TBZ Monthly

A new monthly content service from Brad Edwards

Volume 2, No. 5. ~ May 2023

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:

1. A Pretty Good Melody
2. A Useful Lip Slur
3. Technique/Rhythm Builders
4. A Free Book Sample
5. A Playing Tip
6. Thoughts on Teaching and Performing
7. A Random Thought

Enjoy!

Brad Edwards

Trombone Professor, Arizona State University

School of Music Dance and Theater

Websites:

Trombone Zone

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Free Audition Solos

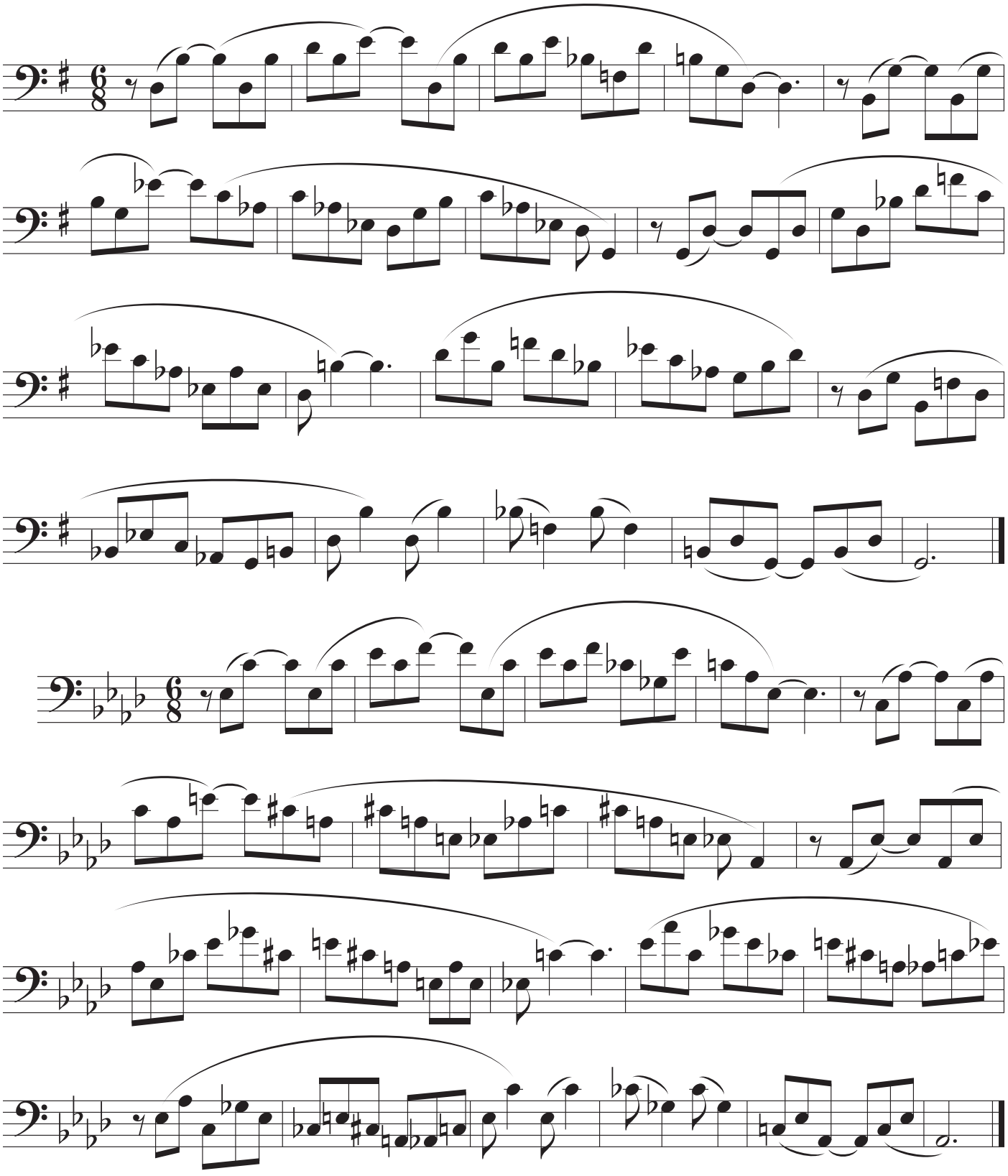
ASU Bones

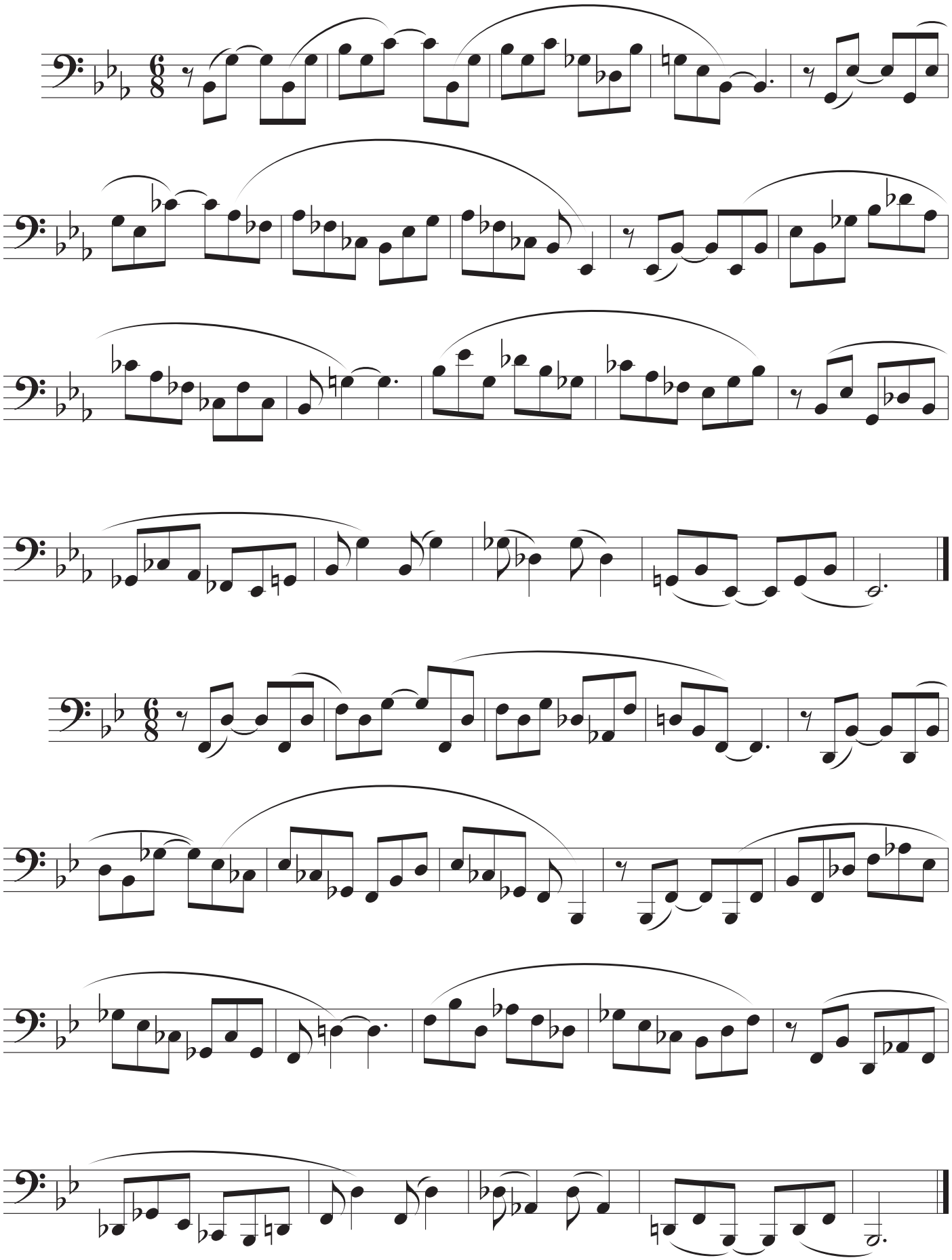
TBZ MONTHLY

A Pretty Good Melody

May 2023

If only this little tune could figure what key it's in and where the downbeat is!





Feel free to let me know if these melodies are getting too difficult!

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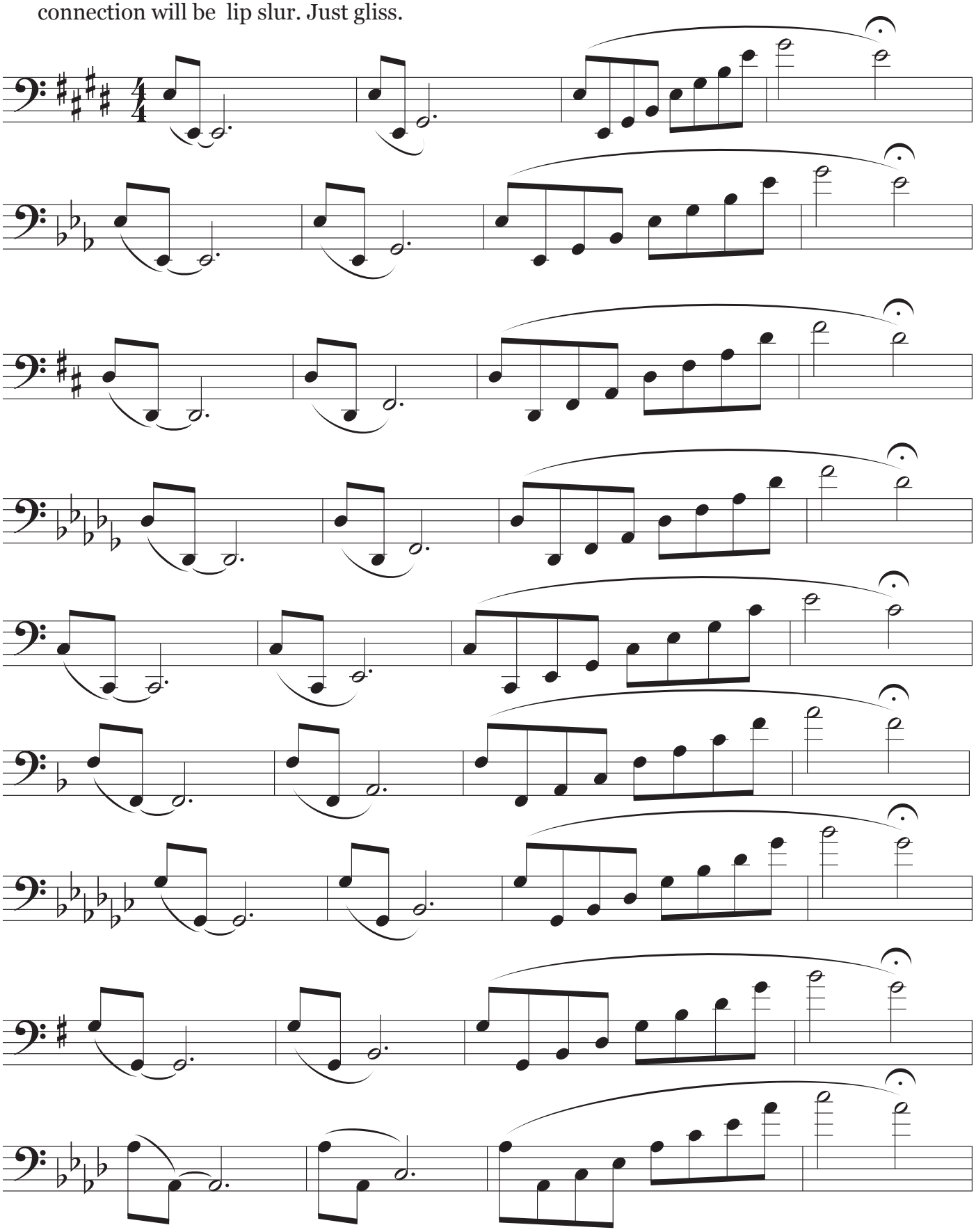
A Useful Lip Slur

May 2023

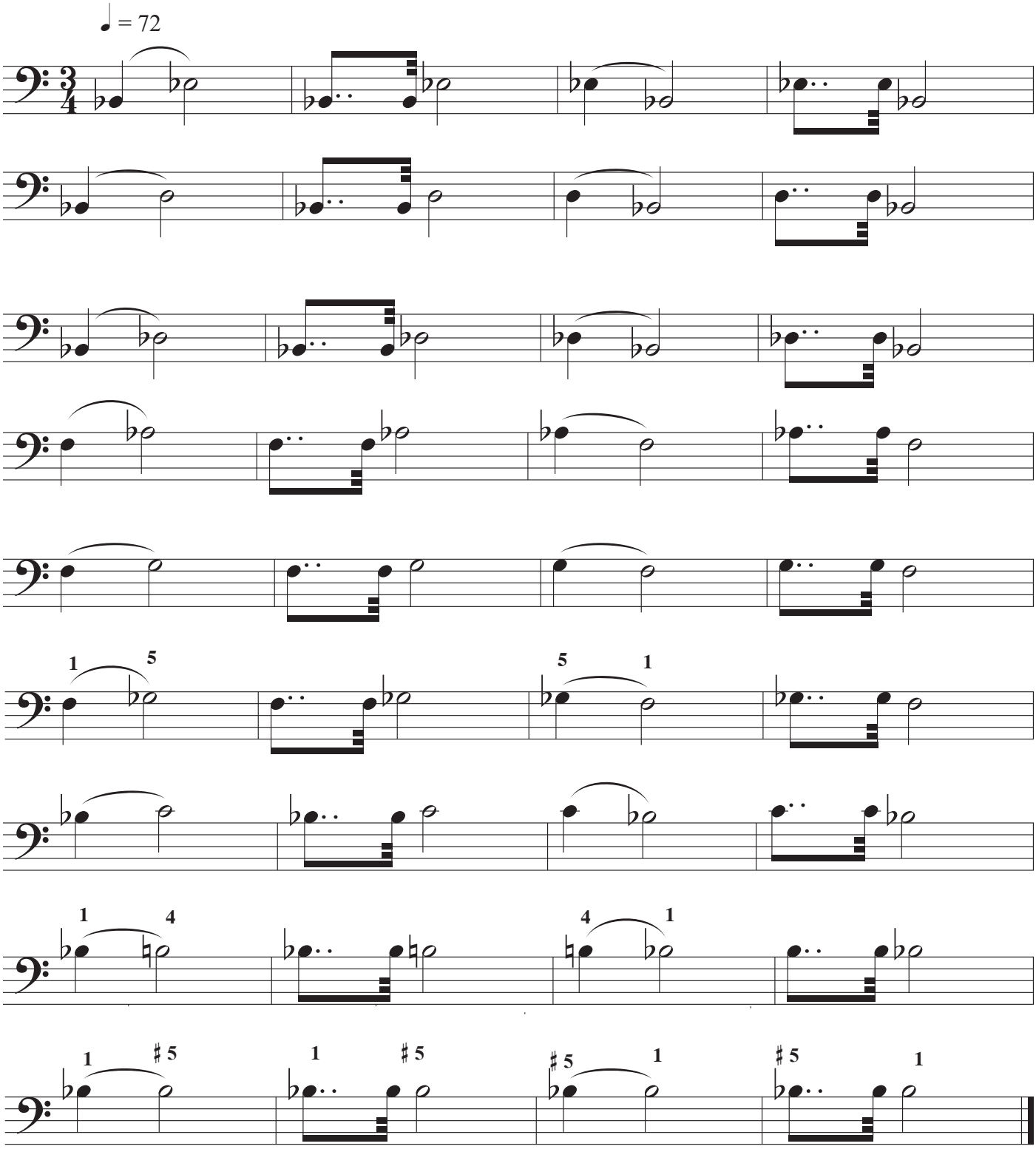
This might be useful in ironing out register shifts. Feel free to go lower or higher! Not every connection will be lip slur. Just gliss.



May 2023

Technique / Rhythm Builders

This is all about moving the slide at the exact correct moment, not early!



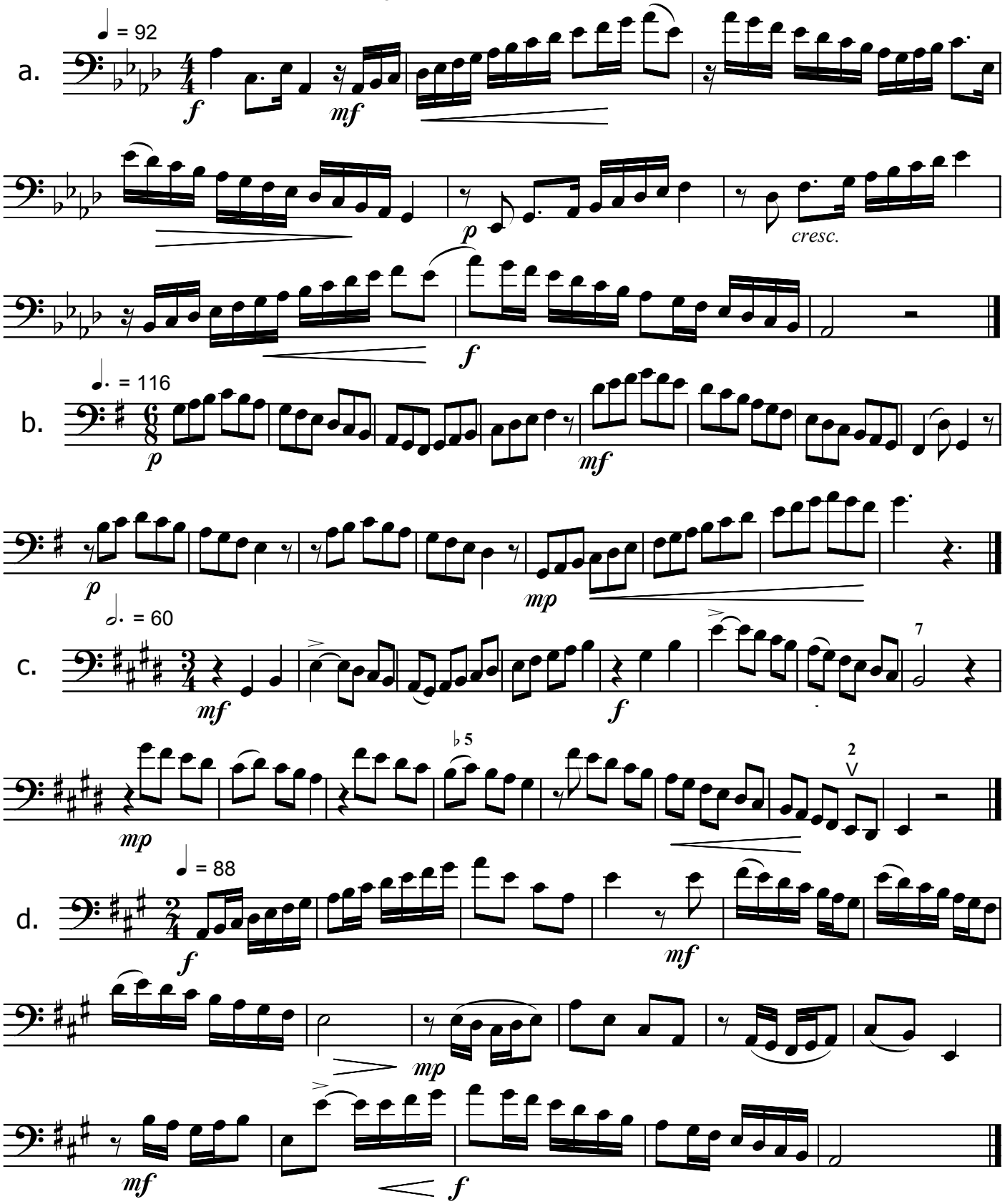
Free book sample: Trombone Craft / Bass Trombone Craft

One of the inspirations behind the Trombone Craft books was to present scale practice in a musical context. In other words, melodies that used a lot of scales. Pretty simple. I did something similar in the Patterns and Snippets books.

Enjoy!

#2.21 "Two-Line" Tunes: Two Octave Scales

Slide positions are not indicated. Look these through and mark some in. For additional scale practice, see Appendix #4: "Scale Pattern-Building."



For additional practice, try these in their "cousin" key signatures: A, G-flat, E-flat, A-flat

#2.21 "Two-Line" Tunes: Two Octave Scales

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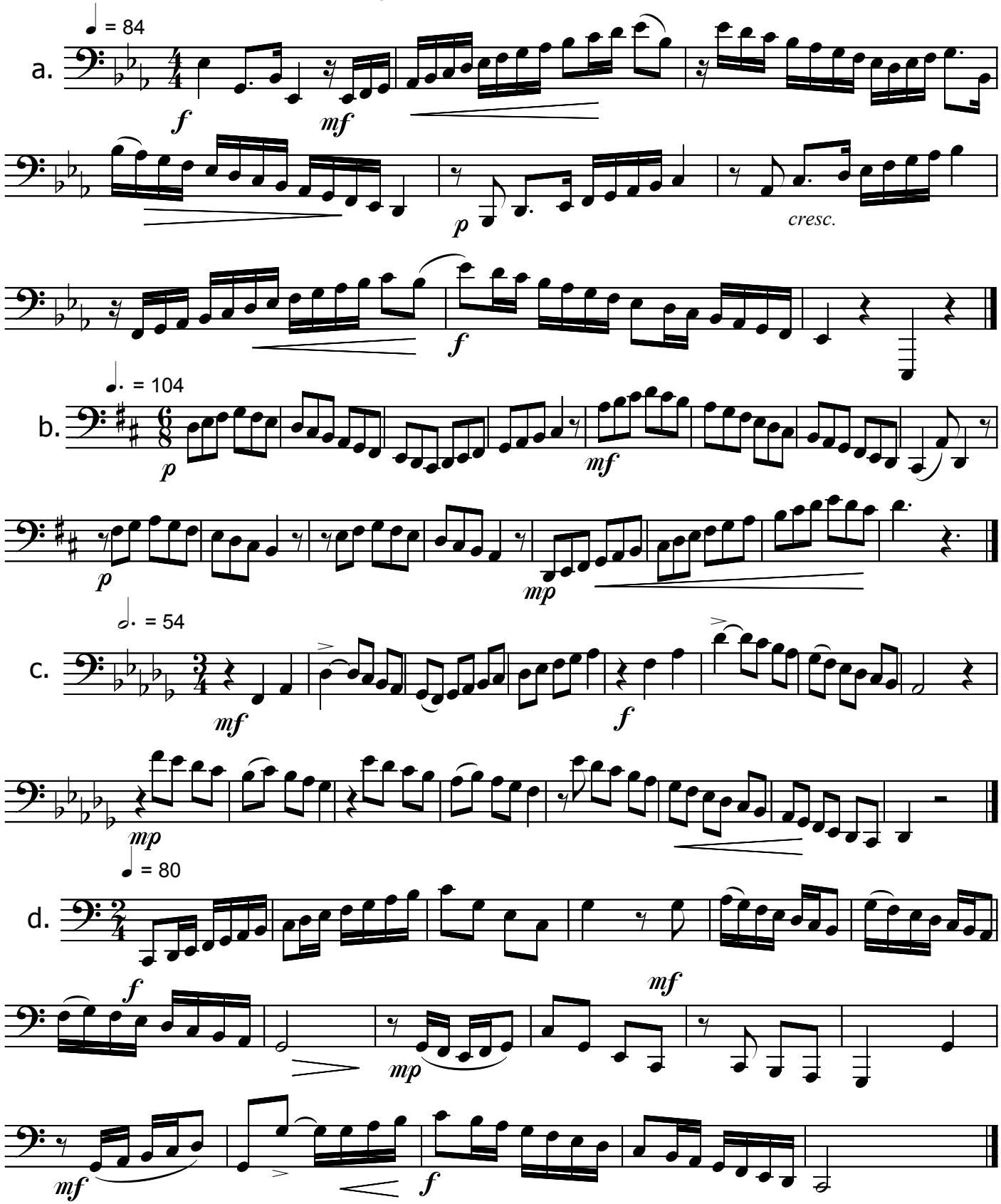
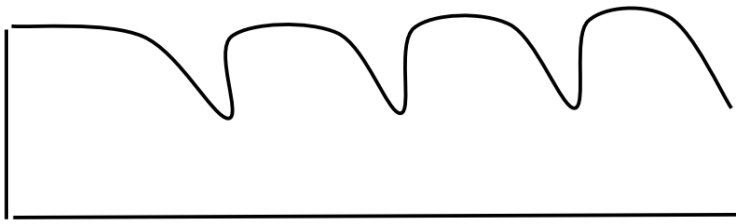


Playing Tip: One of the secrets to legato

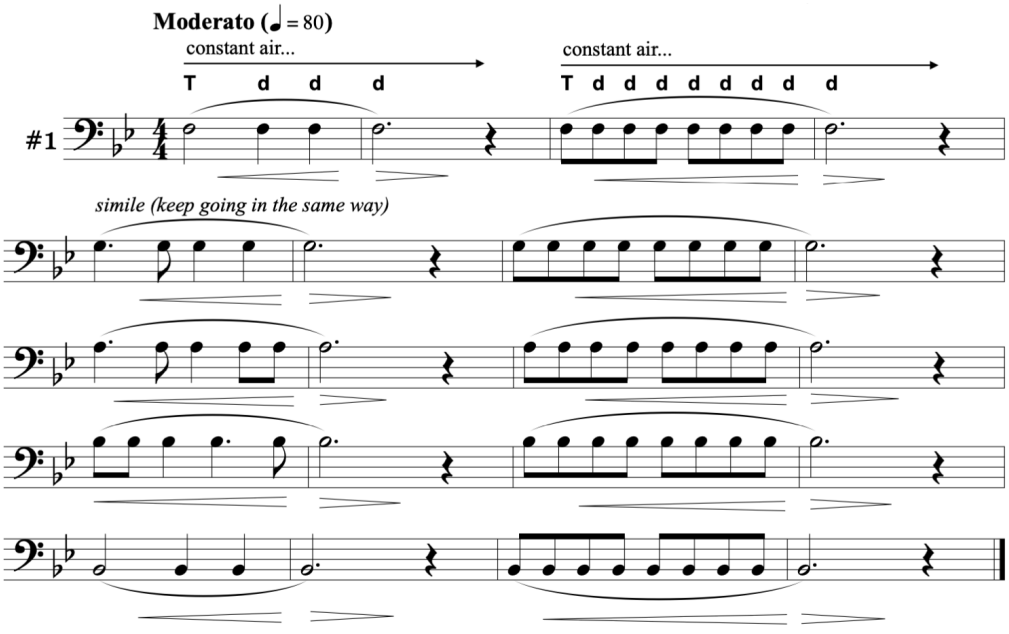
There are so many ingredients to a great legato and you've probably heard them before. Steady air, quick slide and all that. Here's one that people tend not to think of: the ***ends of the notes***.

When I ask a student about legato, they often reply with "dah" as the answer. Or they may talk about using natural slurs. These are all fine answers but they are all focused on the ***beginnings of the notes.***

Take a look at this crude drawing:



It is my attempt to show some legato tonguing in which the player allows the notes to taper off at the ends. If you allow the notes to fall away, no amount of "dah" or natural slur can help you produce a real legato. Here's an example from my book, The Intermediate Trombonist. I tried to convey this concept by using an arrow to show the steady blowing of air.



However (and I can't emphasize this enough!), as you focus your attention on sustaining the ends of the notes, don't move the needle into swelling them with a soft entrance. That leads to the dreaded *Wah.*

I like to imagine a smooth "surface" to the notes as they change from one pitch to the next. Sort of like these paving stones...

On Teaching and Playing: The Basement Level

I like to tell stories. All of them are true, at least in my memory. Years ago at the old Eastern Trombone Workshop, I heard a presentation by the New York Philharmonic trombone section. They had recently held an audition and were discussing what they heard.

Here's the amazing thing, one of them mentioned that out of the first round of players only about four people played the Ride of the Valkyries with the correct rhythm. FOUR PEOPLE!

Stop to consider this.
All these fine players owning expensive instruments.
Practicing so hard for months.
Likely paying a lot to travel to the audition.
And ONLY FOUR played the Ride with correct rhythm??

Students want to work on solos and excerpts. But usually when I hear them struggle, I can identify some aspect of their fundamentals that isn't working.

I like to describe myself as a trombone "building inspector." The student shows up with their four-story "trombone building." They assume it's now time to put on that fifth floor. But first, I like to go into the basement with my flashlight and look at the foundation. Are there any cracks?

Let's be honest. If we don't fix those cracks, there's no point in adding that fifth floor. I used to think this analogy was humorous until that horrible apartment building collapse in Florida.

The builder and maintenance people in that building missed important details. Things that may have seemed boring. In our trombone playing, it's the little things that keep our "trombone building" standing tall.

- Develop the ear through singing.
- Normalize posture
- Play passages slowly with correct rhythm and articulation.
- Develop ease and resonance in the tone - through all tessituras and dynamics.

These are not small details! Some will have the patience to tunnel down and fix things at the basement level. I remember a recital by a famous performer years ago. He was clearly not having his best day. Some notes didn't speak, etc. However, I could not find a SINGLE NOTE that was out of tune. Watching him protect the basics even when not everything was working was frankly more inspiring for me.

Want to build a trombone skyscraper? Start with a solid basement!

A Random Thought: The Low Brass Player's Guide to Musical Terminology

First of all, this is not serious advice. I often joke that anything a conductor says can be boiled down to four simple categories.

Louder	Softer
Faster	Slower

Conductor: "Trombones, I want a nice ringing presence on that entrance."
Translation: "Louder"

Conductor: "We need a beautiful blended sound at this point."
Translation: "Softer"

Conductor: "I need more intensity here!"
Translation: "Faster" and "Louder."

Conductor: "Trombones, please watch me."
Translation: This one's tricky and depends on context. It probably means "Faster." It could also mean "Slower" or "Softer." Very unlikely that it will mean "Louder."

Conductor: "This is the essence of the composer's creative life; we must convey that essence."
Translation: "Louder"