

TonalEnergy: Three Ways to Integrate the TE Met into Your '21-'22 Curriculum

Albert Vela

Greetings colleagues! I hope that by the time you are reading this, your teaching environment has inched ever so closer to a sense of normalcy. As we continue the never-ending cycle of “Band”, we all know that “closing out” one year also means “starting the next year”. With a pandemic’s worth of experience behind us, why not use the thrill of beginning a new year to start fresh, make some exciting, new changes, and try implementing a little more TECHNOLOGY in the classroom. (And NO, I’m not talking about more Zoom!)

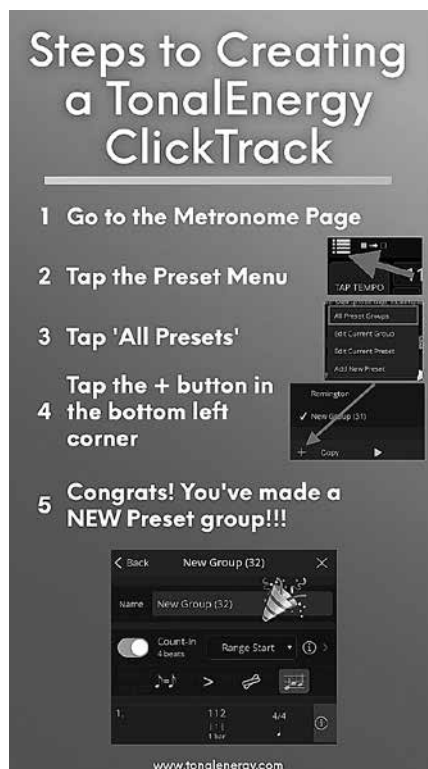
My goal in this article is to provide all band directors with a means for integrating the **TonalEnergy** app into their rehearsals in a way that allows you to spend more time ACTUALLY TEACHING your students. Remember, if your students see YOU practicing with an advanced technology, *they will be more likely to use the tech in their own practice!*

My considerations for these exercises are to **make it simple and automatic**. I am including this QR code to allow you to access free practice materials and demonstration videos to quickly integrate these TE Tech Tips into your rehearsal planning for the fall!



<http://bit.ly/TETBA2021>

To help in setting up a new preset group (or ClickTrack), here is a graphic.



TE Met Exercise #1

Beginner Band Exercise - Long Tones

What beginner DOESN'T need to practice long tones on a daily basis? What is the first thing most beginner books do after learning a new note? LONG TONES! So the next step in the equation:

1. Make it more fun
2. Help beginners know what to practice at home
3. Develop tonality

So how can we do this?

Let's make a TonalEnergy Metronome ClickTrack with DRONES! Follow the “Steps to Creating a TonalEnergy ClickTrack” graphic to begin.

From here, you can easily create a 1 PRESET track that will loop whole notes. Added bonus: you can even include a verbal count-in to help your students understand how to manage the rest/silence better.

You can also check out the short help video from the QR code.

There should already be 1 preset in the group, so press the **i** and make the preset equal to a 1 BAR of 4/4 time.

- If you scroll down, you can turn on the USE DRONE feature.

- Press the button and add a pitch. Below that, be sure the slider is set to CONTINUOUS SUSTAIN.

- Go BACK to the group page TURN ON Count-in. Press the **i** to adjust a few settings

- Hit the “Count-in” drop down and change to EACH PRESET. Change the Count-in duration to 4 BEATS.

- ❖ For an added bonus, scroll down tap the VOICE COUNTS to turn on!

Now you have a tool that will AUTOMATICALLY create a whole note pattern that performs a drone WITH A COUNT-IN.

This can seem like a lot to unpack, so to sum it all up: *When you turn on the metronome, it will count-in for the student in every rest and will play the pitch you are currently working on!*

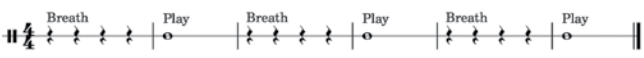
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Think of the many different ways you can have a student practice along with this:

- Play along
- Sing along
- Hum along
- Say the note name
- Breathing practice

Whole Note Fanfare

A simple exercise to practice along with a TE ClickTrack



You have just turned a 1-minute exercise into a WHOLE PRACTICE SESSION!

Remember to check the QR code for the free supplemental sheet and video link. (PDFs of all the illustrations are available at the QR code website.)

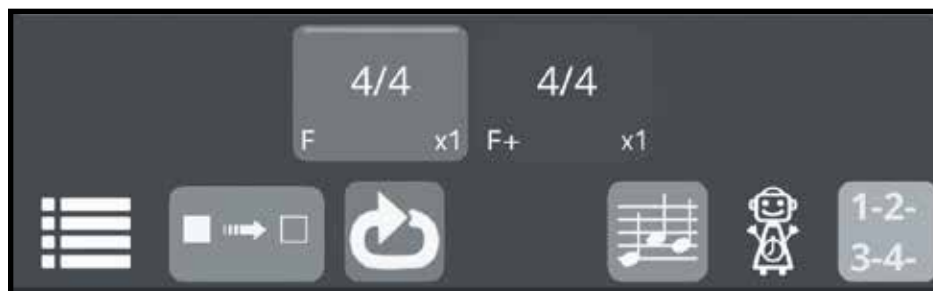
TE Met Exercise #2

JH/HS Concert Band Perfect 5th Tuning Exercise

So you know all the right notes and rhythms...NOW WHAT? A logical next step is to start developing an ensemble's intonation IN PRACTICE so that it can be applied to moments in your concert literature.

One of the most accessible intervals to begin with is the Perfect 5th. In this exercise we will create a TonalEnergy ClickTrack to create a simple, looping preset group that will start with 4 counts of a Root, and then add 4 counts of the Perfect 5th. In this scenario we will be in the key of F, thus using C as the Perfect 5th. (Feel free to use your own interval!)

Let's make a TonalEnergy Metronome ClickTrack with drones and INTERVALS! Follow the "Steps to Creating a TonalEnergy ClickTrack" graphic to begin.



Make your first preset

- Following similar steps to the previous exercise, tap the **i** next to the first preset.
- When it is opened, set the preset to 1 bar of 4/4 time.
- Scroll down to USE DRONE, tap the  and add an F and set to CONTINUOUS SUSTAIN. Additionally, tap the KEY/TEMP arrow and set the temperament to F and alternate. (The default alternate temperament in TE is automatically set to JUST.)

Make your second preset

- In the bottom right, tap the PLUS  button to add a new preset.
- It should copy the previous preset and already be set to 1 bar of 4/4 AND have the drone set to F.
- Here you can tap the PLUS  button next to the keyboard and add the C. (Continuous sustain and the temperament should already be adjusted for you.)

Tap BACK and admire  the two presets in your group!

Now it's time to check the Count-in.

- Tap the Count-in slider to turn it on, tap the **i** to go to the settings and set Count-in to "Range-Start". This means that TonalEnergy will give a Count-in everytime the group loops.

- Change the Count-in counts to the desired beats and voice counts and tap BACK.

- Tap/highlight the Auto-Advance button (square into square), loop button (so the group will loop), and be sure the Drone Sounds button is green (to hear the sounds).

The middle of your metronome screen should look like the image below. How cool is this?!?!?

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From here I recommend splitting your group up into A / B (or 1 / 2). The first time, the A group moves to the C after 4 counts and the B group stays on the Root (F). The next time, B moves to the 5th (C) and A stays on the Root. Repeat as much as many time as you want.

Perfect 5th Practice
A simple ensemble exercise to create awareness of Perfect 5ths Vela

The musical score is for a marching band ensemble exercise titled "Perfect 5th Practice". It is in 4/4 time and consists of 10 measures. The score is written for the following instruments: Flute, Oboe, Bb Clarinet, Bb Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, Alto Saxophone, Bari Saxophone, Horn in F, Bb Cornet, Tbn/ Bass Trb/ Euph, and Tuba. The first five measures (measures 1-5) show the instruments playing a half note chord, which is a perfect fifth (F and C). The next five measures (measures 6-10) show the instruments playing a half note chord, which is a perfect fifth (C and G). The score is written in a single system with all instruments on staves.

TE Met Exercise #3

Marching Band Counting/Articulation Exercise

Count exercises for marching band?!?! Yes! Marching season at the beginning of the school year is an EXCELLENT time to create, build, and reinforce a program-wide approach to counting. And let's be real, EVERY PROGRAM could stand to get better at counting!

Some major considerations when creating an effective counting exercise for a program are: "Is it simple?" and "Is it predictable?" If you can answer "yes" to those questions, students from 9th graders with two left feet through All-Staters will benefit and grow from a counting exercise.

Counting/Articulation Sequence
A simple exercise to practice along with a TE Click Track Vela

The graphic shows a sequence of rhythmic patterns for a counting exercise. It is divided into three sections: 8, 10, and 12. Each section contains a series of rhythmic notations (quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes) that correspond to the numbers 1 through 12. The patterns are designed to be played along with a TE Click Track.

The above is the layout for the exercise that we are going to create. My concept here is to help your students develop a sense of the subdivision BEFORE they begin to play. To aid this, we are changing the subdivision BEFORE playing.

Let's make a TonalEnergy Metronome ClickTrack that CHANGES subdivisions! Begin by following the "Steps from Creating a TonalEnergy ClickTrack" graphic.

- Go into the first preset and set to
 - 4/4
 - 5 bars
 - Quarter notes
- PRESET 2
 - 4/4
 - 2 bars
 - 8th note subdivision
- PRESET 3
 - 4/4
 - 2 bars
 - 8th note triplet subdivision
- PRESET 4
 - 4/4
 - 2 bars
 - 16th note subdivision
- LAST PRESET
 - 4/4
 - 2 bars
 - Quarter note subdivision

(continued)

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From here you can adjust your desired count-in and BAM!—You have a preset group that allows you to play the above exercise!

Change tempos, have students sing, count, air and finger, tap....the list goes on!

Whew! What a great job! Let's recap what we just accomplished in this article:

- We made a metronome ClickTrack for a beginner class that loops whole notes, with a drone, and with a voice count-in. (Exercise 1)
- We made a ClickTrack with count-in and drone for your concert band to practice enhancing their awareness of just intonation with perfect 5ths. (Exercise 2)
- We created a rhythm/subdivision exercise for your marching band to help encourage thinking ahead in subdivisions and work on articulation. (Exercise 3)

Great work on getting through all of this. You are basically a "ClickTrack" programming master now!

So here is a bonus! These exercises can all be EASILY modified and transferred to work with students of all ages!

Remember to check the QR code for the free supplemental sheet and video link. (PDFs of all the illustrations are available at the QR code website.)

Do you have a question? Please send an email to albert@tonalenergy.com.

Best of luck as you begin to plan for a more NORMAL (hopefully!) 2021-2022 school year!

Albert Vela has been involved in many facets of music education over his 12 years of teaching, including Assistant Director and Marching Band Director at Oak Ridge High School, a Brass Instructor with the Blue Devils, and the Curriculum and Media Specialist at TonalEnergy.