

TBZ Monthly

A new monthly content service from Brad Edwards

Volume 4, No. 5. ~ May 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

This is the first tune I composed in Dorico on my laptop without access to a musical keyboard. I played passages on my instrument, figured out what I liked and then sat down to write things from memory.

The musical score is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of two systems, each with a 6-measure first system and an 18-measure second system. The melody is characterized by frequent triplet patterns and dynamic markings including *mf*, *f*, *p*, *mp*, and *cresc.*. The key signature changes from one flat (B-flat) in the first system to two flats (B-flat and E-flat) in the second system. The score is as follows:

First System (Measures 1-6):

- Measure 1: *mf*, triplet of eighth notes (F2, G2, A2).
- Measure 2: triplet of eighth notes (B1, C2, D2).
- Measure 3: triplet of eighth notes (E2, F2, G2).
- Measure 4: triplet of eighth notes (A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 5: triplet of eighth notes (D3, E3, F3).
- Measure 6: *cresc.*, triplet of eighth notes (G3, A3, B3).

Second System (Measures 7-18):

- Measure 7: *f*, triplet of eighth notes (C4, D4, E4).
- Measure 8: triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4).
- Measure 9: triplet of eighth notes (B4, C5, D5).
- Measure 10: triplet of eighth notes (E5, F5, G5).
- Measure 11: *p*, triplet of eighth notes (A5, B5, C6).
- Measure 12: triplet of eighth notes (D6, E6, F6).
- Measure 13: triplet of eighth notes (G6, A6, B6).
- Measure 14: triplet of eighth notes (C7, D7, E7).
- Measure 15: triplet of eighth notes (F7, G7, A7).
- Measure 16: triplet of eighth notes (B7, C8, D8).
- Measure 17: triplet of eighth notes (E8, F8, G8).
- Measure 18: *f*, triplet of eighth notes (A8, B8, C9).

Third System (Measures 19-30):

- Measure 19: *mf*, triplet of eighth notes (F2, G2, A2).
- Measure 20: triplet of eighth notes (B1, C2, D2).
- Measure 21: triplet of eighth notes (E2, F2, G2).
- Measure 22: triplet of eighth notes (A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 23: triplet of eighth notes (D3, E3, F3).
- Measure 24: triplet of eighth notes (G3, A3, B3).
- Measure 25: triplet of eighth notes (C4, D4, E4).
- Measure 26: triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4).
- Measure 27: triplet of eighth notes (B4, C5, D5).
- Measure 28: triplet of eighth notes (E5, F5, G5).
- Measure 29: triplet of eighth notes (A5, B5, C6).
- Measure 30: triplet of eighth notes (D6, E6, F6).

Fourth System (Measures 31-42):

- Measure 31: *f*, triplet of eighth notes (G6, A6, B6).
- Measure 32: triplet of eighth notes (C7, D7, E7).
- Measure 33: triplet of eighth notes (F7, G7, A7).
- Measure 34: triplet of eighth notes (B7, C8, D8).
- Measure 35: triplet of eighth notes (E8, F8, G8).
- Measure 36: triplet of eighth notes (A8, B8, C9).
- Measure 37: triplet of eighth notes (D9, E9, F9).
- Measure 38: triplet of eighth notes (G9, A9, B9).
- Measure 39: triplet of eighth notes (C10, D10, E10).
- Measure 40: triplet of eighth notes (F10, G10, A10).
- Measure 41: triplet of eighth notes (B10, C11, D11).
- Measure 42: triplet of eighth notes (E11, F11, G11).

Fifth System (Measures 43-54):

- Measure 43: *mp*, triplet of eighth notes (F2, G2, A2).
- Measure 44: triplet of eighth notes (B1, C2, D2).
- Measure 45: triplet of eighth notes (E2, F2, G2).
- Measure 46: triplet of eighth notes (A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 47: triplet of eighth notes (D3, E3, F3).
- Measure 48: triplet of eighth notes (G3, A3, B3).
- Measure 49: triplet of eighth notes (C4, D4, E4).
- Measure 50: triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4).
- Measure 51: triplet of eighth notes (B4, C5, D5).
- Measure 52: triplet of eighth notes (E5, F5, G5).
- Measure 53: triplet of eighth notes (A5, B5, C6).
- Measure 54: triplet of eighth notes (D6, E6, F6).

Sixth System (Measures 55-66):

- Measure 55: *f*, triplet of eighth notes (G6, A6, B6).
- Measure 56: triplet of eighth notes (C7, D7, E7).
- Measure 57: triplet of eighth notes (F7, G7, A7).
- Measure 58: triplet of eighth notes (B7, C8, D8).
- Measure 59: triplet of eighth notes (E8, F8, G8).
- Measure 60: triplet of eighth notes (A8, B8, C9).
- Measure 61: triplet of eighth notes (D9, E9, F9).
- Measure 62: triplet of eighth notes (G9, A9, B9).
- Measure 63: triplet of eighth notes (C10, D10, E10).
- Measure 64: triplet of eighth notes (F10, G10, A10).
- Measure 65: triplet of eighth notes (B10, C11, D11).
- Measure 66: triplet of eighth notes (E11, F11, G11).

A Pretty Good Melody

This musical score is for a piece titled "A Pretty Good Melody," written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The score is divided into two systems, each containing four staves of music. The first system is in the key of D major (one sharp), and the second system is in the key of B-flat major (two flats). The music is characterized by frequent triplet patterns and various dynamic markings.

First System (Key of D major):

- Staff 1:** Starts with a *mf* dynamic. Features a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then another triplet of eighth notes. The staff ends with a *cresc.* marking.
- Staff 2:** Begins with a measure rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, a half note, and another triplet of eighth notes. The staff ends with a *p* dynamic.
- Staff 3:** Starts with a measure rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, a half note, and another triplet of eighth notes. The staff ends with a *cresc.* marking.
- Staff 4:** Begins with a measure rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, a half note, and another triplet of eighth notes. The staff ends with a *mf* dynamic.

Second System (Key of B-flat major):

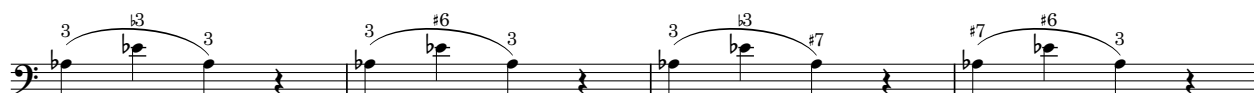
- Staff 5:** Starts with a *mf* dynamic. Features a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then another triplet of eighth notes. The staff ends with a *cresc.* marking.
- Staff 6:** Begins with a measure rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, a half note, and another triplet of eighth notes. The staff ends with a *p* dynamic.
- Staff 7:** Starts with a measure rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, a half note, and another triplet of eighth notes. The staff ends with a *cresc.* marking.
- Staff 8:** Begins with a measure rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, a half note, and another triplet of eighth notes. The staff ends with a *mf* dynamic.

The score concludes with a final staff in the second system, which begins with a *mp* dynamic and features a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then another triplet of eighth notes. The staff ends with a *f* dynamic.

A Useful Lip Slur

Tuning Up Some Other Positions

Speaking of alternate positions: listen carefully for your intonation here. Make them sound as equal as possible.



You might need to use flat 1st position on this one.



Technique/Rhythm Builder: Confident Attacks

This kind of exercise really targets moments when the trombones have to project with a confident, centered sound. It goes up into that "money range" that can make or break us. Avoid the urge to tense up for moments like this.

The exercise consists of eight staves of music in 2/4 time. The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The exercise features a sequence of eighth-note attacks, each marked with an accent (>) and a slur. The notes are: Staff 1: B \flat 2, D3, F3; Staff 2: B \flat 2, D3, F \sharp 3; Staff 3: D3, F3, A \flat 3; Staff 4: B \flat 2, D3, F3; Staff 5: B \flat 2, D3, F3; Staff 6: B \flat 2, D3, F3; Staff 7: B \flat 2, D3, F3; Staff 8: D3, F3, A \flat 3. Each staff concludes with a quarter rest followed by a double bar line. The final staff is numbered 13.

Pause and rest for a moment before going on.

Technique/Rhythm Builder:



Higher?

*Free book sample: 2.18 Sextuplets
From: Trombone Craft and
Bass Trombone
Craft*

Here is some fairly tricky rhythm practice from the Craft books. Also a bit of trivia concerning the name “Trombone Craft.” It was a big project and originally I released the tenor trombone version in three volumes. Once I had finished volume three, I realized that everything should be contained in a single volume which I called Trombone Craft Complete (TCC). Laying around out there, you might find Trombone Craft, Vol. 1, etc. These are pretty rare and I’m sure they will be extremely valuable collector’s items any day now...

As for these sample pages, if they are too tricky at the written tempo, try having the metronome sound in 8th notes. Maybe a marking of 120 might be a good speed but, if you stumble, just go slower.

Enjoy!

44.

#2.18 Rhythm Builder: Sextuplets

Basic Rhythm Exercise

♩. = 60

Two Etudes

a. ♩. = 60

b. ♩. = 60

#2.18 Rhythm Builder: Sextuplets

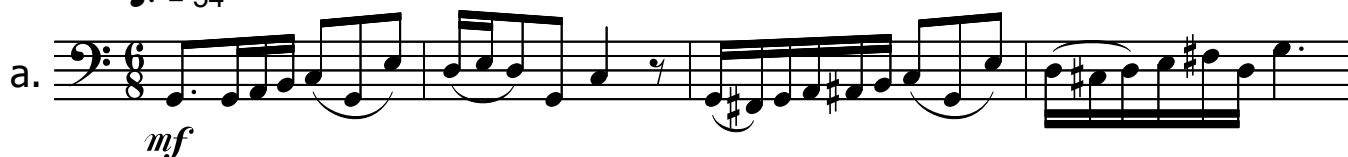
Basic Rhythm Exercise

♩. = 54



Etudes

♩. = 54



b.

♩. = 54

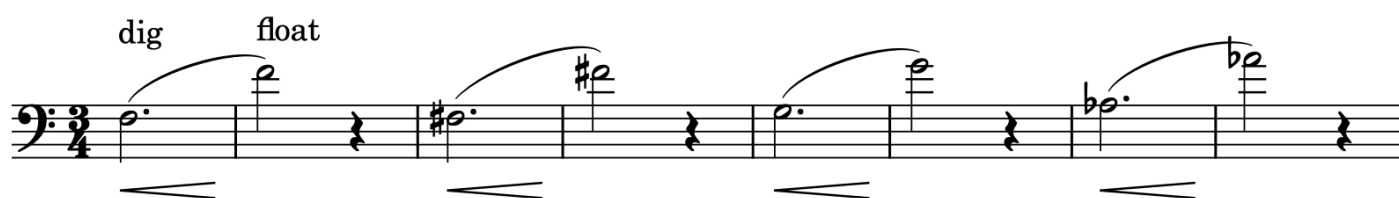


Playing Tip: “Dig and Float” Trampolines



It is natural to tighten and squeeze when reaching for higher notes. But we often tighten up so the air is quite forced, the mouthpiece is pushed in too much, and the lips are pressed together so they cannot vibrate.

This “Dig and Float” technique (which likely goes by many names) involves using a crescendo on the lower note to accelerate the air in advance of the upward leap. Here’s an example exercise:



The secret here lies at the end of the bottom note for each slur. Keep the air moving and volume increasing (gently) and allow the top note to float out of that sound. Yes, we do make a physical change for the upper note but most people really overdo it! I’m not asking for the top note to be softer (although it could be!), just that it be no louder than the very end of the bottom note.

As you do this, keep in mind that to the human ear, higher notes will naturally sound louder (up to a point).

There are other tricks I use in leaping to higher notes (more than I will cover in detail here) which include:

- Reshaping from an ‘aah’ to an ‘eee’ vowel inside the mouth so the middle of the tongue arches (think of your finger over a garden hose putting the water under pressure so it sprays farther).
- Pressuring the air (think of making the ‘ssss’ loudly). Notice that, as you do this, your abdominal muscles will contract somewhat. This is helpful if not overdone.

This exercise reminds me of bouncing on a trampoline where we transfer the energy of the bounce into a nice floating sensation in the air.

If we look at the Bordogni vocalises, we can find many examples of leaps to higher notes. Here’s one from #9 in the Rochut edition:



Lots of octave leaps here! In order to work on the ‘dig and float’ concept, I might try this exercise.



Dig into the bottom note and let the upper note float out.

On Teaching and Playing: Alternate Positions, Balancing the Scales



Each slide position is a choice with advantages and disadvantages. In my teaching, I want my students to discover these things, usually by going back and forth between two options.

I am the product of my teacher (aren't we all?). My undergraduate teacher expressed the opinion that a trombone has seven positions and we should use all of them. My master's teacher used to say, "You should just use the real positions." When I asked him about the efficiency of alternate positions, he would simply reply with, "Move your slide faster."

Here's one argument I hear:

Complaint: "The alternate positions don't sound as good."

Response: "That's because you avoid them. Practice them more and they'll sound just as good."

That response is good up to a point but I believe no amount of practicing will ever make 6th position as stable as 1st position. Why? Here's my guess: when instrument makers pick dimensions for an instrument (how big this should be compared to that) they probably design for maximum resonance in first position. When the slide gets longer, the bell doesn't get bigger (we're still waiting on you, nanotech!). So the instrument effectively goes "out of scale," becoming less acoustically stable. I suppose they could design an instrument so that it "rings true" in 6th position but then wouldn't 1st position become wobbly? Who would want to buy such a horn?

One classic example of such a choice about alternates comes from the opening of Guilman's *Morceau Symphonique*.



With the first note, B-flat3, we can either play in 1st or 5th.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Start in 1st	More secure (esp. since it is the first note - less scary) Probably more in tune	The leap to the G-flat is less clean/harder because: 1. You move from the 4th to the 7th partial, having to skip over the 5th and 6th partials. 2. Upward leaps are usually harder when the slide is moving out.
Start in 5th	The leap to the G-flat is cleaner/easier because: 1. You move from the 5th to the 7th partial only skipping the 6th partial 2. Upward leaps are usually easier when the slide is moving in.	Less secure since your first note is in an alternate position. A tuning adjustment is likely needed (usually the 5th partial is flat and needs correcting).

Here's another example, something a bit more exotic, from the Grøndahl *Concerto*.



In this example I like the fluidity playing the F in 6th position and then travel across 3rd to the F in 1st position. However, if your slide technique is sloppy, you'll miss the positions pretty badly.

So many choices!

The Good Stuff - Trombone Pedagogy

Jay Friedman, “Preparing and Executing a Melodious Etude”

(Blog post on 11/10/2020)

As I write this, news is racing across the internet about the possibility that Tim Higgins, Principal Trombone of the San Francisco Symphony, might become that next principal in Chicago. Jay Friedman has held that chair since 1964 (joining the orchestra in 1962). What a run!!

We should be eternally grateful to Mr. Friedman not just for his wonderful musicianship but also for contributing his thoughts in the form of a blog begun in the 1990's. I came across this post and wanted to reflect on it.

The term “sostenuto” has been widely misunderstood by many people. It is widely assumed to mean that a note is to be sustained at the same volume throughout the duration of a pitch. I believe that the term has a simpler, more basic meaning; referring to the length of the note, not its shape. Therefore the way I describe the method above [see post] would still be classified as sostenuto, even with a slight diminuendo on each pitch, but lasting as long as a note that was sustained at the same volume throughout. The shape of a note should be a different issue than the length, giving us another tool in the quest for variety in playing, otherwise known as “style.”

[Blog Post](#), paragraph 5.

This differentiation between a note's length and the degree of taper is interesting to me. I often see younger players attempt to play tenuto notes and sustain with no taper until the very next note, beginning the next note with a solid “tah” attack. I find this difficult to do and, what's more, I find it can lead to an unmusical sound. Just as with violin (something Friedman mentions in other articles) a *slight* decay is natural and produces a more pleasant sound to my ear.

In an earlier paragraph, Friedman talks about keeping the torso relaxed and avoiding any tendency to tense up and push.

...The torso will remain completely relaxed and act as a resonating chamber, resulting in maximum resonance with minimum exertion. What expels air without pushing? Elasticity in the lungs. When a large amount of air is inhaled the lungs expand and when allowed to contract they will push out air without any assistance from muscles in the body. The sealed embouchure starts the lungs emptying rapidly and will sustain all but the longest notes with an almost undetectable decay. This is exactly the same method as required in singing, and since the trombone is known as the closest instrument to the human voice, it should employ the same basic mechanics.

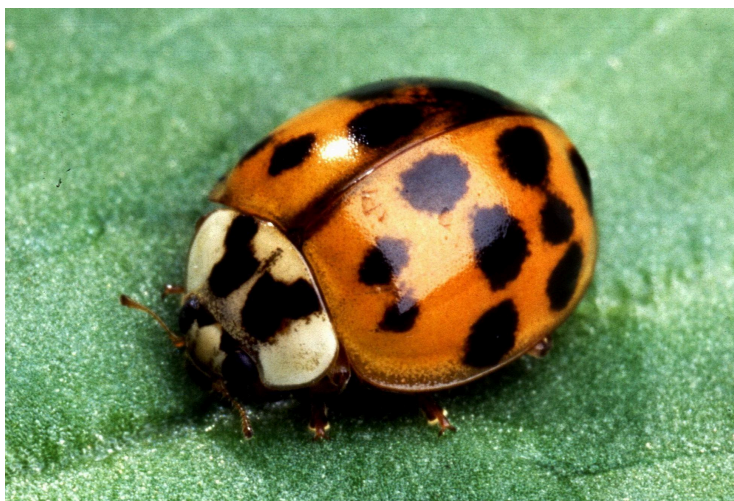
I really like this notion of maximum resonance with minimum exertion. My work definition of resonance is: ***The most vibration for the least effort.***

So often we try to push out the air. In fact, band directors are often guilty of telling us to do this. Some push might be appropriate for a smaller brass instrument like trumpet but telling your students (especially young students) to push out notes often leads to a labored, tense approach where in truth they are fighting against themselves.

I strongly encourage you to listen to Mr. Friedman's playing examples and read the entire blog post.



A Random Thought: Of Insects and Folksongs



According to an entomology blog, “A recent study published in the journal *Biological Conservation* suggested that 40% of all insect species are in decline and could die out in the coming decades.” The blog goes on:

The main cause of the decline is agricultural intensification, which involves the elimination of all trees and shrubs. Habitat destruction, such as intensive agriculture, the use of pesticides (particularly insecticides), introduced species, and to a lesser degree, both the number and diversity of insects are declining around the globe due to habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. Environmental writer Oliver Milman says habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change are killing off insects worldwide, which, in turn, threatens everything at stake. [“Why are insects disappearing”](#) - Entomologist blog, Mar. 1, 2025

OK, fewer bugs. I mean, how bad can that be? Well, as long as we don’t think about pollination or the food pyramid (you know, what birds eat and so on).

Let’s leave that depressing subject and talk about folk songs. It seems that, with each passing generation, fewer folk songs are generally known. Even in my years of teaching, my students know fewer and fewer songs. Take *Shenandoah* for example. There was a time when students generally knew this tune and could figure it out by ear. Now? Not likely they would know the tune. Ditto with *The Farmer in the Dell*, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, *Sakura*, *Greensleeves*, *Pop Goes the Weasel*. It’s

possible that these tunes have been replaced by theme songs to video games or TV shows. The latest craze, apparently, is the [Lava Chicken](#) song from the Minecraft movie.



Still, I like to think about that pre-radio time when people found entertainment by gathering in the parlor to sing together. Reality? Maybe not but, without the internet, TV or even radio, music wouldn't exist ***unless we made it ourselves***. Likewise, more people went to church and participated in congregational singing during services. Even that seems to have faded.

Instead of being music makers at a young age, it seems more people are passive consumers of Spotify and short-form videos. In this way, we have lost something really valuable. When we go to pick up an instrument, we are no longer blessed with a bounty of tunes in our heads. In this way, we are musically handicapped.

Shenandoah

Andante

Soprano

O Shen-an - doah, I long to hear you, A -

Alto

O Shen-an - doah, I long to hear you, A -

Piano

Intro/Interlude

mp



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!

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