

## *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](mailto:brad.edwards6251@gmail.com). (IG: [@brad edwards trombone](#))

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### ***Enjoy!***

Brad Edwards

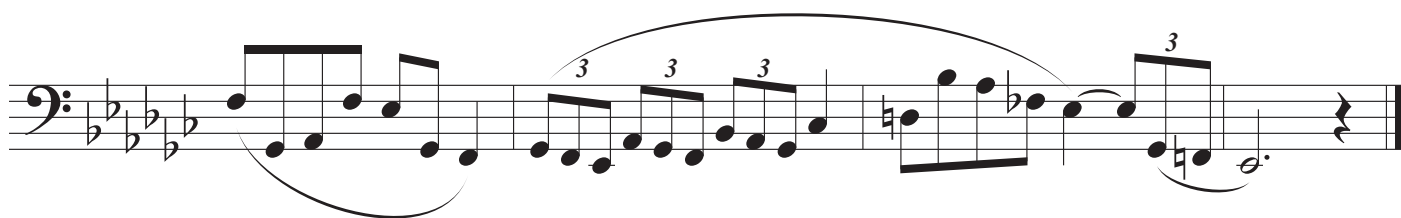
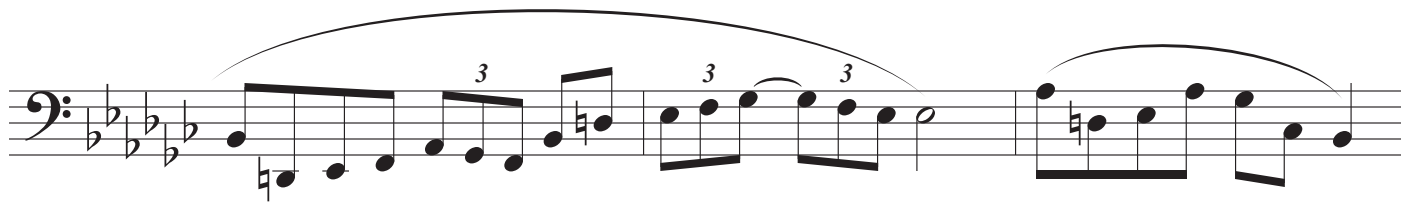
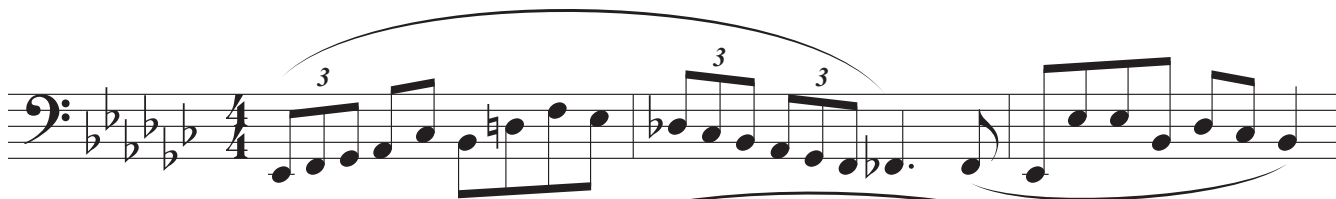
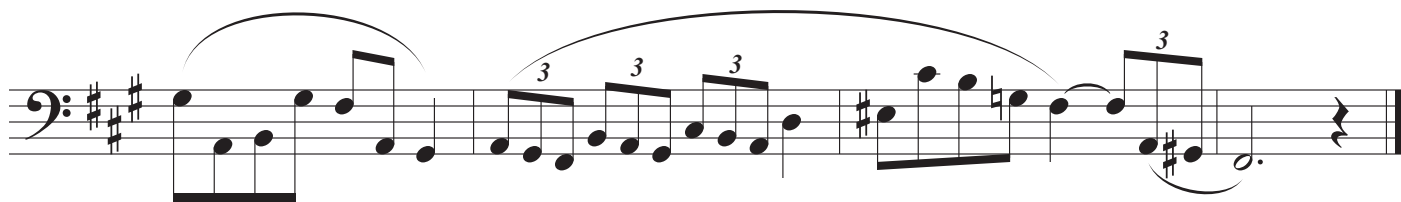
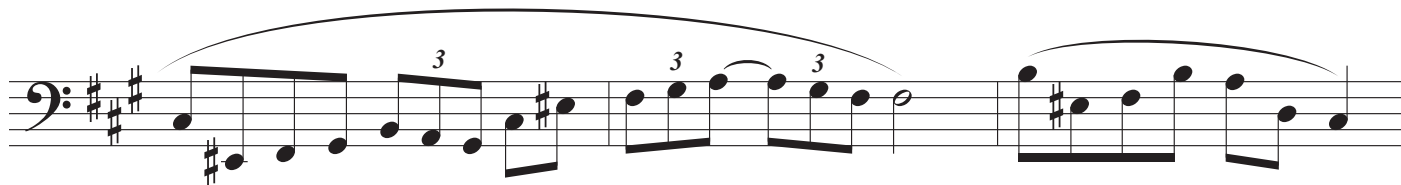
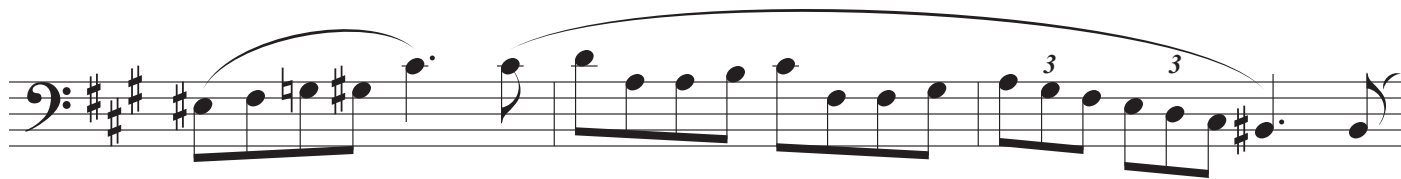
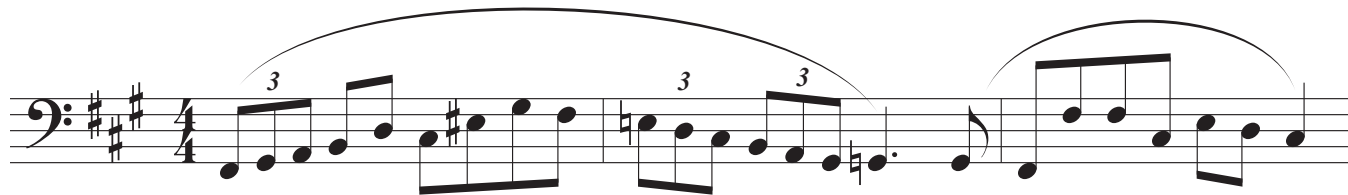
Trombone Professor, Arizona State University  
[School of Music Dance and Theater](#)

Websites:

[Trombone Zone](#)  
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*A Pretty Good (slightly spooky) Melody*

The musical score is written in bass clef, 4/4 time. It consists of eight staves. The key signature starts with one sharp (F#) and changes to one flat (Bb) between the fourth and fifth staves. The melody is characterized by frequent triplet patterns and slurs, creating a 'spooky' atmosphere. The piece concludes with a double bar line on the eighth staff.



## *A Useful Lip Slur*

If you take out the slurs, this is also a good articulation/accuracy exercise!

Going higher:

Going higher.

The musical notation consists of two staves in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff begins with a 3/4 time signature, followed by a 3/8 time signature, and then returns to 3/4. The second staff begins with a 3/8 time signature, followed by a 3/4 time signature, and then returns to 3/8. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests. A fermata is placed over the final note of the second staff.

2 keys: G-flat, G

2 keys: G-flat, G

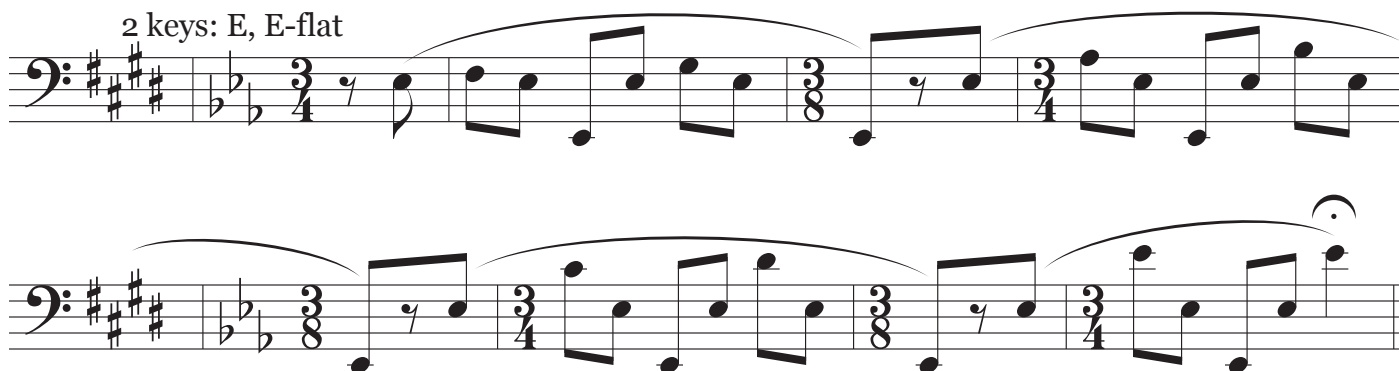
The second system of music continues the piece in the bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a key signature change to one sharp (F#) indicated by a sharp sign on the F line. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

2 keys: A-flat, A

[illegible]

Going lower:

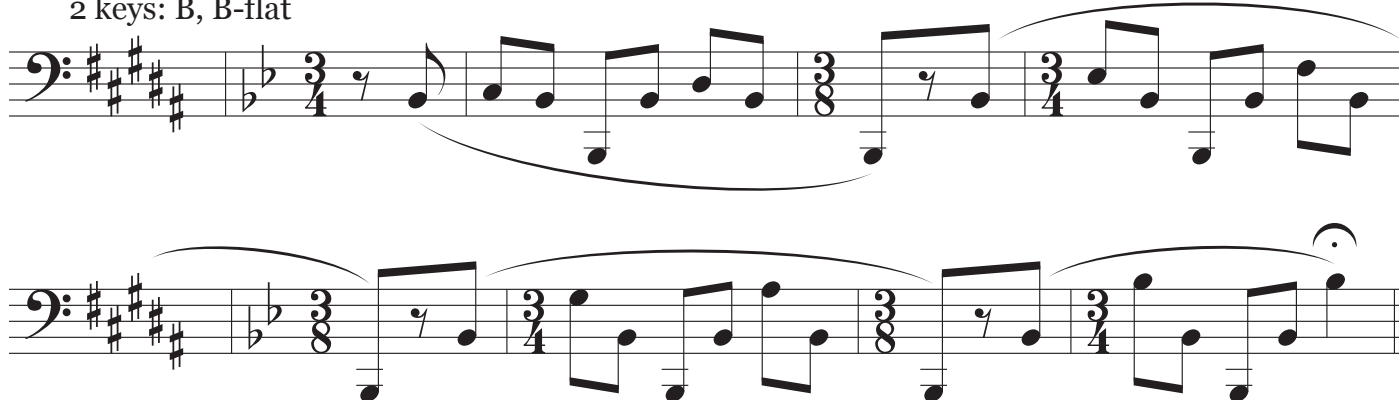
2 keys: E, E-flat



2 keys: D, D-flat



2 keys: B, B-flat



## *Free Book sample: Tuning Drone Melodies*

Here are two duets from my book, [Tuning Drone Melodies](#). You can turn on your favorite drone (here's a nice [cello drone](#) you can use) and play over this with two people. Working alone, you might be able to lay this down as an overdub.

Remember:

- In a minor third (E flat up G flat for example), the notes “want” to be a bit further apart. Usually this means the top note goes **up** just a bit (16/100 of a half step).
- In a major third (E flat up G natural for example), the notes “want” to be a bit closer together. Usually this means the top note goes **down** just a bit (14/100 of a half step).

These aren't big changes but they can really make the interval (and thus the chord) ring with beauty and clarity.

Enjoy!

## Major and Minor Thirds

Two systems of piano music in 4/4 time, E-flat major. The first system consists of two staves. The top staff begins with a *mf* dynamic and features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, some beamed together. The bottom staff also begins with a *mf* dynamic and provides a harmonic accompaniment with quarter and half notes. The second system continues the piece, with the top staff marked *mp* and the bottom staff marked *mp*. Both staves in the second system feature crescendo and decrescendo hairpins. The piece concludes with a final *mf* dynamic marking on the bottom staff.

## Duet in E-flat major (an octave drone is probably best for this, no fifths)

A musical score for a duet in 6/8 time, marked Andantino. The piece is in E-flat major and consists of two staves. The first system begins with a *p* (piano) dynamic. The second system features a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The third system includes a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. The fourth system features a *mf* dynamic. The fifth system includes a *p* dynamic. The sixth system features a *mf* dynamic. The seventh system includes a *mp* dynamic. The eighth system features a *p* dynamic. The piece concludes with a final *p* dynamic marking. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, as well as crescendo and decrescendo hairpins.

## Playing Tip: Look away to learn faster

Suppose you are working on a passage from a new piece:



Unless you've been working out of the [Trombone Craft](#) book, you haven't seen this one before. So, depending on your ability level, try learning this using a technique I call "pre-loading."

As you look at the opening of this passage, you might spot a pattern: the G major arpeggio. If you've been practicing your arpeggios then, in your mind, you should have a memory module labeled "G Major Arpeggio" that you can call up on command here.

So, this is supposed to be a G Major arpeggio memory module...





Look over the first two bars. Conjure up in your mind the sound of it. If you look away can you hear the rhythm? As a game, try singing the first note. It's fun if you can pull it up using pitch memory (all you "perfect pitch" types will scoff at us mere mortals).

Once you have built a model for those two measures, **look away from the music and play them**. That's right: for this learning technique, I'm asking that **whenever music is coming out of your bell, your eyes are *not* on the music**.

You may make mistakes. That's fine. Look back at the music and spot the moment where you goofed. Study it more carefully and then look away to play it again.

At first, this will likely feel as if you are progressing much more slowly but memorizing small bits of a passage forces you to clarify them in your mind. I believe you will actually be learning it much more quickly. I also believe that, if you do this correctly, you will retain what you've learned longer and more accurately.

Next, study the next two measures. Same thing: once a model is clear in your mind, look away and try to play them. Think of these two chunks as Lego pieces that you can now snap together. I'm not asking you to memorize the entire etude. What I'm suggesting is a form of "mini-memorization."

A couple tricks to use when you studying the music with your eyes:

- You can sing it or whistle it
- You can air pattern it or play through the positions with an "air trombone" (no sound).
- You definitely should look for recognizable patterns and pull up those "memory modules" to help you play musical sentences, not just musical words.

Later today, pause and reflect on this learning session. Can you still remember how it goes? As Daniel Coyle pointed out in [The Talent Code](#), struggle helps us learn more effectively.

*The trick is in finding the right amount of struggle!*

## *Favorite Musical Moment(s): To the 2nd Degree*

Ah, the 2nd scale degree. Being just a step above the tonic note, it can be quite poignant.

The [2nd movement](#) of Mahler's 7th symphony opens with horn calls in echo. The "echo" part is muted. Listen to this amazing moment seconds later when the echo part just [hangs on that poignant note](#) above the tonic. Wow!

~

Jazz soloists love using this note especially in minor keys. Take, for example, this solo by JJ Johnson on *Minor Blues*. [This recording](#) is cued up a bit before the moment where he hangs on the ninth to finish a chorus (which happens right about the [2:27](#) mark).

~

A really dramatic example comes from the opening [O Fortuna](#) movement from *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff. Right at the opening, the downbeat strongly presents a D pedal point only to have the chorus (and orchestra) come in on a strong E! Scale angst to the 2nd degree!

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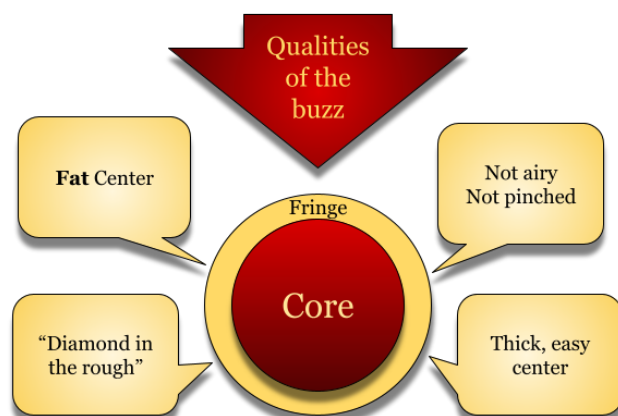
# On Teaching and Playing: Describing Sound

Here's something I struggle with: If a student is trying out a different instrument or mouthpiece, I struggle to put into words what I'm hearing.

I think there are two challenges here.

**First**, we use adjectives like “dark,” “resonant,” “core,” “uncentered” and so on to describe what we hear in our minds but we can't be certain that those words evoke the same aural image in the mind of the student. Heck, we can't even be sure they hear exactly as we do!

1. I try to use tricks for this: singing a steady pitch while slowly changing the syllable from “ooo” to “eee.” Listen carefully and you can hear a quiet glissando from low to high. There are even methods of overtone singing that refine this greatly. Here's one amazing example of [overtone singing](#).
2. My stereo speakers are tall and somewhat narrow. They have a visible stack of speakers ranging from the low range speaker at the bottom (woofers) up to the high range speakers at the top (tweeters). For any given tone, the woofers might be more active or the tweeter might be more active. I've even had students gently place their fingers on the woofers or mid range speakers to capture that tactile sensation which I associate with a strong core in sound.
3. I can use visual images such as this one from my book First Habits:



Still, all of this is an analogy of the sound itself. With a good microphone I can go back and forth with a student so they can hear the differences directly. Even there, I notice that their attention goes to something audible but not the essential thing I'm hoping they hear.

**Second,** I think we may all have a left-brain right-brain challenge when describing sound. The two brain hemispheres are connected by a bundle of nerves, the [corpus callosum](#). At one point doctors attempted a radical procedure by cutting this nerve bundle to alleviate the symptoms of severe epilepsy. Here's a [roughly 6-minute video](#) describing an amazing experiment in which the two separated spheres of the brain work and perceive independently of each other. In the photo below, you can see drawings by a split-brain patient who was simultaneously shown two images, one for each eye. It is almost as if two people reside inside the same brain.



So, I wonder if the *speech centers* of my brain and the *timbre perception* centers of my brain are separate enough that one has some difficulty communicating to the other. I can immediately *hear* a difference in someone's tone but coming up with words to describe what I hear is more challenging.

Food for thought. If anyone knows of research in this area, please send it along!

## *A Random Thought: The Enchanted Weeds*



Once upon a time there was a gardener. Their rose garden was their pride and joy. Such roses! Like all gardeners, they had to deal with weeds.

However, these weren't ordinary weeds. Decades before, the gardener's grandfather had angered the local witch (something to do with a shipment of low-quality toads, I don't want to get into it here). That witch cursed the grandfather and all of his descendents with enchanted weeds.



Now, most weeds you can dig out and, if you get them by the root, they won't grow back. Not the easiest work but, if you're a dedicated gardener, digging out those weeds day by day isn't too much to ask.

Not these weeds.

The gardener would see a weed, dig it out (roots and all), turn around to toss it away. When he turned back, not only had the weed returned but it was larger than before!! Here's what made things worse: the gardener learned that even *looking* at the weed made it grow faster. Heck, even *thinking* about the weed seemed to help it along.

This was one very frustrated gardener. But, they were determined not to give up. One day while pruning some prized roses, the gardener was so focused on the rose that a nearby weed was ignored. It got no attention at all.

And here's the funny thing: without attention the weed began to wither and wilt. If the gardener returned attention to the weed, it grew again but, as long as all attention was focused on the nearby rose, the weed shrank.

Surprised by this discovery, the gardener realized that weeds could be eradicated by ignoring them. Just focus on the roses and the weeds would wither away.

Somewhere in the distance, an ancient witch's voice could be heard howling, "Nooooooooo."

Now just re-read the story but

- Replace "roses" with "good habits."
- Replace "weeds" with "bad habits"



*The end*



## *Extra: ASU Trombone Studio - A Peak Under the Hood*

Before each lesson, I ask my students to send me a “lesson ticket” which answers three questions: (1) What concepts did we cover last time? (2) How did practicing go? (3) What would you like to cover today?

Without revealing identities, I’d like to share some of their comments from the beginning of this Fall semester. I’m grateful to work with such insightful young people!

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This week I've focused on my legato playing as a lot of my repertoire is legato. Singing and blowing through phrases have helped a lot to get my lines smoother. Also listening to recordings has helped me get my desired sound and connection with my recital music.

~~~~~

I am getting more fired up. Holding myself accountable to myself I guess. I need to be better at getting the intensity without wanting to punch a hole through the wall. Aka not be so negative and angry, but channel that energy in a positive manner. This is getting better throughout the week. Channeling that angry energy towards the positive fact that I am improving seems to work wonders. Also spending less time on stuff that just isn't working or that is frustrating me too much and coming back to it later seems to alleviate some of this.

~~~~~

This week has been great! I feel motivated, and have been able to spend lots of time playing and working on rep. I feel that I've been able to be very consistent, and am trying to tailor my schedule to when I know I'll be more productive. I've been happy with my fundamental work; both daily upkeep as well as new exercises and work as well. Chamber music has been getting more productive and efficient with each rehearsal, and my solo rep is finally starting to sit really nicely in my ear and I am less worried about my recital later this semester due to it. I need to schedule in more time to sleep, but that is my only gripe for now. Feeling good about the semester.

~~~~~

Practicing this week was good. I have been doing a lot of mental practice alongside my normal practicing. I have spent time working on my assigned material and also my solo repertoire for my recital. I would like to start bringing in some of the excerpts I will be having to record for pre screening auditions but I need to spend time working them back up first.

~~~~~

I tried using the small fast chunks technique when going over the final variation this week and it has started to show in my playing. While I did not think I played very well in the masterclass on Sunday, I found the information really helpful. Coming up with visualizations of different variations again has made the music seem more fun and character-like instead of just sometimes difficult.

~~~~~

This week I've continued working on reading vignettes for bass bone. For tenor, I've continued working on Hommage a Bach, as well as a vignette. I've noticed a lot of progress on my lip slurs lately. They feel a lot more controlled. I've also kept working on scale and arpeggio patterns.

~~~~~

I need to be more present in my practice, I feel like I'm improving my mindfulness but I want it to be even more than it is. I seem to have more resilience when I practice in the evening. I've been working on doing 30min on /30min off with my practice. I don't stick to it all the way, sometimes I work for longer or shorter depending on how I am feeling and how productive I am. Doing cycles of 10 Minutes per etude/ Fundamental work seems to yield a more productive session that is surprising, this could be because I know I must make progress in that ten minutes so I am overly aware of correcting myself.

~~~~~

A couple days this week I went through the dominant arpeggios. Trying to do them without music but it does take me longer so I didn't do all of them every time. The hopeful shield thing we talked about actually helped me a lot. It's a good way for me to let go and play confidently, I tried to think about that in [my ensembles] when I was playing and I felt like it allowed me to relax and just let it happen, and not be as upset when it didn't come out the way I wanted to. I think that might be one of the most helpful things you ever said to me.