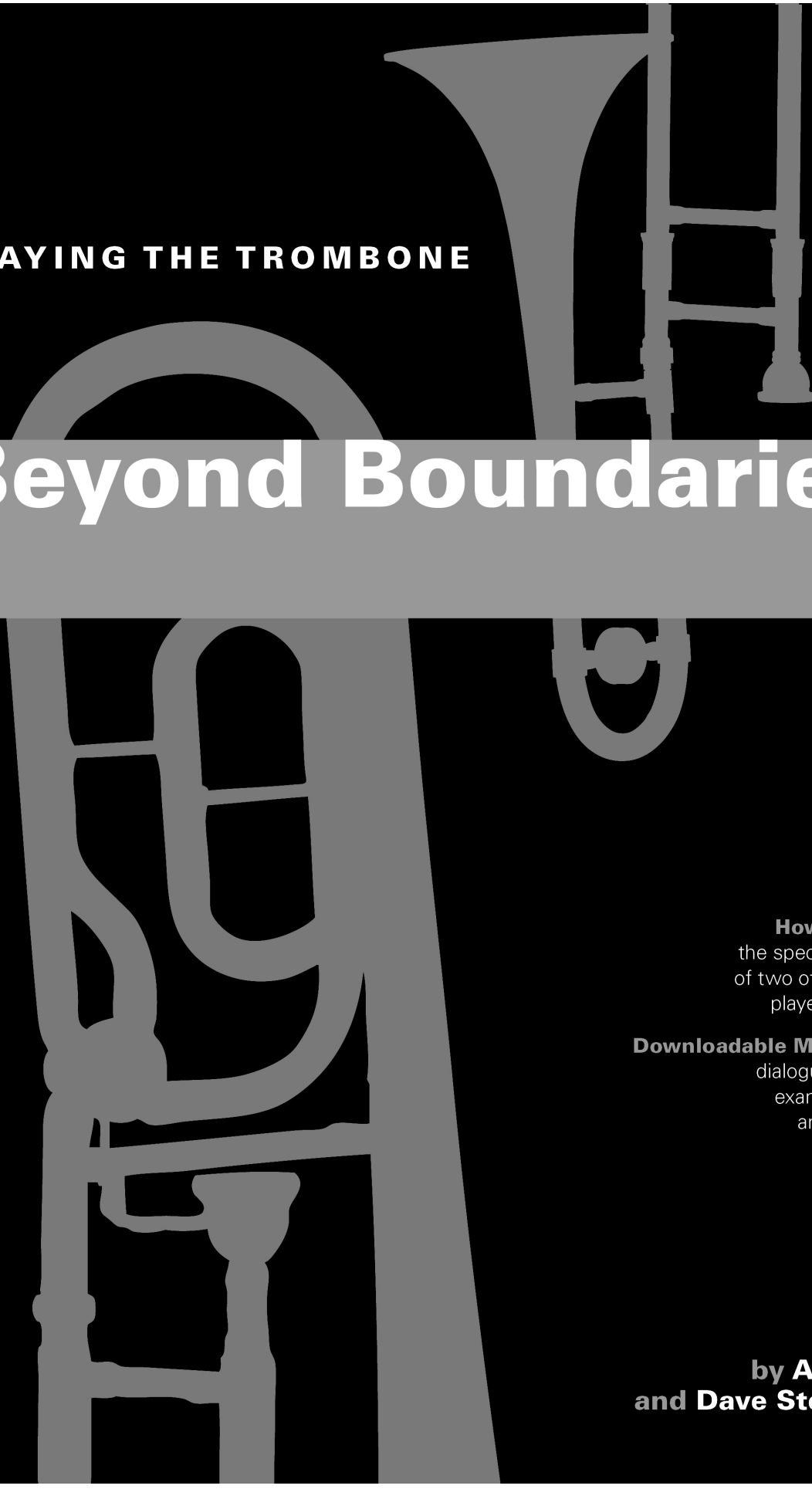


A large, stylized, light gray trombone is positioned vertically, spanning the entire height of the cover. The bell is at the top, and the slide is in the middle. The background is black.

21064

PLAYING THE TROMBONE

Beyond Boundaries

How to acquire
the special techniques
of two of the foremost
players of our time

Downloadable MP3s include
dialogues, solos and
examples by Raph
and Steinmeyer

**by Alan Raph
and Dave Steinmeyer**

Playing The Trombone Beyond Boundaries

by Alan Raph
and Dave Steinmeyer

Contents

Foreword	5
Preface.....	6
Acknowledgements	6
Introduction	7
Trombone Notation	8
<i>Staffs And Clefs; Transposition By Clefs</i>	
Tone Quality	10
<i>Long Tones; Metered Long Tone Exercise</i>	
Practicing	12
<i>Warm Ups; Extensive Warm Up Exercise On Seventh Chords; Extensive Warm Up Exercise On Building Chords; Sight Reading; Mental Practice; Coming Back From A Long Layoff; Endurance; Beyond Endurance; Intonation; Keyboard; Vibrato</i>	
Articulations	24
<i>Legato Articulation; Legato Etude; Staccato Articulation; Staccato Scale Etude; Slide Control; Long Position Etude; Chromatic Etude; Double Tonguing; Double Tongue Etude; Triple Tonguing; Triple Tongue Etude; Lip Break Articulation (Linear/Arpeggios); Problems Of The Initial Attack</i>	
Time	40
Range	41
<i>High Notes; High Register Lyric Etude; High Register Tongued Etude; Steinmeyer's Approach To Higher And Highest Notes; Low Notes; Low Notes Daily Exercise; Lower And Lowest Notes; A Word About Bass Trombones And Mouthpieces; F Attachment Comprehensive Etude; Bass Trombone Etude; Pedal Tone Etude</i>	
Intervals	56
<i>Interval Etude</i>	

Ornaments	58
<i>Lip-Turn Etude</i>	
Equipment	60
<i>Custom vs. Factory Stock Model; The F Attachment Trombone; Maintenance</i>	
Performance Considerations	64
<i>Doubling; Comparison Of Playing Arenas; Indoor vs. Outdoor Playing; Microphones; Trombone Ensembles; On Playing Bass Trombone by Alan Raph; On Playing Lead Trombone by Dave Steinmeyer</i>	
Capsules For Consideration	70
An Interview With Buddy Morrow	72
Caprice For Solo Trombone	74

Project Manager & Editor: Mendy Varga
Assistant Editor: Nadine Gardner
Engraver: Ken Peek
Cover Design: Elizabeth C. Johnston
Recording Engineer: Dave St. Onge

Enclosed CD

The spoken parts of this CD are taken from interview sessions (December 20-21, 2011) between Alan Raph (interviewer) and Dave Steinmeyer. It includes Steinmeyer's candid "on-the-spot" playing examples of various techniques.

TRACKS:

1. Introduction (Raph)
2. Excerpt: low note cadenza (Raph)
3. Excerpt: high notes (Steinmeyer)
4. Interview #1: high notes, vibrato (with examples), mouthpieces (with examples), playing lead trombone, air stream, hear it first, fatigue, early days
5. Interview #2A: double tonguing, slurring (including "da" tonguing)
6. *Silent Night* example
7. Interview #2B
8. *Silent Night* example (part)
9. Interview #2C: breathing in tempo, locking, down-slurring
10. Interview #3: alternate positions for high notes, fat lips, beyond endurance (example), low note therapy
11. Interview #4A: cross-grain, compatible equipment, high notes
12. Interview #4B: vibrato, intervals, microphone, intonation, trombone ensembles, playing lead trombone, player vs. band leader
13. Excerpt: example of "keeping the time" on bass trombone (Raph)
14. *Caprice* (Raph)

Preview Only

Preview Only

Foreword

Listening to good players by any means -- live performances, recordings, online videos, etc. -- is essential to the learning process. It brings the world into your practice room. If you hear something played on a trombone and it impresses you, there is always a way to learn to do it yourself. This book will help give you the means to extend your techniques and will guide you in the learning process. The downloadable MP3 recordings will help widen your perspective.

After hearing Dave Steinmeyer's amazing solo and lead trombone playing, the realization that "perhaps I can also learn to do this" often opens new paths. *Beyond Boundaries* is written to help you increase and expand your playing abilities without limits.

Dave is self-taught. He learned by listening, evaluating, copying, and experimenting. He put a lot of time and effort into this, and as a result he has been able to surpass his mentors.

I am not self-taught. I took lessons. I questioned everything and found answers. I still do.

Beyond Boundaries examines trombone techniques from various perspectives. The exercises within, once learned, should then be expanded. The etudes are comprehensive. Each represents a particular technique. Learn them and use them. Reviewing them will recall (or revive) a forgotten technique.

Once you've acquired a technique, it is yours to use and further develop in your own way. Anything you hear can become yours for the taking. It only requires your time and effort.

With the understanding that this method is all about going *beyond*, it may require you to rethink a concept.

Alan Raph, 2012

Preface

When asked by Alan Raph to be part of this project, I jumped at the chance to work with this trombone legend and master of the low range. There isn't much in the world of trombone teaching and playing that he hasn't been part of for almost 60 years. That being said, I myself have been playing trombone for around 55 years, most of that time spent in the United States Air Force music program playing lead trombone with, soloing with, and for ten years conducting the premiere jazz ensemble, *The Airmen of Note*.

This book will help players of all abilities and styles. If our combined years of playing and teaching won't work for you, I don't know what will. Remember, this requires a lot of effort on your part as well as ours. I can tell you from experience that, for as many teachers as there are explaining low and high range techniques, there are just as many ways to achieve it.

There is no magic involved here. In my opinion, you have to use the right equipment to do a specific job. Playing lead trombone is not easy especially if you're using a large bore tenor trombone.

In this book Alan and I explain just about everything you will need to expand your low and high range. I was warned many years ago not to give away the secrets of how I play so high. But Alan and I agree that we should let you know what we know. While a younger teacher may not want to tell you all he knows for fear of losing work, our philosophy is "lay it all out." So here it is for the taking. I will tell you that, if you make the effort, you will succeed. You will need curiosity and lots of AIR!

Dave Steinmeyer, 2012

Acknowledgements

Our thanks goes out to several people directly and indirectly responsible for this book. To Mendy Varga at Kendor Music for her advice, support and tireless work in putting this book together.

To Urbie Green, a true mentor, for his innovations and refinements. To Larry O'Brien, leader of the Glenn Miller band, and Howard Williams, an avid trombone devotee. To former teachers Simon Karasick, Cliff Heather and Gabriel Mason. And to the trombone legends who contributed to this volume by either doing it first or best; they all showed us something special: Arthur Pryor, Tommy Dorsey, Jack Teagarden, Miff Mole, Buddy Morrow, Urbie Green, Bill Watrous, Wycliffe Gordon, Frank Rosolino, Carl Fontana, Dick Nash, and George Roberts.

To a great many fine trombonists who may not have known that we were listening hard and learning much: Joe Bennett, Sonny Russo, Ed Kottick, Erwin Price, Art Baron, Dave Uber, Bob Meyers, Dave Jett, Dick Hickson, James Morrison, Al Godlis, Neil DiBiasi, Kai Winding, Jack Nowinski, Charlie Vernon, Vincent Forchetti, JJ Johnson, Harry DeVito, Morty Bullman, Robert Isele, Bob Brookmeyer, Frank Siracco, Benny Powell, Jimmy Cleveland, Mickey Gravine, Dave Barger, Keith Brown, Ralph Sauer, Rick Lillard, Phil Wilson, and Bruce Bonvissuto.

Introduction

Beyond Boundaries offers approaches to and refinements of extended-range trombone techniques in plain language. The goal is for the trombonist to understand and absorb the material quickly and thoroughly.

PLEASE NOTE:

Embouchure = lip setting and the muscles used to support it.

Aperture = the diameter of the lip opening through which air passes. The aperture offers various degrees of resistance to the air stream for a wider or narrower core of sound.

Air Stream = the air blown (buzzed) into the trombone. It enters through the aperture which is supported by the embouchure.

Prerequisites to the study of this book include the *Arban Book*, *Melodious Etudes*, *Blazevich Clef Studies*, or in lieu of these, the ability to play scales and arpeggios in all keys and a 2 ½ to 3 octave range on the trombone. Keyboard knowledge is also an advantage.

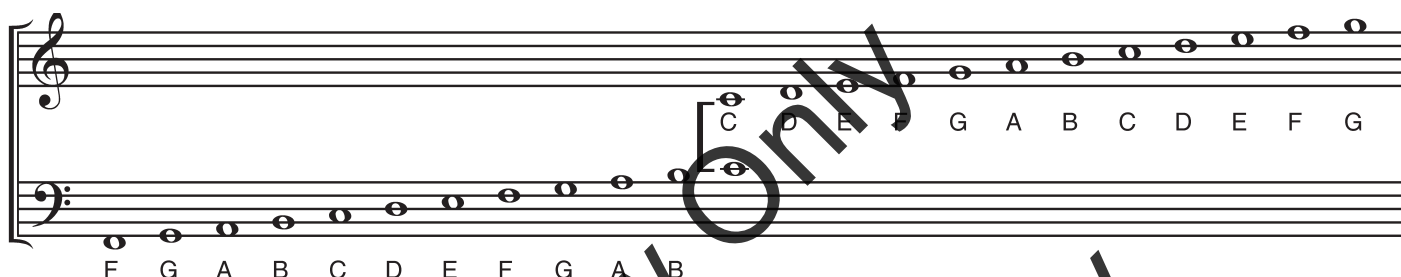
NOTE: When practicing memorized exercises it is important to keep going. If a particular sequence is not played well, stay in motion and make corrections en route. Make the next one better. Excessive repeating stops the momentum and serves little purpose except to increase frustration. Learn to go for it the first time. Remember *trouble spots* from one day to another and make a special effort to improve them next time around. This applies especially to *warm ups*.

Alan Raph and Dave Steinmeyer, 2012

Trombone Notation

Staffs And Clefs

The music staff is commonly known as the five parallel lines on which notes are written, either on a line or in the space between two lines. Some instruments (e.g. piano) use two staves of five lines each, with a ledger line for middle C between them. There used to be one staff of eleven lines called the *grand staff*, but with so many lines it was hard to figure out which line a given note was on, especially when sight reading. So the top five lines were raised (treble staff) and the bottom five lines were lowered (bass staff), leaving middle C between them on a ledger line. This is the grand staff as we know it today. It accommodates 23 diatonic (scalewise) notes encompassing the average male and female voice registers.



If we were to make a staff to encompass all the notes on the piano keyboard rather than human voices, we would need 44 lines which would make note-reading a nightmare. We therefore retain the two staves (plus middle C) which gives us 11 lines, and as we need higher or lower notes we add ledger lines on demand. The extreme low and high ranges of the trombone cover the entire piano keyboard minus four diatonic notes at the top, as played by Alan Raph starting on the lowest note A and continuing upward with Dave Steinmeyer, who can play to the highest F. Both trombonists have a 5 ½ - 6 octave range on their instrument.

When a composer or arranger writes above the staff, he/she may choose to use the *moveable C clef* to eliminate excessive ledger lines. This clef identifies middle C and borrows lines from the treble and bass clefs above and below it to complete a 5-line staff. *Tenor clef* is the most widely used in trombone music and places middle C on the 4th line (counting upwards from the bottom line). *Alto clef*, used by many symphonic composers (and the viola), puts middle C on the 3rd line. *Mezzo soprano clef*, useful in reading French horn music, assigns C to the 2nd line.

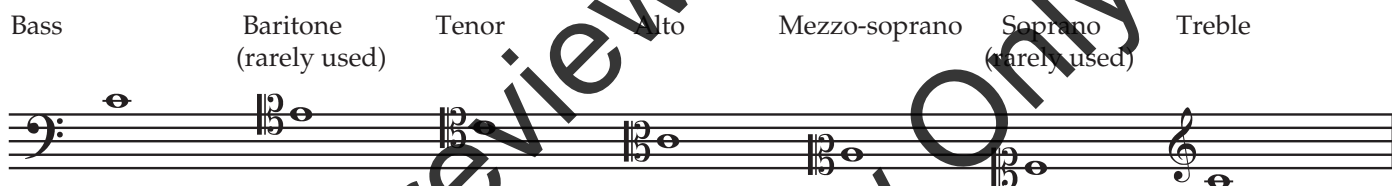
Transposition By Clefs

Musicians need to transpose from time to time. Perhaps a singer needs the music transposed up a third or down a step. Perhaps the third trumpet player doesn't show up and one of the trombones is asked to play his/her part. Or maybe there's a French horn part but no French horn player.

The most common means of transposition is by interval. If the trumpet has a written C, the trombone plays a Bb, or down a whole step. If the alto sax has a written B, trombone plays a D, or down a 6th. If transposing from a French horn part, play down a 5th. The key in the name of an instrument tells the concert pitch when the instrument plays a written C. When a Bb trumpet plays C, it sounds Bb, and when an Eb alto sax plays C, it sounds Eb.

By knowing clefs (treble, bass, tenor, alto, mezzo soprano), the trombonist can read other instruments' music without transposing note by note. This is much faster. To read Bb parts for trumpet, clarinet and tenor saxophone, the trombonist can add two flats to the key signature and read the music in tenor clef. To read F Horn parts, add one flat to the key signature and read the music in mezzo soprano clef. To read Eb parts for alto and baritone sax, add three flats to the key signature and read the music in bass clef.

From bottom to top, the clefs parallel the voices in a choir. Middle C is shown in all clefs.



Play the following in different clefs. Insert one of the three clefs (place the moveable C clef on various lines).



Tone Quality

The process of playing and resting should become automatic. Resting is vital to good strong playing.

To develop a good basic tone, blow a tone *through* the trombone, not just into the mouthpiece, and keep it sounding by employing a constant stream of air. Use the room as part of your acoustical chamber. Use plenty of breath and embouchure support. When the tone is over, relax completely. Don't stay in position tensing your muscles in anticipation of the next tone. Come back to "neutral."

It is very important to develop a good basic tone before you personalize it. It makes all the difference between a rough-edged and a polished sound.

Possible obstacles to good tone quality:

1. Faulty instrument. Check for air leaks starting with the water key. Look for obstructions in the instrument, including a buildup of organic matter. Start cleaning with the inside of the inner slide. Check the mouthpiece stem.
2. The tongue is in the way.
3. The player is playing the mouthpiece and not the entire instrument.
4. The embouchure is not formed well (weak embouchure muscles) allowing air to escape from the corners of the mouth.

Long Tones

The playing of long tones is especially good for the development of:

- attack (articulation).
- tone.
- a steady, non-wavering body of sound.
- volume (dynamics).
- release of a note.
- crescendo/diminuendo.

Long tones are best approached in a musical manner, not with a stop watch, but in relation to a pulse. Relating long tones to a pulse (or beat) gives them musical meaning. A tone played mezzo forte for six measures at a moderate tempo has life and purpose and is more meaningful than a tone played for 25 seconds.

Metered Long Tone Exercise

This will be expanded in the **Low Notes Daily Exercise** (pages 47-49). Breathe when necessary. When playing two or more notes per breath separate them only by the attack. Play the following exercise on several different low notes.



Expand the exercise:

1. Volume and tempo may be varied.
2. Crescendos and diminuendos may be added.
3. The attack separating one note from another may be emphasized or de-emphasized.

Play the first whole note. You now have 3 more chances to improve it. Repeating a measure is discouraged in favor of making the next note better. Work to develop a clear attack and release.

Practicing

Warm Ups

Warming up is like stretching before doing a physical activity, with one advantage. When you warm up you can also challenge your status and extend your techniques. Playing a warm up is the one time when you and the trombone work together without the encumbrance of reading notes, memorizing or improvising. It is the perfect time to work on range-building, tonguing articulations, lip slurs, tone production, slide technique, and refinements.

Most trombone techniques can be incorporated into a warm up routine to help nurture, develop, and expand them. LEARN and MEMORIZE the exercises and make them a part of your daily practice. These are your tools. Keep them clean and sharp and learn to use them.

An effective warm up routine usually starts with lip slurs. Clean slurs, solid notes and good attacks are all part of lip slurs which can always be improved upon. Keep a constant stream of air in motion at all times. Ride the air stream. Work the embouchure muscles in combination with the air stream. Extend the warm up exercises by range (high and low), tempos (faster/slower), and volume (louder/softer).

When a warm up exercise sounds good consistently, it is time to extend it by playing louder, faster, higher, longer, shorter. These are all extensions of technique. If you become complacent with a consistently good-sounding warm up exercise and find yourself mechanically going through the same motions each day, it is time to challenge your status and move ahead. Complacent repetition doesn't preserve a particular skill level, but rather dulls it. Reaching ahead not only maintains present ability, but extends it.

LIP SLURS: When slurring upward, tighten your embouchure toward the center (pucker inward), change the vowel from *a* to *e* (*ah* to *ee*), and blow faster. When slurring downward, avoid loosening the embouchure and go for the lower note with determination. Crescendo, change the vowel from *ee* to *ah* (or *oe*), and support the sound.

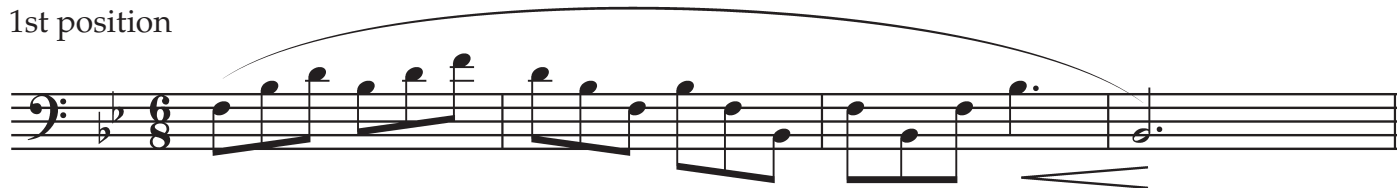
TUNES: Some players warm up on tunes and jazz patterns. If tunes are a large part of your approach, learn a new tune each day in all keys. Start with tunes that you know (folk songs, Christmas carols, patriotic songs, show tunes, etc.). The more tunes you learn, the quicker you'll pick up new ones.

As you move on to written methods, studies, excerpts, solos and/or improvisation, you'll find that your techniques have noticeably improved after warming up.

The following warm up patterns may be used, changed, and/or extended. A 15 minute warm-up every day can do more to develop technique(s) than anything else you might do.

1. Lip Slurs

1st position



Play also in 2nd - 7th positions. Concentrate on initial attack, tempo, volume, and even/equal sounding notes.

Suggested extension:



Play also in 2nd - 7th positions.

2. Long Notes/Short Notes

1st position



Play also in 2nd - 7th positions. Concentrate on attack, full tone, connecting the long notes, and separating the short notes.

Suggested extension: use this pattern to develop trigger (F attachment) notes and pedal tones.

3. Loud And Short Notes In All Registers (using crescendos)

1st position



Play also in 2nd - 7th positions. Concentrate on clear, short notes and use crescendos as marked.

Suggested extension:



Play also in 2nd - 7th positions.

4. A Short, Harmonically Interesting Lip Slur Exercise.

slide positions



Any of the above warm up exercises may be changed, restructured, abbreviated, expanded, etc. to suit your special needs.

5. Lip Slur Warm Up Etude

Tongue the first note of each phrase, then lip slur the rest.

The musical score consists of seven phrases of eighth-note slurs in bass clef, 4/4 time. Each phrase is marked with a slur and fingerings. A large diagonal watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the center of the page.

- Phrase 1: Slur over 8 eighth notes. Fingerings: 5, 6, 5.
- Phrase 2: Slur over 8 eighth notes. Fingerings: 5, 5, 5.
- Phrase 3: Slur over 8 eighth notes. Fingerings: 4, 5, 4.
- Phrase 4: Slur over 8 eighth notes. Fingering: 7.
- Phrase 5: Slur over 8 eighth notes. Fingerings: 5, 5, 5.
- Phrase 6: Slur over 8 eighth notes. Fingerings: 6, #7, 6.
- Phrase 7: Slur over 8 eighth notes. Fingerings: 7, 7, 6, 6.

Extensive Warm Up Exercise On Seventh Chords

This exercise will increase your familiarity with chordal/slide position relationships. It is based on the four most common 7th chords:

dominant 7th minor 7th half diminished 7th (full) diminished 7th.

C⁷ **Cm⁷** **C^ø** **C^o** *

Building the exercise:

- Start on C (2nd space) with a C⁷.
- Flat the 3rd = Cm⁷. Flat the 5th = C^ø.
- Flat the 7th again = C^o. Flat the root = B⁷th, continue the pattern until you reach C again.
- Play each 7th chord for a span of two octaves, up and down. This gives you a total of 48 patterns of slide manipulation while playing these arpeggiated chords.

The exercise may be started on any note in any register, but should be done on all 12 notes. Note that the lip is relatively fresh at the beginning of the exercise, allowing for better high notes. As you descend, slide movement increases. Notes may be tongued or slurred or both (alternated). Once learned, the exercise should be played without pausing between chords. Take time-out for breaths and for resting.

You may also use this exercise to increase and strengthen your high or low registers. Start it on a higher (or lower) note as you become more secure in your playing of it.

C dominant 7th

C minor 7th

C half diminished

C diminished 7th

B dominant 7th

*Bbb is easier written and played as an A (most players think of it as an A).

Extensive Warm Up Exercise On Building Chords

Once the following structure is understood, this exercise will become interesting and very open-ended. It will take time and patience to understand and work out.

Each measure in common time will consist of eight 8th notes: five going up and three going down. Play legato.

1. Start on low Bb (2nd line) in 1st position and play the first two overtones, Bb and F. Add three more notes, building upwards, to form a chord. Then go back down 3 notes to complete the sequence.
2. Start on the same Bb and play the second overtone (E) in 2nd position. Add three more notes to form a chord, then go back down three notes to complete the sequence. The 8-note sequence is always 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2.
3. Play the Bb and go to 3rd position for the second note (Eb), then complete the above sequence.
4. Play the Bb and go to 4th position for the second note (D), then complete the above sequence.
5. Play the Bb and go to 5th position for the second note (Db), then complete the above sequence.
6. Play the Bb and go to 6th position for the second note (C), then complete the above sequence.
7. Play the Bb and go to 7th position for the second note (B), then complete the above sequence.

See the written exercise on the next page for a visual representation of the above.

Continuing the exercise:

1. Play low A in 2nd position and come back to 1st position for the second note (F). Add three more notes to spell a chord, then come back down three notes as before.
2. Play the A and stay in 2nd position for the second note (E), then complete the sequence.
3. Play the A and go to 3rd position for the second note (Eb/Db), then complete the sequence.
4. Play the A and go to 4th position for the second note (D), then complete the sequence. Do the same for A to 5th position, A to 6th position, and A to 7th position.

Play low Ab in 3rd position and come back to 1st position for the second note (F), then complete the sequence. Play the Ab, go to 2nd position for the second note (E/Fb), then complete the sequence. Play Ab, stay in 3rd position, then complete the sequence. Play Ab, go to 4th position...then 5th...6th and 7th.

Play G, and do the above sequence. Also, Gb, F, and E. You will end up having done 7 patterns on each of 7 notes.

Summary of the exercise

Here's an overview of the exercise as determined by the first two notes; three additional chord notes (in any slide position) are then added to each.

1-1 1-2 1-3 1-4 1-5 1-6 1-7
4-1 4-2 4-3 4-4 4-5 4-6 4-7
7-1 7-2 7-3 7-4 7-5 7-6 7-7

2-1 2-2 2-3 2-4 2-5 2-6 2-7
5-1 5-2 5-3 5-4 5-5 5-6 5-7

3-1 3-2 3-3 3-4 3-5 3-6 3-7
6-1 6-2 6-3 6-4 6-5 6-6 6-7

Written out in notation

This can be better learned without reading the written notes, but rather 'thinking' your way through the chords.

The musical score is written for bass guitar in 4/4 time. It consists of seven lines of music, each containing four measures. The chords and their corresponding fingering numbers are as follows:

- Line 1: B $\flat$ (1), C7 (1 2), E $\flat$ (1 3), B $\flat$ (1 4)
- Line 2: G $\flat$ (1), C7 (1 6), BMA7 (1 7), F (2 1)
- Line 3: A (2), B7 (2 3), D (2 4), A (2 5)
- Line 4: F (2 6), B7 (2 7), D $\flat$ (3 1), F $\flat$ (3 2)
- Line 5: A $\flat$ (3), B $\flat$ 7 (3 4), D $\flat$ (3 5), A $\flat$ (3 6)
- Line 6: E (3 7), G7 (4 1), C (4 2), E $\flat$ (4 3)
- Line 7: G (4), A7 (4 5), C (4 6), G (4 7) etc.

Sight Reading

Develop the habit of scanning things mentally before actually playing them. This will tell you what to expect and will help eliminate any surprises that might lie ahead.

When Sight Reading In An Ensemble:

- keep your place.
- play the beats; avoid getting bogged down on the notes.
- if the music is difficult, play what you can and don't give up. Check tempo or meter changes, and try to get a point of reference or two before you actually start playing (e.g. measure 34 goes into 2, cut from the end of 42 to the beginning of 53).
- watch out for sudden snares or traps, like a rhythmic sequence which suddenly changes.
- try to hear the notes before you play them (Wycliffe Gordon's book *Sing It First* describes this in depth).
- scan ahead for tricky rhythms or intervals while playing relatively easy sections.
- try not to play in the rests.

When Sight Reading In The Practice Room: Include sight reading as part of your daily practice. When playing a new etude or a sight reading exercise, play through it a total of five times (not necessarily on the same day) using the following approach:

1st time: Look over the music, note difficult spots, work out tricky rhythms while looking it over, choose an attainable tempo, and play it through without stopping. If you miss notes or passages, maintain your place and jump back in at the appropriate times. Keep the beat and don't repeat anything.

2nd time: Having gone through it once, you now know many of the trouble spots. Look over the music again and try to resolve those spots in your mind. Play it again without stopping.

3rd time: This is your chance to really learn it. Treat it as a solo. Isolate and work on difficult sections. Stop and start as needed. Play your way through it with these stops and starts.

4th time: Play it through without stopping. If there are still trouble spots look them over and resolve them.

5th time: Your final performance.

The 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th times have given you the opportunity to hone your sight reading skills in context without the luxury of stopping.

Mental Practice

In addition to memorizing warm up exercises, use down time (bus/car trip) to figure out rhythms, scan the music (try to hear the notes), and memorize the music.

Rhythms: Slow the music down, dissect it, fit it into the meter, and mark the downbeats mentally or in pencil. Work out each beat mechanically, and once understood, increase the tempo until it feels right. Then put it all back together again.

Scanning The Music: Look at the whole piece for places to rest, difficult spots, and to get an idea of its continuity.

Memorization: Here are three (3) ways to memorize. They can effectively be used in combination with each other.

1. Mentally picture the written music and remember how it looks.
2. Hear the music in your mind using tonal memory. Hear the part by itself, then try to hear it as a part of the whole.
3. Stimulate muscle memory by mentally feeling slide position sequences and the required embouchure formation.

A great deal can be accomplished without even holding the instrument.

Coming Back From A Long Layoff

If you do not play the trombone for weeks, months, years, or even decades, when you pick it up again and play, it will feel as though you never stopped. Everything will work surprisingly well -- your feel for the horn, your tone, your attack and even your high register -- for about 20 seconds. Then it all crashes.

The endurance factor has kicked in. Muscle memory is there, but muscle tone is gone. Give yourself ample time to get it back. Play for a few minutes and stop, then increase your playing time from day to day. It may take a few weeks to start feeling good again. Don't overdo it. It will come back.

If you enjoy playing, keep it enjoyable by not going over your head if you can avoid it. Once you've reclaimed your skill level, maintain it with daily practice. Always go for more, and smooth the rough edges on the way. Many players have kept, regained and even improved their skills well into their later years.

Endurance

In your daily practice, stop short of getting tired, rest a bit, then resume. This will build endurance. Avoid playing until you can't play anymore. The more you play each day, the more your endurance will increase. If you stop playing daily, the first thing to go is endurance.

When playing hard and constant, take advantage of every rest to remove the mouthpiece from your lips, however briefly. It will increase your endurance considerably. Expend as much effort as needed and no more. Stay calm and don't get over excited in the heat of the moment.

This being said, Dave Steinmeyer has his own take on endurance. Often after playing hard all day, Dave would play in the high register for a while to see if the notes were still there (they usually were). His use of air stream over muscle helped to preserve his unusual abilities. He'd check his status, wondering if the air still functioned through swollen lips. He would ask, "If I had to play more, could I?" Using air more than muscle increased his longevity. But before he puts the horn away for the day, he usually plays some pedal tones to relax things.

Beyond Endurance

Several years ago Dave had the experience of playing in a circus band, and it was the hardest he has ever worked. Circus music is loud, fast and constant. Until you build up a tolerance, it will eat you alive.

What do you do when you're wiped out and the first act isn't even over yet?

- Get the mouthpiece off your face as often as possible.
- Let the others who are more used to the routine carry the unison sections.
- Take advantage of every rest and then some.
- Remember your function: in circus music you're playing for kids and animals, not Quincy, Mehta or the Pope. Nobody's going to walk out if you miss a note or two.
- Split the part with the player next to you: play it the first time, then let him/her do the repeat.
- Narrow the air stream (no big sounds) and aim for the microphone.

Intonation

The best judge of good intonation is the musically-developed human ear, not a series of lights or a steady line on a screen. Listening to good music well played will develop a sense of pitch and chords. When tuning, have pitch awareness and consider these factors:

1. Tune the instrument to itself. Play a scale or arpeggio and listen critically to the relationship of the intervals. Play intervals and adjust one to the other. Play the scale on a well-tuned keyboard and listen to it, especially the 3rd, 5th and 7th intervals. Play these intervals against the root and determine their relationship. After a while you will be able to play scales with a critical ear and make minor adjustments as needed.
2. Tune the instrument to a general pitch (A in the orchestra, Bb in the band). Once you match it, use it as a basic starting point. Your ability to relate one pitch to another will then continue the process.
3. Tune to your place in the overall structure of the music, and specifically to your place in a particular chord (root, 3rd, 5th, etc.).

Note: a 4th position D (just above the bass staff) will require a slight adjustment between being the third of a Bb major chord or the root of a D chord. Listen for and make note of the difference.

Unisons, octaves and 5ths are generally the easiest to match for tuning purposes. Once accomplished, make small adjustments according to chord structures, other timbres and balance/blend with other instruments. If it still is not right, check the relationship between the bass instruments and melody instruments (bottom and top notes).

Keyboard

Learning the keyboard is very important. At the very least, you should be able to identify and work with chords and chord progressions. The keyboard is the only instrument on which you can see and identify all the notes at once. It combines sight with hearing so you can see as well as hear the relationships between notes and chords.

The keyboard is a quicker path to hearing and identifying major and minor scales, chromatic scales, identifying chords and arpeggios, finding common tones, and relating the keyboard notes to trombone notes, especially if you improvise.

Vibrato

Vibrato signifies ownership. You can personalize any note with vibrato, but if you're unsure of a note, vibrato will not help.

Vibrato is indeed "owning" a note and then:

- intensifying it.
- warming it.
- giving it character.
- nudging it.
- parodying it.
- emphasizing its pulse.
- wagging its tail.

Playing with no vibrato at all is also an option and another means of expression.

On the trombone, there are several kinds of vibrato:

Slide Vibrato: Hold the note and move the slide out a bit, then back to pitch. Most players use the wrist but some move the whole arm for this. It requires some sort of speed to be effective, and can vary from slow to fast. The distance that the slide is moved from the note can also vary, making the vibrato wide or narrow. Slide vibrato allows the most choices for variation.

Lip Vibrato: *Ta wa wa wa* or *Ta ra ra ra ra* are two forms of lip vibrato.

Diaphragm Vibrato: *Ta ha ha ha ha*

Head Vibrato: usually a slow nodding of the head.

Of all the above, only slide vibrato deliberately changes the pitch, while the others simply pulsate.

Delayed Slide Vibrato: Play a note and approximately 2/3 of the way through, vibrate it right into the following note. You now have produced a note, its intensification and its change into another note. This is a very common way of adding character to solo playing.

Through the years some players were known for their slow wide vibrato, some for their lip vibrato, and some symphonic players for their diaphragm vibrato. Some only gave a hint of vibrato while others played with a wide and fast vibrato or with no vibrato at all. It is something that personalizes your playing. It is also used to duplicate the musical style of a certain era. Listen to good singers and study their use of vibrato.

Articulations

Tonguing a note is in fact releasing a note. An articulation is a release of the air stream. Trombone players are often taught to place the tongue behind the upper teeth for the attack. This is so the embouchure is not disturbed and it works on many notes. Some players place the tongue between the teeth. On very low notes the tongue often comes forward from between the lips and the attack is made with the tongue in front of the face and even more so as the notes get lower. The disturbance of the embouchure is generally negligible. The best guide is to do whatever works. Avoid a sloppy attack, air before the note, a time lag between the attack and the note, or a split tone.

The attack is the critical part of the tone. It is the attention-getter and it should be the loudest part of the tone, even if only a bit louder. There are occasional exceptions: sometimes a minimized attack is required, and there are times when *no attack* is called for. There is also a vocal attack (not accented). The attack often defines the character of the music.

Correct vowel use is also important; from very low notes to very high notes the vowel should be: *taw toe ta tee ti tsss*. Example(s): low E might be *taw*, middle Bb might be *ta*, an octave higher *tee*, still higher *ti* (short *i* sound), and for very high notes almost no vowel at all with *tsss*. Get the tip of your tongue out of the way and let your narrowed air stream carry the high notes.

Some players have a tendency to minimize the attack and to put all of their focus and effort into the body of the tone. This can quickly become tedious to the listener, very much like someone speaking loudly in a monotone.

Our best players have developed expressive attacks and many dynamics of expression.

Types Of Articulations:

1. *Ta* = tongued
2. *Da* = soft tongue
3. *Ha* = breath attack
4. Valve articulation
5. Lip break articulation
6. Flutter tongue
7. You can even learn to pronounce understandable words by using the trombone tone as the vowel and by carefully pronouncing the consonants.

Legato Articulation

Tongue every note, making the first note of a phrase *ta* and each subsequent note *da*. The end of one note is the beginning of the next. No spaces between notes. Spaces destroy the legato. Soft-tonguing (*da*) combines natural lip break notes with non-lip break or glissando notes and allows the phrase to sound uniform. One of the common faults with players is their attempt to lip-slur an interval rather than applying a light *da* tongue to the target note. *Ta-da* will always sound better and be more controllable than *ta-aa*.

Tongue the first note and move the slide as quickly as possible to each successive note, stopping dead on arrival. The tonguing of each note should be simultaneous with the slide placement. Avoid spaces -- the end of one note is the beginning of the next.

Play the following etude using these suggestions. Near the end of it, there is a passage written for the F attachment valve. If playing without the valve, tongue it lightly (*da*) or omit this short passage. Note also that the first and fourth notes in measure 4 are long enough to use some vibrato. Choose alternate positions to shorten the slide distance between notes. There will be a tendency to lip-slur the overtones; if you maintain a soft tongue, the overtone notes will balance better with the slide notes.

Preview Only
Preview Only

Legato Etude

Andante

4 5

5

5

7th pos. 6th pos. 7th pos.

4 #6 4 4 5 6 4 #6 6

#6 4

1st pos. w/valve

Staccato Articulation

A short note needs to speak clearly within its brief duration. A good approach to playing short notes is to pronounce the word *top* or *tot*. You'll find that the end of the note needs this cut-off articulation as much as the beginning of the note. Without the final *p* or *t*, the note will have a tendency to be too long and will also interfere with the succeeding note. As the speed of the staccato increases, the final *p* (*t*) will give way to the next *t*, but a clear-toned staccato will remain.

Rapid linear passages (scalewise ascending/descending lines of diatonic or chromatic notes) are best played by keeping the slide in motion and tonguing the notes en route, unlike *legato* playing where the slide is moved rapidly between notes and stops completely on arrival at each new note.

In practicing the following scale etude, play the eighth notes staccato. The quarter notes can have some length.

Preview Only
Preview Only

Staccato Scale Etude

Allegro (Vivace)

sim.

Slower

Tempo I

rit.

Slide Control

The trombone is the only wind instrument on which one note can be more than two feet away from the next. Using the natural accent of the downbeat will help produce extremely fast playing in a smooth, non-clumsy manner.

To do this:

- Maintain one slide direction for each beat whenever possible.
- When playing a long line of notes, try to make the change of slide direction which is required to continue the line, occur on a downbeat. Aiming for the downbeat will facilitate the direction change and will use the natural downbeat accent to keep the momentum.
- When changing slide direction on a downbeat is not possible, use the upbeat for your change. Try to avoid changing on the in-between notes (the second or fourth 16th note in a group of four).
- When changing slide direction on a downbeat, you will be surprised by how quickly you can move the slide using the beat as your rhythmic impetus, even on long reaches (e.g. from 1st to 6th position).

Example:

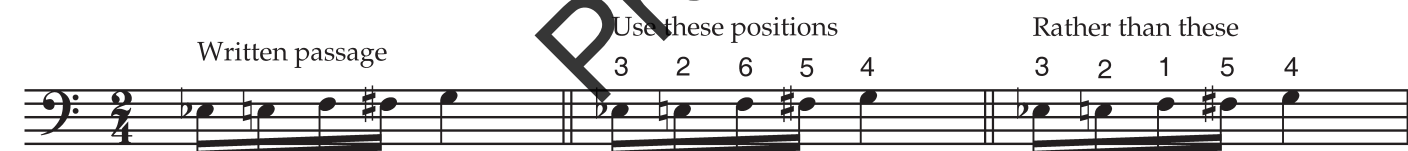
Clumsy - using basic positions



Smoother - using alternate positions



If the downbeat is not possible, use the upbeat as a secondary accent.



Sometimes it is necessary to move the slide a great distance on the in-between notes:



In this case it will help to practice rapid slide movement as in the following etude. Play without the use of the F attachment. Focus on moving the slide straight out and in.

NOTE: Don't shortchange the longer positions. Go the whole distance.

Long Position Etude

Moderato

7 7 7

6 6 6

The following etude is positioned to minimize slide direction changes. Keep a smooth arm and play the notes short.

Chromatic Etude

Vivace

*_v = valve

Play rapid scalewise passages by tonguing the notes short (*top*) while keeping the slide in motion.

Double Tonguing

Fast, short and loud double tonguing = ta-ka ta-ka: In practicing double tonguing, the object is to make the *ka* sound equal to the *ta*. There is a tendency to make the *ka* sound too far back on the tongue which inhibits a clear sounding *ka*. This can be avoided by pronouncing *kya* instead of *ka*. *Kya* helps the back of the tongue to strike a bit more forward. At a faster tempo, *ta-kya* will give way to *ta-ka*, but by that time the back of the tongue will already be striking more forward as it should.

The use of *top* in short single tonguing will give way to the double tongue consonants, thereby making the articulation pronunciation in slow motion *tak-kat tak-kat*.

It is important to develop an overlap between a fast single tongue and a slow double tongue to enable the switch to take place at different tempos. Many players have said "it's too fast for single tonguing and too slow for double tonguing." Having an overlap area solves this playing dilemma.

Faster and more legato double tonguing = da-ga da-ga: This attack is less percussive than *ta-ka*. In legato playing, the first note of each group may sound clearer with *ta* rather than *da*, thus making the line of legato double-tongued notes *ta-ga da-ga da-ga*.

Fastest and most-legato double tonguing = da-dle da-dle: The harder each *d* is pronounced, the better the definition of the notes. Depending on the register being played, the vowel sound will vary from *daw-dle daw-dle* in the low register through *da-dle da-dle* in the middle register to *dee-dle dee-dle* and *di-dle di-dle* in the high register. The term *doodle tonguing* (which many players call this kind of double tonguing) is misleading because pronouncing *oo* tends to purse the lips and can impede the effectiveness of the articulation.

Double Tongue Etude

Vivace

Double Tongue Etude, Vivace

The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with the markings 'T K T K' above the first four notes. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 4, 6, 4, and 6 above various notes. The sixth staff includes the marking 'accel.' below the first note. The eighth staff begins with the marking 'Tempo I' above the first note. The piece concludes with a double bar line. A large diagonal watermark reading 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the center of the page.

Triple Tonguing

Triple tonguing is similar to double tonguing, but with groupings of three notes rather than groupings of two or four notes.

ta-ka ta-ka becomes *ta-ta-ka ta-ta-ka* and sometimes *ta-ka-ta ta-ka-ta*

da-ga da-ga becomes *da-da-ga da-da-ga*

NOTE: In dadle tonguing, *da-dle da-dle* does NOT become *da-da-dle da-da-dle* but *da-dle-da da-dle-da*.

One great advantage in using *da-dle* tonguing is that double and triple tonguing can be mixed without a tendency to become tongue-tied. For the following example, it is tricky to play *ta-ka ta-ka ta-ta-ka ta-ka ta-ta-ka ta-ka* or *da-ga da-ga da-da-ga da-ga da-da-ga da-ga*. But it is relatively easy to play *da-dle da-dle da-dle-da da-dle da-dle-da da-dle*. Dadle tonguing also works well for long lines of notes and continuous playing.



Preview Only

Preview Only

Triple Tongue Etude

Presto

T T K

5 5 5 4

6 7

7

(.)

Lip Break Articulation - Linear

For the occasional rapid figure, consider the following:

T = tongue

1. *[Musical notation for Exercise 1: Two measures of eighth-note patterns in 6/8 time, bass clef, one sharp. Tongue (T) and lip break (V) markings are present above the notes.]*

2. *[Musical notation for Exercise 2: Two measures of eighth-note patterns in 6/8 time, bass clef, one sharp. Tongue (T) and lip break (V) markings are present above the notes.]*

Tonguing the first and last note of each figure and using aggressive lip breaks on the in-between notes is an effective articulation pattern. It also reinforces the time.

The exercises above can also be played using *da-dle-da da* for #1, and *da-dle-da da-dle-da da* for #2. This will make it smoother (less forceful).

There are many such scales and scale fragments waiting to be explored.

Special Bass Trombone (and F Attachment) Lip Break Articulations In Combination With The Valve(s).

Tongue the first and last notes

[Musical notation for Exercise 1: 6/8 time, bass clef, one sharp. Notes: 1 (v), 4, #5 (v), b3 (v). Tongue (T) at start and end.]

[Musical notation for Exercise 2: 6/8 time, bass clef, one sharp. Notes: b2 (v), b3 (v), 6, 5, 1 (v), b2 (v), 4, #5 (v), b2 (v). Tongue (T) at start and end.]

[Musical notation for Exercise 3: 6/8 time, bass clef, one sharp. Notes: 1 (v), b2 (v), 5, 4, 4, #5, 7, 6. Tongue (T) at start and end.]

[Musical notation for Exercise 4: 6/8 time, bass clef, one sharp. Notes: b5 (v), b3 (v), 5, #5, 7. Tongue (T) at start and end.]

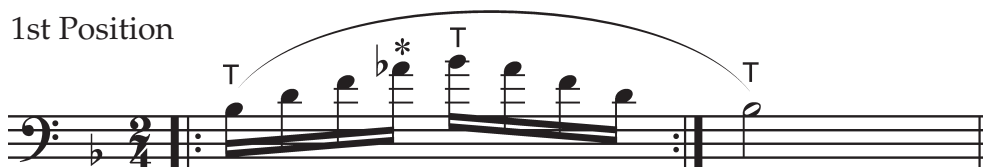
Experiment with other linear and arpeggio figures.

Lip Break Articulation - Arpeggios

Although it is recommended to use a soft tongue on overtones, sometimes a lip break approach can be used effectively.

The overtone series in each position allows for lip break articulations.

1st Position



Play also in 2nd - 7th positions

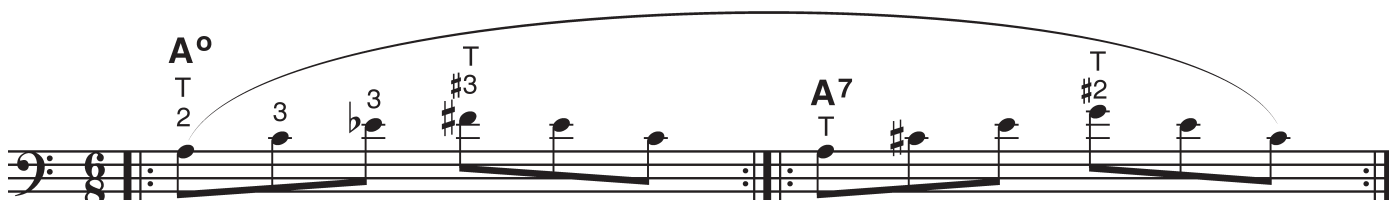
Set your embouchure for the high note before you start.

NOTE - (T) means optional tongue. Sometimes tonguing an intermediate note can give the passage a different twist.



Play also in 2nd - 7th positions

Simple (and more complex) chord patterns can also be worked.



Play also 3rd (Ab) - 6th (F) positions.

* Note: the out of tune 7th of the chord (Ab) is usable in this context, at a moderate tempo.

Problems Of The Initial Attack

Many players have encountered the inability to produce a clear precise initial attack when they want to; it's similar to stuttering. The solution to this also opens a playing concept which has many benefits.

The Problem:

Locking: A player breathes too early and holds or locks his breath until ready to play a note. This stops the rhythmic flow of breathing and blowing. It often increases anxiety and can also interfere with the concept of meter.

Freezing: A player takes a breath, and when he wants to make an attack, he can't. He freezes. Many players with this issue find that they have to resort to various emergency methods of getting the tone started. Some of these are:

- a *who* attack - no tongue, only a push of breath.
- a lip attack (*paa*) - the formation of a *p* often distorts the embouchure and can seriously hamper the attack.
- a badly-timed attack. In the desperation or anxiety of trying to make an entrance, a player sometimes overcompensates by attacking too early or too late.

The Solution:

Most players with a freezing or locking problem find that they can attack correctly when there is a conductor to cue them or if there is a strong rhythmic feeling to the music they are playing. The player's attention for the moment is focused on the beat and he responds to it by making the attack in the right place. The lesson here is to play everything rhythmically in relation to a beat -- set, breathe and attack in tempo.

Whether there is a strong beat to respond to or whether you have to produce your own rhythmic impetus, you should feel your attack as part of a rhythm. If the music is spirited, there is no problem as the beat is strong. When the tempo is slow or *rubato* (indefinite) you will need to simulate a beat to respond to.

1. Tap your foot for two measures at a moderate tempo in common time.
2. Tap the first measure to set the tempo then attack a middle-register note on the first beat of the second measure. Breathe in rhythm on the beat before your entrance (beat 4 of the first measure).

Example: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
 breathe attack

Breathe so that the height of your breath turns into the attack, almost as though you were still breathing in. Turning the in-breath into an attack should be instantaneous and should occur on the beat.

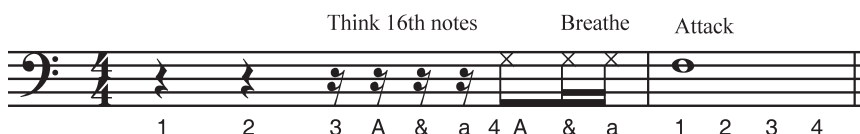
Do this same exercise and attack on the second beat, third beat, etc..

At a slow tempo, you will have to subdivide in order to get the rhythmic impetus. Breathe on the “and” of beat 4.

Example: 1 2 3 4 & 1 2 3 4

In an even slower tempo you might have to subdivide into 16th notes. Make up a rhythmic figure to guide your attack.

Relating to a rhythm or a beat will eliminate the indecision which used to precede your attack.



NOTE: A good drummer in a stage band will often set up the band’s attack by playing a rhythmic figure in front of it. Even a simple 8th note can do the trick. Often the drummer’s rhythmic set up will become an important part of the arrangement, anticipated by the listener as well as the player. The attack, by its very nature, is rhythmic.

Time

- Time is not only important, it's crucial.
- Time is the vehicle for all rhythms.
- Time is tempo combined with feel (i.e. swing, straight time).*
- Tempo is the amount of time in between the beats, or the pace of the music.
- Tempo markings indicate this pace (adagio, moderato, allegro, etc.).

How you play in time has to do with relating to a pulse whether it is an obvious or a subtle one. In a big band the rhythm section usually generates this pulse. Playing "on top of the beat" or playing "laid-back" or "dead-on" are various stylistic interpretations or ways of relating to the beat. Without a rhythm section (as in an orchestra or small ensemble, or in a big band when the rhythm section stops playing), the pulse must be felt accurately and collectively. Sometimes bass trombone players need to anticipate the pulse to offset the tendency of low notes to speak or project more slowly.

Having complete command of your instrument -- being able to play anything at any time with good tone and precise attack -- is a prerequisite to playing in good time. The moment you have to think about the mechanics of playing your instrument is the moment that you lose time.

Time needs to be developed. It does not just happen. The use of a metronome can be a big help in practicing because you'll notice immediately when you start to slow down so you can correct the problem as it occurs. It will help you come to terms with matching articulations to a tempo.

Playing busy passages too loud at a fast tempo often causes lagging, and playing too soft at a slow tempo often weakens the effect of the ensemble. There is a big difference between hanging in or being dragged along by the rest of the band at a fast tempo, and being on top of it to make real contributions to the overall performance. The ability to play the written notes, balance and blend with the ensemble, bring out important lines, accent a figure, play a solo, and lead a section is meaningless unless it is done in time.

Sacrificing the complexities of a figure to the overall time is the way to go. You can always pick up the dropped notes next time around. Go for the beats. Playing every note, molding a phrase, etc. are second in importance to keeping the time.

When playing the bass trombone, nail the beats with the notes. Time is of the essence; making beautiful sounds, is secondary. Go with the rhythm section, be a part of the rhythm section, and place your notes accordingly. There are moments when you *are* the bass and other moments when you *are* the drums, and still other moments when you are supplementing as well as complementing. Pop in those short two or three note solos with certainty and confidence.

* A "groove" is the combination of tempo and feel.

Range

High Notes

To play a higher note:

- pucker your lips toward the center to narrow the aperture. Some players stretch their lips, usually downward.
- blow more air to intensify the air stream.
- change the vowel from *a* to *ee* to raise the back of the tongue.

Do this all simultaneously.

To play a very high note:

- hear the note first, then “taste” it (hear it/feel it before playing it). When you can hear the note that you are going after and can anticipate the expected resistance in producing it, you are *tasting* the note. Every note on the trombone tastes different. Develop this ability and you will never miss.
- narrow the aperture to help intensify the air stream. Some players also direct the air upward.

When playing one note to a higher one, the aperture gets smaller and the air pressure intensifies, like a garden hose when you put a finger over the end to make a smaller diameter. The tongue creates a smaller air space inside the mouth. The original note gets overblown and the next note in the overtone series comes into being. This process continues well into the extreme upper register.

On higher notes, the tone may have a tendency to sound weaker as the muscles tire. To counteract this, once you're able to produce a high note consistently, you can make the aperture bigger and blow more air to strengthen the sound.

High note ingredients:

1. Tighter lips puckered either inward or stretched or both, depending upon the mouthpiece.
2. Raised tongue.
3. Air stream - enables high register playing and takes the strain off the lip muscles. Narrow the air stream, get a higher note. Open the aperture, give more body to the note.

Now work to develop strength and endurance as well as a feel for the notes that you are after. The differences between one high note and the next are slight but significant. Each note feels different.

Once you can produce high notes, use them. Play the upper register in various contexts (warm ups, tunes) to increase your familiarity with it.

Rest often when developing the high register.

High Register Lyric Etude

(observe the rest measures)

Andante

3 2

4 5

42

High Register Tongued Etude

(accent and shorten the quarter notes)

Allegretto

f

mp

rit.

Steinmeyer's Approach To Higher And Highest Notes

Equipment does indeed help with range. While it is possible to play very high notes on large equipment for a limited amount of time, it will always sound better when the equipment matches the register. Given the right equipment, determination will help.

There are two common approaches:

1. Very High Notes: Approach the note by scales, arpeggios or cross-grain* rips. Push the parameters. Go for playing in context by incorporating the note in a musical phrase. Avoid overdoing it. Stop short of getting tired and rest a bit. Pick it up later with a fresh lip. This approach incorporates the high notes into your general technique. Work the notes, develop them and improve your consistency.
2. Even Higher Notes: Hear the note and touch it. This approach works well for the very high notes, those that you can't play, yet. Make a few attempts and then stop and rest. Go for a very short note. Don't try for a big sound because a squeak will do for starters. Hear the note, go for it, rest. Then do it again and rest. And again, then rest. Stop for a while and go on to something else. The next day repeat the process and try to improve your batting average. When you nail it, remember how it felt. When you start becoming consistent at producing the note and developing a taste for it, try playing it a little louder and/or longer. Cultivate it. Your squeezing for it will give way to blowing for it. At the same time, make a few attempts to squeak out an even higher note using the same process. There is no upper limit -- the highest trombone note has not yet been played!

In his formative years, Dave Steinmeyer listened to and copied from recordings. He copied trombone solos, and after some time he would not only play the solo, but would continue playing with the next part of the recording. Often he often found himself playing along with the lead trumpet in the same register.

This was a process spread out over a long period of time and is still ongoing. Trying to jam it into a few practice sessions will not do the trick. It requires systematic development and training, like running or weight lifting.

The determining factor is your commitment. You need to stay with it on a regular basis. Without consistent practice, it will all dissipate very quickly, starting with your endurance. It's attainable, commit to it.

* Lip the overtones upward while lengthening the slide. The final note will be further out on the slide than the beginning note.

Dave is self-taught. He learned the trombone by listening and experimenting. By listening a lot. He has musical talent, interest and drive. He practices tunes in all keys and he improvises on them. He practices all styles from all eras.

He has developed the ability to play music of any type with accuracy and integrity. If he plays a Dorsey solo or a Stan Kenton lead trombone part, he brings an accurate representation to the performance of it. He has developed this ability to a degree shared by few.

He practices the defining solos of players from the past. If there's something elusive in a solo, he finds a way to bring it about. He has always had this intense commitment and he puts in the time.

When he plays lead trombone Dave brings all of this experience and ability with him. He has developed more than one way of approaching a piece of music. When he hears something that's challenging to him, he learns how to do it. This might be playing pedal tones, tonguing a passage, articulating a tricky figure, jumping from high to low or vice versa. Through his imaginative practice he has developed and honed his abilities. His mentors have always been the innovative and exceptional players.

Dave started the same as everyone else. He learned the basic rudiments. He traveled the standard paths by learning to play notes, scales, long tones, intervals, phrasing, etc.. Once the rudiments were learned, he became interested in exploring other paths and chose those which led him to his special abilities. Everything he does is attainable but has a price. The price is commitment, interest, time, motivation, drive, curiosity, and a positive attitude. Saying "I could never do that" was not part of his process and shouldn't be part of yours. Instead say to yourself "If he can do it, I can do it. If I *can* do it, I *will* do it."

You'll be pleased and perhaps surprised to see how one technique corresponds with, and often influences, another. Listen, copy, expand, ask questions, find answers and correct your mistakes.

Low Notes

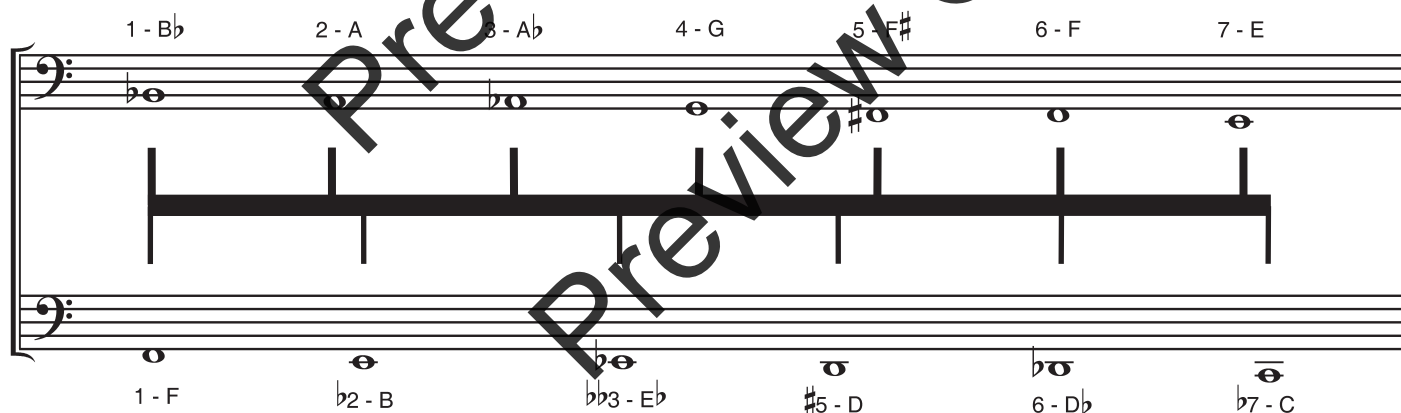
Play a descending scale until you reach your lowest note. This is where we can start to analyze and explore. A common perception is that high notes are hard and low notes are easy because “all you have to do is loosen up, right?” Wrong! *Don't* loosen up for low notes. Keep the corners of your embouchure firm, open your mouth wider, blow more air, support the sound.

Trigger or F attachment notes -- the notes between low E and pedal Bb -- are the most elusive. Start with what you know. If you can play from the low register, second-line Bb down to E below the staff with a decent sound, you're well on your way. Play a low F in 6th position. Now play it with the valve in 1st position. Match the two notes.

NOTE: You might have to adjust your embouchure for the valve note in order to get the same response as the 6th position note. The bore of the F attachment tubing is larger on many trombones and often causes the F attachment notes to be tubbier or thicker in sound, lacking the projection of the non-valve low notes. Pulling the corners of your mouth back slightly and spreading the lips a bit often helps to increase projection and focus. Work on matching the sound of the 6th position F with the sound of the valve F in 1st position.

Play a low E in 7th position, then play it in flat 2nd position with the valve. Learn the F attachment positions because they differ from the regular trombone positions. The lower you go, the distance between notes increases. The F attachment only allows six positions. They are referred to in relation to the regular tenor trombone slide positions 1st, flat 2nd, very flat 3rd, sharp 5th, 6th and flat 7th.

Below is a diagram of the correct slide positions for the F attachment notes:



Now that the sounds of F and E have been matched with each other, go to the Eb with the valve (bb3rd position). Open your mouth wider and match the Eb with the E just above it. Opening your mouth wider will also require more air. Repeat the process for the D, Db and C. Most trombone F attachments have a long tuning slide which you will need to extend its full length to play the B natural (the next note downward). In the 1940's, 50's and early 60's, the bass trombonist had to learn another tuning of the F attachment to accommodate this low B, called a *flat E* tuning. It facilitated reaching the B but changed the positions above it. This process was clumsy and tedious.

Low Notes Daily Exercise

The following exercise will help you develop low notes with a strong sound, a good attack, projection and a solid core.

If you commit 15-20 minutes every day to do this exercise, the benefits will include gaining a strong low register (tone and attack), greatly extending your low register, and realizing a tremendous increase in your strength and endurance. Just do this exercise for a week and you'll notice the improvement, particularly on F attachment notes. Keep it as a regular part of your warm up routine and you'll keep improving.

Start on low Bb (or low F in 1st position with the valve), and play four measures of whole notes at a moderate tempo (quarter note = 72-78). Focus on attack, producing a clear and steady tone, then diminuendo. The attack is the loudest part of the note (mezzo forte or forte). It should be a bell tone - the attack first, then a rapid and steady decrease in volume until the next note.

After you've played four measures of whole notes, play four measures of half notes at the same tempo with the same focus. Let the note diminish in volume and separate it from the next note by the new attack. After the four measures of half notes, play four measures of quarter notes separated only by the attack.

Now starting with 8th notes, play four measures of very short notes. The focus needs to be on the attack, the pitch of the note immediately following the attack, and the abrupt stopping of the note. Use the word *top* or *tot* to aid in the articulation. A measure of 8th notes will then be articulated: *TOP-top-top-top Top-top-top-top*. The downbeat attack (*TOP*) is accented the most; the attack on the third beat (*Top*) is also accented, but a bit lighter. All notes are to be played as short as possible without obscuring the pitch.

Next play four measures of 8th note triplets with the same focus -- short notes, accent the downbeats of the first and third beats, accurate pitch on each short note. Next play four measures of 16th notes the same way, ending on a long note. This should all be played in 1st position.

Now do it all a half-step lower. Continue until you have played six or seven different notes. The exercise will take 15-20 minutes to complete. It will get harder as you continue. Fatigue and dizziness will be factors for a while. Rest for perhaps 10-30 seconds if you feel that you are starting to become tired or light headed. Then come back to the exercise and pick it up where you left off. This exercise needs to be played every day.

Playing suggestions:

1. Play only four measures of each kind of note; don't repeat anything. If the note doesn't sound good, repair it with the next note.
2. Breathe whenever you need to and continue where you left off. Try to breathe symmetrically. A good approach would be to breathe after each whole note, after the second half note, after the 4th quarter note. If you need a breath after the 4th eighth note, breathe and then come back in on the 5th eighth note.
3. Make each note sound better than the previous one.
4. As you play lower notes you will need to open your mouth more and give more air to support the sound.
5. Don't be discouraged by not sounding good, especially on the fast tonguing. Keep going. It will improve. Stick with it, keep trying, rest often, and pick up where you left off.

As you develop a good consistent tone and attack, lower the starting note. Work it into the trigger range (Eb - B) and into the pedal range (pedal Bb downward).

Here is the written exercise starting on low Bb:

Preview Only

Once you can play this exercise consistently, combine notes for variety and for further development.



Open your mouth and keep the embouchure muscles engaged. Don't loosen up. For each successive lower note, open your mouth significantly wider and put more air through the instrument. Opening very wide and blowing a lot of air increases the size of the core (or center) of the note dramatically. Develop the core and avoid the spread.

Use more tongue area for the attack (override the textbook approach of keeping your tongue behind your upper teeth). Your open mouth, air stream, and tongue movement will be exaggerated and even more so the lower you go. This is necessary in order to develop a full centered tone. You will eventually overcome any dizziness or fatigue.

As the exercise progresses it gets physically harder. The trombone gets heavier, especially in the long positions and your jaw may hurt. Rest often and stick with it. Conquer it and enjoy the results. As you make yourself get through the day of doing this (with plenty of resting in the process) you'll find the second day a bit easier. As you meet and get accustomed to the demands of the exercise it will start to set in and you'll be playing it with less discomfort. Soon this will be the way you approach low notes, you'll sound good all the time, and you'll stop hurting.

This also works well for pedal note development, with one additional consideration: aim the pedal note slightly on the low side of the pitch and use more air than you think necessary to produce the tone. This will blow it back to correct pitch. It also deepens the sound of the note and gives it a bigger core.

The ability to attack low notes and to produce an immediate good clear sound in time and on demand is perhaps the most important aspect of playing bass trombone. Instant response keeps the time. Needing to think about and prepare tone and attack slows down this response and leads to playing behind the beat, which is a common problem among bass trombone players. The 8th note through 16th note parts of the above exercise will help you gain this ability.

Lower And Lowest Notes

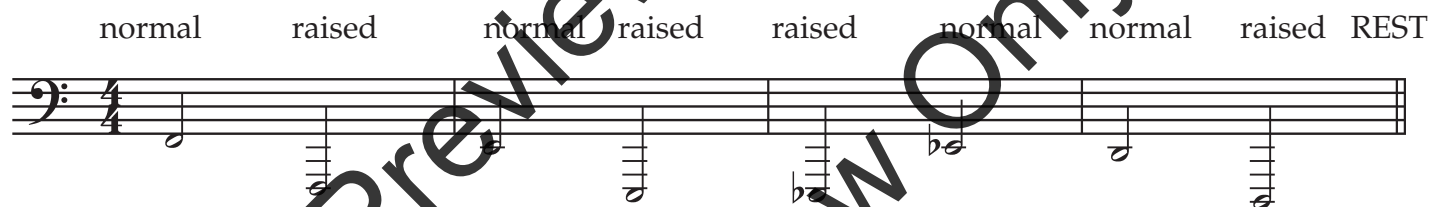
Usually the pedal notes from Bb to G or Gb can be played with the normal embouchure with good tone and volume. This section will approach lower notes and louder volume.

The Raised Embouchure: Start with pedal F. This note can be played with a normal embouchure after some developmental practice. However, it may not have the same volume as the other notes and it might have a tendency not to speak from time to time. Now raise the mouthpiece so that the bottom rim sits into your lower lip and the top rim is closer to your nose. This will free the top lip to vibrate noticeably, like the flap of an awning in a heavy wind. The bottom lip will anchor the mouthpiece and the top lip will be free to flap. This will give you a very loud sound if you use a lot of air.

It might work better initially on pedal Gb or pedal E or perhaps even on trigger/pedal Eb. Your first outburst of sound might startle you with its loudness. If it happens on the low F, try the next lower note or two; the results should be similar.

You'll notice that:

1. The notes will respond at a loud volume. With practice you'll be able to soften them.
2. You will soon be able to extend your range downward to the lowest trigger/pedal note (C on tenor F attachment trombones, and double pedal Bb on double valve bass trombones). By extending the F and D tuning slides on the bass trombone you can get to the lowest A on the piano.



You can extend the lower limits even further by going into the territory of many trumpet players who are able to play very clear trumpet pedal tones which are two octaves below their normal low register. The corresponding notes on the trombone would start at the double-pedal Bb (in 1st position) and continue downward. Soon you'll be *flapping* notes which you cannot hear the actual pitch of (identifiable perhaps by a seismograph or a humpback whale).

Use the raised embouchure for very low notes and for loud volume. However when you *practice* low notes (pedals and trigger/pedals), play them with a normal embouchure even if the notes sound weak or are elusive. They'll develop. Obtaining the feel of playing these low notes normally will give you more control when you raise the mouthpiece.

Practicing descending scales will require you to develop an overlap - notes which you can play either way (normal or raised). If you can overlap four or five notes, it will allow you more freedom in changing from one setting to the other as the music might demand.

Avoid a line of demarcation (i.e. a fixed point at which you stop using one embouchure and engage the other). This would be severely limiting. Practice descending scales changing your embouchure from normal to raised on different notes and develop a feel for the change. The change will usually occur somewhere between pedal G and pedal Eb.

Example: a descending scale fragment with suggested embouchure-change points.

R= raised embouchure N= normal embouchure



A similar scale fragment but with different overlap points.



A Word About Bass Trombones And Mouthpieces

The second valve was added to the bass trombone in the 1950's to allow the playing of a low B (natural) without the need to retune the attachment. It facilitated the playing of the glissando in Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra*. Further use of the second valve showed that it would be more serviceable if it were tuned to D rather than flat-E as it originally was. The D tuning allowed more technical possibilities. As it often does with new innovations, the bass trombone started separating itself from the section to take on a new identity. Balance and blend often became elusive. The bass trombone got larger, more complex and heavier. Bass trombone mouthpieces expanded. It's starting to assimilate a bit these days, but the instrument's capabilities have certainly increased. The choice of equipment is extensive and the areas of specialty have grown. As an aspiring bass trombonist you might at this point learn the instrument (tone and technique), develop low (and pedal) notes, learn the valve/slide combinations. Find your areas of strength and interest, and then get the equipment to match.

The following etudes are comprehensive studies, and once learned can be used as warm up material to preserve and maintain a high level of proficiency. They are good for daily practice, and can also be helpful in bringing you back to speed after a lay off.

F Attachment Comprehensive Etude

Slow

Preview Only

The image displays a page of musical notation for a bass line, consisting of seven staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as bass clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A large, diagonal watermark reading "Preview Only" is overlaid across the center of the page. The notation includes several triplets (marked with a '3') and a section labeled "Tempto I". The final staff ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

Bass Trombone Etude

Moderato



A musical score for Bass Trombone, titled "Bass Trombone Etude" and marked "Moderato". The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece consists of ten staves of music. The first staff starts with a half note G2, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a half note G2. The second staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a half note G2. The third staff features a series of eighth notes, followed by a quarter rest, then eighth notes, ending with a half note G2. The fourth staff starts with a half note G2, followed by eighth notes, ending with a half note G2. The fifth staff begins with a series of eighth notes, followed by a quarter rest, then eighth notes, ending with a half note G2. The sixth staff starts with a series of eighth notes, followed by a quarter rest, then eighth notes, ending with a half note G2. The seventh staff begins with a series of eighth notes, followed by a quarter rest, then eighth notes, ending with a half note G2. The eighth staff starts with a series of eighth notes, followed by a quarter rest, then eighth notes, ending with a half note G2. The ninth staff begins with a series of eighth notes, followed by a quarter rest, then eighth notes, ending with a half note G2. The tenth staff starts with a series of eighth notes, followed by a quarter rest, then eighth notes, ending with a half note G2. A large, diagonal watermark reading "Preview Only" is overlaid across the center of the page.

Pedal Tone Etude

Andante

* v = valve

Intervals

The articulation of wide intervals often involves some resetting (adjustment) of the embouchure. Many trombone players have in their formative years been cautioned against moving the embouchure when changing registers, but if you watch professional players, you can see them readjusting their embouchure for different registers. Often this adjustment takes place inside the mouthpiece and it is not very apparent at first glance.

When playing a lyrical solo or a melodious etude that contains a high note, set your lip a bit tighter at the beginning of the phrase to accommodate it. If there are large interval jumps without much time to readjust, set for the more difficult register (whether high or low) and make do with that setting for the other notes. Set for the important notes.



Set for the low A.



Interval Etude

Play the following etude slowly at first. Play short 8th and 16th notes and rest often to keep from tiring your lip. Later, increase the tempo. This is another comprehensive etude that can be used to get back in shape after a layoff.

Moderato

The Moderato section consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff contains a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals). The second staff continues this sequence, ending with a double bar line. A large diagonal watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the middle of the page.

simile

The simile section consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff continues the sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff continues the sequence, ending with a double bar line. A large diagonal watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the middle of the page.

Slower

The Slower section consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff continues the sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff continues the sequence, ending with a double bar line. A large diagonal watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the middle of the page.

The final section consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff continues the sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff continues the sequence, ending with a double bar line. A large diagonal watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the middle of the page.

Ornaments

A small 8th note with a line through the flag is a *grace note*. It is played just before (and as an ornament to) the note that follows it. It takes its time from the previous beat.



Note: A small note without a line through the flag is an *appoggiatura*, not a grace note.

A *mordent* is a quick turn (written note, upper neighbor, followed by the written note) occurring rapidly on the beat. On the trombone, this is a *lip turn* (a fast lip slur).



At a moderate or fast tempo both the grace note and the upper note of the lip turn (mordent) work well if they are played in the same position as the main note. The desired effect is preserved by the speed of the turn.

Grace Note:



Mordent:



Sometimes at a slower tempo, there is time to play the actual grace note or mordent in its regular position.

Lip-Turn Etude

Allegretto

This musical score is for a piece titled "Lip-Turn Etude" in the tempo of "Allegretto". It is written for a single melodic line in bass clef, with a 6/8 time signature. The key signature consists of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score is divided into seven systems, each containing a single staff. The notation includes various musical symbols: eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, slurs, trills (marked with "tr"), and triplets (marked with a "3"). A dynamic marking of "p" (piano) appears at the beginning of the fourth system. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the seventh system. A large, diagonal watermark reading "Preview Only" is overlaid across the center of the page.

Equipment

For the accomplished trombonist a do-it-all trombone is generally his/her main instrument. Tenor trombones with F attachments are very popular.

Custom vs. Factory Stock Model

There are not a lot of differences between one trombone and another. One may give a crisper lip slur response between overtones, another may allow pitch flexibility within a tone. One may have a bell which vibrates a certain way, while another bell doesn't seem to vibrate at all. The trombone slide may be squared or rounded off at the bottom, etc.. The average player will notice some differences, while the professional player will notice more (perhaps very slight) differences. The better a player gets, the more demanding about finer details he/she becomes. A warmer sound, the ability to play extra loud (or soft), a certain weight or heft, a good high D or E, etc..

Players are always looking for the perfect instrument, and some actually come close to it. There may be no discernable difference between one instrument and another, but sometimes one "feels" better in an undefined sort of way. Sometimes one balances better. These are all small differences which are worth extra money. When you think of the concert violinist who is willing to spend \$50,000 on a bow (which the average player can't tell from a \$500 bow) because of a certain springiness or bounce, you begin to understand the importance of small details to the fine player. When you start to outplay your trombone's capabilities, it's time to upgrade.

Unless you play like Dave Steinmeyer you will not have a need for his custom horn. You can play on Steinmeyer's equipment, but until you've walked the walk, you will not sound like him.

Going beyond general all-around playing into the world of specialization requires additional commitment. There are many great trombonists who have made their mark playing in the high register, but who can also play excellent low and pedal notes. Dave Steinmeyer has reached the highest level of lead trombone playing and high register solo ability...but he could also play bass trombone in a pinch because he has learned the basics.

The F Attachment Trombone

If you are especially interested in the high register, play lead trombone, and use the high register in your jazz solos, you will have little need for an F attachment trombone. It will just be extra weight.

Should you prefer the low notes and like playing bass trombone parts, you should consider a double valve bass trombone (larger mouthpiece, 2 valves and bigger bore). Studying the bass trombone will require you to really learn the low register, the valve notes, slide/valve combinations and, for that matter, the valve itself including oiling, cleaning and re-stringing. Bass trombones are also much heavier and are more expensive.

Example: Play entirely in 1st position using the F valve as indicated (v).



Maintenance

Cleaning The Slide: Wrap cheese cloth around the trombone cleaning rod making sure to cover the tip (don't leave any exposed metal). Wrap it tightly to fit easily into the outer slide. Insert the rod and twist it out. Do the same for the other side of the slide. For the inner slide, insert the cleaning rod without cheese cloth through the bottom slide first. Thread some cheese cloth through the eye of the cleaning rod and draw it back through. Don't force it; use less cheese cloth if it's too tight a fit. Do the same for the top inner slide. Throw any dirty cheese cloth away and continue with fresh cheesecloth.

Lubricating The Slide: In the big band era (1930's-50's) the standard slide lubricant was *Ponds* cold cream. In the late 50's, they added beeswax to the formula, which was probably better for cosmetic use, but not for trombone slides. The 60's and 70's saw other lubricants come into play including other brands of cold cream (*Trombotine*), silicone based products (*Amazing* shaving product) and even aerosol cans of floor waxes (*Behold* was popular at North Texas State University for a while). Instrument companies also came out with their own refinements of the above (*Superslick*, *Slide O Mix*). Many players have recently found that *Ponds Dry Skin Cream* (not cold cream) works well, and it's readily available in any pharmacy section.

- Place a small amount of Dry Skin Cream on your finger and then smear it on the stockings of both inner slides (the stocking is the wider part near the bottom).
- Rub it around the stockings so that it covers the area. Remember you're only using a little bit of the cream. Next, use a water squirter (a plastic container which will produce a small stream or spray) and wet the entire inner slide. Put the top inner slide into the top of the outer slide and rotate while you lengthen and shorten the slide. This spreads the cream and water mixture. Repeat all of this for the bottom slide as well.
- Put the slides together (top and bottom) and wet again. Use the water squirter frequently as needed. By using water liberally, the slide should be good for a few hours of playing (or a few days of standing) before a new application is needed.

Tuning Slides: Products such as Lanolin, Vaseline and tuning slide grease (even cork grease) can be used depending on the tightness or stubbornness of the tuning slides. If the tuning slides are stubborn or if they're going to be used often, Vaseline usually works well. If the tuning slide is loose and moves by itself, cork grease often firms it up. If it is really loose, try a bit of candle wax.

Valves And Valve Caps: Valve oil or even *Singer* sewing machine oil works for the rotary valve(s) depending upon the amount of play in the valve. If there's more play, thicker oil. Three-in-one or even motor oil works for the external trigger springs of a mechanical action valve, as well as for the water key springs.

For the valve covers (caps) as well as for the rotary nut which secures the slide section to the bell section, a bit of cork grease (just a little on the outer threads) often does the trick.

Stringing A Valve: Some newer models have mechanical action, but many trombones have a strung valve.

- Dacron fishing cord, 40-50 pound test, works well. Don't use nylon as it stretches.
- Cut a length 8 inches or so and tie a simple overhand knot at one end. On the rod which operates the valve rotor there are two holes; one is near a screw and the other is further away.
- Pass the string through the further away hole from the outside inward toward the valve rotor. Pass the string around the valve rotor counter clockwise approximately half way, and then bring it clockwise completely around the small screw (which you've already loosened to accommodate the string).
- Continue the string around the second half of the rotor and run it parallel to the rod until it reaches the hole (near the screw) on the rod. Pass the string through this hole, from the inside to the outside, and pass it clockwise around the screw on the rod (which you've already loosened to accommodate the string).
- Position the rotor and trigger to your comfort and tighten the screw on the rotor first.
- Then pull the string around the rod screw taut (not over tight) and tighten the rod screw.
- Clip any excess string but leave enough to grab if you need to further adjust it.

Freeing A Stuck Slide: If it's dented, see a repairman. If it's misaligned, try the following: separate the outer from the inner slide, line them up and see if the inner slide is wider or narrower than the outer slide at the point of entry. If it's wider, carefully put some inward pressure at the brace of the inner slide(s) to make them slightly narrower. If narrower, put the pressure outward. Do this gradually. Test the alignment and repeat the process as necessary. If you are uncomfortable doing this, see a repairman.

Freeing A Stuck Mouthpiece: Don't twist it. Use a mouthpiece puller as it will pull the mouthpiece straight out. If there is no mouthpiece puller available you might carefully try the following: find a wooden door jamb and grip the mouthpiece by its rim between the back of the door and its jamb and pull the slide assembly straight out, leaving the mouthpiece (hopefully) between the back of the door and the jam. If this doesn't work, see a repairman.

Performance Considerations

Doubling

Trombone, alto trombone, bass trombone, valve trombone, euphonium (baritone horn), bass trumpet and sometimes tuba are all reasonable and related doubles. They share a similar mouthpiece both in size and shape.

Euphonium: Playing euphonium is an excellent way to learn to play legato on the trombone. Simulate the euphonium valves on the trombone. Play a note, and then go to the next note immediately, firmly and decisively with no hesitation. The immediacy of the change between one note and the next brings about legato playing. Of course, the euphonium player moves less than an inch and you sometimes need to move the slide over two feet, but the idea and the process is the same.

When doubling on euphonium, there are 3 important things to consider:

1. Preserve the angle of the mouthpiece. Avoid reseating the instrument in a way that's different than the way you are used to with the trombone. Balance the instrument.
2. Allow the euphonium's inherent characteristics to emerge. Don't try to make it another trombone. Watch out for over-blowing, don't try to project its sound like a trombone, and allow some spread in its sound.
3. Learn valve technique. It isn't enough to know which valves are for which notes. There are many ways to get tangled up in valve combinations. Valves need to be systematically learned. There are many exercises for this.

Valve Trombone: While it can project and cut through the instrumental mass, it is still a darker and rounder sound than a tenor trombone. Valve trombones were very popular as operatic instruments in Italy in the 1800's and are most effective in today's jazz bands as well as for solo playing.

Bass Trumpet: It produces a much lighter sound than euphonium or trombone. It's a concentrated small sound and a unique solo sound.

Tuba: Listen to good tuba players and emulate them. Some players have a deep large sound while others have more of an edge to their sound and more projection. A bass trombone mouthpiece with an adapter will work on tuba, but the larger tuba mouthpiece will enhance the sound.

There are some superb players who have had no problem changing mouthpieces or instruments. Tommy Dorsey could play trumpet. James Morrison is extraordinary on trumpet as well as trombone. Howard Johnson can play baritone sax, tuba and flugelhorn. Dave Barger on plays trombone and tuba. Wycliffe Gordon plays trombone, tuba and trumpet, as does Tom Malone. Charlie Vernon plays excellent tenor trombone in addition to bass trombone.

While many players play several unrelated instruments, their playing is (with a few exceptions) generally jazz-related. Jazz is a venue which allows for a more personal sound and requires less conformity than the symphony orchestra which needs a certain basic instrumental sound to begin with in order to blend with the other instruments and preserve the integrity of the ensemble. Doubling within the symphony orchestra usually involves an instrument that is closely related to the player's main instrument. The trombone/euphonium double would be a possible exception (the obvious slide vs. valves is offset by mouthpiece similarity).

Comparison Of Playing Arenas

(Symphonic, Commercial, Big Band, Jazz)

Symphonic playing requires certain techniques and sounds. So does big band playing. Commercial playing often allows a bit more leeway regarding individual style. Jazz allows for much individual expression and personal sound.

Duke Ellington had many different kinds of players in his band, but the band always had its own style which was known to change from time to time depending on the personnel. The band would incorporate new and different sounds. There was a marked difference between the sounds of Duke Ellington and Count Basie. There was less difference between the Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman bands and still less difference between the New York Philharmonic and the Chicago Symphony. There is almost no difference between New York and Los Angeles studio musicians. And there is a huge difference between jazz soloists.

In the studios, you are judged by your proficiency, familiarity of styles, sight reading ability, attitude, professionalism, and quickness to assimilate without asking questions. In the big band you need proficiency, stamina, a cooperative attitude and some knowledge of the band's style. In a jazz band, you need the ability to play and relate to jazz and to interplay with others. In the symphony orchestra, proficiency, familiarity with the repertoire and its general interpretation, and the ability to balance and blend with the section(s) are vital.

Indoor vs. Outdoor Playing

Practicing

When practicing *legato* outdoors, you have no room acoustics to lean on, so you must work harder to develop a beautiful singing legato and phrasing ability. When you come back indoors, you'll hear the difference. It is like a baseball player taking practice swings with a weighted bat before he steps up to the plate. If you can make it sound good outdoors it will sound that much better in an indoor acoustical setting.

When practicing *staccato* indoors, practice short "dry" staccato playing in a live (uncarpeted) room. When you move back to a normal acoustical auditorium, you'll have a built-in bonus.

Ensembles

When playing with an ensemble outdoors, don't overdo the volume. Let the instrument generate its own sound. Playing over-loud to be heard will not be beneficial to you. Unless you are on an outdoor acoustical stage with baffles and overhang, there will be no room acoustics to complement your sound. Stick with your section and do everything as a group.

Playing with an ensemble indoors is the normal scenario, but you'll sometimes have to contend with an unusually live room or the studio-dry deadness of a room. Play the room, and don't fight it.

Microphones

Often microphones (for a live audience, not recording) are used for an ensemble. They might simply be one or two overhead mikes for room sound and general amplification, or a mike for the trombone section (usually favoring the 1st trombone), or even individual mikes for every player. If using individual mikes for recordings, take the sound check seriously and play the performance at the volume that you played for the sound check.

If the microphones are simple “for the house” acoustics, you might have some leeway by moving in and out depending on what you are playing. The mike can help you, but use it cautiously and carefully.

Trombone Ensembles

In much the same way as players in a string quartet, woodwind quintet or brass quintet, trombone players can find and share musical interest and variety in trombone ensembles. String quartets are the ultimate chamber ensembles of like instruments, while woodwind quintets are the ultimate ensembles of unlike instruments.

Trombones parallel strings. String quartets have soprano(s), alto, tenor/bass as do the trombones (minus the extreme high registers).

Trombones have:

- an extensive workable range (over 4 octaves).
- full bass and even contra bass register.
- power, volume, and extreme dynamic contrasts.
- the ability to combine easily and effectively with a rhythm section.

Probably the most practical combination of trombones and the easiest to organize would be a quartet or quintet. Larger groups work well, but sometimes can become cumbersome and often need a conductor.

Due to its extreme range, the trombone ensemble functions as a viable and interesting performing group. Other like-instrument brass ensembles are limited by their weak low registers (trumpets and French horns), by their spread of sound, or by a lack of projection (euphoniums and tubas).

There is a sizeable amount of literature available for trombone ensembles and even more when you include jazz-oriented pieces with or without the rhythm section.

On Playing Bass Trombone by Alan Raph

If you can develop a clear sound and good attack on the trigger notes *on demand*, you will be ahead of the pack. Extend it into the pedal note register and you're well inside the bass trombone ball park. Now it's just a matter of degree. "On demand" of course means neither dragging (common) or rushing (less common) the time.

If you're playing a double valve bass trombone with independent rotors pitched in Bb, F, Gb, and D, you already have your work cut out for you figuring out the valve(s)/slide combinations and articulation possibilities. If you use a large (symphony) bass trombone and mouthpiece, you have even more to contend with, and the weight and mass of your equipment is considerable.

Most of what I say here has already been presented earlier in this book. However, here are a couple of capsule thoughts you might keep in mind:

- If you feel out-of-tune, you're probably sharp.
- If you feel out-of-time, you're probably late.
- If you feel the band is rushing, you're probably dragging.
- If you feel like a low note soloist, you're probably too loud.
- If you feel like part of the trombone section, you're in the right company.
- If low Db has a warm place in your heart, you might have found something special.
- If balancing the section from the bottom up is a priority, you *have* found something special.
- If you can play a downward scale with a crescendo, you've found something else.
- If you can stake a claim on a low note with confidence, you've arrived.

Alan Raph plays a King Duo Gravis bass trombone with a sterling silver bell (.562 bore) and uses a Bach 1 1/2G mouthpiece.

On Playing Lead Trombone by Dave Steinmeyer

The ability to relate to the style of the music defines a lead trombonist. A lead trombonist must work with the rhythm section, the trumpets and the saxes, and needs to be able to stylize trombone solos (and section playing). He/she also needs to lead the rest of the section with consistent articulation and phrasing. The lead trombonist needs technique, time, and the ability to see the whole picture.

I have been playing lead trombone throughout my entire career. Every day in that chair is a learning experience. To be a successful lead player, you have to be consistent in everything you do such as blending with trumpets or fitting in with saxophones. As a lead player you have to be sure that details like pitch, dynamics and vibrato are addressed before you start rehearsing a chart. I must be confident in my approach and give clear musical signals to the other members of the trombone section. However, if I want to embellish a passage with a little vibrato and do not want the entire section to follow, I will use lip vibrato so the section does not see my slide moving.

Listen to as many players as possible. Be a sponge and soak up what you hear. For younger players, listening is crucial. There are not many places to get the experience needed to develop a high level of skill as a lead trombone player. Lack of experience can keep one from working with various bands and Broadway type shows because of the many styles needed to play that kind of music. In addition, knowing the proper use of a wide variety of mutes is essential for a professional lead player.

It also helps to have a good high range so you will be comfortable playing in the upper register for extended periods of time. Become familiar with reading ledger lines above the staff since most lead parts remain in bass clef. Remember when playing beyond high Bb, the least movement in the embouchure the better.

Dave Steinmeyer plays a custom Martin trombone (.500 bore) similar to a Conn 100H (6H). He uses a Burt Herrick custom mouthpiece (made for Jack Teagarden in 1948) with a cushion rim and "S" shaped bowl. It is similar to a Bach 15 with a Bach 12 inside rim.

Capsules For Consideration

FAST VS. SLOW PLAYING

Fast tempos: keep the time

Slow tempos: REALLY keep the time. Look to the beamed black notes for the pulse.

Adagio (pp): Play louder than you otherwise might to make sure all the notes speak, especially on the attack, then taper down.

Allegro (ff): Play a bit softer than you otherwise might to keep the tempo better. Accent highlights and punctuate.

LOUD VS. SOFT

Loud: Go for accents and highlights rather than a wall of loudness.

Soft: Narrow the air stream and go for intensity, not inaudibility.

SYMPHONIC VS. JAZZ PLAYING

Symphonic: long quarters and measured eighth notes (1& 2& etc.).

Jazz (Swing): short quarters and a triplet feel on eighth notes (1&a, 2&a, 3&a, 4&a). Slur 2 or more eighth notes. If you have a line of 8th notes followed by a rest, play the last 8th note short.

WRITTEN



PLAYED (JAZZ)



Eighth notes are also usually slurred and the upbeats are accented.

WRITTEN



PLAYED (JAZZ)



HIGH/LOW REGISTER PLAYING

High register playing: Consider playing as though you were an instrument which plays up there normally (think trumpet, violin, etc.).

Low register playing: Consider playing as though you were an instrument which plays down there normally (think tuba, bassoon, cello, etc.).

SECTION PLAYING SOLI: Don't try to outblow your section. Instead use its mass power to sustain an overall volume, and save yourself for the highlights.

LEARN THE KEYBOARD at least well enough to work out chords and harmonic progressions. Learn to tell where your note is in the chord. If you're playing the major third, LOWER the pitch just a trifle. If you're playing the minor third, RAISE it a bit.

STACCATO LINES / LEGATO

Staccato lines: Smooth slide, short notes.

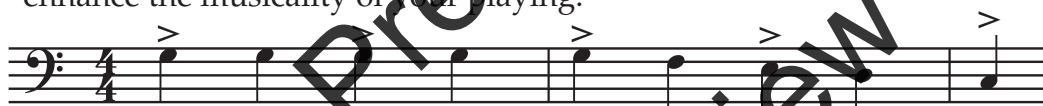
Legato: Move very quickly from one position to the next and stop dead on each successive note. No spaces between the notes. Warm up the sound with vibrato.

DYNAMICS attract and hold the listener's attention. Most of us have a tendency to underplay them. Exaggerate the dynamics (the audience needs to be in on it), including crescendos and diminuendos.

SIGHT READING: Play the beats. When you are sight reading something at a rapid tempo, you may miss some notes, but you need to keep the beat. The beat will get you through. You can pick up the missed notes later. If you bog down on notes, the beat will go on without you. Stay with the beat first, then fill in the missing notes.

MISCELLANEOUS

- When reading from a music stand, play off the left side when possible so the bell doesn't get in the way of the music.
- If you try to do something and it doesn't work, try it a different way until it works.
- Make use of the natural accents (beats 1 and 3 of common time) in everything you play. A rudimentary but often-neglected point: the first beat of each measure should be accented. In common time, there is a lesser accent on the third beat as well. Keeping this in mind will greatly enhance the musicality of your playing.



- When playing a pattern of two-note slurs, accent the first note and shorten the second.



- When a dotted 8th note is followed by a 16th note, it is often marked like a string bow marking. The 16th note should instead be slurred to the following note.



- When rehearsing a new piece of orchestral music with many measures rest, learn to rely on cues from other instruments rather than (or along with) counting measures. It strengthens your identity with the total picture.

An Interview With Buddy Morrow

by Alan Raph

In 2011, at the age of 91, Buddy Morrow died. He died on a Sunday just after working the previous Friday night with his Tommy Dorsey band. He had played with Dorsey in the late 1930's, and when Tommy Dorsey heard Buddy play those well formed high notes with a big beautiful sound, he said, "That kid's going to kill himself."

Buddy was a close friend and we stayed in touch to the end. We worked the New York City studios together almost on a daily basis for many years in the 60's and 70's, until he moved to Florida and took over leadership and ownership of the Dorsey band.

In looking over some articles that I wrote for a publication called *The National Student Musician*, I came across an interview with Buddy, parts of which I'm including here.

Buddy was a strong musical influence on both Dave Steinmeyer and myself and hopefully his words will be helpful to you.

Buddy was born in New Haven, Connecticut, and played with Paul Whiteman (sat next to Miff Mole) and Tommy Dorsey, among other bands. He came to New York City to play in the studios. He organized his own band and toured, and recorded his mega hit *Night Train*. He came back to the studios in the 60's (which is when our paths crossed) and later directed the Tommy Dorsey band.

From the interview:

Q. What makes a good trombone player?

A. The ability to hear musically and the prerequisite of having developed (early) a good tone. Tone is paramount. Without it nothing else matters, and with it goes a tolerance (by the listener) toward less developed areas. Playing with good tone, listening constantly and using the trombone as an expression of your musicality rather than a mechanical monster are three prime considerations.

Q. What makes a bad trombone player?

A. Being unaware of your surrounding conditions and your role in complimenting these conditions. Not bothering to understand the total musical structure of a situation. Being involved in the mechanics of the instrument as not to use it in relationship with the other musicians. Not listening.

Q. What are common faults of players?

A. Lazy arm. There should never be pitch variations in going from one note to another (no glissando sound between notes unless a glissando is fully intended). Reach far enough for the long positions. From the very beginning of trombone playing, make sure that notes are not played sharp because of the effort involved in reaching.

NOTE: The *Long Position Etude* on page 30 of this book was written as a direct result of this interview when Buddy told me he used to practice long reaches for speed and accuracy and no wasted motion.

Q. How can a trombone player learn good intonation?

A. He must develop an ear for the correct sound of note relationships. A player should be aware of his position in a chord and adjust his pitch accordingly. He will find small but vitally important differences in even the same note as it takes on different character through its use and position in a chord structure.

Q. You have unusual range and endurance. How does one develop this?

A. Keep pushing for extended range no matter how bad the notes may sound initially. Push to get the notes, and once obtained, play patterns, intervals and tunes on these notes, refining them as you go along. Caution however, don't get overtired. Practice 10 minutes and rest 10 minutes, walk around, get a drink of water, etc. and even try some different passages and techniques (less taxing). Gradually the range will come and endurance will be built up along with actual range. Don't set a goal for a certain high note and once squeaked out feel that all is accomplished. Challenge your status at every moment. Keep building and pushing toward further goals.

Q. How important is the low register to a soloist who generally plays in the upper register and has a flair for high notes?

A. The low register is the basis for everything. A bad low register will make for a thin high register.

Q. What kind of "slide-arm" exercises have you found helpful?

A. Interval studies are particularly good, especially when you concentrate on reaching for the long ones. The attitude of the player toward his slide manipulation is important; the slide is tossed by means of the arm and wrist, not pushed and pulled.

Q. What distinguishes a great player from a good competent one?

A. All else being equal, ATTITUDE. Desire to (and ability to) project into a situation without having to be told what to do. Imagination. Invention. Having the courage of your convictions and being able to exploit your convictions. Add to this *spark* and *drive* and you'll have a fighting chance.

Caprice For Solo Trombone

by Alan Raph

This unaccompanied solo contains much of the foregoing material: various articulations, valve use, extreme lower and higher register (it spans from a pedal G to double high A). It's an effective put-it-all-together piece of music.

Moderate (freely)

mf

mf

f

mp

mp

f

stringendo

Tempo I

mf

mp

mf

Rubato

f

mf
p
f
faster
mp
mf
f
mp
f
mp
Opt. Fine
mf
f
mf
accelerando
**v = valve*

Musical score for a tuba part, featuring various musical notations including dynamics, articulation, and performance instructions. The score is written in bass clef and includes a large diagonal watermark reading "Preview Only".