

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](#)

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A Pretty Good Melody

Here's a fairly spooky little tune for Halloween. The scariest thing? I tried writing this in Dorico! I'm getting closer but I'm not there yet. Maybe in November...

The musical score is written in bass clef and consists of several systems of staves. The first system starts in 4/4 time with a *mf* dynamic. The second system includes dynamics *f* and *mp*, and ends with a *Fine* marking. The third system is marked *mf*. The fourth system is marked *D.C. al Fine*. The fifth system is marked *mf*. The sixth system includes dynamics *f* and *mp*, and ends with a *Fine* marking. The seventh system is marked *mf*. The eighth system is marked *D.C. al Fine*. The score features various time signatures including 4/4, 2/4, 6/8, and 3/4, and includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, and *mp*. The piece concludes with a *Fine* marking.

mf

f *mp* *Fine*

mf

D.C. al Fine

D.C. al Fine

mf

f *mp* *Fine*

mf

D.C. al Fine

D.C. al Fine

A Useful Lip Slur

Staff 1: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature, key signature of one flat. The staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and accents, including a triplet of eighth notes.

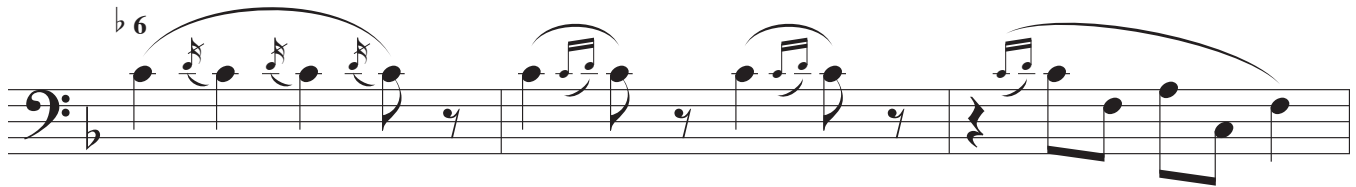
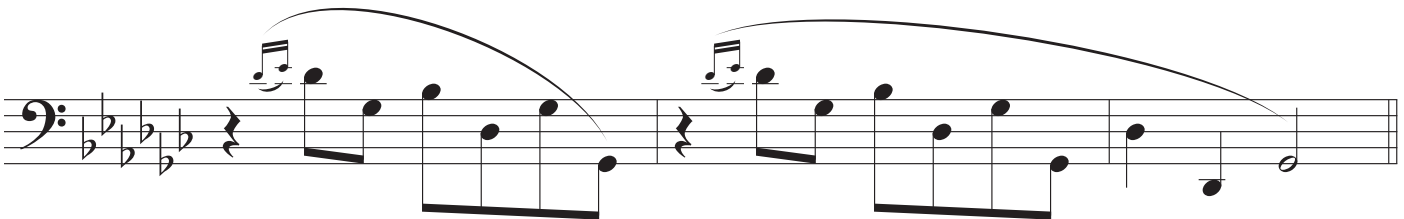
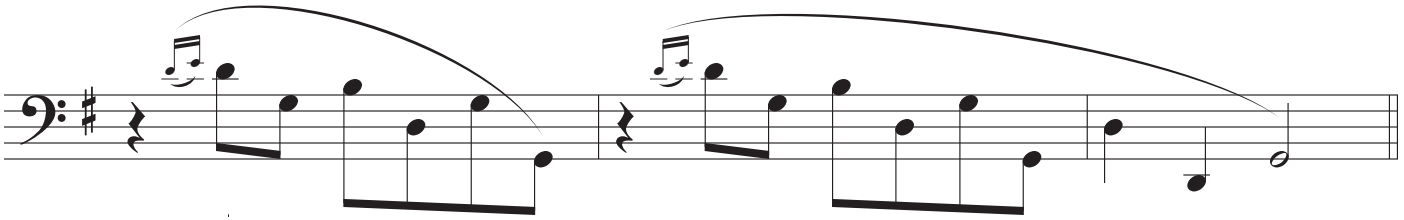
Staff 2: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. The staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and accents.

Staff 3: Bass clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and accents, including a triplet of eighth notes.

Staff 4: Bass clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and accents.

Staff 5: Bass clef, key signature of two flats. The staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and accents, including a triplet of eighth notes.

Staff 6: Bass clef, key signature of two flats. The staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and accents.



Technique / Rhythm Builders

Jack-O-Lantern Halloween Hocket

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 5/8 time signature. It contains five measures of music with eighth and quarter notes, including rests. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 5/8 time signature. It contains five measures of music with eighth and quarter notes, including rests. The two staves are bracketed together on the left side.

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 5/8 time signature. It contains five measures of music with eighth and quarter notes, including rests. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 5/8 time signature. It contains five measures of music with eighth and quarter notes, including rests. The two staves are bracketed together on the left side.

The third system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 5/8 time signature. It contains five measures of music with eighth and quarter notes, including rests. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 5/8 time signature. It contains five measures of music with eighth and quarter notes, including rests. The two staves are bracketed together on the left side.

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and a 5/8 time signature. The melody starts with a quarter note, followed by two eighth notes, and then a quarter rest. The bottom staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar rhythmic pattern of quarter and eighth notes.

The second system continues the piece with two staves. The top staff features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, including a dotted quarter note. The bottom staff continues the accompaniment with eighth and quarter notes, maintaining the piece's rhythmic and harmonic structure.

The third system concludes the piece with two staves. The top staff ends with a quarter note and a quarter rest. The bottom staff concludes with a quarter note and a quarter rest. The system is terminated by a double bar line.



Free book sample: Lip Slur Melodies
No. 5.1 “In an Easy Groove”

Part Five of Lip Slur Melodies is called “Raising the Bar.” In this section, it’s time to tackle some more challenging material. This first, “In an Easy Groove,” is one that I think is just fun to play. Sometimes when I first an area high school, I choose this one and give out the music as well.

Enjoy!

Part 5: Raising the Bar

In an Easy Groove

5.1

This musical score consists of ten staves of bass clef notation. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*mf*, *mp*, *f*, *ff*), articulation (accents, slurs), and fingering (6, 3, #4, V). The piece is titled "Part 5: Raising the Bar" and is described as "In an Easy Groove".

Staff 1: *mf*, V, 6, #4, 3, 6, 6

Staff 2: *mp*

Staff 3: *mf*, V, 6, 6, #4, 3, 3

Staff 4: *f*, 6, 3, 3, 6, *ff*

Staff 5: 6th ..., 6, *mp*

Staff 6: *mf*

Staff 7: 6, 1, V, 6

Playing Tip: Raise Your Potential, Reach Your Potential

As we work towards delivering good performances, it might help to break our efforts into two categories.

#1 Raise Your Potential

1. Sound Concept

- A. Listening to quality performances
- B. Listening to wonderful instrument sounds
- C. Practice singing (buzzing, too)
- D. Practice micro glisses with your slide.
- E. Slow scales with tuner (listen first, then look)
- F. Record yourself and playback at half speed.
- G. Run the music in your mind

Building a strong concept is like improving your GPS navigation. It gives you a clear idea of exactly what sound you want coming out of your bell. Otherwise, you are playing by feeling and **reacting**. Instead, be **proactive**.

2. Fundamentals

- A. Lip Slurs and Lip Slur Melodies (improving embouchure control)
- B. Scales (improving reflexes, consistent slide placement)
- C. Arpeggios (improving agility, interval accuracy)
- D. Expanding Intervals [like the Arban's Interval Studies] (agility, accuracy)
- E. Long Tones or Slow Scales (improving embouchure consistency, tone, endurance, breath control)
- F. Dynamic variety [eg. crescendo/diminuendo] (improving control, dynamic range)

Here's a simple definition of fundamentals:

*Being able to produce out of your bell
the exact sound you hear in your mind.*

3. Health

- A. Diet
- B. Sleep
- C. Exercise
- D. Well-Being

All the practicing in the world won't serve you if your health is poor. You must take care of your body and your mind. Also, remember that mind and body are connected in more ways than we may realize.

#2 Reach Your Potential

In your practice and life habits, you want to have the highest possible potential to play very well. However, if you can't deliver in the critical moment, you won't find the results you've hoped for.

1. Tension vs. Relaxation

A. Physical Tension

When we play overly tense, accuracy and tone will suffer. Also endurance.

B. Mental Tension

Under pressure the mind can "lock up" hampering the ability to think clearly. The best way to develop relaxed focus is simply to find more ways to play under pressure. With experience you can improve what mental strategies work best for you.

On Teaching and Playing: Lesson Tickets

I'm actually surprised I haven't written about this yet. I guess in some issues I may have quoted some of my students' lesson tickets. Anyway, here we go.

Before their weekly lesson, I ask my students to send me a "lesson ticket." To be honest, I have never refused someone a lesson because they didn't send a ticket but I have sent out pre-lesson messages just saying, "Ticket?"

The lesson ticket consists of answers to three questions:

1. What concepts did we cover last week?
2. How did practicing go this week?
3. What would you like to cover in this lesson?

I ask that they send me the ticket the night before the next lesson. I try to read over it that night and then reference it again as the lesson is starting. I ask them to start their answers to Question #1 in the evening following the first lesson. I want them to sit down and reflect. How much can they remember? In our lessons, students are expected to record the entire lesson. Most of them do this on their phones and I provide a nice Shure microphone which can plug into an Android or iOS phone.



However, before they go over the recording itself, I think it is helpful to check their memory. Some newer students make the mistake of simply listing what we covered. That's not the point. I have a spreadsheet for assignments. This is for the ideas that I share. Those little pearls of wisdom I hope to drop (most of which aren't original!).

Question #2 is a chance for them to let me know how the week has gone. This semester, for example, I've noticed quite a few of them report fatigue and even taking a day off to rest their chops. I guess that's what happens when the wind ensemble is playing a piece by John Mackey! They can also let me know if they've had any breakthroughs or continuing frustrations.

Question #3 is a chance to propose a structure for the lesson. For the younger students, this mostly consists of going over the material I've assigned. For the older and graduate students, they have more of a chance to chart their own course.

Recent requests include:

- Sharing a "cool musical moment" from an interesting progression in a Stevie Wonder song.
- Wanting to focus on rim buzzing.
- Wanting to focus simply on tenuto attacks with a more stable embouchure.
- Wanting to get some playing tips for the upcoming placement audition.
- Asking about summer festivals.
- Wanting a first lesson on alto trombone.

Most importantly, I want my students to be thoughtful and reflective. I want them to take some ownership over the learning process. These lesson tickets provide a line of communication between us.

Here are some examples from recent lesson tickets:

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So. I would like some help on mental practice techniques and some VERY basic Alto trombone help. Like imagine I've never played ever before, how do you suggest getting comfortable and not being so confused. I have been feeling like I practice everything a little bit and nothing a lot so that nothing I'm working on sounds awesome, everything is just okay.

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Practicing this week has felt productive. I worked with {TA name} to help build a practice schedule to keep myself accountable and found that it really helped me feel accomplished after practicing. Still being weary of fatigue, and I am having trouble with getting the scale patterns you assigned clean.

==

Practice this week has been a little sporadic, but I feel like I'm making good progress. In the Williams I'm noticing that I'm adding beats and late off ties in the first mvt. My issue with the third mvt is I need to play the first two sections fast in order to double tongue them, but the last bit is just out of my reach and faking it doesn't slot in quite right.

This week I'd like to focus on the Williams. I know that's all we've done this year so far, and after the concerto comp next week I'll be happy to bring in other material. I'm thinking of an unaccompanied piece, maybe the Eric Culver suite? Maybe the Hidas or movements of a cello suite.

==

Practicing this past week has gone well. I'll admit I didn't have as much time with my instrument as I would have liked, but I worked hard nevertheless. I worked on tone and particularly vowel shapes and sounds with {TA name}, and it gave some useful insight into style and resonance. I'm debating on whether to do Kao's *Ancient Memory* for Wednesday Studio or a different thing I have that's not related to school... Oh well, I'll ruminate on it some more. Also, I haven't bought it yet, but I think I'm going with Leslie Bassett's Suite for Unaccompanied Trombone for my jury piece this semester.

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This week in my practicing I have been trying to be more aware of my air and how I am using it. I have been aiming towards a smooth execution of slurred phrases with no notes popping out of the texture in all of my lip slurs and etudes. I have also been making an effort to practice in front of a mirror and I think it has helped me become aware of unnecessary movement while playing.

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Anyway, you get the idea. The lesson tickets help my students to be more proactive engaged learners.



The Good Stuff - Trombone Pedagogy

Toby Hanks, Forza de Musica Marinara: A Nutritious Dish that, Carefully Prepared, Simmered, and Consumed Regularly, Will Promote Health and Build Strong Bones (Trumpets, Horns, and Tubas, too)

OK, that's a long title! Some explanation: this comes from a book called *The Brass Player's Cookbook*. It is a collection of essays by a variety of luminaries each more or less in the form of a recipe: with sections titled "Ingredients," "Serves," etc.

Each author riffs on this concept with their own 'recipes' for better playing. Toby Hanks, longtime tubist of the New York Brass Quintet, passed away in 2021. His 'recipe' contains three warnings. Here's one of them.

Warning 2

Conscientious repetition of such a routine sometimes develops some **DRDS** (Daily Routine Dependence Syndrome).

Primary Symptom

An inability to play comfortably at rehearsals or concerts unless this routine is complete. Be away that *life will note always afford one this convenience*.

Antidote

1. Sprinkle exercises in small doses throughout your practice day. (Similar benefits can be derived).
2. Occasionally just pick up your instrument and play. Just keep your concepts strong. *Never mind how it feels*. Jake [Arnold Jacobs] taught us that "it don't have to feel good to sound good." (God bless him).

Hanks, Toby, *Forza de Musica Marinara: A Nutritious Dish that, Carefully Prepared, Simmered, and Consumed Regularly, Will Promote Health and Build Strong Bones (Trumpets, Horns, and Tubas, too)* from *The Brass Player's Cookbook*, Galesville, MD Meredith Music Publications, 2006. p. 38.

Hanks’s other warnings, also valuable, talk about (#1) differentiating between a warm-up and a daily routine and (#3) developing a balanced diet in your playing.

I wanted to highlight this particular detail because it is something I could stand to work on more. When I find myself shoved into a performance situation without my usual warm-up, I struggle to play my best. So, I need to include more moments when I just pick up the instrument and start playing.

I have always been so impressed by people who can do this and have noticed that they often have careers with travel and perhaps limited opportunities to have that precious daily warm-up in order to be ready.

I suspect that, in doing concerts with the esteemed New York Brass Quintet, Toby Hanks had many moments when the schedule simply didn’t allow time for the usual daily routine.

This is not saying that such a routine isn’t important! But there is wisdom to be found in not becoming “routine-dependent.”



A Random Thought: A Postcard

OK, this isn't a trombone essay, just a postcard from where I live. Here in Arizona, I live near [South Mountain Park](#). This year is the 100th birthday of this space as a municipal park. Also, it is one of the bigger "city parks" you'll find. Here's a description from their website:

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At more than 16,000 acres, South Mountain Park/Preserve is one of the largest municipally managed parks in the nation and consists of three mountain ranges - the Ma Ha Tauk, Gila and Guadalupe. The park boasts more than 100 miles of trails for hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking. Additionally, the roadways throughout the park are a favorite for bicyclists.

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The park is walking distance from my house. This helps explain the 200+ scorpions I've killed in my backyard and the regular visits through our neighborhood by coyotes (people here do NOT leave their cats outside).

I walk and sometimes run regularly on these trails. Many people bike on them, including at night during the summer. You can see their bright lights bobbing off in the distance. Here's a photo of the parked cars from this morning.



It's interesting to see a quiet dispute about one lot that juts into the park. 8 years living here and, while someone owns this parcel of land (including a nice bridge for a driveway), no construction has taken place. The owner (a realtor or investor I assume), has taken pains to keep hikers out of this space including posting signs that we can't use this one really nice little access trail.



I used to use that access trail all the time and, when the signs went up, thought about saying “screw you” and continuing to use the trail. But no, I now go to the main entrance, about 60 yards away. I suspect that some of the million-dollar-home owners near that access point hate the traffic and would love to find a way to block the public from using it. Sort of like the conflicts we hear about with beaches in California.

Oh yes, an Arizona summer is hot. You may not have heard. Hot and dry. Yet still, on a regular basis people try to hike these trails.

During the day.

In the summer.

Often without enough water.



And so another regular feature of where I live is the sound of sirens and even helicopters as crews go out to rescue someone stranded or injured. Yesterday we heard and saw 8-10 emergency vehicles zoom by, probably for one or two people who needed help.

And so I see a sort of conflict: these crews all working for the public good in a public space. And I see wealthy folks trying to keep out the rabble.

The coyotes don't care. Neither do the scorpions or rattlesnakes. I recently had one rattle a warning at me as I walked by near this spot. The javelinas also don't care either. I don't see them often but, at Halloween, if you put real pumpkins on your front doorstep, you may get a smelly visit from them.



Anyway, that's a random postcard from where I live. If you plan to visit in the summer, just be smart about going out to hike. Arizona in the summer is a bit like Minnesota in the winter. You can go out but you need to be careful and plan accordingly. By the way, there are some *really* nice sunsets here.





We founded **The Trombone Tutors** in 2023 to offer top-notch instruction to all young trombone players! Our program includes eight live virtual masterclasses each month with Dr. Eric Henson and Dr. Justin Isenhour. Classes cover all the essential skills middle and high school students need to achieve their personal musical goals. Can't make a live session? No worries! Members enjoy unlimited archive access!

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