

Brad Edwards

Free sample pages from...

Lip Slur Melodies

***A melodic approach to building
tone and technique with lip slurs***

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Foreword

I love playing these because they are beautifully melodic and every note is coming from or going to a natural slur. This promotes sustaining and blowing through the notes. I have been playing and teaching this way all my career and it is wonderful to find a book that covers the basics of teaching the "one note followed by another with nothing in between " concept.

I think you have really hit the essence of Arnold Jacobs' teaching. This makes it easy: just blow air and move your lips and slide with the rhythm.

Thank you, Brad Edwards!!

Charlie Vernon

Bass Trombone, Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Depaul University

Introduction

Most trombonists use lip slurs in their daily routines. These exercises help with embouchure control and strength. By removing the tongue from the equation, players are forced to rely on their air to generate the notes.

A few years ago I published another book, Lip Slurs (Ensemble Publications), to add some variety to the daily "lip slur diet." I finished that book with 20 lip slur melodies. Over the years, I've received wonderful feedback about that book, including requests that I write more of these lip slur melodies.

Well, here you go! This book has over 100 etudes and 33 duets relying exclusively on the natural slurs of a trombone. They are designed for the common F-attachment tenor trombone, although one section is meant exclusively for the double-valve bass trombone. They progress from easy to quite challenging.

I would like to thank Dr. Justin Isenhour for helping me proofread this book. Enjoy!

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Lip Slur Melodies

Part 1: Getting Started

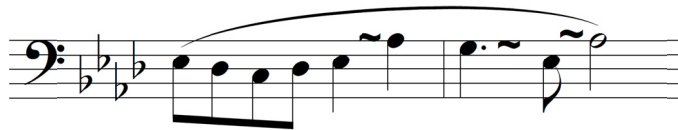
On trombone, our legato playing can involve a mixture of legato tonguing and natural slurs. Natural slurs occur between any two notes with a natural break in the overtone series.

Here are some examples:



As you change pitches, it isn't necessary to use the tongue since these notes jump between partials of the overtone series. There is a school of thought that one should legato tongue every note for the sake of consistency but many fine players employ natural lip slurs to avoid breaking the air stream in legato music.

This example requires some legato tonguing:



But, even here, it is possible to employ some natural slurs (at the spots marked with a tilde (~) symbol.)

Tips for Improvement:

- Keep your air stream steady and move the slide precisely. Mastering these pieces will greatly improve your slide speed and accuracy.
- Keep your embouchure corners steady. The center of the embouchure should be more relaxed so it can vibrate. The corners should be firm (no air pockets) with minimal movement.
- Keep the throat relaxed and the airway open. Listen to the sound of your breath. If you hear a high gasping sound when breathing in, your throat may be too tense. The breath should make a soft, low sound.
- Listen carefully to pitch. Especially when you begin to use alternate positions and trigger notes, it is easy to misplace the slide. This will also hurt your tone. As a trombonist, you can never stop listening for pitch!

Part 1: Getting Started

1.1 Moderato

mf

mp *f*

mp

1.2 Moderato

mp *cresc.* *mf*

mp

mf *mp*

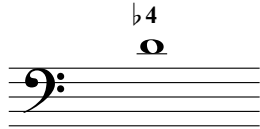
1.3 Allegretto

mp

mf

mp *mf* *mp* *rit.*

Introducing Some Useful Alternate Positions



Remember that, like the E-flat next to it, this note is on the 6th partial (or "F partial") of the overtone series. That partial is usually sharp. Listen carefully and correct as needed.

1.13 Allegretto *mf* *mp* *f* *mf* *rit.* *simile* *b4*

1.14 Flowing *mp* *f* *mp* *p* *mf* *rit.* *a tempo* *mf* *mp* *p* *1* *b4*

Lip Slur Melodies

Part 2: Moving Along

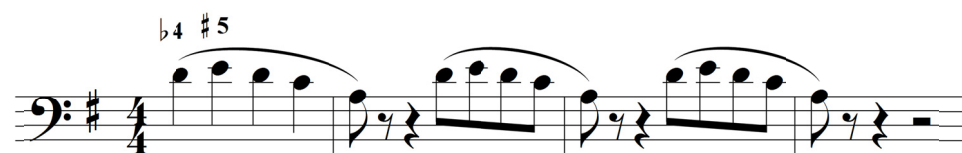
Now it's time to add a bit more complexity to these melodies. Remember, it isn't necessary to legato tongue within any slur. You will probably want to use some articulation at the beginning of a slur, however.

Tips for Improvement:

- Watch out for tension – Tension is the enemy. We often do not notice how tense we are as we work to master tougher material.
- Accurate slide – As these melodies get more complex, it is all too easy to play with a sloppy, inaccurate slide. Be very precise in your slide placement!
- Practice slowly – Most people don't slow things down enough and don't invest enough practice time playing things slowly. Be patient! Here's an example from the upcoming section:



Be sure to spend enough time working out that 16th note passage with some slow practice. Perhaps something like this:



Slow practice is your “secret weapon” to effortless playing!

- Play with direction – Most musical lines have a feeling of motion towards or away from a “target note.” Just as you would avoid drinking stagnant water, you should avoid playing stagnant notes. Here's an example:



Be sure to play that sustained C with a feeling of direction to the following 8th notes. This isn't quite the same as a crescendo but it certainly shouldn't be a diminuendo.

The next section, "Soaring Higher," gives more practice slurring up to the G.

Moderato

2.3

mf

mp

f

mp

f

mp

Flowing

2.4

mp

p *cresc.*

f *mp*

cresc. *mf* *mp*

cresc. *mp*

17 Expect to start seeing some harmonic "curve balls" every now and then. This next one floats between C major and C minor.

2.11

Andante

mp *f* *cresc.* *mf* *pp* *p* *rit.*

2.12

Allegro scherzando

mp *mf* *f* *mf*

Lip Slur Melodies

Part 3: Soaring Higher

Now it's time to build up to some higher notes. This next section methodically works to ascending "target notes" starting with G and ending with C. Each target note has two pages of material devoted to it. Patient work with these etudes will help you build strength in the high range. Don't be discouraged if your high range doesn't develop as quickly as this book progresses. These etudes should supplement other strategies for building high range.

Tips for Improvement:

- Stay relaxed – Many brass players tense up too much for high notes. This is especially true in two areas: the throat and mouthpiece pressure. Tension is the enemy.
- Use fast air – High notes require cooler, faster air under greater pressure.
- Notice your oral cavity and embouchure – For low notes, think of the "ah" vowel. For higher notes, an "ee" might help. For most players, rolling in the lower lip slightly also helps. This causes the air stream to point down.
Keep those embouchure corners firm! Avoid turning the corners up into a "smile" for higher notes. For most players, this weakens the tone by spreading the upper lip too thin.
- Glisses are helpful – Play a glissando in from a long position to a shorter one. Like this:



- Patience is helpful – In fact, patience is critical. It takes as long as it takes! Work at it a little bit each day. However, if you're tired, give your lips some time to rest. This allows the muscles to rebuild and strengthen.
- Low notes are helpful – There's an old saying, "The low supports the high." Learning to play low notes with easy warm air seems to help the high range.

In fact, you may want to try alternating these higher etudes with the lower etudes of the next section, "Plunging Lower."

Part 3: Soaring Higher

Extending up to G

Occasionally, you will see longer slurs suggested with a dotted line.

3.1

mp *rit.* *a tempo* *f*

3.2

Cantabile

mp *p* *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

Extending to A

3.7 Singing fully

mf *mp* *f* *mp*

cresc. *mp* *cresc.* *mf*

3.8 Flowing

mp *f* *mp* *con moto* *rit.* *a tempo* *mf* *mp*

rit.

The musical score consists of two main sections, 3.7 and 3.8, each with multiple staves of music. Section 3.7 is in 4/4 time and features a melody with various dynamics and articulations. It includes triplets, slurs, and a key signature change to one flat (b4). Section 3.8 is in 6/8 time and features a more flowing melody with dynamics ranging from piano to forte. It includes slurs, triplets, and a key signature change to one flat and one sharp (b4#5). The score is written for a single melodic line, likely for a voice or flute.

Lip Slur Melodies

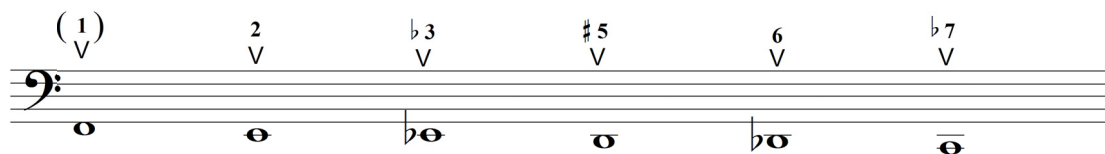
Part 4: Plunging Lower

It's important to balance all those high notes with some rich, dark low notes. In fact, I have always found that a good low range helps my high range.

Tips for Improvement:

- Slow, Warm Air – Have you ever used your breath to fog up a window? Remember how you took a deep breath and used slow, warm air? Have you ever blown air across a jug to make it vibrate? If a jug isn't handy, you might want to use a straight mute. Same idea: slow air will yield more vibration than fast air. Low notes usually sound better if you blow this way.
- Open Up – Open your oral cavity by moving away from an “ee” sound and towards an “aw” sound. Notice how your tongue drops down. Also, separate your teeth a bit more.
- Roll Out – I find my low notes come out better if I allow my lower lip to roll out a bit. This naturally causes the air stream to angle upwards more.
- Mouthpiece position? – As you roll out your lower lip and open up your teeth, you may find that your mouthpiece moves down slightly and even tilts up a bit more. As long as this improves your sound and can be done within a slur it should be fine.
- Don't Force – With low notes, you're really searching for that “sweet spot” in partnership with your instrument. Don't try to play too loudly at first. Seek resonance!

Just in case you need a quick refresher on the F-attachment slide positions, here's a guide:



I tune my F-attachment so the 1st position C is in tune. This causes the trigger to be a little flat. Others tune to the F instead.

Part 4: Plunging Lower

4.1 *Unhurried*

2 V

#5 V

6th ... 4th ...

mp

mf

3

6

3

6

mf *mp*

4.2 *Noble*

6 V

6

#5 V

mf

(3)

cresc.

mf

6

6

6

mp

mf *mp*

f *mf*

From here on, you will often see a valve marking without a slide position indicated.

4.6

Somber

mp

V

6

V #6

2 #6 b5

2nd time..ritard

Fine

f

#6

#6 b5

mp

6

mf

Waltz (in three)

#5

2

(1)

6

Accurate slide!

#5

V

V

6

#5 b5

rit.

b5 #6

D.C. al Fine

Lip Slur Melodies

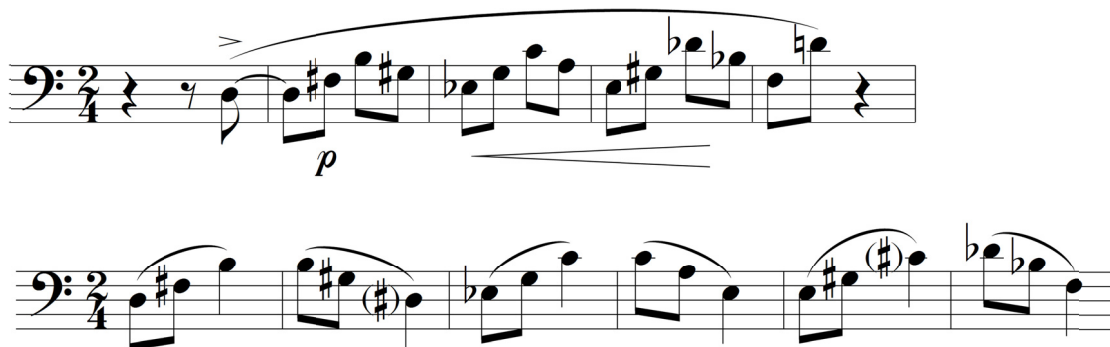
Part 5: Raising the Bar

I know what you're thinking, "I'm bored with all these easier pieces. Give me something I can really sink my teeth into." Fear not, things will get trickier.

Tips for Improvement:

- Slow it down! : Yes, this actually works. Do it.
- Really hear the intervals: There are some unexpected patterns in here. If you struggle with something, isolate the trouble spot and make sure you really hear the intervals at work.

Here's an example: There isn't a clear tonal center in this pattern. It uses a "position sequence" instead. If you "decode" the accidentals, you will find a series of minor triads in inversion...



Keep that slide accurate: As you play through these "position sequences" it's easy to lose slide accuracy. Don't.

Unhurried

5.5

Musical notation for the first section of the piece, measures 1-12. The music is in bass clef, key of D major (two sharps), and 3/4 time. It features a melodic line with slurs and accents. Dynamics include *mp* (measures 1-2), *mf* (measures 3-4), and *mp* (measures 5-6). There are markings for *b4* (measures 1, 3, 5) and a *2* (measure 2). A *cresc.* marking is present in measure 7. The section ends with a double bar line in measure 12.

Agitato

Musical notation for the second section of the piece, measures 13-24. The music is in bass clef, key of D major (two sharps), and 6/8 time. It features a more rhythmic and driving melodic line. Dynamics include *p* (measures 13-14) and *mp* (measures 15-16). There are markings for *b4* (measures 13, 15) and *5th ...* (measures 14, 16). A *rit.* marking is present in measure 17, followed by a *tempo primo* marking in measure 18. The section ends with a double bar line in measure 24.

Lip Slur Melodies

Part 6: Soaring Even Higher

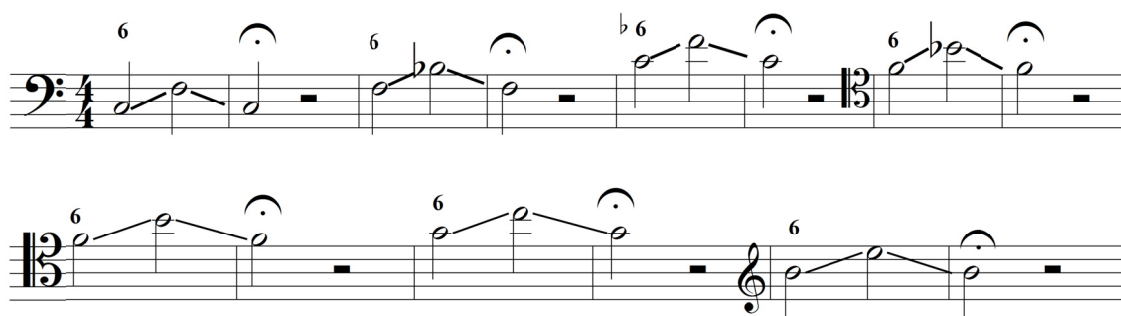
Building a strong high range takes patience. Work at it steadily. Doing a little at a time, for a long time, yields nice results.

Tips for Improvement:

- Watch out for mouthpiece pressure! Pushing in that mouthpiece cuts off the blood flow. No blood means no oxygen for those muscles. You'll get tired sooner and, over time, run the risk of injury.
- Keep those corners firm: Allowing the mouth corners to turn up spreads the upper lip thin. It may work at first but won't pay off in the long run.

The etudes in this section build up gradually. You will see section titles like, "Extending to G." The etudes in this little section work up to the G but no higher. If you struggle with a new "target note," give it time, work on some other sections of the book.

Glissandos can be helpful to help you build up your high range. Try a sequence of glisses from 6th to 1st. Something like this:



Note: at times you will see treble clef in this section. When the notes get this high, it makes sense to use treble. (I decided to avoid our friend, Mr. Alto Clef.)

Part 6: Soaring Even Higher Extending to D-flat (C-sharp)

Relaxed and lyrical

6.1

mf

mf

mp *cresc.*

f *dim.* *rit.*

Annotations: (#4), $\flat 1$, #4, $\flat 3$, #4

6.2

Joyfully

mf *f*

mp

f

Annotations: ($\flat 4$), $\flat 1$, (#4)

Extending to E

Mournful waltz

6.9

The musical score for 'Mournful waltz' is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of several staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The second staff is in bass clef, starting with a *v* (vibrato) marking and a *mf* dynamic. The third staff returns to the treble clef with a *mp* dynamic and includes a '4th ...' marking. The fourth staff is in bass clef, featuring a *rit.* (ritardando) marking and ending with a 'D.C. al Fine' instruction. The fifth staff is in treble clef, marked 'Relaxed' and *mf*. The sixth staff is in bass clef, marked *mp* and includes a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The seventh staff is in bass clef, marked *mp*. The eighth staff is in treble clef, marked *mf*. The piece concludes with a final note in bass clef.

mp *p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mp* *mf*

v *mf* *4th ...* *rit.* *D.C. al Fine*

Relaxed

6.10

mp *f* *mp* *cresc.* *f* *mp* *mp* *mf*

b4 *b4*

Lip Slur Melodies

Part 7: Plunging Even Lower

This section was created with the double-valve bass trombone in mind. Because of different valve configurations and tuning systems, few markings are included. Tenor trombonists are welcome to try these but they will find some intervals that aren't natural slurs on a single-valve tenor.

Tips for Improvement:

- Don't force the air: Lower notes require slower, warmer air. You can't force these notes. If you hear an advanced player playing loud low notes, you might mistakenly assume that they are being forceful with the air. You might be surprised at how little effort it takes to produce a big sound.
- Listen carefully to pitch: The extreme ranges can easily go out of tune. Sometimes we are so proud of popping out these low notes with a big sound that we disregard the intonation. Play things up an octave and listen carefully to the intervals.

Here's an example: The first line shows a note sequence from one of the etudes. The second line is that same sequence up an octave. If pitch is unclear, start in that upper octave and really lock in the intervals. This will help your ear when playing in the lower octave.

The image displays two musical staves in bass clef, 5/4 time, key of D major. The first staff shows a sequence of notes: D2, E2, F#2, G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, with slurs under the first four notes and the last four notes. The second staff shows the same sequence up an octave: D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, with slurs under the first four notes and the last four notes.

Plodding steadily

7.4

mf

f

mp

gtr

cresc.

f

Dancing gracefully

7.5

mp

mf

b4

mp

f

mp

Light and playful

7.8 *mp* *cresc.*

mf *mp*

mf

mp

mf

Flowing

7.9 *mp* *mf*

mp *mf* *p*

Lip Slur Melodies

Part 8: Taking a Bow

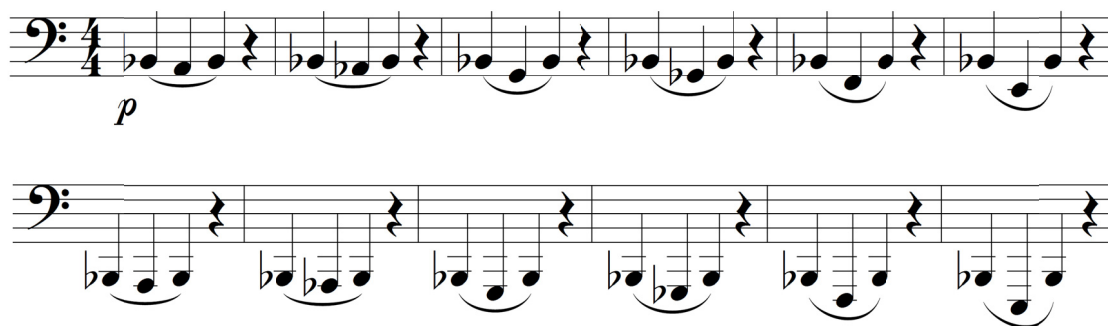
These last eight pieces provide a greater challenge. However, they aren't impossibly difficult. The musical statement should always be more important than the technical challenge. With careful practice, they can be mastered. Once you can nail them, take a bow. You've really accomplished something!

Tips for Improvement:

- **Work them up over time:** Pick one piece and live with it for a while. Patiently work on small sections, repeating them slowly until they are more comfortable.
- **Use patient repetition:** Recent research has revealed the body's ability to add layers of myelin insulation to nerves. As a sequence is practiced, the myelin is added, making this skill automatic. Think about typing, texting or some newer form of data entry. At first, one moves slowly and somewhat clumsily. With repetition (the adding of myelin), the body learns to rapidly execute actions that previously seemed impossible.
- **Watch out for tension:** It is a natural human reaction to tense up when faced with a challenging task. As you tackle these pieces, don't allow excessive tension to creep into your playing. Pause frequently and take a few deep breaths, allowing the tension to leave your body.
Believe me, it is all too easy for tension to sneak in "under the radar." Many of us play with higher tension levels than we realize. Become more aware of this tension and find ways to approach tougher material in a relaxed manner. It may be harder at first, but it will pay great dividends down the road.

Here is a little relaxing sequence you can play if you find yourself becoming too tense...

slow glisses



Driving

v

8.4

mf

mp

mf

f

mp

cadenza

accel.

accel.

rit.

D.C. al Fine

mp

Fine

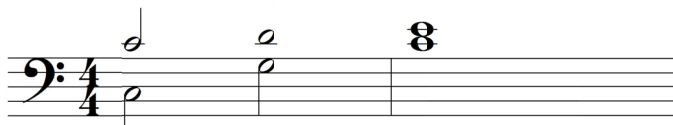
Lip Slur Melodies

Part 9: Playing Together

As I was writing this book, I was surprised at the level of interest shown in the fact that it would contain duets. Given this apparent level of interest, I wanted to make sure that I didn't shortchange in the duet department. To that end, here are 30 duets ranging from fairly easy to rather difficult. Enjoy!

Tips for Improvement:

- **Have Fun:** Sometimes we get so caught up in “working” to be a better player that we lose sight of what made us fall in love with music in the first place. Whether through these duets or through other material, find time each day to simply enjoy playing your instrument!
- **Listen to each other:** Some people put on blinders as they play. Don't just be two individuals playing independent notes at more or less the same time. Blend your sounds into one finished product. Be very aware of your partner and listen for the nuances in their playing. Open up your ears!
- **Tune, tune, tune:** Most of the cadences in this section use octaves or thirds. Make sure these notes lock-in to each other. If you hear “beats” of discord between two notes, try that spot again and see if you can line things up. Remember that, especially with 3rds and 6ths, small adjustments away from “in tune with the tuner” can really improve the interval. Electronic tuners use equal temperament, a compromise system in which all keys are the same but none are ideally in tune. Those small adjustments, so easy on a trombone slide, can return intervals to their natural state of pure ratios. Here's an example:



In this example, the top voice will need to lower the E of the last measure by 14/100 of a half step (also known as 14 cents) in order to achieve the pure 5:4 ratio of a *real* major third (if the bottom note is in tune!). What makes this trickier on the trombone is that this E is usually sharp to begin with. You might be surprised just how much you need to lower this note for it to lock into place.

Here's a simple way to remember the most common adjustments:

Major 3rds and 6ths - top note down a bit

Minor 3rds and 6ths - top note up a bit

Here's an even shorter version:

Major down, minor up

Part 9: Playing Together

Singing fully

9.1

mf

f *mp*

f *mp*

Flowing

9.2

mp *mf*

mp *mf*

p *mf*

p *mf*

mp

mp

Andante con dolore

9.10

mp

p

mf

mp

mp

mp

f

f

mp

mp

rit.

1

v

#5

#4

b4

(b4)

6

Detailed description: This musical score is for a piece titled 'Andante con dolore' on page 94. It consists of two staves of bass clef notation. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature, marked *mp*. The second staff is marked *p* and features a 'v' (vibrato) marking. The score includes various dynamics such as *mf*, *mp*, and *f*. There are several slurs and phrasing marks throughout. Specific notes are marked with fingering numbers: '1' at the top, '#5', '#4', 'b4', and '6'. The piece concludes with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking and a double bar line.

This is a free sample of a book by Brad Edwards (I sure hope you didn't pay for it!).

Mostly likely it was copied from TromboneZone.org or HornbonePress.com

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And, also, please don't make complete illegal copies of books. I work hard on these and somehow, it just feels wrong that someone else should just offer up a pdf copy after all the time and effort I've put in.

Thanks.

- Brad Edwards

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Building blocks for Tone and Technique

Simply Singing for Winds (114 pages)

A wellspring of simple melodies to sing, buzz, play.

Trombone Craft (169 pages) / ***Bass Trombone Craft*** (185 pages)

A musical approach to building tone and technique.

Lip Slurs (84 pages)

In three sections: slow slurs, fast slurs and lip slur melodies.

Lip Slur Melodies (132 pages)

Lyrical melodies and duets, using just natural slurs.

Patterns and Snippets (180 pages)

A musical approach to scales and arpeggios.

Tuning Drone Melodies (134 pages)

Music to be played over tuning drones; for one or more instruments.

Introductory Studies in Tenor and Alto Clef (56 pages)

A good first clef book to precede the Blazhevich Clef Studies.



New!

24 Concert Pieces by Brad Edwards

- A collection of solos starting at the intermediate level and progressing in difficulty.
- Currently available for tenor trombone, bass trombone, tuba and horn (and maybe even trumpet someday)
- Each piece has a reasonable piano part.
- Each piece presents a variety of musical styles.
- Useful for solo and ensemble festivals.
- Free samples available on the TromboneZone.org and HornbonePress.com websites.

Volume One

[approximate timings shown in brackets]

- #1 Andante con moto [3:30]
- #2 Allegretto - Andante - Allegro giocoso [3:40]
- #3 Noble - Lyrical [4:00]
- #4 March [3:20]
- #5 Alla Tango [3:40]
- #6 Singing - Driving – Dancing [4:10]
- #7 Scherzando – Tranquillo [3:30]
- #8 Misterioso – Giocoso [3:40]
- #9 Piacevole – Vigoroso [3:40]
- #10 With Confidence – With Yearning [4:20]
- #11 Expansive – Carefree [3:40]
- #12 Wistful – Playful – Joyful [3:30]

Volume Two

- #13 Scherzando - Cantabile [3:30]
- #14 Espressivo - Dramatico [4:10]
- #15 Floating – Dancing [4:15]
- #16 Relentless - Wistful – Impish [4:30]
- #17 Impetuoso – Serioso [3:50]
- #18 Grooving – Haunting [4:00]
- #19 Pesante - Scherzando – Waltz [4:00]
- #20 Dream Scene - Chase Scene [4:15]
- #21 Spirited gallop - Woeful lament (Ironic Waltz) [5:10]
- #22 Insistently – Tenderly [4:45]
- #23 Funebre – Imponente [4:45]
- #24 Driving – Dreaming [5:15]

Keep an eye out for recordings and videos of these pieces (including the piano part alone). On Youtube, search for Hornbone Press.