

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](#). 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!

Brad Edwards

Trombone Professor, Arizona State University

[School of Music Dance and Theater](#)

Websites:

[Trombone Zone](#)

[Hornbone Press](#)

[Free Audition Solos](#)

[ASU Bones](#)

A Pretty Good Melody

with freedom ♩ = 60

The musical score is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of two systems, each with a 13-measure line. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

System 1:

- Measures 1-4: *mf* (mezzo-forte), triplet of eighth notes.
- Measures 5-8: *f* (forte), triplet of eighth notes.
- Measures 9-12: *cresc.* (crescendo), triplet of eighth notes.
- Measure 13: *mp* (mezzo-piano), triplet of eighth notes.

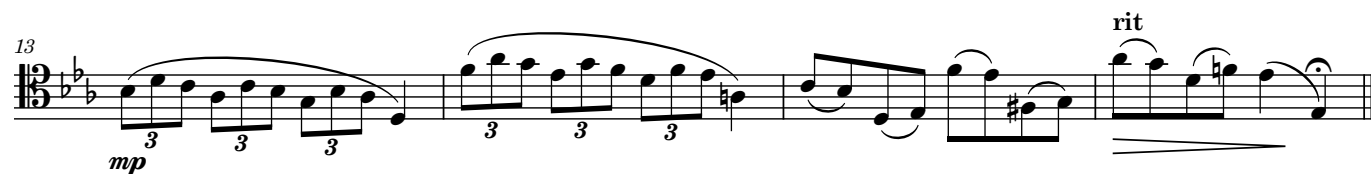
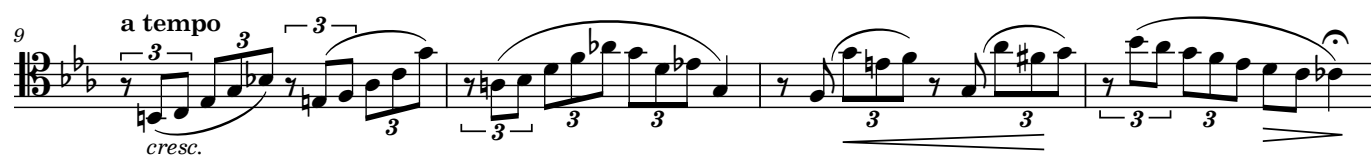
System 2:

- Measures 1-4: *mf* (mezzo-forte), triplet of eighth notes.
- Measures 5-8: *f* (forte), triplet of eighth notes.
- Measures 9-12: *cresc.* (crescendo), triplet of eighth notes.
- Measure 13: *mp* (mezzo-piano), triplet of eighth notes.

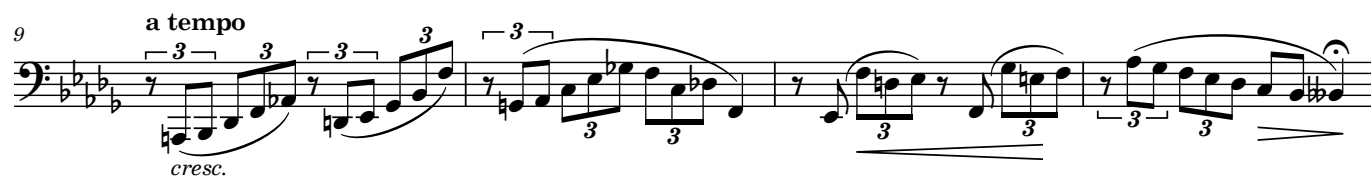
Tempo markings include "with freedom ♩ = 60" at the beginning of each system and "a tempo" above measure 9 of each system. Performance directions include "rit." (ritardando) above measures 8 and 12 of each system. The score uses various musical notations including slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

A Pretty Good Melody

with freedom ♩ = 60



with freedom ♩ = 60



A Useful Lip Slur

Wider Leaps with Neighbor Tones

It's always useful to work on wider leaps. This starts out close to the overtone series but then sequences up.

The exercise consists of six staves of music, each containing three measures. Each measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The sections are numbered 1 through 6, with a sharp sign (#) indicating the starting note for each section. The key signature changes from one sharp (F#) to two flats (Bb, Eb) across the sections.

- Section 1:** Starts on Bb. The first measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The second measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The third measure has a slur over sixteenth notes.
- Section 2:** Starts on C#. The first measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The second measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The third measure has a slur over sixteenth notes.
- Section 3:** Starts on D#. The first measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The second measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The third measure has a slur over sixteenth notes.
- Section 4:** Starts on E#. The first measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The second measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The third measure has a slur over sixteenth notes.
- Section 5:** Starts on F#. The first measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The second measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The third measure has a slur over sixteenth notes.
- Section 6:** Starts on G#. The first measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The second measure has a slur over sixteenth notes. The third measure has a slur over sixteenth notes.

Wider Leaps with Neighbor Tones

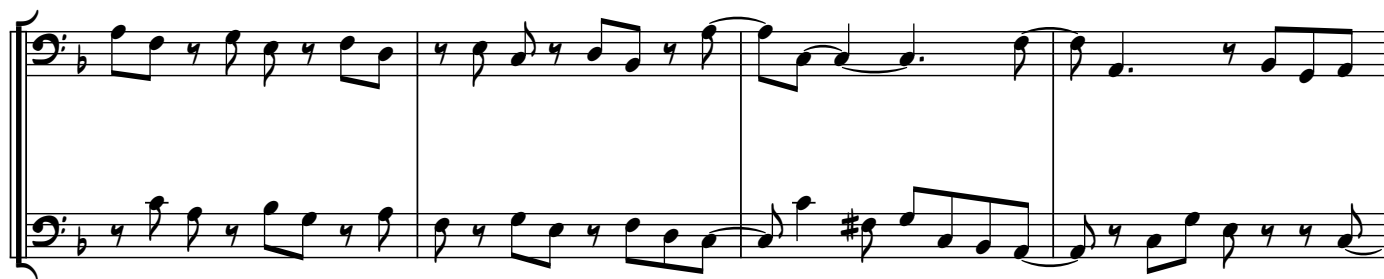
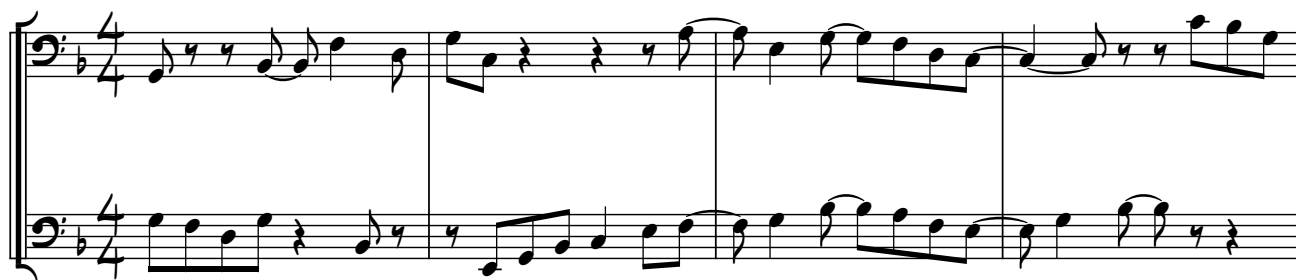
And now we leave the overtone series for tenor trombone.

Technique/Rhythm Builder: Rhythm Duet

This one's a bit odd.

$\text{♩} = 126$

Technique/Rhythm Builder:



Free book sample: Lip Slur Melodies
No. 9.21 “Singing fully”

The notion behind this book was to write a collection of melodies which, on trombone, could be executed entirely with natural slurs. The book ends with a collection of 33 duets. Both parts use natural slurs (with an occasional glissando thrown in).

Enjoy!

Singing fully

9.21

The musical score is written for a vocal line and a piano accompaniment in 3/4 time. The key signature starts with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and changes to two sharps (F-sharp and C-sharp) in the third system. The tempo is marked 9.21. The dynamics are *mf* (mezzo-forte) in the first two systems and *mp* (mezzo-piano) in the last two systems. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings (e.g., #4, #5, 1, b5). There are also breath marks (V) and accents (V) indicated. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a key signature change to one sharp (F-sharp).

First system of musical notation, featuring treble and bass staves. The treble staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Both staves are marked with *mf* (mezzo-forte). The treble staff includes fingerings $\flat 4$ #5 and $\flat 4$, and a dynamic marking *f* (forte). The bass staff includes fingerings $\flat 4$ and *f*.

Second system of musical notation, featuring treble and bass staves. The treble staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The bass staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). Both staves are marked with *f* (forte). The treble staff includes fingerings #4, #5, and 1. The bass staff includes fingerings #4 and 1.

Third system of musical notation, featuring treble and bass staves. The treble staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The bass staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). Both staves are marked with *dim.* (diminuendo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The treble staff includes fingerings #4 and 1. The bass staff includes fingerings #5, 1, and (v).

Fourth system of musical notation, featuring treble and bass staves. The treble staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The bass staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). Both staves are marked with *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The treble staff includes fingerings #5, 1, and #5. The bass staff includes fingerings (v) and v.

Playing Tip: Lock Down Those Corners

If you take time to look at the embouchures of professional players, you'll see a fair amount of variety. When I lived in Washington D.C., I took a couple lessons with Doug Elliott, the mouthpiece maker and devotee of the Don Reinhardt Pivot System for embouchure. I've watched him in action and Doug has an uncanny ability to quickly diagnose embouchure issues, proposing fixes.

At that time in his house, Doug had this large binder filled with photos of professional players' embouchures. He made his own set of clear mouthpieces and, whenever some professional musicians came to such venues as the Kennedy Center, Doug would ask them to play a few notes in different registers while he snapped photos of their embouchures using the clear mouthpieces. As good as the lessons with Doug were, what has really stuck with me were those binders of pictures. It quickly became apparent that not all successful players were using the same embouchure! In some cases the mouthpiece was higher, in others lower. The amount of tilt (rolling in or out of the lip) during register changes varied widely. I remember being stunned by a photo of a high B-flat played by Milt Stevens who at the time was the Principal Trombonist in the National Symphony. His lower lip rolled in so far, you couldn't see the red of the lower lip! Clearly it worked for him.

However, even with all this variety, there is an element which is more often shared by a variety of players: firm embouchure corners. Don't get me wrong, there are successful players who puff out their cheeks. The most famous example these days is Trombone Shorty.



Still, many pro players do have firm embouchure corners.

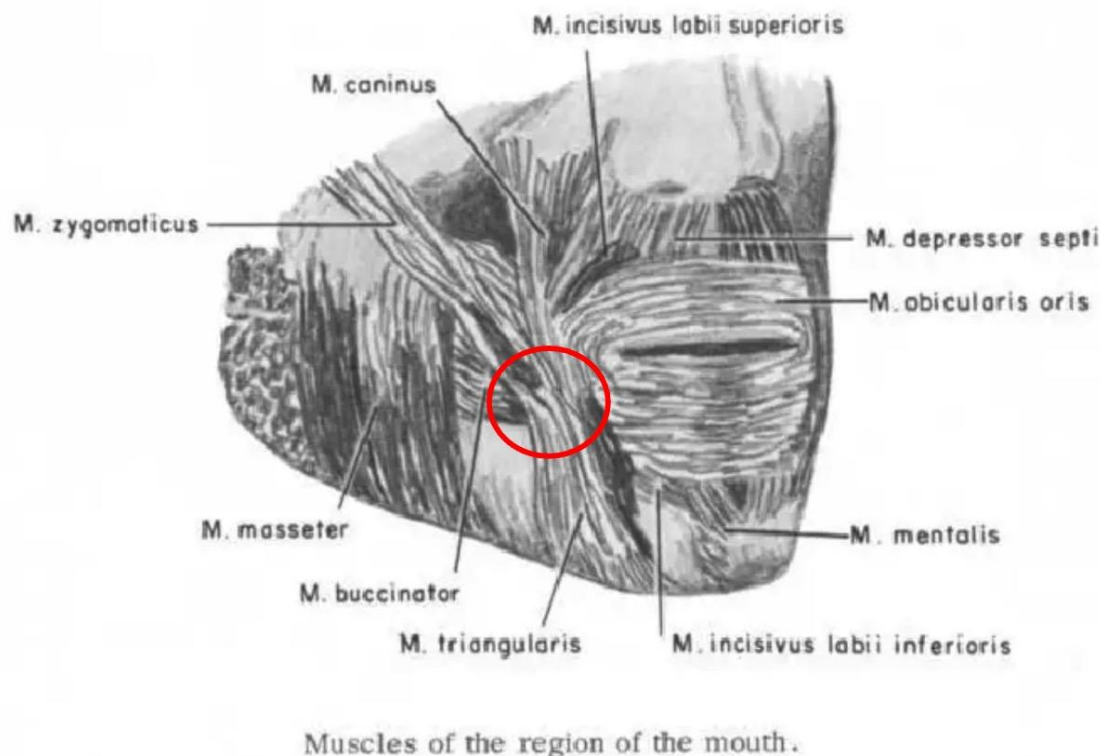
Joe Alessi	Bill Watrous
	
Christian Lindberg	Weston Sprott
	
Tim Higgins	Paulina Teresenko
	

Denson Paul Pollard	Michael Dease
	
JJ Johnson	Al Grey
	

Anyway, you get the idea. I agree with the conventional wisdom that firm embouchure corners help to stabilize the embouchure. This, I think, is similar to the ligature used to hold a clarinet reed in place.



There is a drawing I often turn to in Ed Kleinhammer's book, *The Art of Trombone Playing*.



That red circle (my addition to the image) is an important spot. Not to get too technical but, “muscles overlap there.” If those muscles relax, an air pocket will appear and the embouchure center will have to find support elsewhere.

I don't try to change too many embouchures but, if I see little air bubbles under the corners, I usually stop things and look into it.

Fixed easily? Sometimes yes and sometimes no. However, most students who firm up the corners report back that they feel greater stability and control.

The Good Stuff - Trombone Pedagogy

Accuracy from

Good Vibrations - Masterclasses for Brass Players

Randy Gardner

I decided to continue with Randy's [excellent book](#). I really like his discussion of accuracy:

ACCURACY: The greatest difference between a world-class artist like Picasso and a person who can only draw stick figures lies in what these two people can see in their inner eye rather than in their fine motor control of a paint brush. Before putting brush to canvas, Picasso's inner eye saw in fine detail what he intended to paint. Consider the sculptor Michelangelo who said that he could see a figure imprisoned within a stone before he picked up his chisel. He liberated figures from blocks of stone. What separated Michelangelo from other sculptors was not his ability to control a chisel but his extraordinary inner eye. As with these great artists, great musicians hear vividly what they intend to produce before engaging in the physical activity of making music. Accurate, in-tune, and artistically satisfying performance is, more than anything else, the result of having a precise mental image of the desired musical outcome.

Gardner, Randy. Good Vibrations, self-published, 2016. p. 109

When you pick up your instrument to play something, how clear is the sound in your mind? I often see people who are “playing by feel.” They see the dots on the page and know the correct sequence of slide positions or fingerings but they aren’t really clear on the *sound* they want!

*The most important practicing takes place
between your physical repetitions.
Pausing to reflect is a super power.*

Gardner goes on write about solfège:

Solfège, or sight-singing, skill is essential to achieve a high level of music performance. One of the ways that I suggest strengthening your ear-and-instrument connection is by integrating solfège work with instrumental practice through a four-step process.

- 1) Play the first note of an exercise on a piano. Then, hear the entire exercise mentally, without producing any sound. Check your mental pitch accuracy occasionally. Proceed if you are on pitch. If not, locate where you went off course and correct that error before proceeding further.
- 2) Sing this exercise using whatever solfège system you are employing- fixed do, moveable do, pitch numbers, neutral syllable, etc. - checking your pitch accuracy occasionally. (Fixed do is the international language of music.)
- 3) Perform the exercise on your mouthpiece alone or on a BERP.
- 4) Finally, perform the passage on your instrument.

Messages sent from the brain to the body must be positive. Negative messages such as, "Don't miss!" or "Oh no, here comes that passage I always miss!" or "If I miss any notes in this passage, I'll be out of a job." invite negative results. Questions such as "What will the conductor (or other important people in the audience) think of me if I miss this...?" significantly increase a musician's probability of being inaccurate.

Clear your brain screen of all verbal instructions or thoughts, and fill your brain screen with clear sound images. Hear powerfully what you intend to produce!

Starting in Fall of 2024, I began each lesson at ASU doing Sing, Buzz, Play with my students. On my website, I have a [graded sequence of 20 short melodies](#). Students (even grad students) start at the beginning and work their way through. I do have some ear-training wizards with perfect pitch and *none* of this is a challenge for them. In that case, I have to get more creative!

We can all benefit from a stronger mental sound roadmap. I even catch myself playing without enough thought as to the exact sound I want.

Recording yourself can be useful for this (and humbling!). Lately, I've noticed that, at the end of phrases, my mind leaves the final note and I don't sing through it to the conclusion.

So, I must build my sound concept a little more.

A Random Thought: Back to Those Spiders

My first book (no longer published) was titled: 25 Steps to Better Rhythm (1993). Finishing up with the Air Force Band, I was starting to teach a larger studio of private students. I discovered their struggles with rhythm (something I had noticed since my college days in Connecticut - another story there). So, I wrote a book with the goal of keeping the melodies simple while the rhythms became more complex. I call this “factor isolation.” (I’m sure some music educator has a better term but that’s what I use).

I was completely new to the idea of publishing and selling my own books. I used them in lessons with my students and my colleagues on other instruments also started using them. I must have sold tens of books!!

I wanted to do right by this project so, believe it or not, I registered copies with the Library of Congress (right there next to the floor plan for the National Archives in case you want to “borrow” the Declaration of Independence). The books used common melodies to demonstrate rhythms and I wanted to make sure none of them were under copyright. At that time, “Happy Birthday,” still under copyright, was not available.

So, I went through song by song trying to figure out what was in the public domain and what wasn’t. This wasn’t as easy without Google! And then I hit a roadblock: *The Itsy Bitsy Spider* (aka *The Eensy Weensy Spider*). I asked one of the librarians for their assistance. They got stuck and asked another librarian for help. So there we were, one nerdy trombone player and two world-class Library of Congress librarians, trying to track down the origins of *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*. Of course now we can run to ChatGPT to help us out. Not then. We spent over an hour and simply could not find anyone holding copyright to this little tune. So, in it went.

Let’s hear it for wonderful, helpful librarians who care about their craft. They were as intrigued by this puzzle as I was. How could something right in front of our noses not be readily traceable?

Meanwhile, that little fellow keeps going up the water spout only to get washed out by the rain every time!

