

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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A Pretty Good Melody

I thought to myself, "Gee I haven't written anything modal yet." So here you go: Locrian mode (D-D in the key of E-flat). Actually, I've tried playing this melody in all the different regular modes and it's interesting to hear how it changes.



The keys below can be used to generate some different modes.



The image displays a musical score for a piece in 3/4 time, featuring a treble and bass staff with various musical notations including triplets, slurs, and accidentals.

Treble Staff:

- Staff 1: Key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), 3/4 time. The melody begins with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, B-flat4, and C5. A triplet of eighth notes (D5, E5, F5) is marked with a '3'. The staff concludes with a quarter note G4.
- Staff 2: Continuation of the melody. It includes a quarter note G4, eighth notes A4, B-flat4, and C5, followed by a quarter note D5. A triplet of eighth notes (E5, F5, G5) is marked with a '3'. The staff ends with a quarter note G4.
- Staff 3: Continuation of the melody. It starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes A4, B-flat4, and C5. A triplet of eighth notes (D5, E5, F5) is marked with a '3'. The staff concludes with a quarter note G4.
- Staff 4: A single staff containing various accidentals: a sharp sign (#), a flat sign (b), a double flat sign (bb), a sharp sign (#), a double sharp sign (x), and a flat sign (b).

Bass Staff:

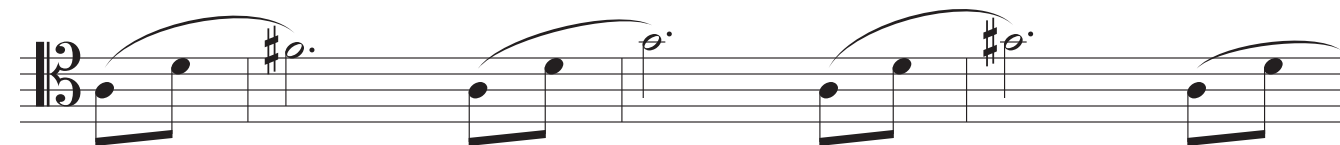
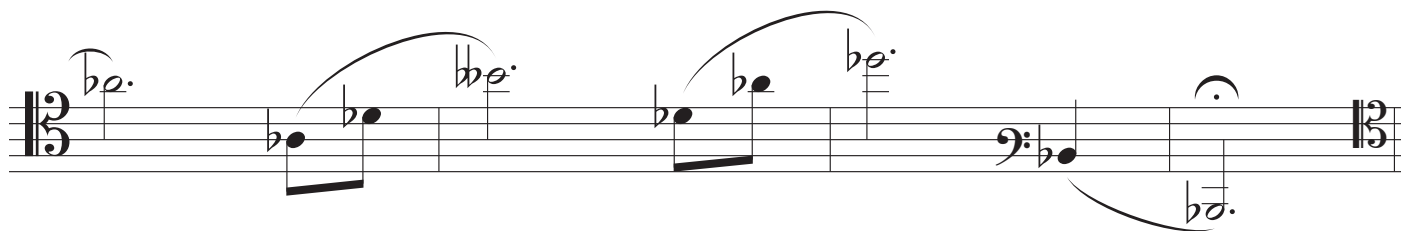
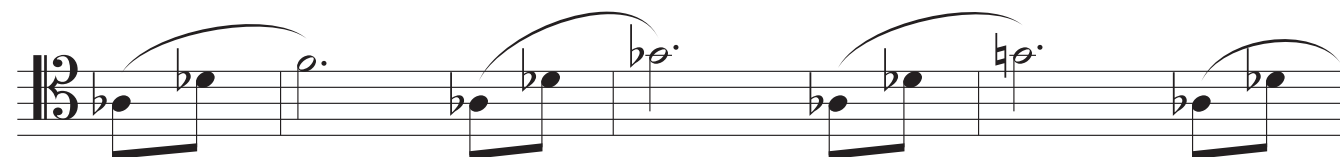
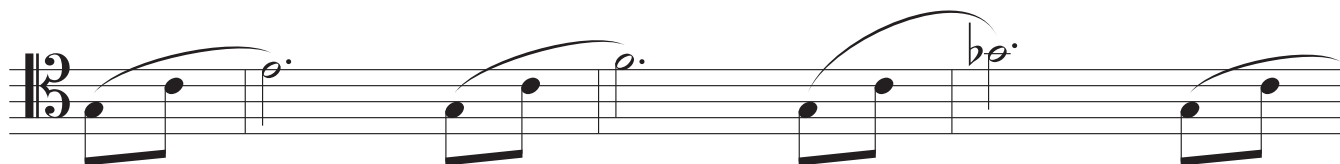
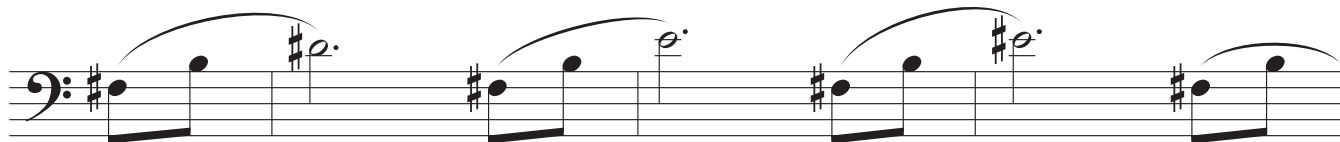
- Staff 1: Key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), 3/4 time. The melody begins with a quarter note G3, followed by eighth notes A3, B-flat3, and C4. A triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F4) is marked with a '3'. The staff concludes with a quarter note G3.
- Staff 2: Continuation of the melody. It includes a quarter note G3, eighth notes A3, B-flat3, and C4, followed by a quarter note D4. A triplet of eighth notes (E4, F4, G4) is marked with a '3'. The staff ends with a quarter note G3.
- Staff 3: Continuation of the melody. It starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes A3, B-flat3, and C4. A triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F4) is marked with a '3'. The staff concludes with a quarter note G3.
- Staff 4: A single staff containing various accidentals: a sharp sign (#), a flat sign (b), a double flat sign (bb), a sharp sign (#), a double sharp sign (x), and a flat sign (b).

A Useful Lip Slur

Besides being useful for building up the high range, this can be a great tuning exercise.

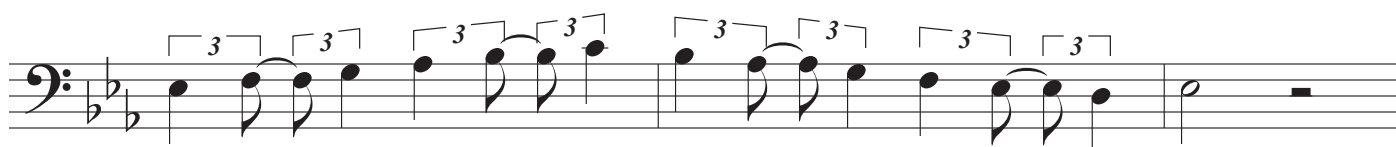
$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 72$

The musical score is written in bass clef, 4/4 time. It consists of eight systems, each with two staves. Each system contains four measures of music. The first measure of each system is a half note with a slur. The second measure is a quarter note with a slur. The third measure is a quarter note with a slur. The fourth measure is a half note with a slur. The notes are: System 1: G2, A2, B2, C3; System 2: D2, E2, F2, G2; System 3: A1, B1, C2, D2; System 4: E1, F1, G1, A1; System 5: B1, C2, D2, E2; System 6: F2, G2, A2, B2; System 7: C3, D3, E3, F3; System 8: G3, A3, B3, C4. The notes are written in bass clef with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) to indicate the correct pitch for the lip slur exercise.

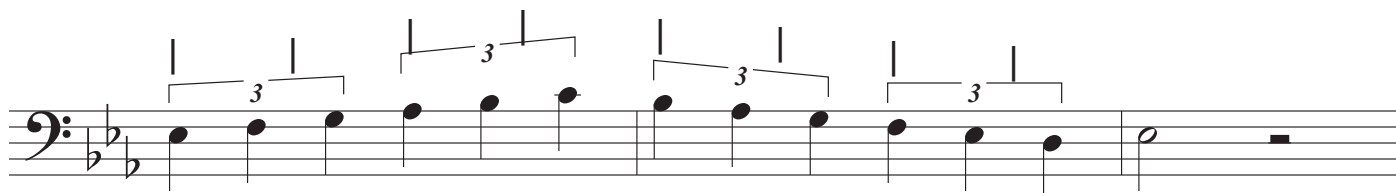


Technique / Rhythm Builders

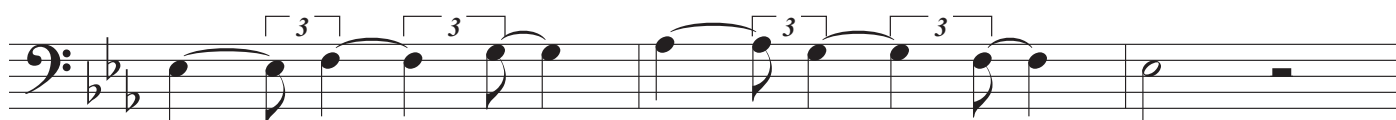
When I'm playing quarter note triplets or (gulp) half note triplets, I always want to keep track of the main beat.



Notice where the notes fall in relation to the beat!



OK, now let's make things a bit trickier...



Notice where the notes fall in relation to the beat!



First note - on the beat

Second note - a triplet eighth after beat two

Third note - a triplet eighth before beat four

I've come up with a mnemonic device that helps me: **bah, two-bah, three, bah-four**
Or think of it as "Tuba before." Get it? (bah-2bah-3-bah4)

Free Book sample:
The Intermediate Trombonist: Lyrical Legato

One section of The Intermediate Trombonist deals with developing legato. It has 40 little etudes that start fairly easy and progress to greater challenge. At the end, the student is almost ready for Bordogni (or at least that was the idea).

This sample page has two etudes. The following page has duet parts to go along with the etudes.

Enjoy!

Andante (♩ = 72)

#30

mf

mp

p *f*

mf

Notice the variety of articulations in this one...

Allegretto (♩ = 126)

#31

mp

p *f*

mf

mp

Andante (♩ = 72)

#30

mf

mp

p *f* *mf*

Allegretto (♩ = 126)

#31

mp

p *f* *mf* *mp*

Playing Tip: Good Clay

I'm not an expert in pottery but I do have a bit of summer-camp experience with a pottery wheel and a kiln. I know, for example, that before you throw your pot, you need to wedge your clay.



Why? Because if the clay has little air bubbles in it, it will explode when fired in the kiln! At least that's what I was told. There are, apparently, differences of opinion on this. Still, the basic concept holds true.

**Before you make that beautiful pot,
you must have good clay!**

I hope the connection to trombone playing is obvious but in case it isn't, I'll spell it out. Before we can deliver that beautiful trombone solo, we need to build our "good clay" through lip slurs, sostenuto and so on. **So many** students just want to dive into their solos or excerpts without "wasting" time on building their fundamentals. This is especially true when schedules get busy and your next lesson is fast approaching.

Like any experienced teacher, when a student is struggling with a passage, I can trace it back to some aspect of their fundamentals that needs work. Mastering a seemingly simple melody or exercise will help you to succeed with the solo passage.

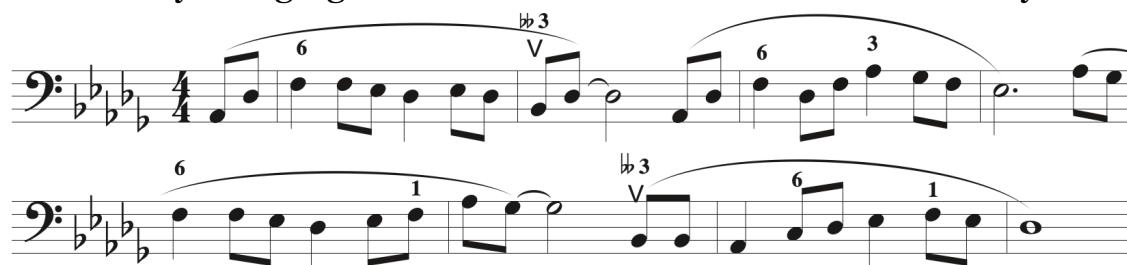
Here are two examples where you can use Taps to help tune up some excerpts. Before you play Ride of the Valkyries, play Taps like so:



If you can't play Taps in beautifully and tune in this key, your odds of a successful Ride aren't so good. Taps can also work to help tuning on St. Saens Organ Symphony:



An even better "clay-wedging" tune for the St. Saens is Red River Valley:



Use the simple material to master a beautiful tone and flawless intonation. Then your good clay is ready to be formed into a beautiful pot!



On Teaching and Playing: Start with the Ink

This is somewhat related to the previous section on “good clay.” It’s great for performers to show rhythmic freedom in some pieces. But, this freedom should arise from a good understanding of the printed rhythms, not from ignorance of them!

A classic example is the trombone solo from Mahler’s 3rd symphony.

As a starting point, I always ask my students to be able to play this with metronomic accuracy (even counting in quarter notes). No, the final product won’t be so strict but we sometimes distort rhythms so far away from the original ink that they become unrecognizable.

You can make a similar case for the Sarabande from Bach’s 5th cello suite. Perhaps start out playing with a metronome so you are more aware when you choose to make liberties:

Just so there is no confusion, I'm not saying that the final rendition should be metronomic! But it doesn't hurt to use a regular pulse as your starting point.

Trombonists are usually very good about following the composer's markings, except when they aren't. A great example is the Romance by Axel Jorgenson. Here's a passage at Rehearsal letter B:



In most recordings, performers just ignore the articulation markings. Why? Honestly I think the answer may be, "Because I sound prettier when I just stick to legato." I'm not suggesting that the staccato notes need to be "marching band" short but would it kill people to pay a bit more heed to what the composer actually wrote??

There's an old saying: **Want a job? Play what's on the page.** I agree with this about 95%. However there's that extra 5% where you can still bring something special to the table.

OK, I'm rambling a bit. Let me try to tie this together:

1. Start being able to exactly play what's on the page.
2. Listen to recordings to learn how advanced performers deviate from the printed page.
3. Make informed decisions about the freedoms you want to introduce *not* because you can't play what's on the page but because you've started there.

A Random Thought: Of Ducks, Syrup and the Slide Bone

Our eternal challenge: a totally smooth legato line that masks all the slide activity. Tongue too hard and it isn't really legato. Tongue too little and you're faced with "gliss soup." Move your slide too early and you get little bends on the ends. Move too late and it's scoop city. Everything needs to line up just right.

So, we need analogies to help us with the aural concept of a *liquid smooth legato* in spite of any slide shenanigans going on.

I'll offer up three analogies. The first one isn't original.

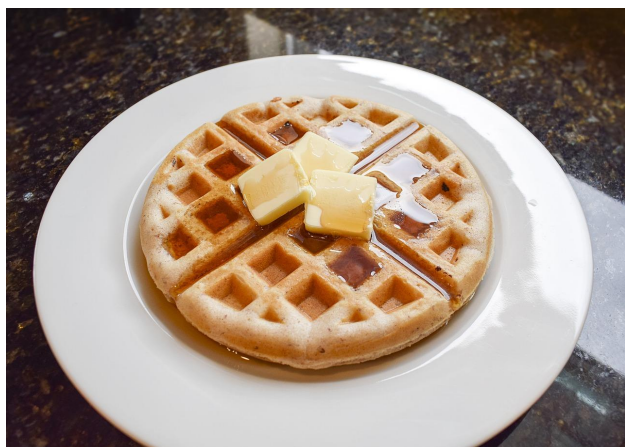
Think of ducks gliding across a lake.



Here's the analogy: you see them gliding smoothly across the surface of the water but, underneath the water, those little legs are paddling away. Smooth on the surface, fast paddling below. Nice!

Actually this still image from a pleasant [YouTube video](#). Take a moment to give it a look. I mean, who doesn't like ducklings?

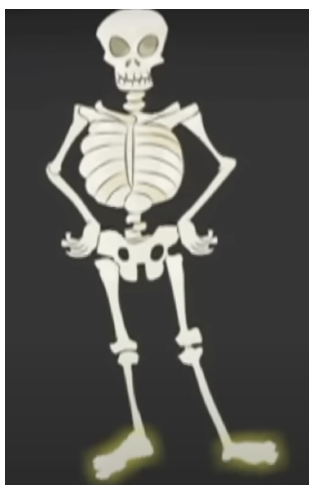
Here's another one. *Imagine pouring syrup over waffles.*



The waffle of course is bumpy but that syrup fills in the bumps so that the surface becomes smooth. I like to describe the air as syrup, filling in all those bumps as we move the slide. Smooth on the surface, bumpy below. Yum!

OK, one more. I'll admit, this one's rather odd. When I'm teaching my students legato, I often notice their air stream tends to huff with the movement of the slide. I sometimes do a demonstration where I blow a steady stream of air through my instrument (no notes) while I quickly flick my slide between 1st and 4th. The idea is to break that mental connection between the act of blowing and the act of moving the slide. The slide movement should not change the way we blow.

For some reason, that once made me think of that [children's song](#), "The foot bone's connected to the leg bone. The leg bone's connected to the knee bone. etc"



Except, with our instrument, we ***DON'T want the air bone connected to the slide bone***

when we play (wait for it) ...

the trombone.

I'll let myself out.