

TEXAS BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION

INTERMEDIATE INSTRUCTION SERIES



TUBA

GABE MUSELLA
CLINICIAN

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FOREWORD

The primary focus of the annual Convention of the Texas Bandmasters Association is providing opportunities for professional growth for its members. Your attendance at the clinics offered in the Beginner Instruction Series which began in 1995 has encouraged the Board of Directors to continue with a second series of clinics which addresses the needs and instructional strategies for second-year band students. Our clinicians are chosen from the ranks of superior music educators in our state, and they represent a wide diversity in geographic location as well as school size and setting.

This year clinics are scheduled for bassoon, low clarinet, saxophone, trombone, euphonium, tuba, and membrane percussion. Each person attending will receive a companion booklet in which you will find suggested materials and pedagogical strategies which our clinicians are so generous to share with us.

We appreciate the extra effort of the clinicians who prepared these clinics. We also acknowledge Jim Hagood TBA Past President, whose initiative got the series started, and both Bob Brandenberger and Mike Olson who continued to move forward with the project.

This series is respectfully dedicated to the many band directors, both past and present, who have worked so hard to make our students' experience in band music such a rewarding one.

Bob Parsons, President, Texas Bandmasters Association

GABE MUSELLA

Gabe Musella received his BM in Composition and his MM in Conducting from Texas Tech University. Mr. Musella is currently at Evans Junior High in Lubbock. Over the past ten years, his ensembles have been consistent UIL Sweepstakes and Best in Class winners. Mr. Musella is a published composer and an active clinician who has served on the UIL Sight-reading Selection Committee and the TMEA Honor Band Rules Revision Committee. He is affiliated with TMEA, TBA and Phi Beta Mu.

Advancing the Young Tuba Player

Foreword

In preparing this clinic, I have taken the position that the average middle school aged tubist can do the following after completing his beginning band year: make an acceptable characteristic tone, play 2-5 scales including a chromatic, and play two octaves from low F concert to fourth line F concert in the staff. If your student does not fall into this category, some of this material will be helpful in a remedial situation. Above all else, I urge **you** to use it in **helping your students develop a home practice routine** where they are addressing their strengths and weaknesses in an appropriate manner. Ideally, your students have an instrument that stays at home and they are not forced to share their school horn with anyone else. If individual lessons are not possible, you might find this material helpful at tuba section rehearsals. Pinpoint problem areas by asking yourself "What is it that I don't like?" or "How can he improve?" Once you have the answer, be specific in your requests for improvement. **Practicing diligently can be counterproductive if bad habits are being reinforced.** Encourage students to "**practice smarter, not harder.**" (this is also sound advice in a full band setting) The following outline serves as a guide for the clinic.

BREATHING AND TONE PRODUCTION

- I. Breathing tubes and buzzing
- II. Horn position
- III. Long tone exercises
- IV. Pedal tones
- V. Flexibility exercises
- VI. Vibrato

ARTICULATION AND TECHNIQUE

- I. Tongue placement
- II. Single and double tongue development
- III. Finger busters
- IV. Arpeggiated chords
- V. Intonation - "working the slides"

RANGE DEVELOPMENT

- I. "YO yo's"
- II. "pass out"

ENSEMBLE SKILLS

- I. "Tubas you're late!"
- II. Phrasing
"Which octave do I play?"

RECOMMENDED SOLO REPERTOIRE

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BREATHING AND TONE PRODUCTION

I. Breathing tubes and buzzing (see Example 1 on p. 7)

Many students create their best sound on the initial note of a selection or a passage where they have been counting multiple rests. The trick is to get them to **maximize their air intake and outflow** during the course of an extended phrase or an etude where there is no good place to breathe. Breathing tubes can be very useful in developing control of the air stream. Go to a hardware store and purchase 1 and 1/4 inch vinyl tubing. Cut them into 4 - 5 inch pieces. After inserting in mouth and sealing the corners, do the following breathing exercises at quarter = 70: inhale for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts @x's), inhale for 2 counts, exhale for two counts (16x's), in for 1, out for 1 (32x's). Let them recover and do the following sequence: inhale for 1 and exhale for 8 (4x's), inhale for 1 and exhale for 12 (4x's), inhale for 1 and exhale for 16 (2x's). The purpose here is air management. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO STRESS DIAPHRAGM CONTROL AND TOTAL BODY RELAXATION DURING THE COURSE OF THIS EXERCISE.** After the breathing exercise, students can begin buzzing on their mouthpiece. Remington exercises and descending open 4th/5th intervals are solid exercises to buzz. **Listen for students using their tongues to stop the buzz.** Eliminate this problem by telling them to blow a stream of air at their hands for two counts, stop for one, and continue blowing for an additional two. Do it all on one breath and emphasize that the tongue does not stop the flow of air.

II. Horn position

A common problem with young tuba players is the angle at which the lead pipe and mouthpiece meet the player. As is the case with all instruments, the player should dictate the angle, not the horn! However, many students find a comfortable way to "cheat" and still create a passable tone when they are in beginning band. It is not an exaggeration to say that tone production, range development, and intonation tendencies are greatly affected by the lead pipe angle. One way to correct this is to have the student sit tall in the chair without the tuba. Tell her to sit still while you bring the horn to her. The mouthpiece and mouth should meet without any adjustment from the student. If the she is too short, phone books are good way to make the height adjustment while keeping the horn resting on the chair. Manufacturers have developed tuba stands that can be adjusted to the student. However, I must caution that angle problems are still likely to exist unless you **are very careful to assist** the student in the initial adjustment of the stand. Periodic checks are a necessity if stands are being used.

III. Long tone exercises (see Example 2 on p. 7)

Long tone exercises, along with lip slurs, are the "vegetables of brass playing," not fun, but good for you. While students can be bored into a repetitive routine of these brass playing essentials, it is important that they be reminded of not "slopping through them." (good advice for your ensemble while doing daily drill.) **Always strive for a steady, resonant tone free of extra-musical sounds.** Adhering to the following four rules in all situations will help achieve consistency:

1. **Firm corners, low jaw**
2. **Open gap between the teeth**
3. **Breathe from the diaphragm**
4. **Blow!.....and relax**

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IV. Pedal tones (see Example 3, on p. 7)

If long tones and lip slurs are “vegetables”, pedal tones are dental visits; students don’t want to go there! Here are some of the reasons why. Because of the enormous amount of intense air that is required, pedals are not easy to produce. Students will experience a “**head rush**” while taking the initial plunge into the deep unknown. While some of your students might enjoy the sensation, your tamer students might find it uncomfortable. In addition, many students do not enjoy making a sound that is in its beginning stages, best described as a motor that won’t start. After you sell them on the idea that pedals are cool, help guide your student by encouraging the lowest available jaw setting in combination with total body relaxation; proceed slowly. Attempting anything past 4 to 8 counts is not reasonable at this point. Initial forays can be taken by having the students flap their lips vigorously outside the mouthpiece. (Analogies include horse whinnying and motorcycles.) Next, have the student take a large breath and repeat the process into the instrument. Embouchure considerations are to be temporarily set aside. After a few successful attempts, begin insisting on firm corners, etc. Achieving control of the pedals will result in a richer, resonant tone in all registers of the tuba.

V. Flexibility exercises (see Example 4 on p. 8)

Ideally, all brass students have been introduced to some form of lip slur activity during their beginning year. A concern when engaging in lip slurs is the collapse of the corners while doing downward slurs into the low register. Students need to be reminded to keep the corners firm or else their tone quality (mostly flabby) and intonation (usually sharp) will suffer greatly. Problematic areas while slurring upwards include “bumping” notes and letting the jaw “scrunch up” because it was not set firmly. An intensified air stream will help cure many problems while slurring up. A daily dose of lip slurs is a great calisthenics for any brass player.

VI. Vibrato

Vibrato development is highly encouraged once a solid, resonant tone has been consistently established. It should be used judiciously, and for young students, you must often be the judge. I have seen vibrato generated successfully by the using both the jaw and the diaphragm. Jaw vibrato appears to disrupt the embouchure and contradict many common rules of brass playing, so I must go on record as discouraging its development in younger players. Vibrato is appropriate for espressivo solo playing in both solo and full ensemble situations. It is not recommended in marcato style or full ensemble passages. **Balloons, mini crescendo’s on individual notes**, are sometimes the product of a student who is trying to be too expressive. They can also be the result of an unsupported air stream. An interesting note about balloons is that many fine young players have this problem. The conceptual “block” or core of the tone must not be compromised. Help them out by playing recordings of professional tubists and other brass players.

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ARTICULATION AND TECHNIQUE

I. Tongue placement

Because of the enormous size of the mouthpiece and the obvious difference in facial features among students, you might try experimenting with the individual in order to find the best choice of syllables and voicings. Encourage development of at least two styles; one for legato articulations and one for marcato playing. If students have the basic understanding that it's not appropriate to tongue the same way in every musical situation, they can later branch out and develop a broader palette of articulations. There are several being used successfully. Using "too" (doo) is common. Others are "toe" (doe) and "dee" (tee). **Solid articulation for low D and below may often require students to tongue between their teeth.** ("thoo" or "thoe")

II. Single and double tongue development (see Example 5 on p. 8)

A simple exercise that can be used with all your brass players is called 3's, 5's, 7's, etc. Set the metronome at comfortable speed (quarter = 80) and have the students cleanly articulate Letter A. Once they have mastered this move on to 5's. You can progress to 17's (a full measure of sixteenths) and beyond if you wish. The key to this exercise is **monitoring students for playing with unacceptable tone qualities, disrupting the embouchure, and using an excessively harsh tongue. Possible solutions to these problems include the use of more air and less tongue.** A mirror can be very helpful if the "tuba face" is being mangled. This exercise can be used in developing a double tongue. Try "tu-ku" or "dee-guh" for syllables.

III. Finger busters (see Example 10 on p. 10)

As with 3's, 5's, 7's, etc. keeping the integrity of the tone quality is the key to this exercise. The fingers should rest comfortably on the valves and be free of tension. Insist that students are very firm when depressing valves. This will help clarify technical passages. **Beware of thumb rings; they can create tension.**

IV. Arpeggiated chords (see example 6 on p. 8)

Chordal routines in a variety of keys will help train the ear and **increase** flexibility. The exercise listed in this handout travels through all of the 7th chord possibilities. Add the octave when students are ready to move ahead.

V. Intonation - "working the slides" (see example 7 on p. 9)

While many directors are keenly aware of the treacherously flat 5th partial on the trumpet or the tuning perils of the throat register on clarinet, some very real problems on tuba seem to go ignored. (the ear is less sensitive to disagreeable lower frequencies) For starters tune concert Bb in the staff with the main slide. **Using 4th valve on low C is of no use if the corresponding slide is not out.** The length will vary depending on the make and model of the tuba, but it has been my experience that 4th valve slide will need to be out quite a bit. Use the tuner for guidance. This is a good age to introduce them to the following tonic - dominant exercise on 1st valve and 1st and 2nd valve combined. Pull the 1st valve slide on E-flat and push in for A-flat. Continue the same motion for G and D. The synchronizing of both hands will take some time; **proceed slowly.**

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RANGE DEVELOPMENT

I. “Yo ~0’s” (see example 8 on p. 9)

The reason for discussing these next two exercises out of the flexibility and pedal categories is their use in helping to extend range. The “yo-yo” is best described as a combination of a glissando and a poorly executed lip slur. Like a real yo-yo, the motion should come down.....and.....back up again. Starting on open valve ask the student to play a concert F in the staff and slowly gliss down to a concert B-flat below the staff and then back to the original note. We want him to “bump” every note in the harmonic series on the way down and back up. The exercise should **emphasize free blowing air and firm corners**. If the student is able to execute this with plenty of air and total relaxation, the next step is to “overshoot” the top note on the way back up. This is one of the few times to welcome the flat 7th partial which should be the immediate next note out. If the student goes beyond the A-flat concert on open valve, encourage him try two octave “yo-yo’s”. Once the pedal register is established, three octaves are possible and highly encouraged.

II. “pass out” (see example 9 on p. 9)

This is nothing but a twist on long tone exercises. Instead of using a metronome, use a stop watch to see how long students can hold their pedal tones. Here is a good rule to remember; **“the lower you go, the more air you need and your teeth and throat should be as open.as possible.”** Also, remind them to stop if they feel dizzy. By the way, the object is NOT to pass out.

ENSEMBLE SKILLS

I. “Tubas you’re late!”

When you were in band, you wondered what the problem was. Now as a director, you don’t care what the problem is, you just want it fixed. Consider this before you go barbecuing your tuba section next time. Where do I have them placed in my ensemble set up? There is no “one size fits all” solution, so experiment if your tubas are playing behind the beat. The best advice for them is to **“play with what you see, not what you hear.”** This is especially true in a “live ‘ rehearsal hall. Also, sacrificing volume and minimizing the amount of tongue used helps in faster tempi and technical passages.

II. Phrasing

Two key points here. One, don’t’ expect your tuba players to hold a phrase as long as your trumpets. (a shot putter can’t outrun a sprinter) Two, when you want a passage “staggered” **tell each player exactly where she is to breathe**, especially the first time you introduce this concept. Insist on the same phrasing every day.

III. “Which octave do I play?”

At first there is a little confusion when octaves appear on a part. Before settling on top chairs covering the higher octave at all times, take the time to examine everybody’s best register. Your better players are more likely to supply the bottom foundation for supporting the band. Just like you would octaves, carefully tune split 5ths.

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RECOMMENDED SOLO REPERTOIRE

The following solos were taken from an informal survey done of the tubists in the 1998 TMEA All State Concert Band, and from my personal experience with students. I asked them to list the solos they had performed from their second year of playing to the present time. All are on the current UIL Prescribed Music List. An interesting note about this list is that 75% of the following titles showed up on at least 3 different students sheets.

<u>Composer/Arranger</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Class</u>
Bach/Bell	Air and Bouree'	1
Barat/Smith	Introduction and Dance	1
Barnes	Arioso and Caprice	2
Buchtel	Introduc Lion and Rondo	2
Capuzzi/Catelinet	Andante and Rondo	1
Edelson	Tango Anyone?	2
Gabrieli/Morris	Ricercar	1
Grieg/Holmes	In The Hall of The Mountain King	3
Haddad	Suite for Tuba	1
Handel/Bell	Honor and Arms	2
Liadov/Dishinger	Dancing Song	3
Phillips (ed.)	8 Bel Canto Songs	3
Telemann	Adagio and Allegro	1
Vandercooke	colossus	2
Walters	Tarantelle	2

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Example 1 - Buzzing

Example 1 - Buzzing consists of three staves of music in bass clef with a common time signature (C). The first staff contains a sequence of quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1. The second staff contains a sequence of quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1. The third staff contains a sequence of eighth notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1.

Example 2 - Long Tones

Example 2 - Long Tones consists of three staves of music in bass clef. The first staff begins with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 74$ and a dynamic marking of *sim.*. The notes are: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1. The second staff contains notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1. The third staff contains notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1.

Example 3 - Pedal Tones

Example 3 - Pedal Tones consists of two staves of music in bass clef. The first staff contains notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1. The second staff contains notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1.

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Example 7 - "working the slides"



push pull sim.

Musical notation for Example 7, showing a sequence of notes with articulation marks: "push", "pull", and "sim." (sustained).

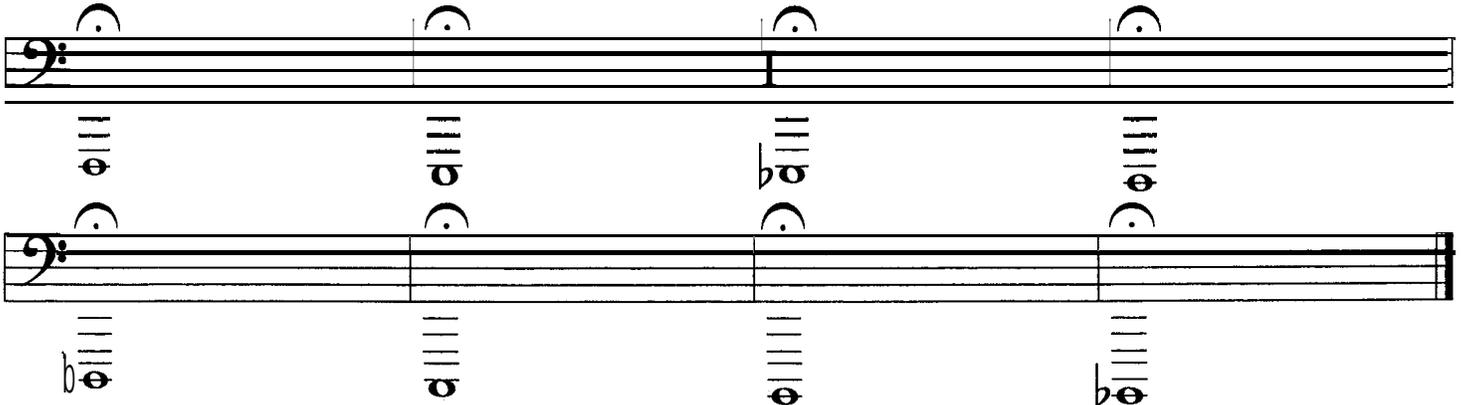
Example 8 - "Yo yo's"



Extension 1 Extension 2

Musical notation for Example 8, showing two extensions of the "Yo yo's" exercise. Extension 1 and Extension 2 are labeled.

Example 9 - Timed Pedals



Musical notation for Example 9, showing two staves with pedal markings (pedal symbols) and corresponding fingering diagrams for the tuba.