

TEXAS BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION

ADVANCED YOUNG PLAYER SERIES



TROMBONE

BOBBYGUESS
CLINICIAN

53RD ANNUAL CLINIC
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
2000

FORWARD

The Texas Bandmasters Association has a long and honorable tradition of providing unique educational conventions with superb opportunities for professional growth. For over fifty-two years the association has served as an agent for improving instrumental music education in communities throughout the Lone Star State.

Over the last five years the Beginner, Intermediate, and the first half of the Advanced Instructional Series have provided exemplary strategies to improve classroom music instruction and student success. This year the clinics are a continuation of the Advanced Instructional Series. The Advanced Instructional Series focuses on the needs of the third year band students or transitioning into the high school band. Our clinicians are chosen from the ranks of superior music educators in our state. They also represent a wide diversity in geographic locations and school sizes.

The clinics that are scheduled this year include Bassoon, Low Clarinets, Saxophone, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, and Snare Drum. Each of these sessions will have a companion booklet presented during clinic. The booklets will contain valuable instructional methods and classroom organizational techniques. We appreciate the time and efforts invested by these clinician to prepare and produce these clinics. Special acknowledgement is appropriate for TBA Past-Presidents Jim **Hagood**, Bob Brandenberger, Mike Olson, Bob Parsons, and Charlotte Royall whose hard work and commitment made this educational series such a colossal success.

This series is respectfully dedicated to all band directors, past and present, for their invaluable contributions to the education of young people through the band medium.

Arturo Valdez III, President

BOBBY GUESS

Bobby Guess is currently the Band Director at Thornton Middle School in the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District, Houston, Texas. He also serves as a freelance bass trombonist in the Texas Gulf Coast Area. A graduate of the University of Houston, Bobby completed his degree (Bachelor of Music in Applied Music) with honors in 1992 and has taught in the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District since 1992. He is also an active clinician presenting master classes on Low Brass Pedagogy in the Greater Houston Area. Bobby Guess is an active member in many professional organizations including the Texas Bandmasters Association, Texas Music Educators Association, International Trombone Association, International Association of Jazz Educators, American Federation of Musicians, Houston Professional Musicians Association, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

Texas Bandmasters Association

Convention/Clinic

July 23-26, 2000

Advanced Series - Trombone

Presented by

Bobby Guess

The information in this packet is a collection of many theories, philosophies, and teaching techniques I have learned over the past 20 years. Many teachers and fellow musicians have curved the path of this information. My utmost respect and thanks goes to these **fine** individuals for paving a path to my continued study in trombone pedagogy.

The trombone is a magnificent instrument. We already know that the different shape and playing practices intrigue people of all types. How do we take this intrigued person who has a basic knowledge of how the instrument works and shape them into a **well-**versed player? It basically boils down to a “COMMON SENSE” thought on new techniques and development.

This packet is arranged so that access to a particular technique is easy to find. I feel if common thought is used in a questioning situation, the trombone is a very practical instrument to understand and master.

BREATHING/AIR FLOW

Air is the most fundamental element of playing any wind instrument. Air controls not only tone qualities but also directs range expansion and control in extreme **soft** and loud volumes. Trombonists are called upon to play FFF and PPP (even though they do not want to admit it!). Key areas I discuss with my students are:

I. RELAXATION vs. TENSION

- A. Upper body must remain **soft**
- B. Students should think breathe to the chair or if standing, breathe to floor
- C. Face must remain completely relaxed and stay in a “natural” position
- D. Shoulders must remain down and relaxed
- E. Always breathe through mouth as opposed to breathing through nose
- F. Tension only causes a trapping of air in the body which slows down air speed

II. "THE SWING"

- A. One steady motion in and out
- B. Do not trap air (hitching)
- C. Be sure to come to a place of rest

SLIDE PLACEMENT! TUNING

I. ELEMENTARY POSITIONS VERSES TRUE POSITIONS

When we start young players on trombone, we give them a very close approximation to where each open horn tone is located. This information will only carry them through a short period in middle school. When the student reaches an elementary mastery of the chromatic scale, it is time to move forward and begin to master "TRUE POSITIONS".

TRUE POSITIONS are defined as the exact place any given note is in tune. Trombone has the largest tuning slide of any brass instrument. We must teach our students to use this long tuning slide located in their right hand.

Each partial on the trombone, due to its design has a tuning tendency. One way to look at this technique of TRUE POSITIONS is as follows: If you play 5 notes all located in 3rd position, slight movement is needed in order to have TRUE POSITION tuning, otherwise 3 out of 5 notes are played out of tune. *Ab and Eb are not in the same position!!!! The longer a student plays a note out of tune; the ear identifies and memorizes incorrect tonal placement.*

To start perfecting TRUE POSITIONS, you simple need time and a tuner.

TRY THIS:

1. Teacher and student sit in **front** of tuner-both watching
2. Teacher only looks at the tuner
3. In sectional rehearsal-"ADD 1 exercise
4. "ADD 1 exercise" with eyes closed

**THE FOLLOWING
CHARTS ARE
INVALAUBLE FOR
TEACHING STUDENTS
BOTH "ELEMENTARY
POSITIONS" AND "TRUE
POSITIONS" ON
TROMBONE:**

Trombone Positions (open horn / standard)

7 6 5 4 3

2 1 7 6 5

4 3 2 1 5

4 3 2 1 4

3 2 1 3 2 1

#3 #2 3 2 1 #2 b2

0 #b1 b2 1 #b1 b2 b1

Intonation Chart

The chart displays the following notes and their corresponding slide positions:

Note	Slide Position
#	1
very #	2
b	3
#	4
as is	5
very b	6
very #	7
b	1
as is	2
#	3
as is	4
as is	5
as is	6
as is	7

slide positions 1 ←3.3"→ 2 ←3.5"→ 3 ←3.7"→ 4 ←3.9"→ 5 ←4.2"→ 6 ←4.4"→ 7

SLIDE TECHNIQUE

I. HAND POSITION

- A. Crucial for clean and accurate playing
- B. ALL of the slide must be controlled by fingers and wrist
- C. Only fat pads of fingers and thumb touch bar (last digit)
- D. 2 Fingers and thumb touch where bar and bottom tube meet
- E. Fingers ARE NOT placed in the middle of the bar
- F. Wrist is in a natural position-not curved in (REMEMBER: all of us are made different)
- G. Top of hand is facing forward
- H. Elbow is relaxed and down
- I. Right shoulder is in natural position

II. MOVEMENT

- A. Movement is a combination of arm, fingers, and wrist
 1. 1-4 positions incorporate mainly wrist movement
 2. 5-7 positions add more involvement with fingers
 3. Very much like casting a fly rod and reel
- B. Slide must travel a straight path forward always
 1. DO NOT let students move slide to the side for longer positions
 2. This is a habit that will not easily be broken
- C. Arm MUST be relaxed- IF YOU SEE VEINS, THEY ARE TOO TENSE ! ! ! !

III. SHIFTING VERSES ONE DIRECTION

It can be plainly stated, “THE MORE THAT A STUDENT CAN MOVE IN THE SAME DIRECTION ON THE SLIDE, THE MORE RELAXED THE STUDENT WILL BE.”

A. SHIFTING

Shifting is the process of changing directions on the slide while performing passages. Although shifting cannot be avoided, the amount of shifting can be reduced by using alternate positions. The more that a student shifts back and forth, the more chances of the embouchure moving and tension appearing. You can also identify students who have what I call “SPEED RACER SYNDROME or WOO WOO”

B. ONE DIRECTION

One direction playing is the most correct way to execute passages on trombone. It is one of the tools that enables trombone players to keep up with valved instruments in fast lines. It also helps players remain relaxed while playing.

IV. CHROMATIC MOVEMENT

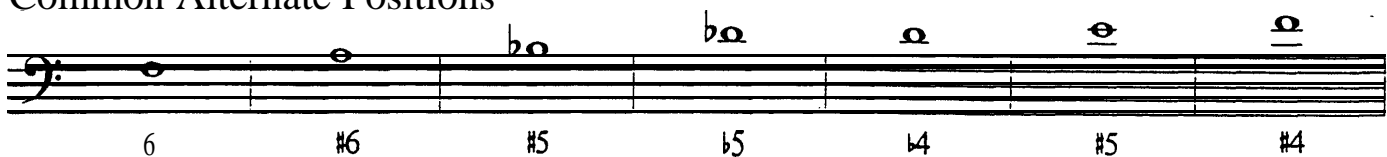
Chromatic tones are 1/2 step apart by definition. On trombone, this is a movement from one position to the next adjacent position. For example, 2nd position "E" to 3rd position "Eb". A move of this kind would be the distance of one position for 1/2 step. This concept should be enforced throughout the entire range of the instrument. Many times students will play "Gb" in 5th position and then move to "F" in 1st position. This defies the rule stated that a chromatic movement is a 1 position move. If this is done from 5th position to 6th position, then we have a 1-position move. Alternate positions are the key to correct slide movement in chromatic circumstances.

V. ALTERNATE POSITIONS

Alternate positions are an important and vital part of playing correct slide techniques on trombone. These notes are found in the various harmonic ladders of the instrument. When students are practicing lip slurs, they are actually playing alternate positions. In order to perform a smooth legato style or accurately execute a fast technical passage, alternate positions become imperative in slide technique.

SOME COMMON AND EFFECTIVE ALTERNATE POSITIONS:

Common Alternate Positions



1. FOURTH LINE "F" IN 6TH POSITION:



2. FIFTH LINE "A" IN RAISED 6TH POSITION:



3. TOP SPACE "Bb" IN RAISED 5TH POSITION:



4. FIRST LEDGER SPACE "D" IN LOWERED 4TH POSITION:



FLEXIBILITY

It goes without saying that lip development is imperative for any brass instrument. Trombonists are fortunate; with the aid of valves, that limitations are not placed on range extension. A trombonist can simply play as high or as low as they want. This is all pending on lip vibration.

We assume that lip slurs have been covered and the importance of doing them for maintenance and muscle development has been stressed. A great checks and balance indicator for airflow is to have a student play a lip slur for you. As we move into new techniques, we introduce notations to our students involving advanced flexibility.

1. LIP SLUR – NATURAL SLUR – “AGAINST THE GRAIN”

A. A lip slur is **defined** as a change in notes between partials, done with air speed, absent of articulation between notes, and not moving the slide. The most common lip slur would occur between 4th line “F” and top space “Bb”.

B. Natural slurs are changes between notes on two different partials where the slide **is** moved and articulation is not present in the change. Natural slurring is the first step into doing grace notes and turns correctly.

**** It is important to note that articulation does occur on the first note of a lip slur or natural slur.

C. "AGAINST THE GRAIN" PLAYING

1. Out on slide-Up in register
2. In on slide-Down in register
3. Basically a form of natural slurring contradicting normal slide techniques.
4. Needed to precourse turns and rips

2. GRACE NOTES

- A. Grace notes should be executed the same as a natural slur to obtain the correct performance of a grace note.
- B. Grace notes should not be played on the same partial as the parent note.
- C. The grace note needs to be articulated before you slur to the parent note.

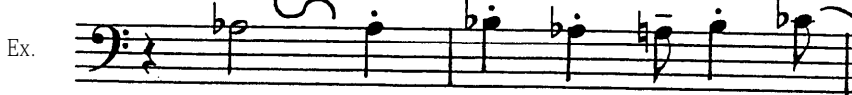
Grace Notes



3. TURNS

- A. Most of the time used in pop or jazz notation
- B. "Both sides" of against the gram playing (UP and DOWN)
- C. Air must move correctly so **partials** connect
- D. Leave and return to the same note or leave and return to a different note
- E. Cannot exceed rhythmic space allotted

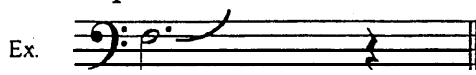
Turns



4. "THE RIP"

- A. Most of time used in **pop** or jazz notation
- B. Air is most important .
- C. Best example of "against the grain"
- D. Articulate the parent note before doing a slur up
- E. Straight out on slide

Rips



THE “F” ATTACHMENT

The “F” attachment is a wonderful device designed to extend the lower register below 7th position “E” and to help trombonist conquer technical problems presented by long position moves. It does not play as **free** as the open horn due to the valve assembly and many curves in which the air travels. As the slide descends, position lengths must increase to achieve TRUE POSITIONS. The valve essentially adds 5 positions to the existing position being played. THE VALVE WAS NEVER DESIGNED TO REPLACE THE OPEN HORN!!!! Many students who attain an “F” attachment feel that “C” no longer exists in 6th position. This is a common misuse of the valve. Try to help students understand this concept.

HERE ARE THINGS TO THINK ABOUT WITH THE “F” ATTACHMENT:

I. TUNING

- A. Play normal open horn tuning note - “Bb”.
- B. Play “C” in **first** position with valve - if “C” is in tune, “F” will be flat.
- C. If you tune “F” with valve - “C” will be sharp.
- D. The lower you play, the longer the positions have to be played in order to compensate for pitch tendencies and TRUE POSITIONS.

II. CHECKPOINTS

- A. See if rotor is lined up properly
 1. Notched lines on back of valve casing should match up
 2. If not matching, air is fighting to move through valve-VERY STUFFY.
- B. DO NOT LET STUDENTS USE THE VALVE FOR NOTES HIGHER THAN 2nd space “C”.
- C. Chromatic rule is in affect!!!!!!!
 1. **Common** mistake - “Db” in 5th position open (horn)-move to-“C” IN 1st position (valve).
- D. Low “F”
 1. Should not be **played** in 1st position with valve-very flat
 2. Low “F” can be played in 1st position for fast technical lines as long as it is not sustained.
- E. Low “B” - two ledger spaces below staff
 1. Due to tuning set up, this note does not exist as a playable note
 2. Can be played as a falsetto note in b4th position

THE FOLLOWING CHART WILL AID STUDENTS IN FINDING “TRUE POSITIONS” IN THE LO WREGISTER:

"F" Attachment Position

Tenor Trombone "F" Attachment
Tuned to "C" in 1st position • (V denotes valve)

The image shows three staves of musical notation in bass clef, representing the "F" attachment position for a tenor trombone. The notes are half notes. The first staff contains notes for valves V1, Vb2, V#4, and Vi5, with the instruction "(okay if soft)" above the final note. The second staff contains notes for V1, Vb2, and V#3, with the instruction "(very flat)" above the first note. The third staff contains notes for V#5, V6, V • very end of slide, and V • falsetto in 4.

BASS TROMBONE

The bass trombone is a great asset to any ensemble. Players have the versatility to play in the extreme low register or to play passages in the upper register. One concept continually plagues students who play bass trombone:

BIGGER IS NOT BETTER!

I. MOUTHPIECE SELECTION

- Two solid mouthpieces for new students are the BACH 1 ½ G and the SCHILKE 59.
- It is important to remember that mouthpieces fit like shoes.
- If a student has trouble producing a sound on a mouthpiece or has a **very woofy** unclear sound, the mouthpiece is probably too large for that particular student.

II. JAW PLACEMENT

It is impossible to produce a characteristic sound in the lower register with the teeth closed. Typically, the student will use some kind of facial pressure to accommodate an inaccurate air stream. As a result, a slow or small air stream will cause a lack of power or inaccurate playing. With teeth closed, the resulting sound will be a thin and uncontrolled tonal placement.

III. TUNING THE VALVES

Most bass trombones manufactured today are set up with two independent or “in-line” valve sections. Playing options presented the player include:

“F” attachment (1st valve only),

“Gb” attachment (2nd valve only),

Or a combination of both

“D” combination (1st and 2nd valves together).

Most notes performed on bass trombone will be either 1st valve or 1st and 2nd together. The “Gb” valve is rarely used by itself due to response issues of the horn. The same rules apply to bass trombone as **with the** “F” attachment. It is a mighty task to educate students about the sound of the open horn verses the sound of a valve.

HOW TO TUNE?!

1. Play open horn – top space “Bb”
2. Play “F” attachment – second space “C”
3. Play “D” combination – first ledger space low “D”

******** Remember, the purpose of the second valve is to play below the staff. If you tune an upper register note with a 1 and 2 combination, it sort of defeats the purpose of the valve. Have the student tune what they are going to play.

IV. CHOICES, CHOICES, CHOICES !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! **Which** valve do I use and when?

Once again we have to remind ourselves about slide technique rules. If the student stays on the same partial or moves ONE DIRECTION, we satisfy the chromatic rule and the **performance** will be much more relaxed and definitely cleaner. **It is proven that a player who constantly shifts back and forth between valves will be much more tense and less likely to have a clean performance.**

BASS 1 trombone Positions

"F" 1st trigger tuned to "C"
 "D" 1st and 2nd trigger tuned to "D"
 2nd trigger alone will be "G \flat "

V - 1st valve only
 VV - 1st and 2nd valve
 T - 2nd valve only

if soft

V1
or
T \flat 2

V \flat 4
or
T4

V \sharp 4

V \sharp 5

V1 (very flat)
or
T2

V \flat 2
or
T4

V ∞ 3

V \sharp 5
or
VV1

V6
or
VV \flat 2

VV4

VV6

VV \flat 7
or
1

Pedal Register

ba

1

2

3

4

b5

b \flat 7 or v 1
or T2

b \flat 7 or V \flat 2
or T4

Vbb3

v5
or
VV1

V \flat 6
or
VV \flat 2

VV4

VV6

Double Pedal Register

2

3

b4

b5

6

7

The following people are responsible for shaping my education in trombone pedagogy. Not only due I respect their mastery of instrumental techniques but I also appreciate their patience **and** cherish their friendship greatly.

EDDIE GREEN	WI-ND ENSEMBLE DIRECTOR -UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON (RETIRED)
GEORGE ROBERTS	BASS TROMBONIST-FRANK SINATRA/ STAN KENTON/NELSON RIDDLE ORCHESTRAS (RETIRED)
ALBERT LUBE	PRINCIPAL TROMBONE-HOUSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (RETIRED)
ALLEN BARNHILL	PRINCIPAL TROMBONE-HOUSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
JOHN McCROSKY	CO-PRINCIPAL TROMBONE-HOUSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (RETIRED)
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DON LUCAS	PROFESSOR OF TROMBONE -- TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
WILLIAM ROSE	PRINCIPAL TUBA-HOUSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (RETIRED)
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RON McCURDY	DIRECTOR OF JAZZ STUDIES • UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
DENIS KIDWELL	WI ND ENSEMBLE DIRECTOR • JERSEY VILLAGE HIGH SCHOOL
ELINOR CLEVELAND	WIND ENSEMBLE DIRECTOR- NORTH SHORE HIGH SCHOOL
BOBBY HEATHCOCK	WIND ENSEMBLE DIRECTOR - CHESTER NIMITZ HIGH SCHOOL
DANNY BACA	BAND DIRECTOR • NORTH SHORE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL