones played on an artificial trombone player system. This method appears to be robust for a slowly varying control of the relative phase and amplitude at  $f_0$  of the downstream and upstream input impedance. It seems to facilitate the production of high tones with the artificial mouth and clearly demonstrates the importance of a careful phase tuning on the production of downstream pressure. Further work on this setup will involve: improving the reliability of the phase and amplitude estimation of lip opening area, investigating the possibility to apply this method for the estimation of lip resonance frequency during playing, and evaluation of technical solutions to improve the velocity of the active control feedback allowing the study of transitory upstream tuning.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the Centre of Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media and Technology, the Schulich School of Music and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada for helping fund this project.

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