

TBZ Monthly

A new monthly content service from Brad Edwards

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Welcome!

Here is the next issue. Thank you to everyone who has subscribed so far. I'm always looking for ways to connect with trombonists and I love having the opportunity to share with people in a way I hope will provide benefit. If you are getting this pdf without having subscribed and would like to subscribe to future issues, simply [follow this link](#).

Chances are this little digital publication will evolve over time. If there's something you'd like to see included, please reach out to me: brad.edwards6251@gmail.com.
(IG: [@brad edwards trombone](#))

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Enjoy!

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Websites:

[Trombone Zone](#)
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A Pretty Good Melody

The musical score is written in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. It consists of two systems, each containing four staves of music. The first system is in D major (two sharps) and the second system is in B-flat major (two flats). The music features a variety of note values including eighth, quarter, and half notes, as well as rests. Phrasing slurs are used to group notes across measures. The first system concludes with a double bar line, and the second system also concludes with a double bar line.

A Useful Lip Slur / Slide Technique Builder

Even if we have an F-attachment or alternate position choices, it is useful not to lose good slide speed while maintaining a smooth connection between the notes. Notice the slide positions (tuning adjustments are left out of this example).

$\text{♩} = 60$

Now play that same passage but deliver a clear, non-legato attack on each note. Don't give up on the sustain. This should be **very** close to slurs.

etc.

Here's a variation subdivided into 16th notes.

etc.

Free book sample: 60 Vignettes

This is a more recent book. Each half-page Vignette appears in three keys. Versions are available for: tenor trombone, bass trombone, tuba, and french horn. Maybe someday I'll add a version for trumpet.

Some are in minor keys, some in major. Some are legato, some are detached. They start easier and get harder.

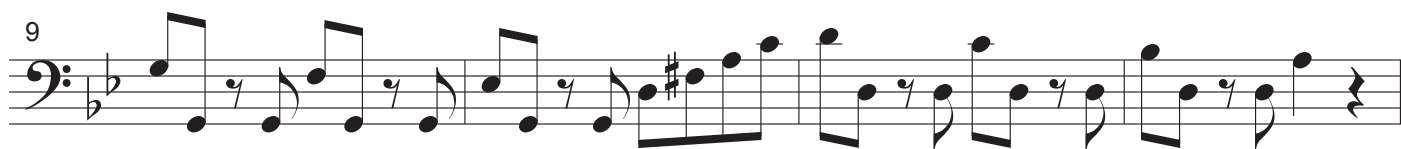
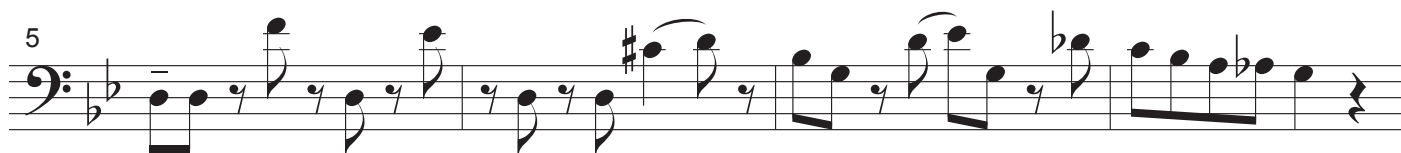
This one is entitled *Cabeceo* which is a term from the world of tango. Play it with spirit and fun.

This is from the tenor trombone book.

A link for this book is [here](#).

A link for more free sample pages is [here](#).

Enjoy!

32*Cabeceo* ♩ = c. 108-138

b.

Musical notation for exercise b. in bass clef, 4/4 time. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with various accidentals (sharps, naturals, flats) and rests. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

5

9

Measure 9 (Bass Clef): The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes, including a sharp sign (#) on the staff.

13

13

[illegible]

5

Musical notation for the fifth measure. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, including a triplet of eighth notes. The measure ends with a quarter rest.

9

Measure 9: Bass clef, key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with rests.

13



Playing Tip: Finding the Fat Center

Most players, most of the time, play on the high side of the pitch.

Consider this, when you miss a note, do you usually miss by hitting a lower note or a higher note? Most people hit the next higher note because they are already on the high side of the pitch.

It's like throwing darts at an "overtone stack" of bullseyes...



If your darts consistently hit on the high side of the middle target, it's easier for them to land on the target above (clam, frack, spleeah).

When you habitually play on the high side of the notes troubles often crop up:

- You miss more notes
- Your pitch tends sharp
- Your tone is more thin
- You tire out faster

I'm not suggesting that you lip down the pitch (although that can be a useful exercise on its own). Think of easing down into the fat center of the note. If you allow the pitch to settle ever so slightly, you might discover a bigger, more resonant tone.

*Find that fat center.
Not pinched, not flabby - just right.
Listen!!*

Favorite Musical Moment(s)

I love moments when I can see the performer totally immersed in the performance. This is a moment of Flow when other thoughts recede to the background and we become immersed in the moment. I'd like to share a few examples:

~

Bassist Victor Wooten performs this nearly [6-minute solo from The Lesson](#). Notice the mental absorption in his facial expression! I've cued up this video about 3 1/2 minutes into the solo. Follow along for a bit to hear amazing virtuosity and intense relaxed mental focus! I think there is a strong connection between his relaxation and the speed of execution. How often when we are playing something difficult do we tense up!

~

Trombonist Achilles Liarmakopoulos provides another wonderful example of relaxed concentration and total focus. In this [video with guitarist Spiros Axaras](#) (from the album Trombone Atrevido) notice his relaxed demeanor. Notice the stillness of his embouchure. Notice how well they play a *ritard* together (at about 29 seconds). I've shown this video in many lessons with my students at ASU.

~

This older recording of the [Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto](#) performed by Itzhak Perlman has always been a favorite of mine. He is so immersed in the passage and yet I think I see a hint of joy in face.

~

Forgive for bragging a bit on the great trombones at Arizona State University. Here's a 33-second passage from the Kevin Day Concerto for Wind Ensemble which features a really [nice trombone section lick](#). (I may possibly have fist-pumped in the air when I heard it live!).

On Teaching and Playing: Doubt Comes In (Grit, Criticism, Praise)

I just saw the musical, *Hadestown* (featuring the wonderful trombonist, Aubrey Ochoa!). At the end of the musical, Orpheus is walking back up from the underworld. His true love, Eurydice must walk behind him but he is never allowed to look back to see if she is still there. If he looks back, she is lost to him forever. The three Fates haunt Orpheus, singing “[Doubt comes in.](#)” I won’t tell you how it ends but, remember, the story is a tragedy.

Here’s my question: we all experience moments when Doubt Comes In. We need Grit to carry on. What builds Grit better, criticism or praise?

I’ve always heard stories of teachers who were very hard on their students. “After three years I finally played something in a lesson and he didn’t have anything to say!” Some of these teachers were legendary for being very harsh and demanding. Funny thing, though: students often remember these teachers with fondness, even reverence.

Were they good teachers? Well, for sure some were just abusive (and incompetent). Others probably knew their stuff and just had a very tough approach. I’ve heard this rationale given for this teaching style:

Life is tough.
This business is tough.
I’m preparing you for it.

That attitude seems less common now. We’ve all heard the phrase “participation trophy” which has inserted itself into the culture wars at times. I associate this phrase with thoughtlessly heaping praise when perhaps it hasn’t been earned. Does this build confidence or does it help Doubt Come In?

Ultimately there isn't an answer since every person is unique. I do worry, though, that when praise is heaped upon someone and they sense that they haven't truly earned it, Doubt Comes In. When they do something really worthy of praise (and that praise is given) will they realize it has greater value than mindless praise?

I don't have any grand solution but I do have a strategy that helps:

Comparative Praise/Criticism

In any passage, there has to be a moment that is better and a moment that is worse. I like to search for that better moment and point out, "I really liked the resonance in your sound here. It would be great if you could get that in this other spot." That's the trick: one moment compared to another moment.

Better yet is for the student to hear a recording of themselves and pick out the better spots. I might ask, "Why is it better there?" Often I get these answers:

- Oh, I really love that spot!
- Well, I actually took a good breath.
- I was more relaxed at that point.

Those self-observations can be Revelations.

Building blocks.

Each little success, observed and appreciated,
helps to defend you when
Doubt Comes In.

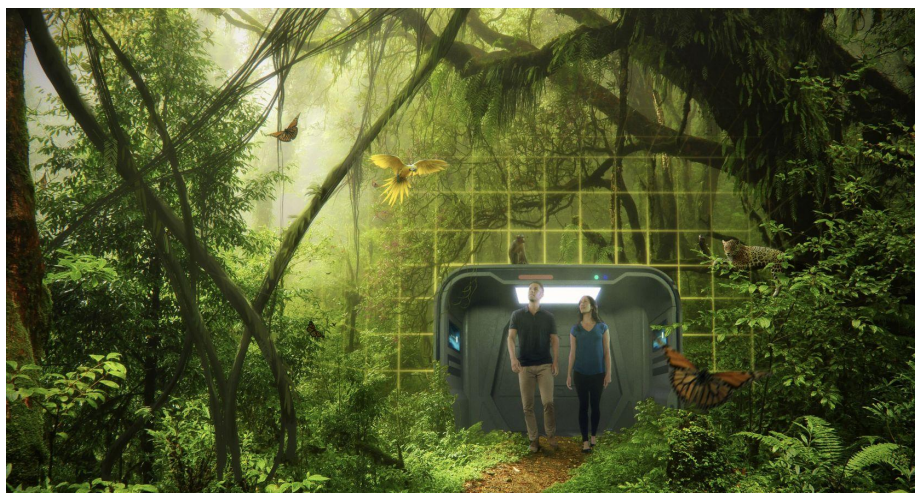
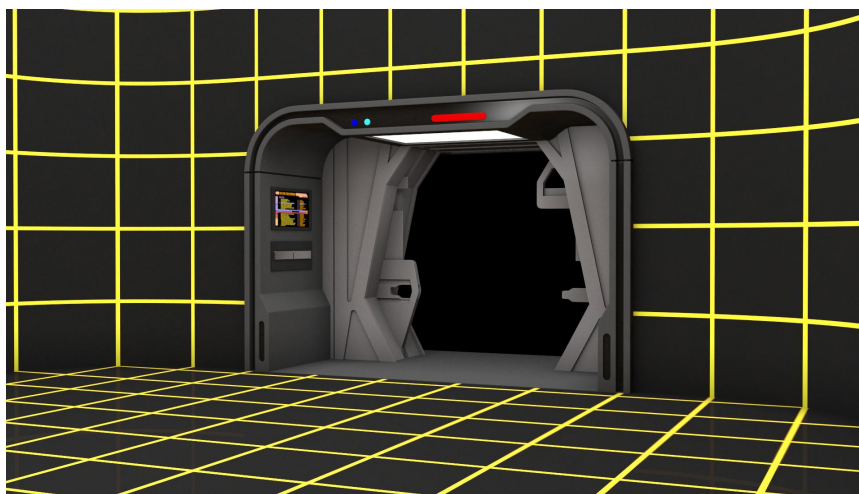


A Random Thought: Band Holodeck

When you're young and learning to play, how do you know what to sound like? In your band room (probably in middle school) you are surrounded by other young musicians who are just starting to figure out their own instruments.

What surrounds you? Beginner sounds. That's what you imitate, probably. What if you could be surrounded by professional-level playing? Well unless one of your parents is king or queen and can command pros to sit down with you for each practice session, you don't have an easy solution.

The Star Trek shows and movies sometimes depict a Holodeck which can be filled with a virtual environment:



Imagine a young player stepping into that holodeck and sitting down to rehearse with professional musicians.

What would surround them? Professional sounds. Think of how quickly they might improve.

This isn't a new idea, of course. There are Youtube videos, the old Music Minus One recordings, sample recordings of band pieces played by pros. That's all pretty good but I think the listener too often becomes passive. They aren't really surrounded by good sounds as they play.

Best of all is an older sibling or parent who is a professional musician, practicing in the house. Most beginners don't have that.

I know, I know:
In the last TBZ Monthly
I raged against screens.
But actual realistic immersion?
That might work.