



*Advanced Tuba
Pedagogy*

Clinician:

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Sponsor: Custom Music

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Techniques for Tuba: Fundamental Playing, Methods, Literature and Equipment

By Dr. Janet M. Tracy Sponsored by Custom Music Company

I. Breathing

Much has been said about breathing, so let's keep it simple. As a general rule breathing should be deep and relaxed. The entire barrel of the torso, back and front, should expand when we breathe. The shoulders should stay down. When the shoulders rise, tension is created. Tension in the player's body is not a good thing. It causes shallow breathing, premature fatigue, poor tone quality, and injuries. The aural cavity and throat should be open and relaxed when breathing. Have the students use a "hoe" shape as they inhale and exhale. Draw their attention to how it feels and sounds.

II. Embouchure

A good starting place for the tuba embouchure is with the lips in a relaxed "M" shape with the teeth separated. Have the students say "oh" and freeze their jaws at the more open point of the "o" syllable. The tongue should be at the very bottom of the mouth except during articulation. The open aural cavity will produce a more clear and deep sound.

III. Mouthpiece Placement

The mouthpiece should be centered vertically and horizontally on the face, taking in consideration for the individual's physical differences, i.e. misaligned teeth, scar tissue, ect. The proportion is usually somewhere between a 50+50 upper to lower lip ratio to a 66+33 ratio.

IV. Concept of Sound

From the very beginning, students should be taught to play with a good clear sound. The band director or a specialized clinician can set the example by modeling for the students. Recordings of famous solo artist are also good examples. The band director should discuss and describe good tone and encourage the students to have their own ideas of what good tone sounds like- What are the qualities? If you could see good tone, what would it look like? Is it a bubble, an intense color? Students need to be able to compare good tone with a bad or inadequate tone. Assign qualities to tone that the students can remember.

V. First Pitches

The easiest pitch for most students to hit at the beginning of their playing experience is the F just at the bottom of the staff. For some students, it is the upper or lower Bb. In general, it is easier for the players to go down the scale to low Bb than it is to play from the F up to the second line Bb. Range is easily expanded by having the student work out in both directions from their easiest note.

VI. Buzzing on the Mouthpiece

Buzzing on the mouthpiece is probably one of the best teaching tools for brass players. This exercise should be used with beginners and advanced players alike. To obtain sound on the mouthpiece, the student automatically has to blow more, and be more precise in focusing the embouchure. The results from successful mouthpiece work are:

1. Better airflow.
2. Better accuracy/consistency for pitches.
3. Better intonation.

Mouthpiece exercises should fit the ability of the players. A beginner may only be able to buzz a few pitches-so glissandos and rhythmic games on a single pitch are a good start. As the players become capable to produce a wider variety of sounds on their mouthpieces, the class can move on to simple songs. The director should have the students' focus on good sound and the appropriate spacing (tuning) between the intervals of the song. Sometimes it helps students to think of the lyrics of the song. Some of the best songs for this can be found in their beginning band book.

Examples:

1. Hot Cross Buns
2. Old MacDonald
3. Twinkle, Twinkle
4. Yankee Doodle

It's best if the songs have flowing melodic lines. The choppy the tune, the less likely the airflow will be free, relaxed and flowing.

VII. Method Books

Beginner level

First Book of Practical Studies for Tuba, by Robert G. Getchell,
Edited by Nilo W. Hovey-Belwin

Elementary Method Eb or BBb Bass, by Nilo W. Hovey-

Rubank

204 Progressive Sight Reading Tunes, by Roger Winslow-Gore Publishing

101 Easy to Advanced Sight Reading Tunes in Duet Form,
by Roger Winslow-Gore Publishing

Intermediate level

Second Book of Practical Studies, by Robert Getchell,
Edited by Nilo Hovey-Belwin

Intermediate Method Eb or BBb Bass, by J. E. Skornicka and

E. G. Boltz-Rubank
Studies in Legato for Bass Trombone and Tuba, compiled and edited by Reginald Fink-Carl Fischer
Advanced Method Eb or BBb Bass Vol. 1, by Wm. Gower and H. Voxman-Rubank
204 Progressive Sight Reading Tunes, by Roger Winslow-Gore Publishing
101 Easy to Advanced Sight Reading Tunes in Duet Form, by Roger Winslow-Gore Publishing

Advanced level

70 Studies for BBb Tuba, Volumes I and II, by Vladislav Blazhevich-Robert King
Advanced Studies for Bb Bass, by H. W. Tyrrell-Boosey & Hawkes
60 Selected Studies for BB flat Tuba, by C. Kopprasch-Robert King
43 Bel Canto Studies for Tuba (or Bass Trombone), by Marco Bordogni-Robert King
Rhythmical Articulation, by Pasquale Bona-Carl Fischer
Melodious Etudes for Trombone, Volumes I, II and III, transcribed and progressively arranged by Joannes Rochut-Carl Fischer
Arban Complete Method for Tuba, by Jerry Young and Wesley Jacobs-Encore Music
Twenty Five Baroque and Classical Duets for Two Tubas, volumes I and II, edited and transcribed by Kenneth Singleton-Peer International

VIII. Solo Literature

Beginner level

Intermediate level

Advanced level

The Prescribed Music List is a wonderful tool that has been well planned. I recommend it.

Equipment:

IX. Tubas

Beginner

3/4 sized instruments:

Sanders Educational Tubas (BBb)

LC-600 Etude, 3 rotary valves .700 bore, 15.25" bell

LC-630 Etude, 4 rotary valves .700 bore, 15.25" bell

Sterling Concert Series

SC-65, 4 piston valves, .670 bore, 14.5" bell

Intermediate

4/4 sized instruments:

Sanders Educational Tubas (BBb)

LC-500 Imperial, 4 rotary valves .750 bore

LC-550 Conservatory, 4 rotary valves .750 bore

Advanced

4/4 sized instruments:

B&S Perantucci Tubas (BBb)

PT-1, 4 rotary valves, .750 bore, 19.5" bell

PT-1 (uniball), 4 rotary valves, .750 bore, 19.5" bell

PT-2PF, 4 piston valves, .770 bore, 17.75" bell

Mirafone Tubas (BBb)

186-S, 4 rotary valves, .778 bore, 17.75" bell

186-4U, 4 rotary valves, .778 bore, 17.75" bell

Walter Nirschl Tubas (BBb)

WN-10, 4 piston valves, .750 bore, 19" bell

Meinl-Weston (BBb)

25, 4 rotary valves, .768 bore, 17.75" bell

X. Mouthpieces (As recommended by Daniel Perantoni, primary designer)

Beginner and Intermediate

PT-83 (Similar to the Conn Helleberg 7B and the PT-36.

The PT-36 is a good general BBb mouthpiece.

Advanced

The PT-82, PT-83, PT-83+

The PT-50, 50+ PT-88, 88+ will work best on the thin-walled tubas like the Mirafone 186 and 188. They will produce a darker sound.

XI. Open for Questions/Discussion