

TBZ Monthly

A new monthly content service from Brad Edwards

Volume 4, No. 6. ~ June 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](#))

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. The Good Stuff: Pedagogy Quotes
8. A Random Thought

Enjoy!

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A Pretty Good Melody

This one floats between tonal centers and between 6/8 and 3/4. Let it float peacefully.

Floating ♩ = 56

mp

7 *mf*

13 *rit....*

a tempo

17 *mp*

21 *cresc.* *mf*

Floating ♩ = 56

mp

7 *mf*

13 *rit....*

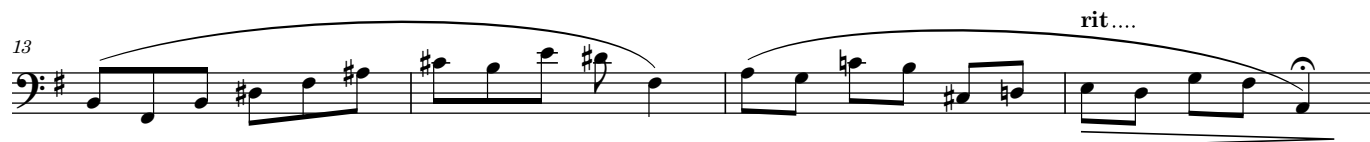
a tempo

17 *mp*

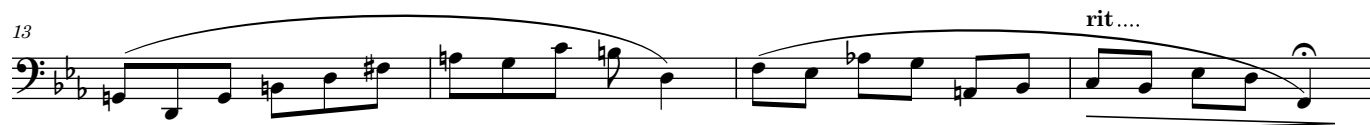
21 *cresc.* *mf*

A Pretty Good Melody

Floating ♩. = 56



Floating ♩. = 56



A Useful Lip Slur

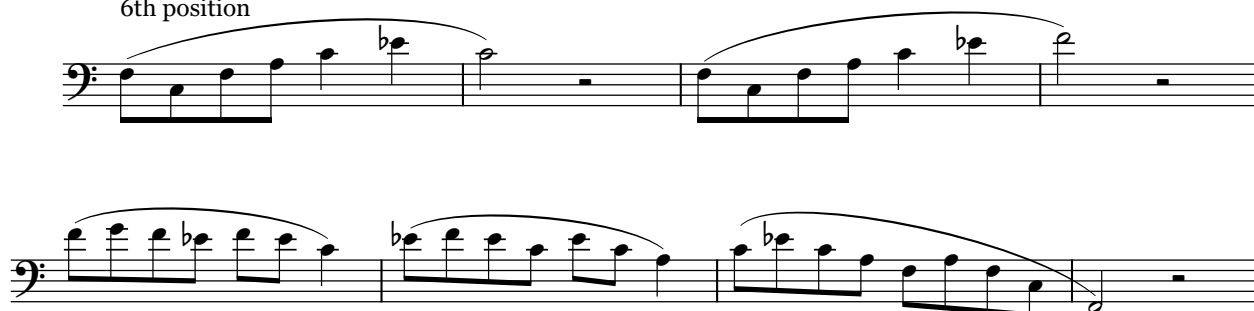
Developing Security in the High Range

This helps with differentiation between those upper partials. It also helps build endurance.

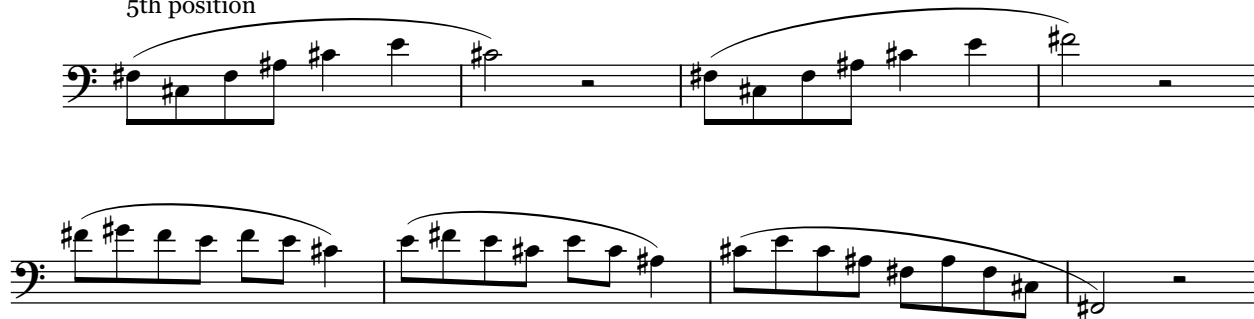
7th position



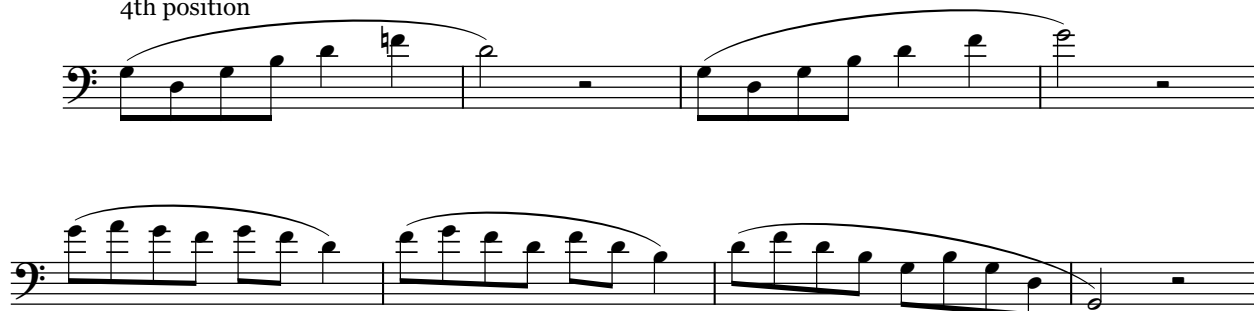
6th position



5th position



4th position



Developing Security in the High Range

3rd position

2nd position

1st position

The image displays three sets of musical exercises in bass clef, each consisting of two staves. The first set is labeled '3rd position' and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The second set is labeled '2nd position' and features a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The third set is labeled '1st position' and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). Each set includes a top staff with a melodic line and a bottom staff with a corresponding bass line. The exercises are designed to develop security in the high range of the instrument.

Technique/Rhythm Builder: Scale Bursts

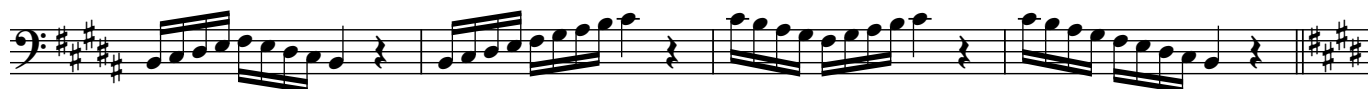
Lately I find myself using this simple exercise daily to keep me on my toes.

Mark in your preferred tempo. Lately, I've been somewhere between 100 and 104.



Technique/Rhythm Builder:

Scale Bursts



Free book sample:
Flipping Key Signatures with Minor Scales
Part of Pattern-Building from
The Intermediate Trombonist

This month I am completing a big project. I now have versions of the Intermediate book for all the brass:

- [The Intermediate Trombonist](#)
- [The Intermediate Tubist](#)
- [The Intermediate Euphoniumist](#)
- [The Intermediate Trumpeter](#)
- [The Intermediate Hornist](#)

To write these books, I sought out expert advice. I'd like to thank those people who were so generous with their time and expertise:

- Deanna Swoboda and Chris Combest - tuba
- Gail Robertson and Patrick Stuckemeyer - euphonium
- Ashley Hall-Tighe, Derek Sanchez, and James Sherry - trumpet
- Martha Edwards - horn

To celebrate this, I offer up a sample from the Intermediate Trombonist. The idea here is for students to play a fairly simple pattern first in a familiar key then in a less familiar key.

Enjoy!

Flipping key signatures with minor scales

These melodies are constructed using mostly the melodic minor scale. Some alternate positions are marked but more are possible.

c minor and c-sharp minor

#34

Exercise #34 consists of four staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff is in c minor (two flats) and shows a melodic line with a slur over the first four measures and a fermata on the fifth measure. The second staff is in c-sharp minor (three sharps) and shows a similar melodic line. The third staff is in c minor (two flats) and shows a melodic line with a slur over the first four measures and a fermata on the fifth measure, with a $\flat 4$ marking above the fourth measure. The fourth staff is in c-sharp minor (three sharps) and shows a similar melodic line with a slur over the first four measures and a fermata on the fifth measure, with a $\sharp 5$ marking above the fifth measure.

d minor and d-sharp minor

#35

Exercise #35 consists of four staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff is in d minor (one flat) and shows a melodic line with a slur over the first four measures and a fermata on the fifth measure. The second staff is in d-sharp minor (four sharps) and shows a similar melodic line. The third staff is in d minor (one flat) and shows a melodic line with a slur over the first four measures and a fermata on the fifth measure, with a $\sharp 5$ marking above the fifth measure. The fourth staff is in d-sharp minor (four sharps) and shows a similar melodic line with a slur over the first four measures and a fermata on the fifth measure, with a $\sharp 5$ marking above the fifth measure.

Go slowly! Remember that E-sharp!

e minor and e-flat minor

#36

Exercise #36 consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff is in e minor (one sharp, F#). The second and fourth staves are in e-flat minor (three flats, Bb, Eb, Ab). The third staff is in e minor (one sharp, F#). Each staff contains two measures of music. The first measure of each staff features a descending eighth-note scale starting from a half note, followed by a half note. The second measure features a descending eighth-note scale starting from a half note, followed by a half note. The exercises are designed to be played in both e minor and e-flat minor.

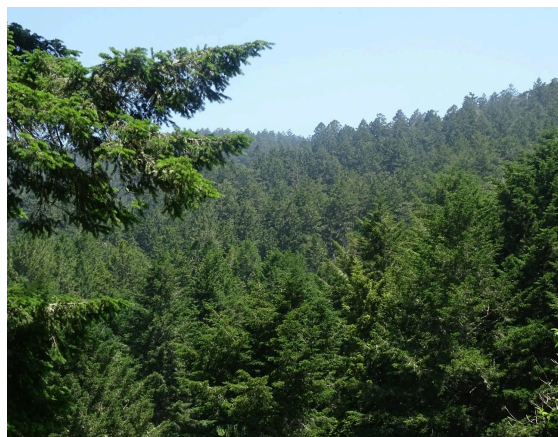
Don't tire out your lips playing it over and over because you aren't sure of the slide positions.
Think it through first!

f minor and f-sharp minor

#37

Exercise #37 consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time. The first and third staves are in f minor (three flats, Bb, Eb, Ab). The second and fourth staves are in f-sharp minor (three sharps, F#, C#, G#). Each staff contains two measures of music. The first measure of each staff features a descending eighth-note scale starting from a half note, followed by a half note. The second measure features a descending eighth-note scale starting from a half note, followed by a half note. The exercises are designed to be played in both f minor and f-sharp minor.

Playing Tip: The Melody Behind the Melody



There's an old saying, "You can't see the forest because the trees are in the way." I'm not sure if that's the right analogy but, when we are playing a passage, we sometimes get caught up in the surface details and lose sight of the bigger picture. The most obvious example of this would be grace notes in something like a Bordogni vocalise (Bordogni/Rochut No. 41):



Remember, this was originally written for *singers*. Oddly, vocalises like this don't show up much in vocal pedagogy these days so it isn't easy to find any recordings of singers performing them. Actually a colleague, Ross Holcombe, just shared this [recording](#) with me. Thanks, Ross!

Still, from other types of recordings I can infer how this would be done by a good singer. Those little grace notes would be (wait for it) *graceful*. They would be light almost an afterthought. However, in the hands of too many trombonists, they get too much emphasis. Why? Well, they're tricky so we tend to pounce on them.

We should look beyond this surface melody to find the simpler essential melody in the background. If we remove the grace notes, we end up with:



However, we can simplify this melody even more:



This is like boiling the melody down a bit to arrive at the essential simple tune that is hiding right there in plain sight. I refer to this as the “melody behind the melody.” If you’re familiar with Schenkerian analysis, it’s a bit like that.

Why should we do this? I think many melodies are essentially simple tunes that have been dressed up a bit. By figuring out the simple tune and playing it, we might find greater relaxation and clarity of phrasing. Once we’ve found that tune, we can add on the layers of complexity while (hopefully) retaining the simple melodic direction.

Here’s another example: the Prelude to the Lohengrin, Act III.



If we seek out the melody behind the melody, we find a simpler lyrical tune. By practicing this tune, I believe we arrive at a better final product:



On Teaching and Playing: Building Your Own Lick Notebook

For me, there are certain licks that just won't easily fall into place. If I repeat them a lot they get better but they never become automatic. Other things like complex lip slurs tend to fall into place more easily (big surprise there!).

It's the fast tongued licks, especially the ones that leap around, that give me the most trouble. Maybe they give *everyone* a lot of trouble. At any rate, since summer has arrived and, besides working up the first trombone part to Gunther Schuller's *Symphony for Brass and Percussion* for this summer's Summit Brass concert at the [Rafael Mendez Brass Institute](#), I have a bit more free time with my practicing. Using forScore I thought I would make a playlist of licks. I can return to them here and there to humble myself (or keep my reflexes sharp).

In French there is a term - *bête noir* - which literally translates to "black beast." What a great image!



Some of my black beasts include passages from the David Concertino, the Rimsky Korsakov Concerto, Malcolm Arnold's Fantasy, the William Tell Overture and, surprisingly, the end of Morceau Symphonique by our friend, Alexandre Guilmant.



To stay sharp, I need to visit my beasts often.

The Good Stuff - Trombone Pedagogy

Mastering the Trombone

Chapter 1 - “Breathing and Breath Control”

Edward Kleinhammer and Douglas Yeo

This book is a sequel of sorts to Kleinhammer’s earlier book, [The Art of Trombone Playing](#). This exercise interests me not only because it comes from two preeminent experts but it seems to go against conventional wisdom that we should emulate a “circle” moving from the inhale to the exhale without any pause. However, this exercise suggests stopping the movement of the air. Bear in mind that this is just an exercise, not a performance suggestion.

Inhale one-third of a full breath and hold this amount for a few seconds; now inhale to two-thirds of a full breath and finally fill up to a full breath and hold this for a few seconds. Then, release the air slowly, stopping at the two-thirds and one-third positions. Repeat this exercise with discretion in accordance with your physical condition as some discomfort may occur at first as your body adjusts to this new found free movement of air and the breathing muscles expand and your air capacity increases. This type of breathing exercise can be practiced any time of the day, without the tube, of course, in public, and without the instrument as well as with it. If you feel that pausing to arrest the breath at the one-third and two-thirds points makes one tense, use a small >>pant<> (a shallow in-and-out breathing motion) at these stopping points to keep the body in motion.

Kleinhammer and Yeo, *Mastering the Trombone*, Hannover Germany, Edition Piccolo, 1997. p.14

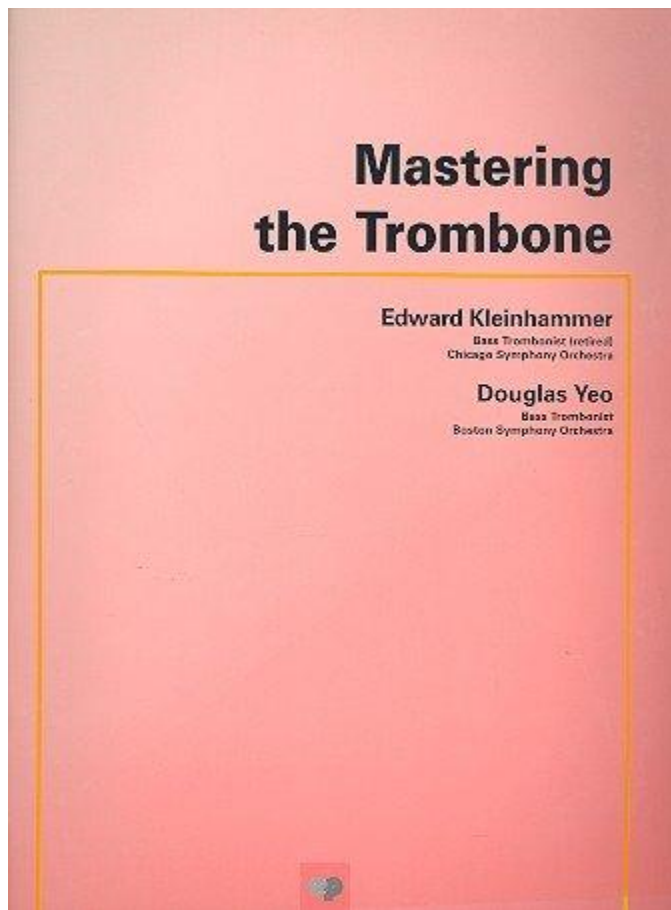
This exercise is part of a suggestion to work with a breathing tube. The authors go on with their description:

Again, what we want to avoid in playing the trombone is taking in air and then collapsing the breathing muscles against the throat and tongue using these to ration the air to the embouchure, such as the feeling we have in constipated defecation. The use of the tube allows us to experience breathing just as the complete yoga breath is described - diaphragmatic, chest and clavicular all in one motion.

ibid, p14

I do really like the idea that we must learn to do something somewhat unnatural in how we release our air. When we take a deep breath, the air wants to rush out in an uncontrolled manner, delivering more air than the lips can handle.

The important thing, I think, is this: it is possible to pause the release of the air *without locking up* in the throat. We can hold our chest cavity open and learn to release the air in a controlled way. This skill is really important when we have to play a very long, soft phrase.



A Random Thought: Goblin Valley State Park (and the commonwealth)

On a recent return trip from Colorado we swung through Utah and visited [Goblin Valley State Park](#). Here are actual pictures I took with my actual phone!



Such interesting unearthly rock formations! They are called *hoodoos*, locally known as goblins. They can take millions of years to form. If you are planning a trip to Utah, this park is worth a visit (and is probably less crowded than the national parks).

In 2013, some scout masters thought it would be a good idea to topple one of these formations. These idiots even took a [video](#) of themselves doing it.

In their subsequent court appearance, they claimed toppling it was necessary for the safety of the scouts. I'm skeptical that this had anything to do with safety.

Here's an [article](#) I found online. A quote:

Glenn Taylor, 45, and David Hall, 42, appeared in Utah's 7th District Court to enter their pleas under a deal with prosecutors. The two men from Highland were sentenced to a year of probation and ordered to pay fines and restitution, which has not yet been determined, The Salt Lake Tribune reported (<http://bit.ly/1IMae0E>).

State prosecutors are still trying to put a price on the amount of damage caused last October to the mushroom-shaped sandstone pillar, which park officials said had been standing for much of human history, if not longer. The formation was estimated to be about 170 million years old.

A video shot by Hall and posted on YouTube shows Taylor dislodging the formation at Goblin Valley State Park in central Utah that's filled with thousands of the pillars called "hoodoos." Hall, Taylor and a third man were seen cheering and high-fiving after the formation toppled.

The men claimed it might have been ready to fall and kill a visitor. Both were later stripped of their Boy Scout positions.

So, what's my point here? Am I just trying to drive up engagement through outrage?

No, I just want to point out that we live in a commonwealth, a group of people who work together for the common good.

We would be wise to remember 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!

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