



*Intermediate  
Euphonium*

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## Intermediate Euphonium

Some colleagues say I am a faux euphonium player. I must confess I am not a true euphonium player and I've never had a private lesson on the instrument. I was raised a trumpet player (average at best) and found I missed my calling at age 30. While attending West Texas A&M University as a full time graduate student, Dr. Gary Garner commented that the Symphonic Band was short euphonium players. I told him after teaching for six years I should be able to make this work and the rest is history.

The information before you is a compilation of philosophies, theories and other techniques that I have stolen from a list of people too numerous to mention. There is hardly an original thought in this handout. I am not only a faux euphonium player but a thief.

If anyone asks, the euphonium is a conical-bore, baritone-voiced brass instrument. It derives its name from the Greek word *euphonos*, meaning "beautiful-sounding" or "sweet-voiced" (*eu* means "well" or "good" and *phonium* means "voice").

Let's get started. Since the clinic addresses intermediate players, I am assuming the student has played one year or more, is progressing toward high school, AND reads bass clef!

- I) Euphonium or Baritone
  - A) Euphonium
    - 1) Bore is larger, mostly conical (cone shape)
    - 2) Conical bore creates a larger, darker tone
  - B) Baritone
    - 1) Bore is smaller, mostly cylindrical (cylinder shape)
    - 2) Cylindrical bore creates lighter, brighter tone
  
- II) Compensating or Non-compensating
  - A) Compensating (four valve)
    - 1) Complete set of tubing on the back of the horn, built slightly longer allowing for better intonation
    - 2) Only activated when any of the first three valves are used in conjunction with the fourth valve
  - B) Non-compensating (four valve)
    - 1) No extra tubing in the back of horn
    - 2) Due to lack of extra tubing, each half step becomes progressively sharper until low B is lost
    - 3) It is used to compensate for sharp C, 1-3 valve combination (4 replaces 1-3) and the very sharp B natural, 1-2-3 valve combination (2-4 replaces 1-2-3).
  
- III) Fourth Valve
  - A) Not particular to euphonium or baritone
  - B) 4 replaces 1-3 valve combination to compensate for sharpness
  - C) 2-4 replaces 1-2-3 valve combination to compensate for extreme sharpness
  - D) Used to create alternate fingerings
    - 1) Use 8<sup>th</sup> harmonic fingering while playing sharp 6<sup>th</sup> harmonics (4<sup>th</sup> instead of open for high F, etc.)
  - E) Accesses lower (pedal) range
  - F) Prefer to have fourth valve on the side
  
- IV) Instruments
  - A) Yamaha
  - B) Besson
  - C) Sterling
  - D) King
  - E) Wilson (advanced)

- V) Mouthpieces
  - A) Schilke 51D
    - 1) Provides bigger, darker sound
    - 2) Harder to control at first
  - B) Bach 6-1/2 AL (tried and true)
    - 1) Smaller sound
    - 2) Easier control
  - C) Bach 5G:
    - 1) Provides bigger, darker sound
  - D) F. Schmidt-JHD
    - 1) Darker, resonant sound
    - 2) smother rim
    - 3) open throat/back bore
  
- VI) Accessories
  - A) Valve oil
  - B) Slide grease
  - C) Mouthpiece brush
  - D) Mouthpiece case
  - E) Towel (to help adjust instrument to proper playing position if applicable)
  - F) Polish Cloth
  - G) B.E.R.P. (Buzz Extension and Resistance Piece)
  
- VII) Assembly (not much to it)
  
- VIII) Posture
  - A) Chair
  - B) Sit forward on chair with feet flat on floor
  - C) Back is straight as to not create tension in upper body
  - D) No slumping from neck, shoulders, or torso
  - E) The instrument is brought to embouchure not the upper body moving to instrument
  - F) Horn angle/position
  
- IX) Breathing
  - A) Breathing exercises: are they really necessary?
    - 1) Practice breathing with a metronome
    - 2) Completely fill up and release all you air on each breath
    - 3) Turn the air around without holding your breath
    - 4) Maintain a consistent speed during the entire out-breath
    - 5) Use hand/arm as a visual aid
    - 6) Breathing exercises help focus the air and the mind
  - B) The following elements are important for breathing practices:
    - 1) The upper body is soft
    - 2) Breathe to the bottom of the chair
    - 3) Face remains relaxed and natural
  - C) More thoughts on breathing
    - 1) Volume of air, not TV air
    - 2) It is pragmatic to get through music
    - 3) Passageway for is air is unobstructed
    - 4) Voicing: shaping the inside of the mouth and throat; must be cavernous
    - 5) Amount of air beyond what you need is reserve.
    - 6) Reserve air contributes to maturity of sound!

- X) Mouthpiece Placement
- A) 2/3 top lip, 1/3 bottom lip
  - B) 1/2 top lip, 1/2 bottom lip
  - C) Most of my successful students use 2/3 top, 1/3 bottom
    - 1) Helps range
    - 2) More open sound
  - D) Anchor mouthpiece on bottom lip
  - E) Flat chin
  - F) Hold mouthpiece by the shank (with thumb and index finger at shank end) to not obstruct view of embouchure
  - G) Every mouth is different but do place mouthpiece in or near lip center
- XI) Instrument Carriage, Hand Position, Finger Positions: Look the Part
- A) Bring horn and mouthpiece to face without changing position of the upper body
  - B) Angle of the horn should allow mouthpiece to have equal contact and pressure on the top and bottom lips
  - C) Do not set on the knee/thigh area due to incorrect horn angle and body positioning
  - D) Right hand operates the valves (bear claw); it does not hold the horn
  - E) The left hand holds the instrument and works fourth valve
    - 1) The horn can be held in any number of places, depending on the arm length of the player
    - 2) Remain in a relaxed position
    - 3) Any reaching and stretching can create upper body tension
  - F) Teach 7 valve positions (just like trombone)
    - 1) 1<sup>st</sup> position (no buttons)-open
    - 2) 2<sup>nd</sup> position -finger two
    - 3) 3<sup>rd</sup> position -finger one
    - 4) 4<sup>th</sup> position -fingers one and two
    - 5) 5<sup>th</sup> position-fingers two and three
    - 6) 6<sup>th</sup> position-finger four (one and three)
    - 7) 7<sup>th</sup> position-fingers two and four (one, two, and three)
- XII) Tone Production: a combination of proper embouchure formation, correct use of air, voicing, and lots of practice.
- A) Brass tone production is a result of air passing across the stationary lips within a mouthpiece cup.
  - B) Lip vibrations and why
    - 1) Hear correct pitch
    - 2) Feel correct pitch/muscle memory
    - 3) Associative learning: associate how a note sound and feels at the same time
  - C) Speed of air must have enough intensity to allow lips to vibrate
  - D) Avoid tension in face and upper body
  - E) Do not roll either lip over edge of teeth
  - F) Lip remains in front of teeth
  - G) Corners remain anchored; do not pull back or leave teeth
  - H) Voicing
    - 1) Use an “aah” or “ooh” vowel sound
    - 2) Throat is open and unrestricted
  - I) Air to vibration (will address vibration later)
    - 1) Hold lips apart, then slowly place lips together for vibration in order to find balance of lip vibration and air
    - 2) Listen for vibration and air
      - (a) Too much vibration allows for thin, non-resonant noise
      - (b) Too much air allows for fuzzy, unfocused noise

- J) Add the instrument
- K) Tonguing
- 1) Tongue tip (not top) touches where the top front teeth meet the roof of the mouth
  - 2) Tongue is soft and relaxed in the bottom of the mouth so the air stream can pass calmly/freely into the instrument
  - 3) Avoid tension in neck, shoulders, and upper body
  - 4) Place tongue tip to the point of articulation and hold there while inhaling on preparatory beat. Keep tongue soft and allow the air to move tongue back to resting position. Tongue movement is a result of the air movement.
  - 5) Note stops occur by stopping the air not by tongue stop/release
  - 6) Jaw remains stationary while tonguing
  - 7) Depending on type of articulation, the air must not stop between notes.
  - 8) The tongue tip simply interrupts the air flow
  - 9) Sound is a result of lip vibrations created by air movement; thus, the tongue is passive in tone production.
  - 10) Use various single tonguing syllables (de, dah, te, tah)
  - 11) The airstream moves down the center of the tongue.
- L) Vibrato
- 1) Used to change color, shape, and add beauty to tone
  - 2) Vibrato is created by jaw, not by diaphragm and/or changes in the air stream
  - 3) The variance in pitch should be even and controlled
  - 4) Use selectively (longer notes but not every note)
  - 5) The actual pitch should begin and end without vibrato
  - 6) I use Gary Garner's Vibrato exercise
  - 7) Improves ability to "lip" pitches
  - 8) Frees tight embouchure in upper register
- M) Intonation
- 1) Learning to play in tune
    - (a) Know yourself
    - (b) Know your instrument's tuning tendencies
  - 2) CPE (Cumulative Pitch Error)
    - (a) The more valves used in combination, the sharper the pitch (low B natural)
  - 3) Constant air stream solves many tuning problems
  - 4) Alternate fingerings
  - 5) Vibrato and "lip"
  - 6) Use of electronic tuners
- N) Common Tone Quality Problems/Solutions
- 1) Problem: Tight, closed sound
    - (a) Lips too close together
    - (b) Teeth closed
  - 2) Solution
    - (a) Yawn
    - (b) Feeling of hold wet Nerf Ball in back of mouth
    - (c) Vibrato exercise
  - 3) Problem: posture, horn angle, etc.
  - 4) Solution: change it!
- O) Tone Quality. Listen for:
- 1) Clarity: no extraneous noise (garbage at note front)
  - 2) Resonance: ringing quality; color of sound caused by lots of overtones; creating more pitches than the actual fundamental note
  - 3) Expressiveness: the human factor; lyricism or singing quality

### XIII) Rhythm

- A) Use a counting system
  - 1) Eastman-1 te, 2 te (I use this one because it helps reinforce tongued note fronts)
  - 2) Traditional-1&, 2&
- B) Count aloud using fingers as brain (concrete level thinking)
- C) Say and do foot tap
  - 1) down-up
  - 2) downy-upy
- D) Say music line using the seven finger positions
- E) Use counting sheets as well as music to practice counting

### XIV) Notes

- A) Teach both treble and bass clef notes/grand staff
- B) Confirm understanding of ledger lines
- C) Understanding Beginning, Middle, and End of notes: articulation, body of sound, release
- D) Say in rhythm using note names (and on pitch if possible) the music
  - 1) Slow process
  - 2) Students will learn notes faster

### XV) Good technique: tonal evenness, rhythmic accuracy, and facility that serves to convey musicianship

- A) Tonal awareness: can every note be heard clearly?
- B) Rhythmic accuracy: reproducing what the composer intended
- C) Facility: most music written in the common-practice period utilizes scales and arpeggios
  - 1) Slurs (harmonic)
    - (a) Moving from one note to another
    - (b) Transitions-air between notes
    - (c) Beauty of movement
    - (d) Move more smoothly from one note to another
    - (e) All notes sound tonally the same, same intensity
  - 2) Range Development
    - (a) Combination of embouchure and breath control
    - (b) Less mouthpiece pressure
    - (c) Hints for upper range
      - (i) Aim the air stream downward in the mouthpiece
      - (ii) Less upper lip pressure
      - (iii) More bottom lip pressure
      - (iv) Slight inward rolling of lips
      - (v) Utilize fast, cold air
      - (vi) Shoot air out of the bell
  - 3) Finger Pattern Exercises: practice daily for development of facility; gradually add exercises as the player becomes more proficient
    - (a) 12 major scales (as high as possible with good sound)
    - (b) 12 major arpeggios (as high as possible with good sound)
    - (c) Chromatic scale (as high as possible with good sound)
    - (d) Clark Studies
    - (e) Introduce *The Arban Conservatory Method for Trumpet (Trombone)*
- D) Introduce Advanced Techniques
  - 1) Continue to extend major scale range and tempo
  - 2) 12 melodic minor scales
  - 3) 12 melodic arpeggios
  - 4) Multiple tonguing

XVI) Musicality: making the music move forward

- A) Note groupings occurring on weak beats move forward toward notes occurring on strong beats
  - 1) 4/4 time: 2 moves to 3, 4 moves to 1
  - 2) 3/4 time: 3 moves to 1
  - 3) 6/8 time: 3 moves to 4, 6 moves to 1
  - 4) Upbeats move towards downbeats
  - 5) Sixteenth notes on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> subdivision of the beat move toward sixteenth notes on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> subdivisions of the beat
- B) Sustained Notes: energy is either moving toward or away from the next note or rest; static notes should be utilized for special effects only.
- C) Vibrato (previously discussed)

XVII) Some Final Thoughts on Practicing

- A) Two enemies of the wind musician:
  - 1) Lack of mental focus
  - 2) Creeping tension
- B) Practice performing
- C) Practice the concentration level you need to perform
- D) Cumulative learning: add-on learning
- E) Understand the goal for each exercise
- F) You must have mental focus to perform, which begins with daily drill
- G) Treat every exercise as a concentration and awareness exercise
- H) Four ways to analyze playing:
  - 1) Are you effortlessly collecting and processing data? Process information in your brain?
  - 2) Does it look visually effortless?
  - 3) Does it sound aurally effortless?
  - 4) Does it feel effortless?

XVIII) Repertoire

- A) Google [Guide to the Euphonium Repertoire: The Euphonium Source Book](#) by Lloyd Bone, R. Winston Morris, Eric Paull
- B) Texas Prescribed Music List

I stated at the beginning of this handout that these ideas came from lots of people, too numerous to notate. I lied! I would be beside myself if I did not thank them for their contributions to this clinic: Tom Bennett, Brian Bowman, Cody Myers, Joe Dixon, Jim Drew, Ruben, Garcia Gary Garner, Eddie Green, Denis Kidwell, Dave Rittter, Lisa Jane Stiles, Mark Turner, and my students. THANK YOU!!

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