

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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A Pretty Good (but somewhat weird) Melody

This seems to be the result of a tug of war between harmonic normalcy and weirdness

The musical score is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of eight staves of music. The melody is characterized by frequent chromaticism and shifting tonal centers. It begins in C major (one sharp), moves to D major (two sharps), then to E-flat major (three flats), and returns to C major. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs, illustrating the 'tug of war' between normalcy and weirdness mentioned in the text.

First staff of music in bass clef, key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with a long slur spanning across several measures, ending with a fermata. The notes are primarily eighth and quarter notes.

Second staff of music in bass clef, key signature of one flat. It begins with a fermata, followed by a melodic line with a slur. The notes are eighth and quarter notes.

Third staff of music in bass clef, key signature of one flat. It contains three distinct phrases, each with a slur. The notes are eighth and quarter notes.

Fourth staff of music in bass clef, key signature of one flat. It features a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The notes are eighth and quarter notes.

Fifth staff of music in bass clef, key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It shows a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The notes are eighth and quarter notes.

Sixth staff of music in bass clef, key signature of two flats. It begins with a fermata, followed by a melodic line with a slur. The notes are eighth and quarter notes.

Seventh staff of music in bass clef, key signature of two flats. It features a melodic line with a slur. The notes are eighth and quarter notes.

Eighth staff of music in bass clef, key signature of two flats. It contains a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The notes are eighth and quarter notes.

A Useful Lip Slur

September 2022

This one requires a precisely-timed slide movement! Shake the instrument as little as possible.

*Free Book sample: Trombone Craft
Appendix 7: Tone and Tuning
#11 Two-Voice Chorale, Nun Danket*

This is a nice little tuning exercise based on Bach’s chorale harmonization “Nun Danket alle Gott.” You have a nice mixture of major 10ths, perfect fifths, octaves and more. Go slowly enough that you can really lock in the tuning!

For example “b” and “c” notice that there is a double key signature. Do them first in one key, then the other. Because of the double key signature, you will also see some double accidentals.

For example, notice the double accidental. This is in example “b” which has the keys of A major and A-flat major. The sharp in parentheses should be used when playing in A major.



You can also record a duet with yourself (record the low voice first!) and check your tuning. A bit more complicated but worth it.

Enjoy!

Appendix 7: Tone and Tuning

App 7.11: Two-Voice Chorale, "Nun danket alle Gott"

Play these slowly enough to really hear the intonation!

a.

Exercise a consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a bass line of quarter notes (G2, F2, E2, D2) and a treble line of quarter notes (G4, A4, B4, C5). This is followed by a series of chords and melodic fragments, including a half note G4 with a fermata, and a sequence of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4, C5). The second staff continues with similar harmonic and melodic patterns, ending with a final chord.

This can be done in A or in A-flat. The small accidentals in parentheses are for the key of A major.

b.

Exercise b consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a bass line of quarter notes (G2, F2, E2, D2) and a treble line of quarter notes (G4, A4, B4, C5). This is followed by a series of chords and melodic fragments, including a half note G4 with a fermata, and a sequence of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4, C5). The second staff continues with similar harmonic and melodic patterns, ending with a final chord.

c.

Exercise c consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a bass line of quarter notes (G2, F2, E2, D2) and a treble line of quarter notes (G4, A4, B4, C5). This is followed by a series of chords and melodic fragments, including a half note G4 with a fermata, and a sequence of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4, C5). The second staff continues with similar harmonic and melodic patterns, ending with a final chord.

d.

Exercise d consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a bass line of quarter notes (G2, F2, E2, D2) and a treble line of quarter notes (G4, A4, B4, C5). This is followed by a series of chords and melodic fragments, including a half note G4 with a fermata, and a sequence of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4, C5). The second staff continues with similar harmonic and melodic patterns, ending with a final chord.

Playing Tip: Goldilocks Air

You know the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. She wanders into their house and tries out the porridge. One bowl is too cold, one bowl is too hot. And one bowl is jussst right.



The same is true with the air we blow when we play. So often band directors and teachers will say, “**Use more air!**”

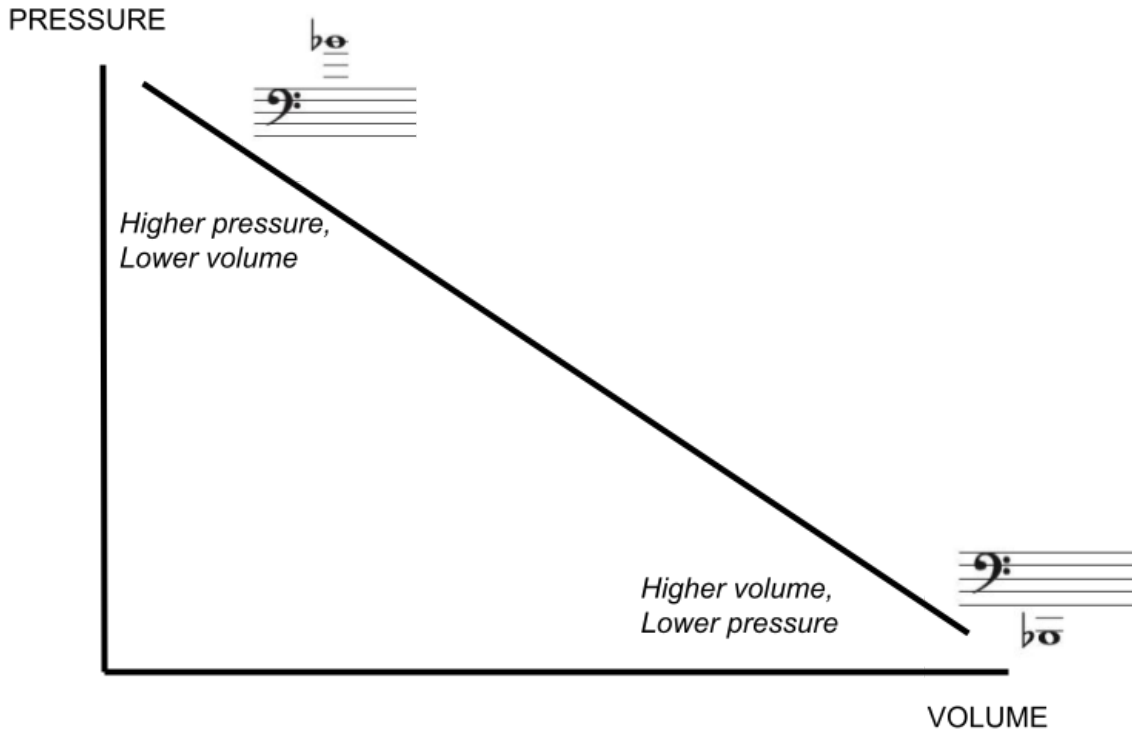
Well, that may work if the student is using a feeble or weak air stream. But a lot of times, the student is blowing with too much force! The embouchure tightens up, sometimes the throat constricts all in reaction to over-pressuring the air.

For starters, we can think of air in terms of pressure and volume. If you make a loud “SSSS” sound you are generating lots of air pressure (“**Use more air!**”) but very little volume.

If you cup your hands and warm them up with your breath, you are probably using lots of volume (“**Use more air!**”) but very little pressure.


Same instruction: different interpretations.

Every note, I think, has a sweet spot where the air pressure and volume are just right. This chart might serve as a good description...



Here's the thing: most students who aren't beginners usually use **too much pressure** and **too little volume** of air for any given note.

So, when they see this note:



They might generate air pressure more appropriate to this note:



That's one reason why, when we miss a note, we miss above the note!

Our porridge is too hot!

Favorite Musical Moment(s): You gotta be there

You gotta be there.

These video/audio samples won't really work on Youtube. There are pieces with a strong spatial element - you just have to be in the room to really experience it.

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The last movement of Holst's Planets, Neptune the Mystic, is one such example. The orchestra fades away into a wordless choir of women's voices. The choir, usually, is offstage so that our attention is directed away from the performers and into the vast reaches of space. Such a great musical moment. Here's a performance from the BBC Proms featuring the [BBC Orchestra and the Elysian Singers](#) (2015).

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Another stunning example is the [Unanswered Question by Charles Ives](#). Having heard this piece when I was a teenager, it has always left a deep impact on me. The timeless strings proceed without a care for the human world. An offstage trumpet presents the question in the form of a mysterious call. The flutes, representing humanity, attempt but ultimately fail to answer this question, even mocking it at the end. The trumpet with its question is offstage. (interestingly, the Wikipedia article on this piece states that the strings are to be offstage with the flutes and trumpet on stage - I like that but I haven't seen it done that way).

~

You can't talk about spatial elements in music without mentioning Giovanni Gabrieli. I felt so lucky to visit Saint Mark's in Venice and see that space in which the music happened. I couldn't find a video of a performance actually in *that* St. Marks but here's a [nice performance](#) in a different St. Mark's by the Compass Rose Brass based in Minnesota.

On Teaching and Playing: Beating Yourself Up

Criticism

It's one of the toughest things to master both as a teacher and as a player.

Over my years teaching, I've seen students who really beat themselves up. No matter how well they play, they will conclude that it was horrible and worthless. If I try to compliment some detail of their performance, they bat away the compliment as empty words. Sometimes, I think they have concluded that beating themselves up is a way to prove to others (and perhaps to themselves) that they are truly serious about improving.

We also live in a time when young people get a lot of empty affirmations about how wonderful and special they are. I worry about these affirmations since I think students usually see right through them as being hollow. Perhaps their internal response is to get down on themselves even more!

I have seen teachers or conductors who are downright abusive to young players. They shout and insult. They become very demanding about ridiculous small details. And yet, the students sometimes worship them! I wonder if these young people gravitate to the abuse, thinking, "Finally, here's someone who will tell it to me straight about how much I suck."

Maybe that's what some people need. I've certainly had a few students who walk around believing that they are a wonderful gift to the world. And, yes, those students need a realistic "adjustment." But most of the time, it's the opposite. Students beat themselves up or, more accurately, beat themselves down.

So, what's the right balance? How do you set high standards? Well, one answer is to notice and celebrate little steps in the right direction. As I often say to my students, **"It's not where you are, it's where you are going."**

A Random Thought: Studio Advice

I recently had my first trombone studio class at Arizona State University. The vibe in the room was great as students first interviewed and then introduced each other. After that I dispensed some life advice which I thought I would share:

Studio health:

- Support each other!
- Play together!
- Spur each other on!

Mental health:

- Don't be shy about asking for help. Don't wait until a problem is a crisis.
- Have something in your life besides music.
- Find things that lift you up.

Physical health:

- Eat healthy
- Drink enough water
- Get enough sleep
- Get exercise

Practicing:

- Many things in your life make demands on your time. Make practicing a priority.
- Make a musical sound from the beginning. Avoid a mechanical Focus.
- With every phrase, strive for Resonance and Direction.
- What habits are you building? Every practice session is a contest between habits.
- What are you avoiding in the practice room?
- Work backwards from your goal. What does your future self require of your current self?

I love seeing all the ways the members of the ASU Trombone Studio embrace these principles!