

## *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](mailto:brad.edwards6251@gmail.com). (IG: [@brad\\_edwards\\_trombone](#))

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### **Enjoy!**

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[Trombone Zone](#)  
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# A Pretty Good Melody

Here's a bit of a love song for Valentine's Day. I must admit my heart wants one tempo and my lungs want another.

*Sempre dolce* ♩ = 69-80

mf 3 *dim.* mp 3

5 3 3 3

9 *f* 3 3 3

13 *p* 3 3 3 *mf* 3 3 3 *rit.* *a tempo*

17 3 3 *rit.* 3

# A Pretty Good Melody

*Sempre dolce* ♩ = 69-80

The musical score is written in 12/8 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a *mf* dynamic and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff starts at measure 5 and features a *dim.* marking and a triplet of eighth notes. The third staff starts at measure 9 and begins with a *f* dynamic. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 and includes a *p* dynamic, a *mf* dynamic, a *rit.* marking, and an *a tempo* instruction. The fifth staff starts at measure 17 and includes a *rit.* marking. The score is characterized by frequent use of triplets and long, sweeping melodic lines.

5

9

13

17

*mf* *dim.* *mp*

*f* *p* *mf*

*rit.* *a tempo* *rit.*

# A Pretty Good Melody

Sempre dolce ♩ = 69-80

Musical notation for the first staff, measures 1-4. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The piece is marked 'Sempre dolce' with a tempo of 69-80. The first measure starts with a *mf* dynamic. The melody features several triplet markings (3) and a long slur spanning across measures 1, 2, and 3. The dynamics change to *dim.* in measure 2 and *mp* in measure 4.

Musical notation for the second staff, measures 5-8. The melody continues with triplet markings (3) and a long slur. The dynamics are not explicitly marked in this section.

Musical notation for the third staff, measures 9-12. The melody continues with triplet markings (3) and a long slur. The dynamic *f* is marked at the beginning of measure 9.

Musical notation for the fourth staff, measures 13-16. The melody continues with triplet markings (3) and a long slur. The dynamics *p* and *mf* are marked. The tempo marking *rit.* appears above measure 15, and *a tempo* appears above measure 16.

Musical notation for the fifth staff, measures 17-20. The melody continues with triplet markings (3) and a long slur. The tempo marking *rit.* appears above measure 18. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 20.

# A Useful Lip Slur

## Descending with a crescendo

A common challenge in brass playing is getting a centered, resonant sound at a louder dynamic at the end of a descent. The key is to find the "sweet spot" in the blow and the position of the lips. Trial and error is usually the best way to learn.

These slurs down to pedals can be pretty tough. Use a catch breath if needed.



*Free book sample:  
Tuning Drone Melodies  
2 pages from G-flat/F-sharp*

The logic behind the book [Tuning Drone Melodies](#) was fairly simple: we all know it's a good idea to play along with tuning drones but it can be easy to run out of musical things to play. So I thought I would engineer some melodies and duets that work over tuning drones.

The first sample page shows you the structure that will follow with the same basic set of materials for any given drone. Then, I share two pages to be played along with the G-flat/F-sharp drone.

Listen carefully!

Enjoy!

# Part One:

## One Voice with Drone

### *About this section:*

Each 6-page section focuses on one tonal center (drone note). All the material is meant to be played over that drone. All sections have the same basic layout:

- **Grinders:** These have lots of half steps moving from ‘grinding’ dissonances to consonances. Glissandi are indicated but don’t worry if your instrument can’t gliss. Just play the half step legato. If you can gliss, move slowly and listen to the beats. Slide positions are intended for trombone and don’t show any intonation adjustments.
- **Perfect Intervals:** This is a simple exercise using perfect fourths, fifths and octaves. Notice the variations below each exercise. Feel free to make your own variations.
- **Perfect Interval Piece:** With titles like *Promenade* and *Rustic Waltz*, these half-page etudes emphasize the perfect intervals. Each piece usually appears twice in the book (in different keys).
- **Finding the Thirds:** Lots of practice with major and minor thirds over the drone. You will find that major thirds ‘settle in’ more easily than minor thirds.
- **Two Short Pieces:** With titles like *Lament* and *Tower Waltz*, these pieces are in contrasting styles and modes. Each piece usually appears twice in the book (in different keys).
- **High Range / Low Range:** Pretty self-explanatory. Don’t worry if you can’t hit the highest notes.
- **Folk Song Settings:** Two or three settings of folk songs that happen to work well over a tuning drone. Each folk song appears three or four times in the book (in different keys and usually with slight variations).
- **Concert Piece:** A more challenging one-page etude. Each drone has a unique etude.

# Echo Calls

Musical score for "Echo Calls" in bass clef, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and includes a *p* marking. The second staff includes *f* and *p* markings. The third staff includes *f* and *p* markings. The fourth staff includes *f* and *p* markings, with a *f* marking followed by a *p* marking and a *f* marking with a *p* marking.

# Finding the Thirds (Major third, down 14 cents; Minor third, up 16 cents)

Musical score for "Finding the Thirds" in bass clef, 3/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff includes cent adjustments of 14 cents (down) and 16 cents (up). The second staff includes a cent adjustment of 16 cents (up). The third staff includes a cent adjustment of 16 cents (up). The fourth staff includes a cent adjustment of 16 cents (up).

# Romance

mp

p

mp

mf

mp

p

# Lydia's Waltz

In one

mp

mf

f

mp

pp

mf

f

mp

p

\* If the triplet is too difficult, you can substitute a quarter note A-flat

## *Playing Tip: Practice As If Someone is Listening*

A friend of mine recently complained on social media that too many young trombonists are posting videos of themselves playing (often in the form of practice logs). While I understand where he's coming from, I must admit that I like the notion of doing this out of a sense of accountability. That said, maybe there should be a Facebook group of people posting their practice logs for each other.

Arnold Jacobs once spoke about his [practice room at the Curtis School](#). It was right off the main hallway so, at any moment, a great musician might be walking by. "There was no way I was going to sit in my studio and sound bad by taking music that I couldn't play and letting it be obvious to the rest of the people outside that I couldn't play it..."

In a similar vein, I've heard stories of a trombone camp in Texas run by Christian Lindberg during which he would walk up and down the hall listening through the door as people practiced.

If you follow ITA News, you will notice the spectacular success of the Los Angeles Brass Academy run by Ohtae Kwon. Mr. Kwon teaches his lessons online. I spoke with him at the ITF in Salt Lake City. If my memory is correct, students would keep their phones recording as they practice with the knowledge that someone might drop in and observe as they practice (I might be mis-remembering this!)

Dave Fedderly told me a humorous story about a private young student in Chicago who wasn't making progress but swore up and down that he was practicing the allotted time every day. In one lesson, Dave handed him a recorder and a stack of blank cassette tapes saying, "Maybe it's *how* you're practicing. For this next week why don't you record all your practice sessions and then I can go over them to see what's going on." When the student came in the next week, BIG SURPRISE, he had improved enormously. Dave followed up with another stack of blank tapes and instructions to record all practice sessions for another week. Days later mom called to say junior would no longer be taking lessons. 😊

All these stories orbit around one central concept: ACCOUNTABILITY. My advice to you is to practice in such a way that you would feel comfortable sharing your efforts with others. Feel that subtle pressure of ACCOUNTABILITY.

## On Teaching and Playing: Decoding

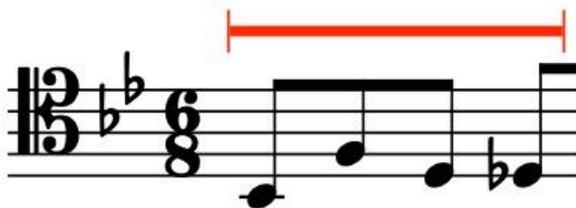
Here is a passage at the end of Brian Balmages [Three Miniatures](#) for solo trombone and trombone ensemble.



This will be the piece performed at ASU in March by our guest artist, Hana Beloglavec. Prior to that, an ASU grad student will perform that same piece. Being the meanie that I am, at one point in a lesson I turned the music stand away from the student and asked them to play it.

If I'm trying to break down a lick, I want to *decode* it. It isn't random notes. If I can understand the pattern it's more likely I'll be able to play it smoothly.

I see a B-flat major triad that morphs to minor.



This sets up a pattern that Balmages repeats. Next up, a D-flat major triad the morphs into minor (spelled enharmonically).



This pattern continues throughout the run. I asked the student, without seeing the music, to figure out the pattern of major triads morphing to minor. You could also just say that this is a sequence of major triads separated by a minor third.

Once the student had this figured out, the lick which had previously been hesitant fell nicely into place. She played it with much more confidence!

In my teaching, I do this all the time. I'm looking for a pattern and effectively playing the pattern instead of reading note by note. I sometimes refer to this as *decoding*. If you can help your students to "crack the code" of a chromatic passage, it's likely they will play it more smoothly and effortlessly.



The infamous Enigma code machine developed by Germany in World War II. There's a great movie about this, *The Imitation Game*. Recommended!



## *The Good Stuff - Trombone Pedagogy* *Noa Kageyama Bulletproof Musician Blog*

Dr. Kageyama is a performance psychologist and faculty member at the Juilliard school. He maintains a very [active blog on his website](#) with posts appearing every few days. He also offers some paid courses through his website.

There is a ton of content here and, while I haven't read many posts, it appears to be carefully researched and written. He also includes audio recordings of these posts which are available as a podcast. My hat goes off to him for the sheer consistency of effort that goes into making such quality content available.

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December 28th, 2025: [The Central Strategy Expert Musicians Use to Practice Difficult Passages](#)

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A 2025 study, authored by performer/educator/researcher Micah Killion and previous podcast guest Robert Duke, does a deep analysis of expert musicians' practice behaviors and provides some revealing insights into how they practice challenging passages.

### **Six musicians**

Six artist-level trumpet players were recruited for the study, each of whom were members of or held principal positions in top ensembles and orchestras in the US and abroad.

Then the researchers asked the musicians to videorecord a practice session where they practiced a passage of music that wasn't where they wanted it to be.

Here were their instructions:

“First identify a passage in your current repertoire or exercises to play. Then record a video of yourself playing that passage warts and all, followed by whatever you do next to get the passage closer to something you’re satisfied with.”

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Some observations from the researchers:

- These pros spent only about 57% of their time actually playing. The rest of the time was spent reflecting or perhaps singing and conducting.
- They usually stopped immediately after making an error.
- When repeating something, they often modified it to bring it within their range of abilities. Dr. Kageyama uses the term, “doable-izing”
- Even when simplifying (such as slowing it down), they kept it musical
- Once they fixed a passage to make it doable - they gradually inserted it back into the context of the passage.

The blog post was summarizing a research article. Here’s the original article:

Killion, M. F., & Duke, R. A. (2025). The central strategy of music practice: A blow-by-blow account. *Journal of Expertise*, 8(2–3), 85–128.

I was not previously aware of Dr. Kageyama’s [podcast](#) but I am now a subscriber!

## *A Random Thought: MGCT My Grumpy Curmudgeon Time*

Acronyms wear me down. I run across them everywhere and, if I don't know them, they force me to pause and, frankly, feel dumb. "What is this acronym that everyone seems to know but I don't?" LinkedIn gives us a handy list [here](#).

The military seems to be [especially fond of acronyms](#). I do remember MRE's, BDU's, BAH, etc.

This has gotten me thinking. I think when people throw around lots of acronyms, it seems as if they are saying, "I know things and you don't." The speaker possesses specialized knowledge, almost like a code word or secret handshake. If you don't know it then you're in the out group. You don't count. You're less important. "Let the adults handle this one, kiddo."

I'd like to think that one of the truest signs of intelligence is both understanding things *and* being able to explain them in a way that isn't offputting.

Some terminology is just a way of speaking indirectly. An "officer-involved shooting" means the cops shot somebody. When an astronaut prepares to egress from the vehicle, they are just getting out, aren't they? We use obtuse language to soften the edges or sound more technical.

Lately in the pharmaceutical industry, there has been an explosion of acronyms for conditions. Do you have RLS? ADS? BWS? CVS? If you have WTS, you could be suffering from Wilsons Thyroid Syndrome, Wind Turbine Syndrome, or Wilson Turner Syndrome. I'm sure many of these syndromes are serious and debilitating but so often I think the industry likes to invent a syndrome along with a new medication to treat it. Also, if you tell someone, "I have SBS," they will look thoughtful and perhaps cut you a break. However, SBS could stand for Shaken Baby Syndrome (very serious!) or [Standby Boredom Syndrome](#). Sorry, but what the heck is that? Is there a new medication for it?

A new frustration for me is the explosion of apps people are expected to learn. Our music school scheduling system has just moved to Mazevo. We also have (and may be expected to know) Canvas, Workday, Quali, iClicker, SurveyMonkey, Airtable, PeopleSoft, and Interfolio. Then in my daily life I need to understand WordPress, Woocommerce, Waterwoo, Meta Business Center, and MailChimp.

And, yes, I accept the cookies. Or maybe I don't. Or maybe the essential cookies but not the targeting cookies. Whatever my decision was this time, I can be sure they'll ask me again tomorrow. And the next day. And the next day.

### ***Maybe I have ABSFS***

(Acronym B.S. Fatigue Syndrome)

(And look, I used yet another acronym: B.S. But I'm guessing you know that one already).

#### **AD COPY:**

[images of frustrated people holding their heads in their hands]

**Announcer voice:** "Do you suffer from ABSFS? Millions people every day suffer needlessly from this terrible affliction"

**Announcer voice:** "But now there's Simplyfi, a new pill you take once daily."

[images of people happily dancing around fountain on a sunny day]

**Satisfied customer:** "I used to get so worn out by all these acronyms that I could hardly get out of bed. Now that I take Simplyfi I feel like a new person!"

Very fast voice at end:

"Possible side effects include: weight gain, weight loss, blurry vision, drowsiness, insomnia, exploding brains, imploding knee caps, standard poodle deviation, and levitation. Consult your doctor before taking this medication."

**Announcer voice:** "Isn't it time you tried Simplyfi?"



[AI-generated images]

