

Metronome Click Tracks for ALL-LEVELS of Rehearsals and Performance

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As a musician and educator, I understand the importance of timing and pulse as it relates to the development of a successful band. One of the key tools that can help in this process is the use of metronome click tracks! In this article, I will discuss the benefits of using click tracks during band rehearsals, from beginner years through high school. Specifically, I will focus on the use of the TonalEnergy Tuner and Metronome app, which offers a unique set of features that can enhance your rehearsal process! The TonalEnergy Tuner app is available in the App Store (ios), Google Play Store (Android), and the Amazon Appstore for Android.

While these ideas/concepts have section headings to offer rehearsal techniques to teachers, they are by NO MEANS limited to a specific level of student! Please use these thoughts as a way to spark your imaginations and provide creative new ways to develop your student's inner pulse!

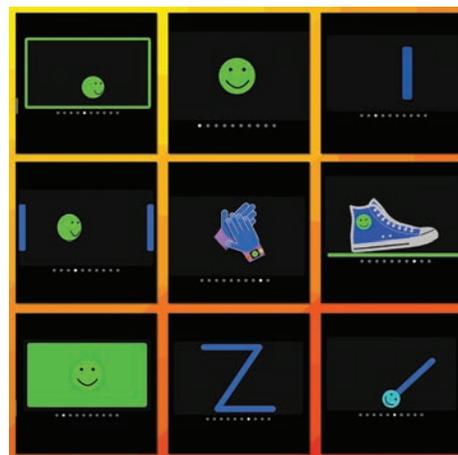
The main points we will discuss are:

- "Simple" Met displays for visual reinforcement of time
- Benefits of creating and rehearsing with a click track
- Using your click tracks to add drones and polyphonic structures AUTOMATICALLY to your rehearsals

Beginner Band:

We all know the use of a metronome during rehearsals can help students develop a sense of time, which is essential for playing music accurately. But we have to start somewhere with our beginners! The TonalEnergy Tuner and Metronome app offers many different visualizations that can help beginners understand the concept of time signature, tempo, and rhythm.

(Grid Image of different metronome visualizations from the TonalEnergy Tuner & Metronome Simple Met.)



These simple and FUN metronome displays can be found by tapping the Metronome icon at the bottom of TonalEnergy and then tapping SIMPLE. You can then SWIPE left or right on the visual display to explore different metronome views.

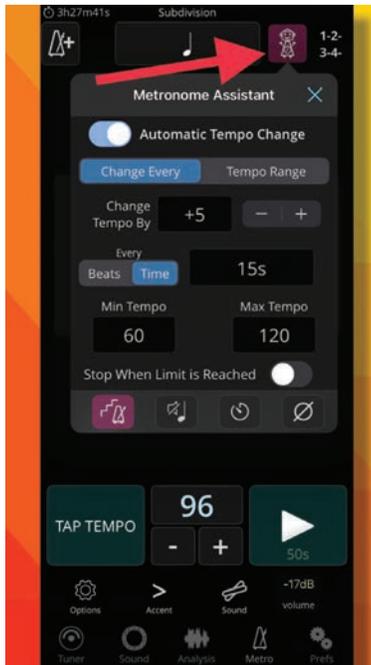
These are great, SIMPLE ways to connect your VISUAL LEARNERS to time/pulse and the audio that is the beat.

You could easily use the "clapping" met display or "shoe tapping" met display as a BELL-RINGER exercise at the beginning of class! Many band rooms have a way to display information on screens these days. Simply project or mirror the TonalEnergy Simple Met and have your students match and follow what the screen is doing. A few consistent minutes a day will go a long way to developing strong young musicians with a GREAT sense of pulse! Think of the benefits! While you typically would demonstrate clapping and tapping technique yourself, you COULD project the display and have your students imitate the technology while you walk around and address the students individually.

ALSO - this could easily transition to an AT HOME assignment in the first few weeks of the year! Who wouldn't want their students practicing constant pulse AT HOME in the first few weeks of the beginner year?!

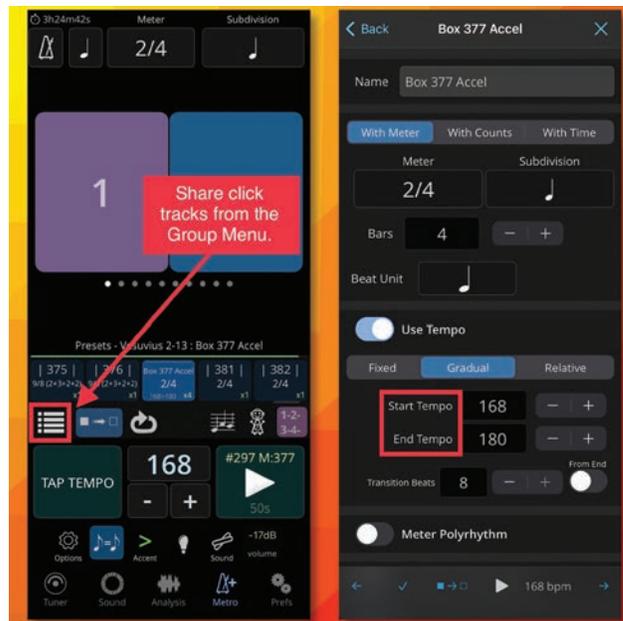
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If you want to go a step further, you could explore the Metronome Assistant and have the tempo AUTOMATICALLY increase from a slow tempo to a brisk tempo! Try it out and button-mash!

rehearsed. Imagine rehearsing through a week of state testing and pep rallies - but EVERYONE rehearsed the exact same tempos by the end of the week. AMAZING!



Junior High School Marching Band & Concert Band:

As students progress to junior high/middle school band, they will be exposed to more complex music that requires a greater understanding of tempo changes. The first situation that comes to mind are the dreaded ACCELERANDO AND RALLENTANDO! You can easily create a click track in the TonalEnergy Met that allows you to AUTOMATICALLY create a tempo change. Gone are the days of turning a metronome dial slowly, but not TOO slowly, to simulate a tempo change!

Having a method of creating a TIMING environment that is CONSISTENT and SHAREABLE early in the learning process is key to ingraining these tempo changes and muscle memory into the students (and teacher) quickly! Additionally, this creates a method for students to practice these tempo changes in a practice room or AT HOME.

Another use case for a click track (another name for a click track is 'preset') might be for bands that are able to team teach a class with a fellow director. Creating a click track that has all current tempo changes, meter changes, accent patterns, accelerandos, and rallentandos allows for ensembles to split up, and divide and conquer while ensuring that the SAME tempo structures are being

High School Marching Band & Concert Band:

Do you have students who are ready for an enhanced experience in ensemble rehearsals and individual practice? You can easily help student musicians explore their tonality while maintaining pulse by adding DRONES to your existing TonalEnergy click tracks!

Think in terms of VALUE for the time you have spent (a few minutes) creating an immersive tempo-scape that provides consistency when rehearsing. In the SAME amount of time it took you to create a click track for:

- Daily Drill exercises you do EVERY DAY,
- Contest/Festival literature,
- Or pieces you perform EVERY year, you can make

a few extra taps and add a single drone (like a root or key center) or polyphonic drones with adjusted temperament!

None of this takes away from the value you provide as a teacher when rehearsing with students in class! It only CREATES value as your students can take the SAME EXACT concepts and rehearsal techniques you demonstrate in class to the practice room or - even better - HOME to practice.

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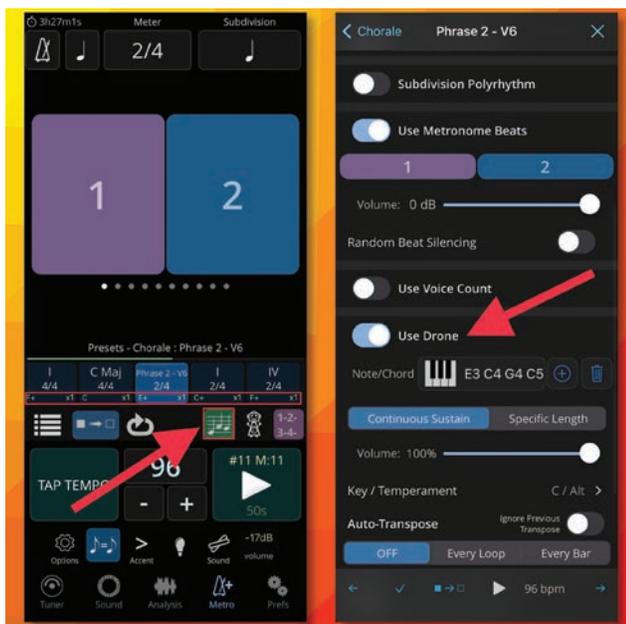
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Need an example of how a click track with drones could benefit you and your students in rehearsal?

Do you ever rehearse an ensemble chorale or perform slow, lyrical movements for performance? Many times I WANT to rehearse along and provide drones using a keyboard or piano. I WANT to provide the brass with drones to perform on their mouthpieces or I WANT the ensemble to SING along with drones in their chorale to help engrain tonality in their ears. But I'm just not that great at piano!

This is where a CONSTANT, RELIABLE, and SHAREABLE click track with drones could come in handy! Imagine having your ensemble rehearse along with a click track that has all of your figured bass and chord structures PRE PROGRAMMED so that they are ALWAYS performed correctly for your students! This frees up a lot of potential as YOU can move around and actively engage with the students and further their understanding of the music on the individual level.

There is just so much potential here!



Conclusion:

In conclusion, using metronome click tracks during rehearsals can be an amazing tool for developing your band! The TonalEnergy Tuner and Metronome app offers many features that you can use in your rehearsals and can in turn train your students to use the EXACT SAME materials in a practice room or at home! I hope that at least one of the ideas above sparks your imagination and makes you excited to try something new with your students!

Thanks to Mike Brashear, the Executive Director of the Texas Bandmasters Association, for inviting me to write this article and contribute to our band community in Texas.

I invite my fellow band directors who plan to attend the annual TBA convention in July to come to my clinic session entitled 'Click Tracks for Score Study'. In this session, we will take a deep dive into what click tracks can look like in rehearsals and how they can be used to enhance score study. Additionally, we will work together to create a simple click track that can be used in your rehearsals. Whether you are a new teacher or a seasoned director, this session is designed to provide practical tips and techniques that can help you improve your rehearsals and enhance your student's musicianship. I look forward to seeing everyone in San Antonio!

Have a question about classroom rehearsal techniques or using TonalEnergy in the classroom? Send me an email! Avela@conroeisd.net or albert@tonalenergy.com.

Albert Vela has participated in and explored many facets of music education throughout his 14-year career. At Oak Ridge High School in Conroe, Tx. Albert is the conductor of the Symphonic Band and the lead instructor of the War Eagle Marching Band. In 2022, he led the Oak Ridge High Brass Ensemble in a concert at The Midwest Clinic convention. Always exploring new experiences in music performance, Albert is a brass instructor for the 20-time World Champion and 25-time Jim Ott High Brass Award Blue Devils Drum & Bugle Corps. He also serves musicians and teachers as the Curriculum and Media Specialist for TonalEnergy and is a sought-after presenter for all levels of music education. Albert is all about helping musicians of all levels learn and grow throughout their music journey.