

TBZ Monthly

A new monthly content service from Brad Edwards

Volume 4, No. 3. ~ March 2025

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](#). 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

A nice little Spring dance to take your mind off your cares and worries.

$\text{♩} = 80$

mf

6

11

cresc.

16

f *p*

22

f *mp*

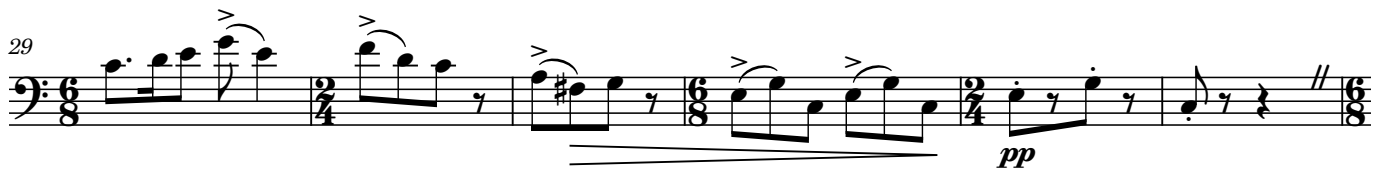
29

pp

35

ff *sub.*

A Pretty Good Melody



A Pretty Good Melody

♩. = 80



A Useful Lip Slur

Little Flips

The musical exercise consists of 12 staves, each containing four measures of music. The first three measures of each staff feature a lip slur over eighth notes, with the final note of the slur being a half note. The fourth measure of each staff is a half note. The key signature changes every two staves: Staff 1 (B-flat), Staff 2 (B-flat), Staff 3 (A), Staff 4 (A), Staff 5 (B-flat), Staff 6 (B-flat), Staff 7 (C), Staff 8 (C), Staff 9 (B-flat), Staff 10 (B-flat), Staff 11 (A), Staff 12 (A).

Technique/Rhythm Builder: Descending Slide Accuracy

On our descending lines, it is all too easy to miss slide positions, usually on the long side. Be alert. Choose a tempo which allows you to play this cleanly!



Free book sample:
The Melodious Trombone: Besides Bordogni
#18 Largement

Just like volume one of the Carl Fischer edition of the original Bordogni/Rochut etudes, I created a set of 60 etudes to provide a bit of lyrical variety. I'm not trying to replace the Bordogni set but these do add a nice bit of variety including some musical styles not found in the original set. Plus, they all have a duet part!

Michael Mulcahy of the Chicago Symphony was kind enough to write a foreword for this book:

In *The Melodious Trombone*, Dr. Edwards revisits a long established approach to lyricism, composing an impressive number of new études that explore a wide variety of keys, range, and styles. I particularly appreciate the spectrum of tempo indications that not only impart speed, but also style and conception. By utilising German and French terminology, in addition to the traditional Italian, he reveals, particularly to the young musician, the lexicon of indications in our vast orchestral repertoire, that are usually overlooked and misunderstood. The studies are progressive in complexity making it safe for players to advance in a logical and healthful fashion. As our instrument develops, the études that pursue more extreme range are very welcome indeed. I am grateful that low playing is given as much emphasis and enthusiasm as the high register, which tends to preoccupy younger players prematurely to their detriment.

It has always been a challenge for players to progress from the practice room to the stage, and present as artists and performers, rather than mere instrumentalists or executors. We do not frequently enjoy the luxury of a fine pianist or piano, so here is a wonderful solution to conceptualise artistically, sooner and better. From a practical standpoint, we now not only enjoy these fresh studies, but enjoy the very available opportunity to start making music in a more complete sense, perfect for teachers and students, colleagues and indeed for everyone who wish to make music together spontaneously and affordably, instead of even more sterile practice in a vacuum.

Let the singing start now. Thank you Brad Edwards!

Enjoy!

The Melodious Trombone

Largement (♩. = c. 66)

18. *mf* *p*

7 *p*

15 *f* *mp*

21 *mf*

27 *cresc.*

33 *p* *mf*

39 *f* *mp*

The musical score is written for a single staff in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Largement' with a quarter note equal to approximately 66 beats per minute. The score consists of six lines of music, each starting with a measure number. The first line (measures 18-26) begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The second line (measures 7-14) is marked piano (*p*). The third line (measures 15-20) features a forte (*f*) dynamic followed by a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The fourth line (measures 21-26) is marked mezzo-forte (*mf*). The fifth line (measures 27-32) includes a crescendo (*cresc.*) marking. The sixth line (measures 33-38) starts piano (*p*) and moves to mezzo-forte (*mf*). The seventh line (measures 39-46) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and ends with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Largement = slowly

The Melodious Trombone - Duet Part

Largement (♩. = c. 66)

18. *mf* *p*

7 *p*

14 *f* *mp*

21 *mf*

28 *cresc.* *p*

34 *mf*

40 *f* *mp*

Largement = slowly

Playing Tip: The Bad Thing Cometh

This tip is about self-fulfilling prophecies, not the good kind. We all live in a world where we need to predict. When driving on the highway, we round a corner and see nothing but brake lights ahead. We get an email that simply says, "Please see me as soon as possible." On a walk, we see a cluster of teenage boys and decide to change our route.

Maybe the brake lights were a temporary slow-down.

Maybe the email was about a good thing.

Maybe those teenage boys are working on an Eagle Scout project.

In our music, we see a passage that we have struggled with in the past. We begin to predict that we'll struggle with it again. A classic example for me is the opening of *Morceau Symphonique* by Alexandre Guilmant.



Living in Pennsylvania, this was my audition piece for district band. I was pretty worried about that opening interval. It may even have starred in some nightmares!

Years later as I began teaching at the University of South Carolina, I chose to open my first faculty recital with *Morceau Symphonique*. I pulled out my music and there were all of my old fears and bad habits waiting for me.

"Hey Buddy! Long time no see."



My old prediction engine was sitting there expecting me to tighten up and struggle just as I had done years before. Even though I was arguably a much better player, I still had this old expectation of struggle. I had to retrain myself.

In teaching my students, I often hear them say something like, “I always struggle with this.” or “I can never play this.” It surprises me how, with a little retraining and reframing, they quickly prove themselves wrong.

The mental sequence goes something like this:

1. Struggle with it a couple times. [The Bad Thing]
2. Remember that struggle. [I remember the Bad Thing]
3. Predict that you’ll struggle again. [The Bad Thing Cometh]
4. Tense up in anticipation of the struggle. [Prepare thyself for the Bad Thing]
5. Struggle [and there’s The Bad Thing again, I *told* you so!]
6. Repeat steps 2-5

I’m not saying there are no hard licks. I *am* saying that we often make licks harder by tightening up in anticipation.

Here are some countermeasures that might help:

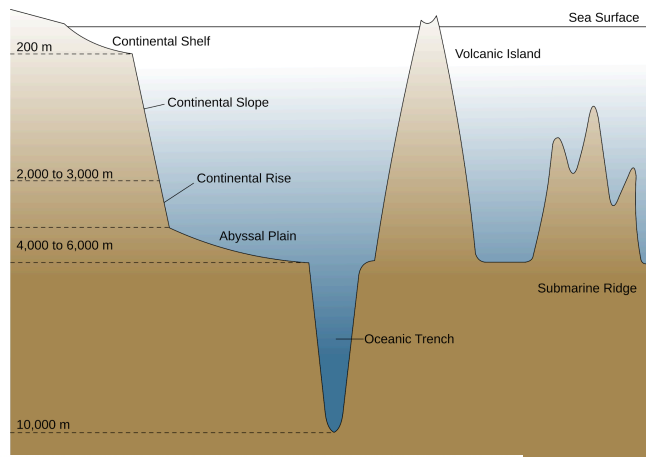
1. Slow it down (duh)
2. Play it in a way that evokes relaxation.
3. While playing it in that easier way, try getting it four times in a row.
4. Look at it intently and imagine playing it relaxed. Remember those successful runs.
5. Actually look away from the visual stimulus of the music and play it from memory. Confused by the intervals? Sing it.

Don’t make it harder by expecting it to be hard.

Don’t invite The Bad Thing into your mind.

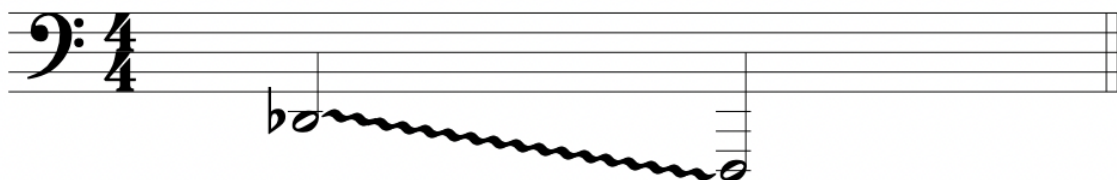
Nurture a Good Thing.

On Teaching and Playing: The Pedal Shelf



Let's see, I've taught private lessons now in Connecticut, Kentucky, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, Vermont, Iowa, South Carolina, California, Arizona, Washington, and Colorado (and maybe a few other states I've forgotten). Everywhere I've taught, I've seen roughly the same technical obstacle. So many students can play down to a pedal A-flat but 'lose' the note trying to go lower. If we use the diagram above, it's almost as if the pedal A-flat lies on the Abyssal Plain but the pedal G plunges down into some kind of oceanic trench.

What's going on here? I'm not sure but, when I observe my own playing, I do notice a sort of physical change that happens.



As my pedal gliss 'submarine' passes through the A-flat to the G, it feels as if my lips are falling into the mouthpiece just a bit. It's not that I'm pushing my lips into the mouthpiece cup but rather, they are able to inflate into the cup pushed by gentle air pressure.

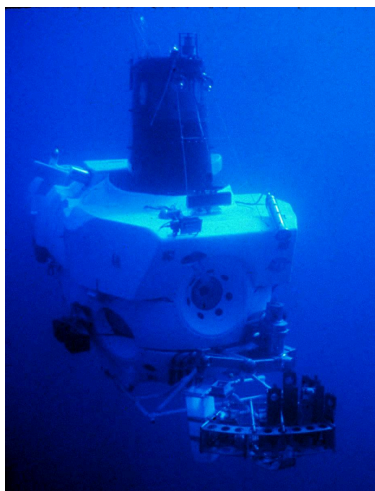
Ok, this next analogy is weird but it works in my mind. Imagine a bounce house inflated about 50% by air pressure. Now, if we place that bounce house into a giant, hermetically-sealed airplane hangar and lower the air pressure in the hangar, the bounce house would start to get larger as the internal air pressure pushes out. In this analogy, the bounce house is our embouchure and the hangar is the internal cavity of the trombone. Thanks to an AI image generator for this next image:



If we hold our embouchure tight and don't let it 'fall' into the mouthpiece just a bit, chances are the note will disappear as we approach the pedal G.

If your student is struggling navigating past the pedal shelf, have them try soft half-step (or quarter step) glisses. Away from the trombone, have them blow gently and let the lips puff out a bit. No, it's not identical but is conceptually similar and might help. Beyond that, preach patience and repetition.

***As is true with so many things,
it takes as long as it takes.***



The Good Stuff - Trombone Pedagogy

Timothy Gallwey - The Inner Game of Tennis (part 2)

I've decided to devote more than one issue of TBZ Monthly to this amazing book. It just has so much great stuff in it.

Here's one:

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Judgment results in tightness, and tightness interferes with the fluidity required for accurate and quick movement.

Galley, Timothy. *The Inner Game of Tennis*. New York. Random House, 2008. p.21

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Yes! When we review and judge ourselves *while playing* we aren't actually absorbed in the task at hand. Self 1 (the doer) is so much quicker than Self 2 (the talker). In this next example, the author is telling a story about a man who was having trouble with his backhand. He simply had the student look in a reflective window to see what was actually happening.

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"Then, for a moment, my mind turned off and I realized that I hadn't given Jack a single instruction on his backhand! "But what did I teach you?" I asked. He was quiet for a whole full half minute trying to remember what I had told him. Finally he said, "I can't remember you telling me anything! You were just there watching, and you got me watching myself closer than I ever had before. Instead of seeing what was wrong with my backhand, I just started observing, and improvement seemed to happen on its own. I'm not sure why, but I certainly learned a lot in a short period of time." He had learned, but had he been 'taught'? This question fascinated me.

The key that unlocked Jack's new backhand - which was really there all the time just waiting to be let out - was that in the instant he stopped trying to change his backhand, he saw it as it was. At first, without the aid of a mirror, he directly experienced his backswing. Without thinking or analyzing, he increased his awareness of that part of his swing. When the mind is free of any thought or judgment, it is still an act like a mirror. Then and only then can we know things as they are.

Galley, Timothy. *The Inner Game of Tennis*. New York. Random House, 2008. p.23-24

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When I ask my students for feedback on something they just played, they often try to analyze what they were doing instead of just *observing* what happened. One of the challenges in teaching is knowing when to ask someone to try playing it another time without any commentary. If you think they know (or should know) what's going on, let them have another go at it. I try to ask them, "What did you hear?" Recording in lessons can be really helpful for this.

OK, one more quote:

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No matter what a person's complaint is when he has a lesson with me, I have found that the most beneficial first step is to encourage him to see and feel what he is doing - that is, to increase his awareness of what actually is.

Galley, Timothy. The Inner Game of Tennis. New York. Random House, 2008. p.25

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There is a wonderful video that demonstrates this. Gallwey is a guest on the ABC morning talk show, [Good Day!](#) The cheerful host (Eileen Prose) is chatting with him about her golf game. Listen to her closely and you'll realize she is much smarter than she initially lets on. I'm guessing the producers of the show wanted her to play down her intelligence.

The miracle moment in my mind starts at about the [7:32 mark](#). Eileen is putting without actually *trying* to hit the target. She's just observing in a non-judgmental way. Gallwey asks her to report where she *thought* the golf ball went. Watch closely! While Self 1 is simply reporting what it thought was happening, Self 2 is making a series of corrections until she is hitting the target without even knowing it! I love this moment in the video.



A Random Thought: Disney Magic



In late February, the ASU Trombone Choir travelled to California. We performed at John W. North High School on a Friday and the SoCal Trombone Day on a Saturday. And on Sunday? Disney!

How on earth did we do that? Well, one member of the studio has parents who have worked for Disney for a combined 60+ years. They generously donated 18 park hopper passes (that they had accumulated over time) so that we could have a wonderful day in the park. It was amazing and we had a total blast. Not something that can happen again and we all realized that with great gratitude.

So, how can I relate this to the trombone? Well, Disney charges a premium price for a premium experience. There is an expectation that you pay more but you get an experience that is just a bit more special. It's true even in the little details. Apparently, each section of the park has a unique ground surface. At one point in the Star Wars section of the park, a ride broke down and they had to escort us out, asking us not to take pictures of the fully-lit interior of the attraction. My Disney-expert student noticed that, even inside the attraction, the floor scheme matches the rest of that park section. In a darkened ride this is something the guests would never see. Still, there must have been a feeling that *every* detail must be right.

When I was in the Air Force Band, we had a daytime performance at Disney World in Florida. They brought us into the park using the subterranean tunnels below the Magic Kingdom (which in itself was pretty cool for me). Before we went up to perform, a Disney employee felt the need to lecture us on appropriate appearance and behavior when we were up in the public section of the park. Uh, hello? This was a premiere military band from Washington, D.C. We were already pretty aware of the details of appearance and behavior. Still not quite good enough for Disney, apparently.

Ask yourself as you practice and perform, “How high are my standards? Are they high or are they *Disney* high?” We can all do just a bit better and sometimes it’s nice to get a reminder of that.





We founded **The Trombone Tutors** in 2023 to offer top-notch instruction to all young trombone players! Our program includes eight live virtual masterclasses each month with Dr. Eric Henson and Dr. Justin Isenhour. Classes cover all the essential skills middle and high school students need to achieve their personal musical goals. Can't make a live session? No worries! Members enjoy unlimited archive access!

Visit www.thetrombonetutors.com to learn more. Use code **TROMBONEZONE** at checkout for your first month free!