

TBZ Monthly

A new monthly content service from Brad Edwards
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Welcome!

My apologies for getting this one out a few days late. Busy time of the year!

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](#).

Chances are this little digital publication will evolve over time. If there's something you'd like to see included, please reach out to me:

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Pretty Good Variations on a Great Melody

Somewhat freely

O Come, O Come Emanuel



The musical score consists of ten staves of music for a bassoon. The first staff begins with a 2/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music is marked 'Somewhat freely'. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and features several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' below the notes). The piece concludes with a 'Fine' marking and a 'D.S. al Fine' instruction.

Somewhat freely



The musical score is written for a bass clef instrument in 2/4 time, with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The piece is marked "Somewhat freely". The notation includes several measures of eighth and sixteenth notes, many of which are grouped into triplets. The score is divided into two systems. The first system consists of three staves. The second system consists of four staves. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the word "Fine". A second ending, marked "D.S. al Fine", is located at the bottom of the page and consists of two staves of music that repeat the final melodic line of the first system.

A Useful Lip Slur

This one has some melodic qualities and can help with building high range.

6th ...

Musical notation for the 6th fingering exercise, showing two staves of music in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The first staff contains four measures of music, each starting with a slur over sixteenth notes and followed by triplet eighth notes. The second staff continues the exercise with similar patterns, ending with a double bar line and repeat sign.

5th ...

Musical notation for the 5th fingering exercise, showing two staves of music in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The first staff contains four measures of music, each starting with a slur over sixteenth notes and followed by triplet eighth notes. The second staff continues the exercise with similar patterns, ending with a double bar line and repeat sign.

4th ...

Musical notation for the 4th fingering exercise, showing two staves of music in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The first staff contains four measures of music, each starting with a slur over sixteenth notes and followed by triplet eighth notes. The second staff continues the exercise with similar patterns, ending with a double bar line and repeat sign.

3rd ...

Musical notation for the 3rd variation, consisting of two staves. The first staff contains four measures of music with triplets and slurs. The second staff contains two measures of music with triplets and slurs.

2nd ...

Musical notation for the 2nd variation, consisting of two staves. The first staff contains four measures of music with triplets and slurs. The second staff contains two measures of music with triplets and slurs.

1st ...

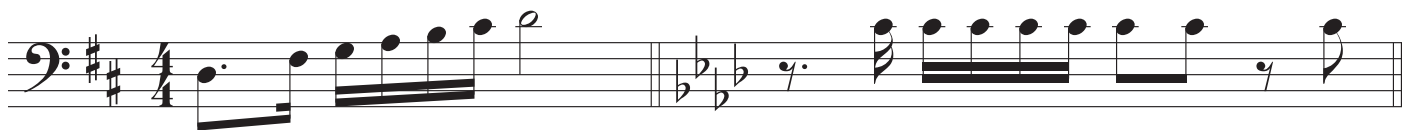
Musical notation for the 1st variation, consisting of two staves. The first staff contains four measures of music with triplets and slurs. The second staff contains two measures of music with triplets and slurs.

Use normal positions

Musical notation for the 'Use normal positions' section, consisting of two staves. The first staff contains four measures of music with triplets and slurs. The second staff contains two measures of music with triplets and slurs.

Technique / Rhythm Builders: A Finnish Christmas Festival?

Here are two licks known to many trombone players. The first is from Leroy Anderson's *A Christmas Festival* and the second is from Jean Sibelius' *Finlandia*. Both have an isolated 16th note pickup and, depending on your tongue speed, may require multiple tonguing.



So, what to do? Well, it seem there are two plausible solutions here.

1. Start with "kah"
2. Start with "tah," effectively employing a triple tongue pattern (tah-tah-kah) at the start.

Yes, you can use "dah" and "gah" instead if you wish.

Solution #1



Advantage: This solution preserves the normal alternation of a typical double tongue

Disadvantage: It start with the somewhat weaker "kah" syllable. And may cause hesitation.

Solution #2



Advantage: This solution starts with the stronger "tah" syllable.

Disadvantage: You lose the regular "tah-kah" alternation.

Ultimately, it's best to be comfortable with either approach. Here are some exercises with that 16th note pickup. Try both tonguing patterns.

a.

b.

Free book sample: Tuning Drone Melodies

This book is meant to provide melodic material designed to be played over a tuning drone. Each section of the book is centered on a specific tonal center. Half of the book is written for a single instrument with the drone. Half is written for multiple instruments with the drone.

This page presents two folk songs adapted for work with a drone. In this case, the drone is D-flat (C-sharp).

Before launching into the melody, spend a bit of time connecting your playing to the drone. Sustain unisons and perfect 5ths while slightly adjusting the slide to hear conflict and resolution in your tuning.

Enjoy!

Boo-lavogue

Irish folk song

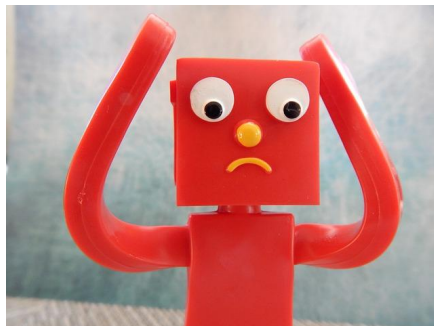
Musical score for Boo-lavogue, an Irish folk song. The score is written in bass clef, 3/4 time, and D minor. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and is frequently accompanied by long, sweeping slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

All the Pretty Little Horses

American folk song

Musical score for All the Pretty Little Horses, an American folk song. The score is written in bass clef, 4/4 time, and D major. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is primarily composed of quarter and eighth notes, with some beaming. The piece concludes with a double bar line. The word "rit." (ritardando) is written above the third staff, indicating a gradual deceleration of the tempo.

Playing Tip: Consistency Part 2



Try to remember (or imagine) those very early days of your brass-playing life. There was one mild trauma through which many of us went: putting the slide in the right spot (or pushing down the right valves) and yet the sounds coming out of the bell seemed all wrong.

What happened? My instrument has a mind of its own and seeks to defy me!

Or, even worse, you blithely sailed through the music, unaware that you were even playing the wrong notes. And then some adult authority figure points out the obvious:

You are on the wrong partial of the overtone series.

Mechanically, you felt as if you were doing all the right things and yet you were punished with the wrong results. So often young players play by **feel** not by **sound**. They see a dot on the page and know to put the slide in a certain place. And yet they don't know **what sound** is connected with that dot.

If a student has a strong foundation of singing, this is far less likely to happen. I have a relative in Paris who teaches clarinet. If I recall correctly, beginning students have to do sight-singing class right from the very beginning. Here in the U.S. we generally don't do that, do we?

I'm not sure if I ever was asked to sing in band class. Like lots of kids, I avoided singing until I had the good fortune to start going to a summer music school in Vermont, [Kinhaven Music School](#). Imagine my surprise when, at that first meal, returning students started singing memorized madrigals and Bach chorales. Soon enough, through chorus rehearsals twice a week, I learned those same pieces and, often the bass voice part still rings through my mind. (These days, singing during meals has been replaced by singing around the camp bell at bedtime. Whatever, I digress).

Another story for you (in case you aren't bored enough yet): after a 4-year stint in the Air Force Band in Washington, D.C. I decided to pursue my doctorate at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. On orientation day I was told to head up to the 3rd floor for my sight-singing test. I patiently explained, "Oh no, there must be some kind of mistake. I'm a DOCTORAL student." Nope. At Peabody, everyone had to do a sight-singing test. In the test I was handed a viola part and told that they use "fixed do" but I could sing on *la* if I wanted to.

The results? The musical version of a Nascar crash!



I was informed that I would have to take remedial sight-singing for graduate students which met early in the morning several days a week. This was a disaster! I was a commuter with a packed and complex schedule. I lived an hour from Baltimore! I asked if I could redo the test in the Fall. Yes, I could.

So, that summer, I had MOTIVATION. I practiced my sight-singing by sitting down with my midi keyboard and speed-composing some of the worst melodies known to man. The worse the melody, I figured, the harder it was to sing. I printed off page after page of those wretchedly awkward 'tunes' and took them down to the piano to practice my sight-singing. My cat didn't react well to this but that's a story for another day...

In the Fall I passed the retest with flying colors and didn't have to take remedial sight-singing class. *Whew!*

Why am I boring you with this long story? Because, that Fall as I was learning new pieces, I discovered (to my chagrin) all that singing was actually helping my playing.

A lot!

The moral of these two stories:

***Why do we miss notes?
We don't hear them clearly in our minds.***

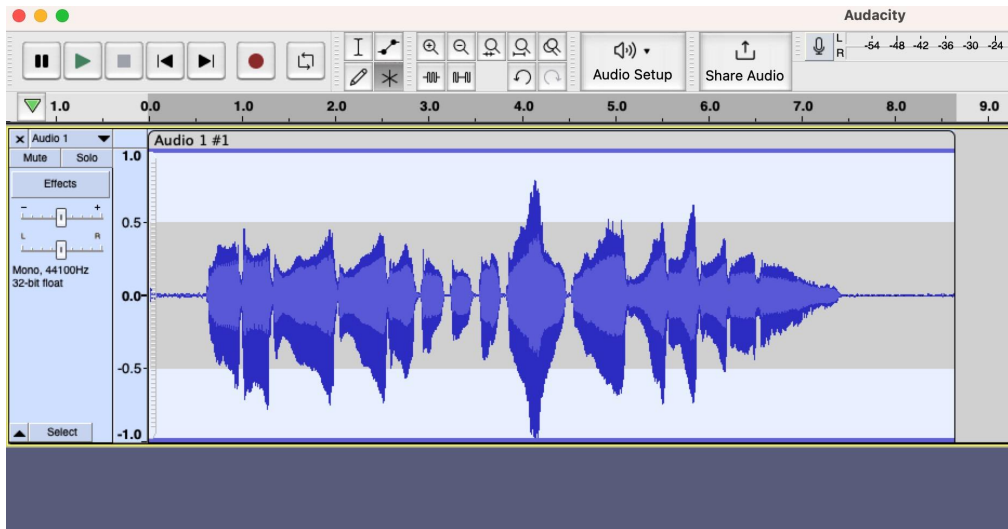
***Want to be a more consistent player?
You have to hear the notes in your mind (audiate).***

Singing is a great tool for this.

Some quick exercises you can do on the fly while practicing:

- Before starting to practice a new piece, try singing the first note.
- If you have an entrance after a rest, try singing the first note of the entrance.
- If you encounter some tricky intervals, sing them slowly.

On Teaching and Playing: Record and Review



I’ve just come to the end of my 55th semester of college teaching (yikes!). During lessons, I am in various teaching modes but, near the end of the semester, much of the lesson is devoted to what I call “record and review.” In short, the student plays through a complete selection (usually their jury piece) while I record.

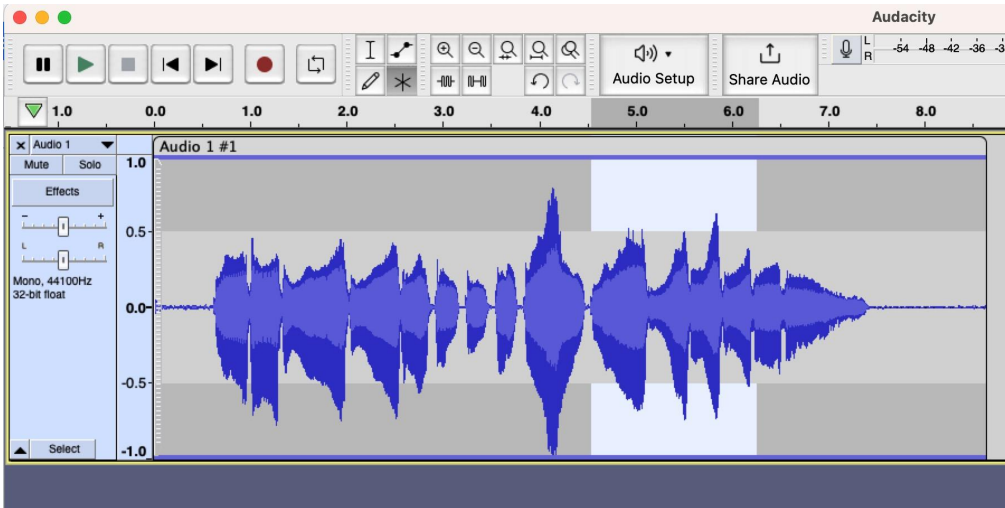
Then the two of us sit down side by side and go over the recording together. Lately, this means I’m seated on the left (with the computer behind me so I can pause and restart Audacity) and the student is seated next to me with their music (often on an iPad these days).

As I play back the recording, I pause at roughly each phrase and ask questions like, “What do you hear?” If they let loose a stream of self-loathing, I like to point out positives. If they seem overly content, I point out negatives that perhaps they are missing.

Those details often revolve around:

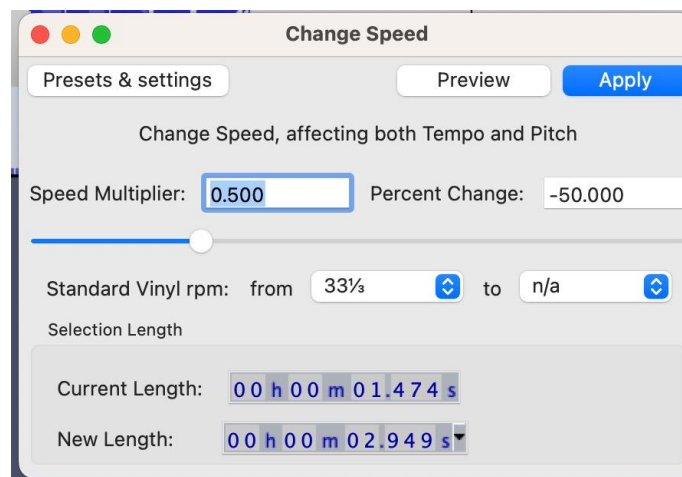
1. unintentionally going “wah” on longer notes
2. bad slide timing, resulting in glisses
3. allowing higher notes to go sharp
4. ‘harsh releases’ on shorter notes (possibly with tongue-stopping)

Let's look again at the Audacity example shown above.



Notice that I've highlighted one spot. Even though you can't *hear* this example (which is actually me singing into the microphone), you can *see* how the notes are much louder at the ends than at the beginnings. Some students are visual learners and it has surprised me how often just *looking* at the shape of the wave gets an idea across. Also, once I've highlighted a region, I can replay it. This helps them to (finally) hear an aspect of their playing that previously they may not have noticed. I can say it over and over but, until they actually *experience* it for themselves, it sometimes fails to sink in.

With respect to noticing the little details of slide timing, Audacity has a feature, "change speed" (similar to "change tempo" which is also useful). Here's an example of my nearly permanent setting of playing things back at half speed (it will sound down an octave):



At half-speed, a student can easily detect those little unintended glisses between notes. Once again, instead of *telling* them to move their slide faster (which I don't really like), I just let them *experience* what bad slide timing sounds like. After they hear it at half speed, I return to full speed and usually their ears are now more sensitive to this detail.

As to habitually sharp notes, I can be little meaner. I simply highlight the recorded note in question and play it back a few times while they both listen and watch the tuner (not fun). I will even ask them to play the note, locking in the correct pitch with the aid of a tuner. As they sustain the correct pitch, I play the offending note over the stereo speakers a few times so they can hear the clash (even less fun - but memorable!).

Whereas I normally stand across from the student in lessons, during “record and review” we sit next to each other with the music. I often pause and give the student a chance to “set the record straight” by playing it again at that moment. I like to celebrate their success in improving a passage. Once they have achieved this success, I return to the recording at the point of the “offending” passage. Now, they *really* hear the detail I was pointing out and have a renewed desire to play it better in the future.

Instead of telling them, it's better for them to ***hear and experience.***



A Random Thought: A Prize-Winning Solstice Opus of Staggering Genius

I've decided to enter this composition into the Western Metropolitaine International Composers Conference call for scores in the "Unaccompanied" category.

Molto meno Moderato *non a piacere*

The musical score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and a complex time signature of 3/8, 4/8, and 3/8. It features a dynamic marking of *mf* and a slur over the first four measures. The second staff continues the melody with various time signatures including 3/8, 4/8, and 3/8. The third staff starts with a tempo change to *poco a poco accuratezza*, a key signature change to two sharps (F#, C#), and a time signature of 4/2. It includes a tempo marking *♩ = ♩* and a slur with a dashed line above it. The fourth staff returns to the original key signature and features a tempo marking *♩ = ♩*. The fifth staff concludes with a dynamic marking of *sfz* and a final fermata.

Certainly looks sophisticated doesn't it? The composer must be a person of rare intelligence to carefully craft such a masterpiece. Let's give it "Honorable Mention."

OK, so I'm being a little cynical. Sometimes, I play through recently-composed pieces and I wonder, "Why on earth did they write it that way??" A sarcastic remark I've been known to mutter, "Why choose 4/4 when you choose 4/8 and make it look more sophisticated?" Wow, if it had been written in 4/16 it would have taken first prize!

Some composers are guilty of wanting their score to *look* complex rather than be easy for the musicians to perform.

That's it. That's my random thought. Happy holidays, everyone.

