

## *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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# A Pretty Good Melody

The musical score is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of eight staves of music, each containing a four-measure phrase. The first staff begins with a *mp* dynamic. The second staff features a *f* dynamic and includes triplet markings. The third staff returns to *mp* and includes a *cresc.* marking. The fourth staff includes *mf* and *p* dynamics, along with triplet markings. The fifth staff changes key signature to two sharps (D major) and starts with *mp*. The sixth staff features a *f* dynamic and triplet markings. The seventh staff returns to *mp* and includes a *cresc.* marking. The eighth staff includes *mf* and *p* dynamics, along with triplet markings. The score uses various articulations including slurs, accents, and breath marks.

mp

f

mp cresc.

mf p

mp

f

mp cresc.

mf p

## A Useful Lip Slur

I don't normally do this but this lip slur is closely related to the melody. If the higher notes are a challenge do it in reverse order, starting in the longer positions.

The image displays six staves of musical notation for a lip slur exercise. Each staff begins with a bass clef and a 2/4 time signature. The first staff is in B-flat major (two flats). The second staff is in B-flat major (two flats). The third staff is in D major (two sharps). The fourth staff is in D major (two sharps). The fifth staff is in B-flat major (two flats). The sixth staff is in B-flat major (two flats). Each staff contains two measures of music. The first measure of each staff features a slur over a sequence of notes: a quarter note, followed by two eighth notes, and a quarter note. The second measure features a slur over a sequence of notes: a quarter note, followed by two eighth notes, and a quarter note. The notes in the second measure are higher in pitch than those in the first measure, illustrating the lip slur technique. The notes in the first measure are: G2, A2, Bb2, C3. The notes in the second measure are: D3, E3, F3, G3. The notes in the first measure are: D3, E3, F3, G3. The notes in the second measure are: A3, B3, C4, D4. The notes in the first measure are: D3, E3, F3, G3. The notes in the second measure are: A3, B3, C4, D4. The notes in the first measure are: G2, A2, Bb2, C3. The notes in the second measure are: D3, E3, F3, G3. The notes in the first measure are: D3, E3, F3, G3. The notes in the second measure are: A3, B3, C4, D4. The notes in the first measure are: G2, A2, Bb2, C3. The notes in the second measure are: D3, E3, F3, G3. The notes in the first measure are: D3, E3, F3, G3. The notes in the second measure are: A3, B3, C4, D4.

4th ...

## Technique / Rhythm Builders

OK, I'm not totally sure about this one! How practical is it for trills? (Probably not very) Still, it is an interesting exercise in possibilities. You'll need an F-attachment for this and tuning may get funky. Can you start higher? Of course!

The exercises are as follows:

- Row 1, Exercise 1: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 1, Exercise 2: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 2, Exercise 1: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 2, Exercise 2: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 3, Exercise 1: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 3, Exercise 2: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 4, Exercise 1: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 4, Exercise 2: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 5, Exercise 1: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 5, Exercise 2: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 6, Exercise 1: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 6, Exercise 2: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 7, Exercise 1: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.
- Row 7, Exercise 2: Notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Trills on G2, A2, B2, C3.

*Free book sample:*  
*Trombone Craft / Bass Trombone Craft*

This is number 2.10 (part 2, number 10). The first example is from Trombone Craft, the second from Bass Trombone Craft. Just some short little pieces providing more practice with natural and harmonic minor scales. See if you can sight-read them.

Enjoy!

### #2.10 "Two-Line" Tunes: Natural and Harmonic Minor Scales

a.  $\text{♩} = 104$

*mp* *mf* *mf*

b.  $\text{♩} = 88$

*mp* *cresc.* *mf*

*b4*

*f* *p*

c.  $\text{♩} = 60$

*mf*

*p* *mf*

d.  $\text{♩} = 116$

*mp* *f* *mp*

*pp* *cresc.* *f*



### #2.10 "Two-Line" Tunes: Natural and Harmonic Minor Scales

a.  $\text{♩} = 96$

*mp* *mf* *mf*

b.  $\text{♩} = 80$

*mp*

*f* *p*

c.  $\text{♩} = 160$

*mf*

*p* *mf*

d.  $\text{♩} = 112$

*mp* *f* *mp*

*mp* *cresc.* *f*

## *Playing Tip: Like a pole vaulter running on a jello track*

Well, I took a crack at using an AI image generator for this one and got this from Freepik.com. (I still don't want to pay for the better ones).



OK, so that's not great but it will have to do for now. Imagine you are a pole vaulter sprinting down the track hoping to launch yourself over that high bar. However, this particular track is made of jello! Just as you are trying to build up speed, you can't get a secure footing. Everything is wobbly.

This reminds me of any passage leading up to a high note. If the notes preceding the high note are not well-centered (wobbly track), your odds of hitting the highest note (clearing the bar) aren't great. This would also be true if you are moving around excessively before that high note. Same track, different type of wobble.

One notable example comes from *Also Sprach Zarathustraby* Richard Strauss. The D5 is tricky enough by itself but you must approach it from a lower-octave D arpeggio and a quick octave leap. This is a classic "wobbly track" case.



A particularly nasty example can be found in [Doolallynastics by Brian Lynn](#). Here, you must arrive at a confident F5 preceded by curious, not very tonal, arpeggios.

227  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$   
*flz* *flz* *flz* *mf* *ff*

230 *f* *f*

232 *fff* Now drink seven pints.

It would seem this track has been made intentionally wobbly!

So, if you're trying to develop your accuracy in the high range, begin with exercises that give you a solid track on which to run. Most commonly this would be glisses in from long positions (although those higher partial notes in long positions can be a bit wobbly), lip slurs on the overtone series, or nice predictable major arpeggios. On the more complex licks, isolate just the preceding note and the target high note. Repeat them enough to make them secure in your ear.



## *On Teaching and Playing: Superior vs Excellent*



We are coming around to Solo and Ensemble season once again. In many states, young musicians will play a prepared piece to receive a rating and comments from a judge. Some of my [Concert Pieces](#) are now listed on the Texas UIL so I'm seeing orders coming from that state.

I have only judged Solo and Ensemble once and I'll likely never do it again. In that year (in South Carolina) I heard two tuba players in close proximity. One was a younger player who took on a really tough piece and handled it well. The second was a high school senior who, in spite of years of private lessons, chose a really easy piece and coasted through it. This frustrated me and I gave him a "2" instead of a "1." In other words, he was rated "excellent" instead of "superior." His band director was furious, saying that judges were not allowed to consider the difficulty of the piece in generating scores.

I also remember kids being devastated for getting a "2" instead of a "1." They were crushed that they were only "excellent" and not "superior."

What makes things worse is this: sometimes bands get official recognition based on the number of kids receiving “superior” ratings. School principals who want a “winning” band program look only at these numbers as they try to shoehorn music programs in with sports.

Kids understand when cheap praise is given. “Oh, you’re all so wonderful” is the kind of comment that bounces off, leaving no impression. In fact, I still believe that kind of cheap praise may actually hurt self-esteem.

Yes, this is a topic I return to a lot. We as teachers have to be careful in balancing praise and criticism. I try to make it comparative: *this moment was better than that moment*. Zooming in to these details is more concrete. A comparative comment also combines praise and criticism into one package. It won’t bounce off as cheap praise so often does.

And for heaven’s sake, can we please do something about all this score inflation in Solo and Ensemble?





## *The Good Stuff - Pedagogy Quotes*

### *Ian Bousfield, [Unlocking the Trombone Code](#)*

In this new section, I will quote other writers and reflect on their words. This month's selection is from [Unlocking the Trombone Code](#) by Ian Bousfield. On p. 5, he writes,

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"If we cover our mouths with our hands so it is completely airtight and then try to blow, we'll notice that the stomach muscles firm up considerably. This is the stomach muscles responding to the resistance of the air not being able to pass through our lips, and so it is when we play the trombone. When we play higher, inevitably, the aperture (the gap between the top and bottom lips) becomes smaller, therefore creating a smaller hole for the air to come through, bringing us ever near to that point where no air can come out. In the process, in reaction to the smaller hole, the stomach muscles contract. we do not need to contract them. This is an error, one of the greatest errors in brass teaching in recent times. If we deliberately clench the stomach muscles, it leaves us practically unable to blow, freely and it is almost impossible then to obtain what we need, the air to create vibration. Therefore this idea of support is without question a myth."

Bousfield, Ian. [Unlocking the Trombone Code](#). London, Warwick Music Limited, 2015.

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This is an interesting observation. In his book [Trombone Technique](#), Denis Wick writes in reference to Also Sprach Zarathustra (see my above section about the wobbly track):

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"The high D taken alone can be played without any more than ordinary difficulty. But played as part of a ff passage begun on a low A, which reaches up to middle D before shooting up another octave, legato, this becomes very difficult indeed for many players. By holding the diaphragm artificially high throughout the entire passage, the high D almost literally falls out of the instrument!"

Wick Denis. *Trombone Technique*. Self published edition. Previously, Oxford University Press; 2nd edition, 1984.

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These two paragraphs seem to talk about the same thing: the necessity of generating higher air pressure for higher notes. Bousfield points out the importance of *starting* with the resistance of the smaller aperture and allowing the muscles to react to this. I have had students who were told to tighten their abs to help with high notes. In fact, I have tried this instruction myself. However, I now see that the better approach might be to create the resistance at or near the embouchure first and allow the abs to naturally react to this.

A great exercise for this: make a loud "sssss" sound like a snake hissing loudly. In doing so, the air encounters the resistance of the tongue. The abs react by firming up to facilitate the higher air pressure. Wick's description, while generally good, is a bit of a misnomer. He speaks of "holding the diaphragm artificially high" for high notes. The diaphragm itself is passive when we blow out. It is only active when we inhale. However, many teachers use the term "diaphragm" when referring to that general region of the body. **Good stuff, Ian!**

## *A Random Thought: Resolutions*

Happy New Year! I usually make New Year's resolutions but I've learned to keep them small. Little changes in behavior can lead to big results. Some resolutions have stuck, some haven't.

- Wash my hands with soap and water, scrubbing for 20 seconds.  
(Ironically I made this one just before the pandemic in 2020)
- Pause a moment before walking down a staircase.  
(Years ago I fell once and I don't want to again!)
- Eat more fruits and veggies (well, duh)
- Don't start the day looking at your phone (yeah, this was last year's resolution - didn't stick)
- Stretch every morning (mostly I've got this one).
- End the day recalling things for which you are grateful (I am mostly able to do this).
- Get 150 minutes of aerobic exercise each week (well, my Fitbit gives my "zone minutes" where I get more credit for higher heart rates. By that standard, I usually make it).

I haven't yet figured out what this year's resolution might be (I'm writing this in December so I still have time). Time is such a limited resource that I have to be careful about a resolution that takes more time.

Specific to trombone, I've been trying something new lately. I sometimes imagine that I'm doing a master class or clinic where I want to demonstrate my playing but I haven't had time to warm-up properly. To that end, in the first notes of my warm-up, I try to create a demonstration piece that shows off what I can do while giving me at least some kind of "on-ramp." I've been surprised how quickly I can move to harder things as long as I have a *really clear idea of what I want to play!* Maybe I can title the piece "Happy Sunrise" or something similar!

So maybe my resolution is to make music right at the start of my practicing (without losing track of the fundamentals). Dunno, I'll keep thinking about it.

