

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!

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The Roiling Winds of March

$\text{♩} = 152$

mp

7 *mf*

13 *mp*

19 *mf*

25 *mp*

31 *dim.* *p*

Detailed description: The musical score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 152. The first staff (measures 1-6) is marked *mp*. The second staff (measures 7-12) is marked *mf*. The third staff (measures 13-18) is marked *mp*. The fourth staff (measures 19-24) is marked *mf*. The fifth staff (measures 25-30) is marked *mp*. The sixth staff (measures 31-36) starts with *dim.* and ends with *p*. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

A Pretty Good Melody

♩ = 152

mp

7

mf

13

mp

19

mf

25

mp

31

dim. *p*

A Useful Lip Slur

Quick Traverses

The musical score consists of six staves of bass clef music in 4/4 time. Each staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and triplets, demonstrating lip slurs in various positions. The first staff is in G major. The second staff is in A major. The third staff is in B-flat major. The fourth staff is labeled "4th position" and is in C major. The fifth staff is labeled "5th position" and is in D-flat major. The sixth staff is labeled "6th position" and is in E-flat major. Each staff concludes with a fermata and a final note.

*Free book sample: #29 Chromatic Triplets
from Patterns and Snippets*

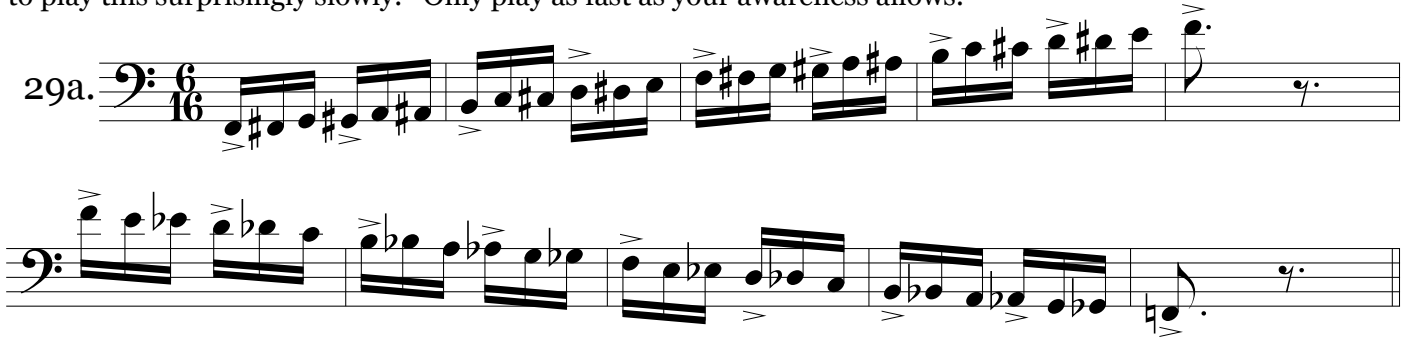
When we are playing chromatic scales, it is helpful to organize the notes by metric groupings. Usually, we choose groups of three or four. These patterns are in groups of three. Don't get lost!

These sample pages are from the tenor and bass versions.

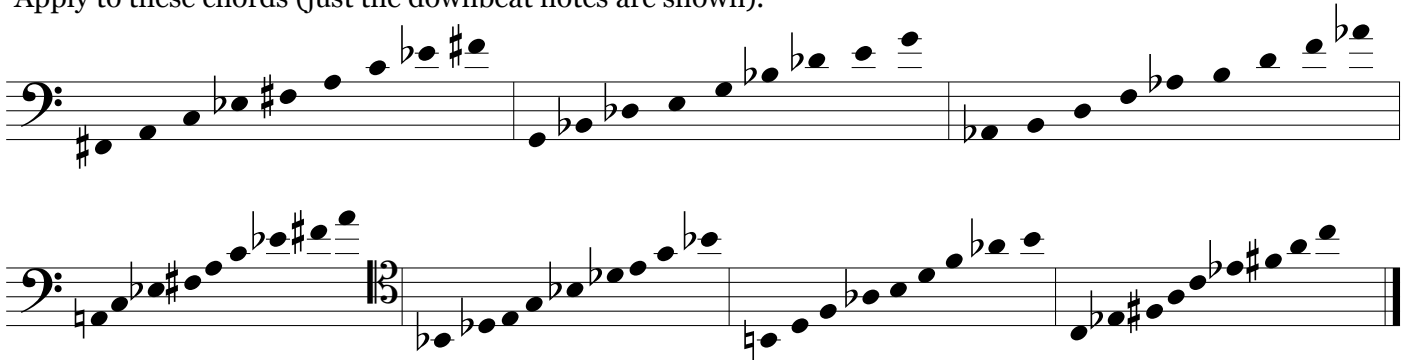
Enjoy!

#29. Chromatic, triplets II

I find it helpful to mentally focus on the downbeats to keep my place in the pattern. You may need to play this surprisingly slowly. Only play as fast as your awareness allows.

29a. 

Apply to these chords (just the downbeat notes are shown).



29b. 

meno

meno

29c.

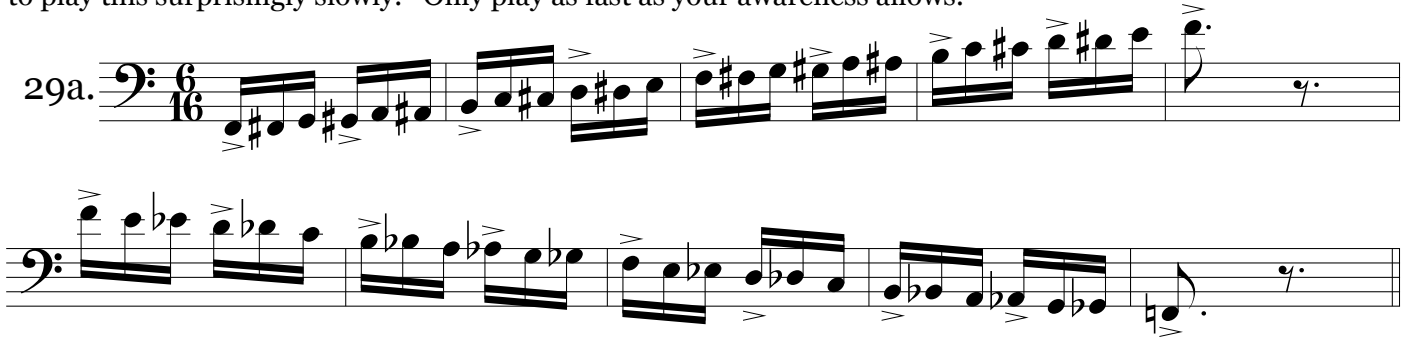
piu

meno

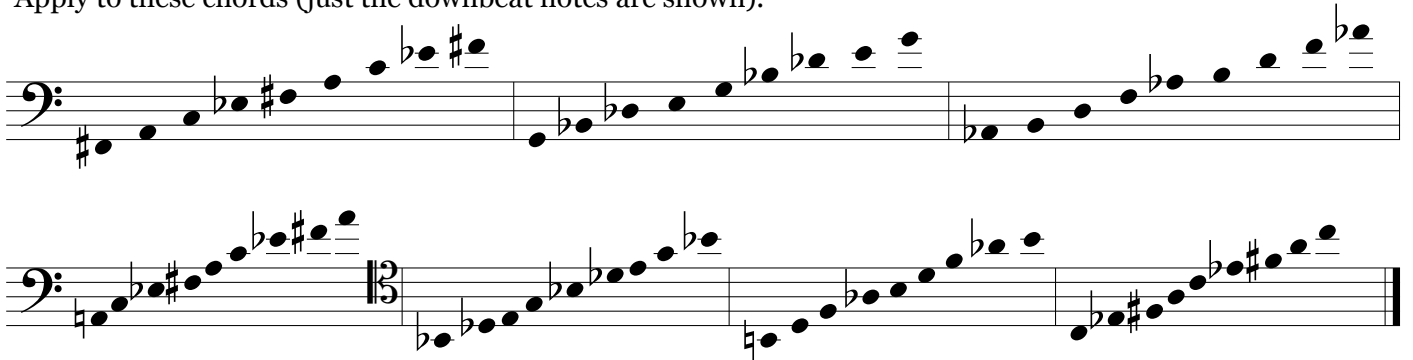
This musical score is written for a bass clef instrument in 6/16 time. It consists of nine staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#), with a 6/16 time signature. The music features a series of eighth-note patterns, often beamed together, with dynamic markings such as *piu* and *meno*. The second staff continues the pattern with a *meno* marking. The third staff features a long, sweeping slur over the notes. The fourth staff returns to the 6/16 time signature and includes *piu* markings. The fifth staff has a *meno* marking. The sixth staff continues with a long slur. The seventh staff has *piu* markings. The eighth staff has a *meno* marking. The ninth staff concludes the piece with a long slur. The overall texture is rhythmic and melodic, typical of a classical or romantic-era piece.

#29. Chromatic, triplets II

I find it helpful to mentally focus on the downbeats to keep my place in the pattern. You may need to play this surprisingly slowly. Only play as fast as your awareness allows.

29a. 

Apply to these chords (just the downbeat notes are shown).



29b. 

meno

meno

29c. *piu*

meno

This musical score is written for a bass clef instrument in 6/16 time. It consists of nine staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#), with a 6/16 time signature. The music features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, with some notes marked with accents (>). The first staff ends with the dynamic marking *piu*. The second staff continues the melodic line, ending with the dynamic marking *meno*. The third staff features a long, sweeping slur over a series of sixteenth-note passages. The fourth staff begins with a treble clef and a 6/16 time signature, ending with the dynamic marking *piu*. The fifth staff continues the melodic line, ending with the dynamic marking *meno*. The sixth staff features another long, sweeping slur over sixteenth-note passages. The seventh staff begins with a treble clef and a 6/16 time signature, ending with the dynamic marking *piu*. The eighth staff continues the melodic line, ending with the dynamic marking *meno*. The ninth and final staff features a long, sweeping slur over sixteenth-note passages.

Playing Tip: This is Made of That



There’s an old saying, “You can’t see the forest because the trees are in the way.” We want to make beautiful phrases but sometimes we get so caught up trying to play with direction we forget to preserve the beautiful sound of the individual notes. It feels like overly simplistic advice but a beautiful sounding phrase is made up of beautiful sounding notes.

As a teacher I sometimes stop a student and ask them just to hold out a single note from a passage, playing it with their best sound (and tuning!). I then say, “Now, let’s plug that lovely note into the phrase.”

Let’s use an example from David Concertino:



I sometimes hear students play that B-flat pickup in an uncentered way perhaps because they are so focused on providing a sense of direction to the phrase.

Now, of course we *don't* want performers playing like robots where they just produce a string of solid notes with no sense of musical connection between. It's all about striking a balance.

There's a famous saying attributed to Arnold Jacobs:

Make every note worth 50 bucks!

Here's a similar and somewhat infamous example from Also Sprach Zarathustra by Richard Strauss.



Of course, this is a fairly virtuosic passage, challenging the performer to start with a full sound in the middle low range and then connect it seamlessly up to D5 with an octave leap. We get so obsessed with hitting the high D we sometimes sacrifice the lower notes on the way, especially the E-sharp and F-sharp which are often played out of tune and uncentered.

Yes, play with direction but remember:

Good bread is made from good ingredients



On Teaching and Playing: Stop or Go?

This has to be one of the hardest decisions in teaching. A student is playing through something and I hear things that could use my attention. However, I believe that stopping a student constantly interrupts their flow and ***can lead to mistakes would not have happened had I not been stopping them so often.***

So, the basic question: when to stop them and when to let them play through? I've probably written about this before and probably will again. To me, it's a really fundamental question.



I am reminded of the great basketball coach, John Wooden. I wrote about him in the August, 2024 issue of TBZ Monthly. In his 1972 book, "They Call Me Coach," Wooden describes the "Sock and Shoe" ritual. Instead of just explaining, he would sit on the bench and demonstrate the process. He'd check for wrinkles around the pinky toe and the heel, then show them how to double-knot so the laces wouldn't come undone—a major pet peeve of his during live play.

In the book, Coach "Wooden's Leadership Game Plan for Success," there are descriptions of the "Non-Negotiable" Rebounding Stance. If a player jumped for a rebound and came down with their feet too close together, Wooden would blow his whistle immediately. He knew when to stop practice to correct a fundamental. Wooden's philosophy was built on the idea that ***"perfection in the trivial led to excellence in the grand."***

So, when do I stop a student? Sadly, I can't offer you hard and fast rules because it's more of an art than a science. That said, here are some general principles I try to follow:

1. Early on, stop more often.

This can refer to early in the semester, in their college career, or early in the development of a piece. Bad habits, ingrained early, will stubbornly stick around.

2. If it keeps happening, point it out.

Like I just said, bad habits tend to take up residence in our minds and refuse to leave. If we are trying to nurture a new habit, it needs our love and that means interrupting the negative sequence.

3. If they're on a roll, let them go.

If things are generally going well and you sense the student is playing with real feeling and direction, *get out of the way*.

4. Remember, you can always record and double back.

My students understand that sometimes I'll ask them to play something through for a grade. I usually record these using the 'record and review' technique. Sometimes we can consume a large chunk of the lesson by spotting a detail that isn't at the level they want it. I'll ask them to play it again to see if it has improved. If it hasn't, stop immediately and get it right even if that means patiently breaking it down.

5. Be aware of frustration levels.

This can be tough because sometimes students get annoyed with me or with themselves. If I sense their head is about to explode, I might stop things and tell a tangentially-related story. (sometimes the story is very tangential!).



The Good Stuff - Trombone Pedagogy
Noa Kageyama The Bulletproof Musician:
Do Mistakes in Practice Create Bad Habits –
Or Better Musicians?

Just as with last month, I'm returning to Dr. Kageyama's excellent blog as a resource. This is from a [post](#) originally dated March 31, 2019 and updated on Feb. 15, 2026. Kageyama cites a research study from Taiwan in which groups of students were learning the game of [pétanque](#) which is a bit like bocce ball, requiring accurate throwing skills.



The students were divided into two groups. One group, the ***guided error group*** was allowed to practice and make mistakes whereupon the instructor would not show the correct approach but instead “described the connection between the students’ incorrect movements and their resulting effects on the flight and landing of the boule.” The other group, the ***correct motion instruction group*** was shown the correct way to throw the boule which they then attempted to replicate.

So how did this affect performance?

Well, after the classes were completed, students took an accuracy test. (This involved 10 throws, where they received 5 points if the boule was within 15 cm of the target, 3 points if within 30 cm, and 1 point if within 50 cm, for a max score of 50).

The guided error group scored an average of 11.92 (out of 50), with a range of 6 to 29. The correct motion group, on the other hand, performed worse, with a 9.61 average, and a range of 6-19.

Kageyama, BulletProof Musician Blog, [Feb. 15, 2026](#)

Allowing students to experience incremental progress along the way may have helped their improvement more than just giving them the ideal performance model from the outset. (Counterintuitive, I know Kageyama goes on:

Conversely, allowing students to start wherever their skill level was, and focus less on doing things perfectly, but simply making tiny tweaks and incremental adjustments, may have helped students feel like they were making more progress. Which can be more encouraging, and help with boosting the motivation to keep going.

As teachers, we are so eager to demonstrate the correct way that maybe we get in the way of useful trial and error learning.

All this reminds me of Alpha Go which started beating the best human players in the world around 2015. Not long after, it was soundly defeated games by Alpha Go Zero, “a version created without using data from human games.” The new program simply used trial and error learning (and ridiculous processing power) to learn how to defeat its predecessor.



A Random Thought: Alyssa Liu



I always find inspiration in the Olympic games. This time was no different. Alyssa Liu's final free skate rocketed her to stardom.

In an interview, she claimed that the medals meant little to her and that she just wanted to share her art with everyone. At first I didn't believe her but then I learned how she walked away from the sport for two and a half years.

When she returned it was on her terms. Instead of doing it because she was being told what to do, she was there because it was truly what SHE wanted. Here are some quotes from her [60 Minutes interview](#) which aired the month before the Olympics. Liu: "Especially as a kid you know you don't really know what you want. Skating feels more like a responsibility or a burden even."

- later in the interview -

Reporter: "With her in charge, is she a better skater?"

Coaches: "Oh yeah, 100%. For many years she was dropped off at the rink. She was told what to do. Now she comes in and it is all collaborative."

Reporter: "I saw that when you were training and they were, 'OK, that's good' and you were like, 'One more. One more.' You don't need somebody pushing you."

Liu: "No, I have, like, my own determination. My determination is, like, up there."

Reporter: "You're pretty scrappy."

Liu:

"I love struggling, actually. It makes me feel alive"