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)

In this issue:

Enjoy!

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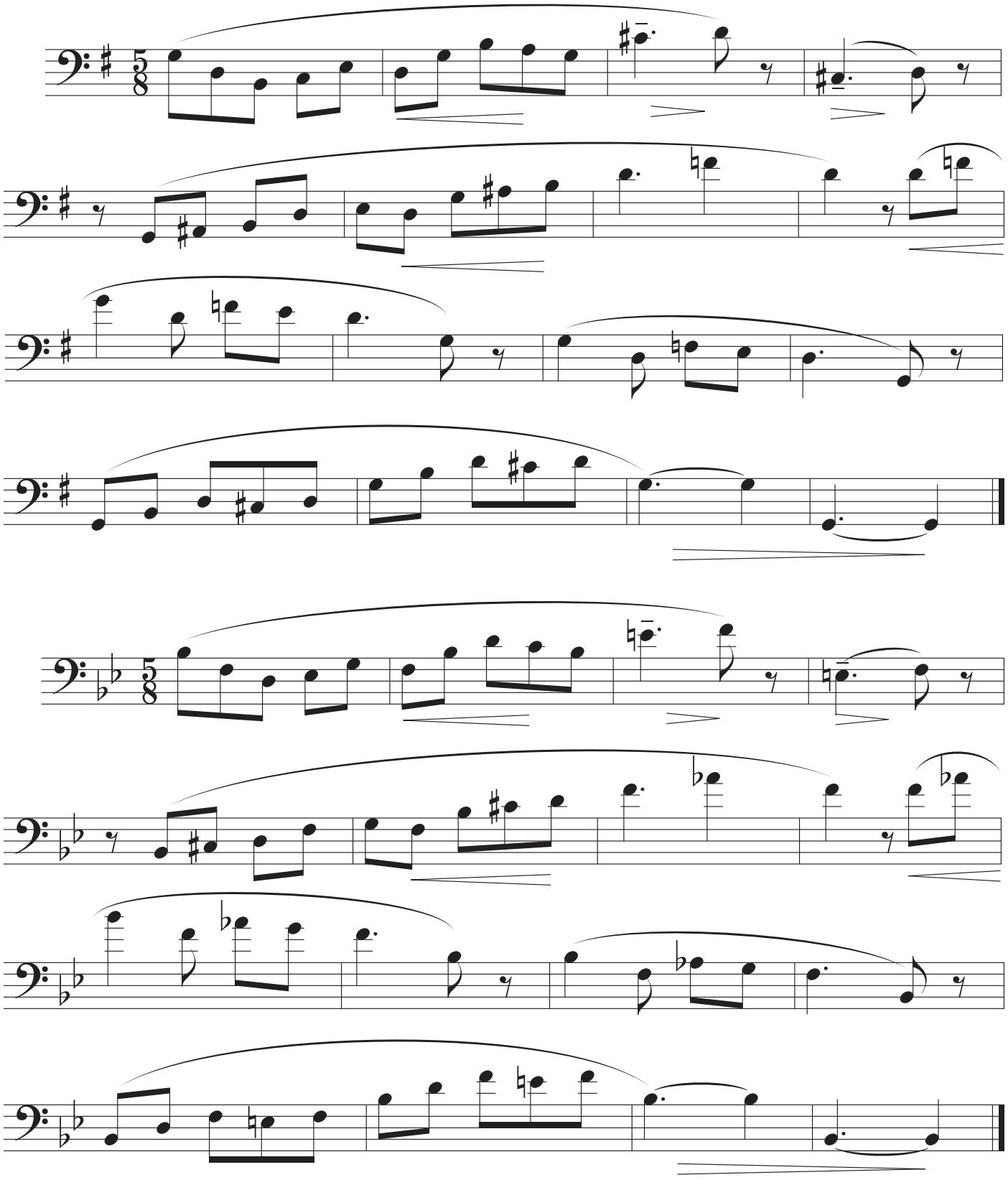
Websites:
Trombone Zone
Hornbone Press
Free Audition Solos
ASU Bones

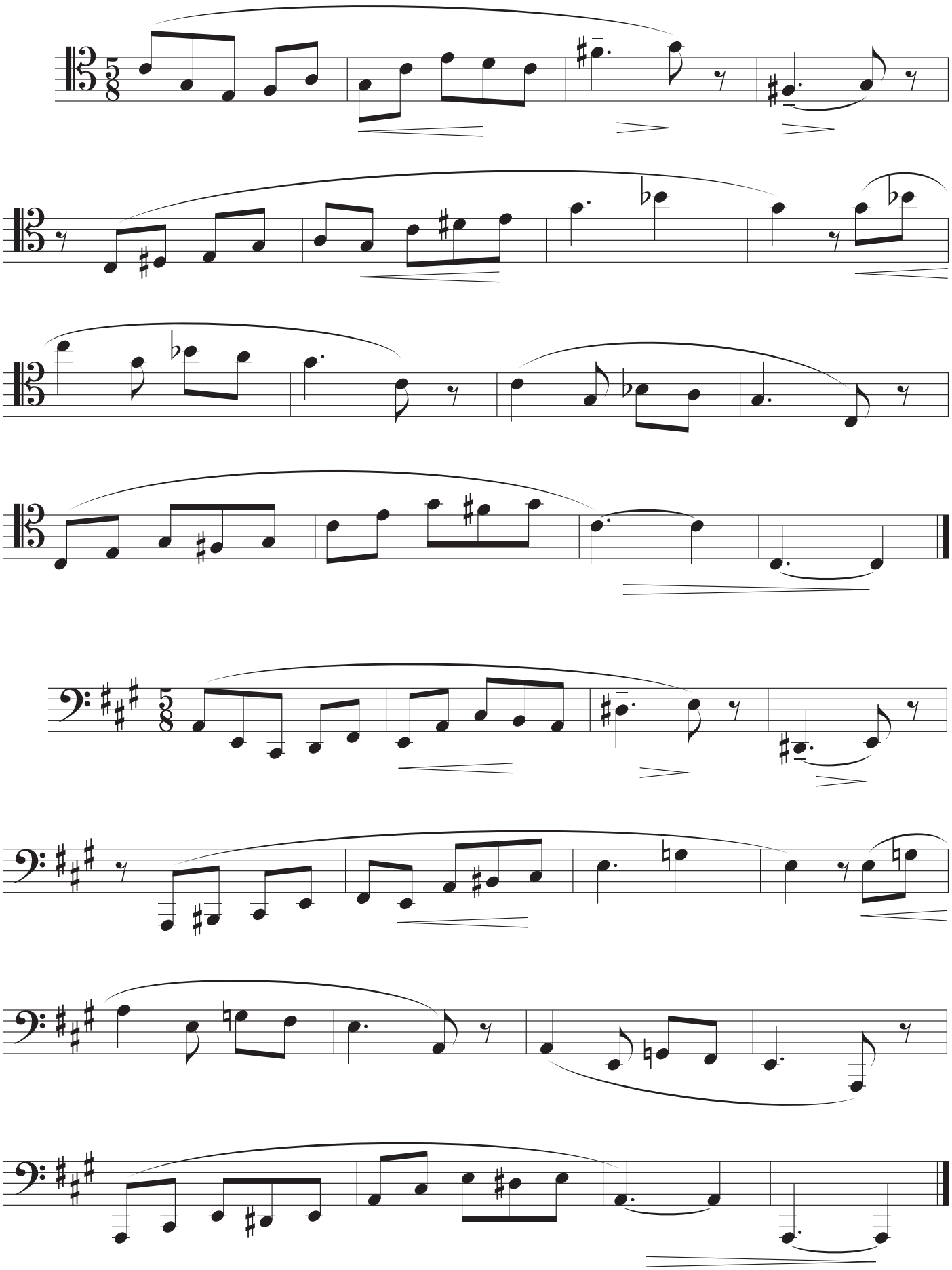
TBZ MONTHLY

A Pretty Good Melody

August 2022

Writing a decent melody in 5/8 is usually a challenge for me. This one sort of works.
Be sure to keep an accurate internal pulse on the sustained notes!

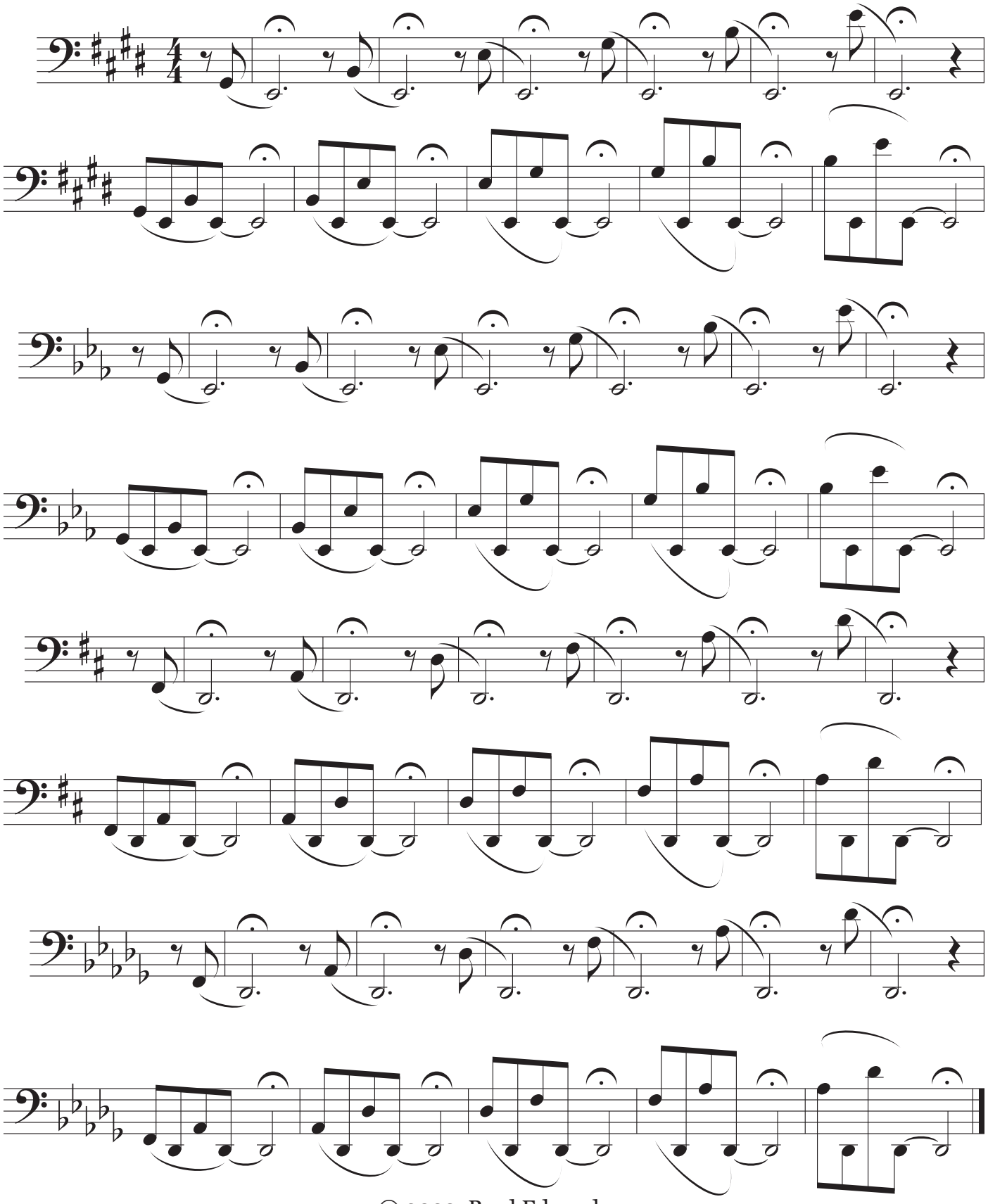




A Useful Lip Slur

August 2022

This one really focuses on the tone of the bottom note. Great sound always!



Free book samples: 100 Sight Melodies

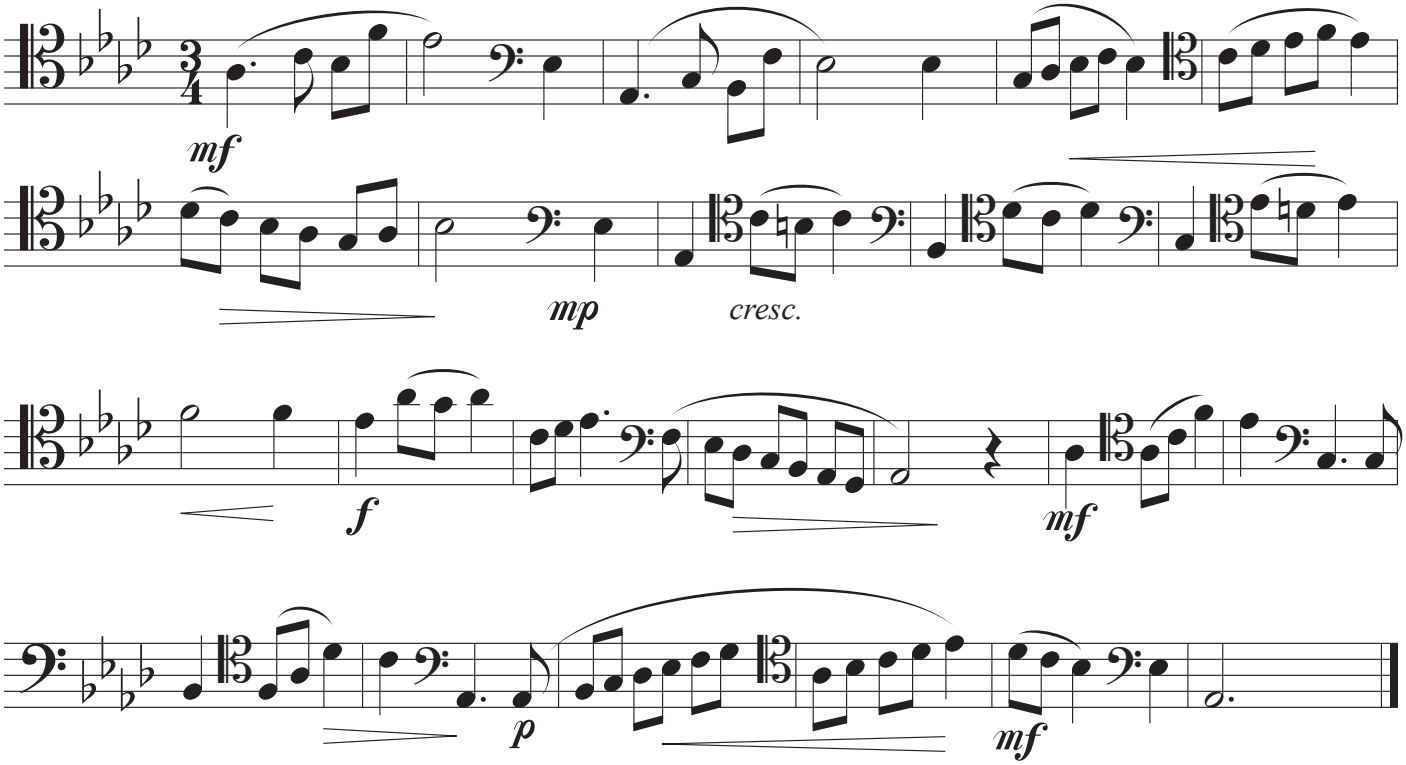
I have two books which are only available in PDF format. *100 Sight-Reading Melodies in Tenor Clef* and *100 Sight-Reading Melodies in Alto Clef*.

These half-page pieces are designed to be read on a tablet screen so the bottom of the "page" has more white space than you might see on a paper book.

For these two free samples, I chose some tough ones (as you can tell from the number).

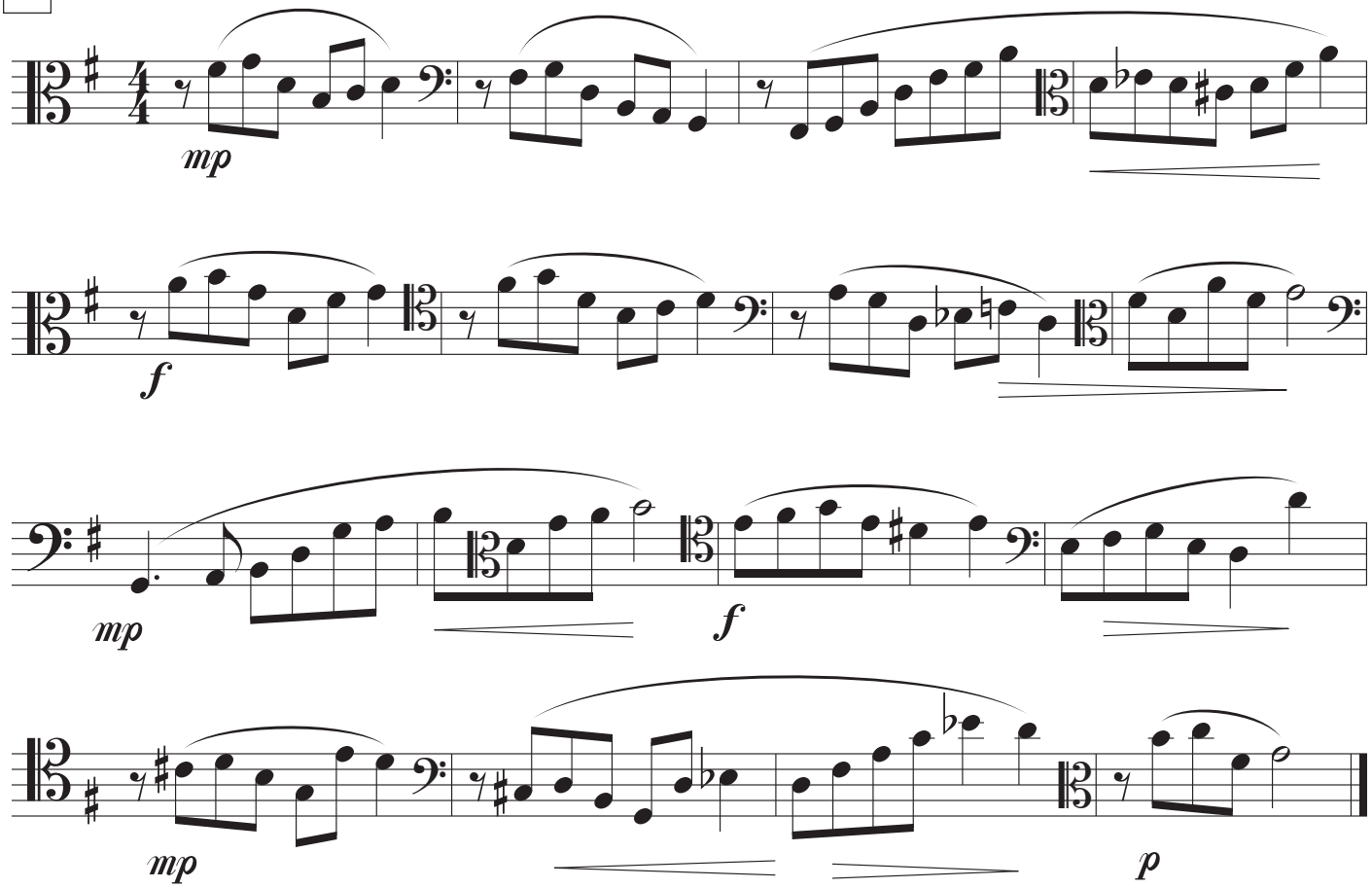
Good luck with the second example
(which uses all three clefs).
Not easy!

Allegretto ♩ = 96-108



93

Andante ♩ = 76-88



Playing Tip: Can the robot (really) do it?

I used to coach a robotics team, ages 9-14. It was for competitions affiliated with FLL (FIRST Lego League). Honestly, it was like nothing else I've ever done. I loved it but man was it exhausting work. I coached for five years and, amazingly, our team won the state championship twice!

"What does this have to do with trombone playing?" you ask. Well, the kids would build attachments and program the robot to autonomously complete some little mission. When the robot succeeded, they freaked out with joy. However, could the robot do it another time?

Our team ended up with a motto:

"If the robot can't do it three times in a row, the robot can't do it."

Recently, I got to coach a wonderful young brass quintet at the Rafael Mendez Brass Institute. I told them my robot story and, for the rest of the week in coaching sessions, I could just say "robot" and they would understand. Can you do it three times in a row without missing?

Of course the great Bert Lucarelli set a higher standard for his oboe students. He would set out TEN buttons. If they couldn't play the passage ten times without a miss, they didn't know it.

Don't stop when you get it right.
Robot!

Favorite Musical Moment(s)

Delivering in spite of adversity. It's what a professional must be able to do. You won't feel your best every time you take the stage. In fact, you will often feel like crap. Still, the audience has paid to see you and it is your job to deliver.

That's why I love this performance by the great Sarah Vaughn. She admits that she isn't feeling well (a cold) and she clearly seems uncomfortable. As she sings, you can see sweat on her face and neck. She apologizes for not knowing the language. She holds a tissue in her hands. I'm guessing she would much rather be curled up in bed trying to recover. Still, in spite of all that, she brings it!!

Apparently, the great drummer Buddy Rich either suffered a heart attack during this extended drum solo or right afterwards. No lack of intensity in his playing! This link leads to the end of an exhausting drum solo.

Here's a humorous example of Brazilian pianist Eliane Rodrigues who encountered a broken pedal during a recital. She didn't want to stop playing - even as they rolled the piano onto a lift and lowered her below the stage to swap pianos. She just keeps playing! Hilarious!

On Teaching and Playing: The Performance Equation

P - I = R

This little equation explains so much. Did I invent it? Not sure but it feels like a variation on similar things I've seen over the years.

P = Potential
I = Interference
R = Result

In other words, your final performance result will be your potential best performance minus interference.

P

We endeavor to raise our potential as high as possible.

- Fundamentals practice (tone-building, lip slurs, scales, sight-singing, etc)
- Careful listening to music (studying the score, comparing performances, etc)
- Visualizing a great performance (imagining how it would sound and feel)
- Develop powers of relaxed concentration
- Getting feedback to know what you *actually sound like*

I

I break interference into two categories: mental and physical. This is an artificial dichotomy since it is clear that the two greatly impact each other. Still, the dichotomy can be useful.

- Interference/Physical
    - standing/sitting out of balance
    - tensing muscles unnecessarily
    - applying too much physical force
    - "fight or flight" response (adrenaline, etc).
      [this is *really* connected to mental interference!]

- Interference/Mental
    - Distraction: thinking about *anything* other than the musical gestures of that moment and the upcoming moment.
        - "I feel nervous. People will think less of me."
        - "Wow, I played that really well."
    - "Brain Lock" - your mind scrambles itself into knots as you are about to perform.

R

Results (not desired)

- You clam a note
    - Perhaps aiming higher than needed (Interference/Physical - excessive air pressure, applying too much physical force)
    - You didn't hear the note clearly in your mind (Potential - hear the note more clearly; Learn to focus the mind as you play under pressure)
- You misplace your slide during a run
    - Sloppy scale practice (Potential - slower scales and careful listening)
    - You trained yourself into a habit of an inaccurate slide (see above)
    - Your arm is tense as you play (Interference/Physical)
    - You can't visualize the run clearly in your mind. (Potential - more focused mental practice; Interference/Mental - brain lock, distraction
- You play legato passages with "wah"
    - You don't hear that you are doing it (Potential - get more feedback)
    - You are using more force of air than is needed. (Interference/Physical)
- You struggle with high notes
    - You need to spend more time patiently building your high range. (Potential - building fundamentals)
    - You are tensing up more than is needed and possibly forcing the air (Interference/Physical)

Even as I write this, I sense that this theory needs more reflection to be fully worked-out. Still I hope it is useful food for thought.

A Random Thought: The McGurk Effect

This one always blows my mind. What we *see* profoundly impacts what we think we *hear*.

Maybe this has been done before but I would love to see an experiment in which the same instrumental performance sound is matched to two different videos, one showing confident posture and one showing hunched diffident posture. Show the video to some people and ask them which performer played better.

“People hear with their eyes.” When I was younger, I hated this concept. Still, we can’t escape the simple fact that more of our brains seem to be devoted to sight than sound.

In a future edition of TBZ Monthly I hope to spend more time on the subject of mirror neurons (fascinating and I need to know more!).

But for now, look at this two-minute video and prepare to have your mind blown. Is it “bah” or “fah”?