



Texas Bandmasters Association Convention/Clinic July 22-24, 2021

Beginning Tuba and Euphonium

**CLINICIANS:
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HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Beginning Euphonium and Tuba

A Discussion on Euphonium and Tuba Pedagogy

Keep it Simple

2021 Texas Bandmasters Association Convention

Presented by:

Chris Meredith - Lewisville ISD

Josh Smith - Grapevine-Colleyville ISD

IN THE BEGINNING

Placement, Scheduling, and Preparation

- Facial characteristics when placing students
- Showcase tuba/euphonium instruments during recruiting: song selection, bright & shiny
- Place a proportionate number of students on each instrument for future success
- Schedule instrument classes as split out as possible, keeping like instruments together
- Oil valves, grease slides, polish instruments, and clean cases BEFORE day one
- Students' instrument lockers should be close to their seat in class

Handling & Care 101

- Identify all parts of the instruments and quiz students
- Case placement (*behind chair*) - everything is uniform
- Start from the ground up and be detailed with each step
- Identify each part of the case and demonstrate how latches function. Practice opening the case just like you would practice holding the instrument or playing a concert F. Be direct and detailed!
- Teach and demonstrate exactly how to handle the instrument being extremely specific to where each hand is placed to pick instrument up, etc"
 - Left hand grabs the bell, the right hand grabs a stable point on the body of the instrument. Never let students handle the instruments by the leadpipe/receiver.
- Instrument parade! How to travel with the instrument
- How do you want students placing the instrument on the ground?
- Avoid letting students place the instruments upside down on the bell
- Place the mouthpiece in the leadpipe receiver and give it a ¼ turn to secure it
- It is most important that YOU instill the correct patient and meticulous mindset in your students about care and safety of their instruments. Be lovingly picky!
- Mouthpiece cleaning demonstration with mouthpiece brush

Relaxed, Ready, and Playing Positions

This sets up EVERYTHING ELSE you do all year to succeed. Invest the time to teach proper playing position, and you will reap the benefits later.

- **Relaxed Position:**
 - Sitting back in the chair with feet flat on ground
 - Instrument lays across their lap with at least one hand firmly positioned to always be in control of instrument
- **Ready Position:**
 - Sitting tall on the front ½ of chair (or edge) with flat feet planted on the ground
 - Knees 90° angle (stability & foot tap)
 - Hands are placed where they would be for playing position
 - Euphonium placed on lap with bottom bow placed in toward the left hip and bell section placed toward the right knee
 - Tubas will rotate up similar to a playing position with mouthpiece off of the face
 - Allow flexibility with tuba players so that this position is economical in relationship to playing position
- **Playing Position** - Euphoniums rotate up so that the mouthpiece meets the face, and the instrument is brought to come in contact with the embouchure (not the other way around!!) Students should never change the way they sit due to the environment (adjust the chair or stand, do not adjust how the player sits).
 - **Euphonium** students should place the bottom bow of the instrument into their waist and lean the euphonium slightly forward. This correct lead pipe angle naturally alleviates pressure from the top lip, allowing it to vibrate naturally and produce a characteristic sound. A small rolled up towel may aid in providing additional lift to the instrument so that optimal posture can be achieved.
 - **Tuba** students will require an extra tool to help them hold the instrument properly (tuba stand, shelf liners, phone books, etc). Use shelf liner as a grip that can be found at Home Depot/Lowe's. Students place one end of the liner underneath the outside of their leg (like a bassoon seat strap), and wrap the liner around the top of the leg so that it rests on the inside of the leg. If you have top valve tubas, place the liner on the right leg. If you have front valve tubas, place the liner on the left leg.

FIRST STEPS TO TONE PRODUCTION

Breathing

- The breath should result in relaxation, not creation of tension.
- Breathing Chant - "Out, 2, Breathe, Breathe, Play, 2, 3, 4, Stop, 2, Breathe, Breathe, Play, 2, 3, 4, Stop"

- The exhalation should exit the mouth just as evenly as the inhalation
- Watch for the shoulders to stay down and soft, listen for the throat to remain relaxed
- Breathe through the bottom of your chair, down to the floor
- Check every step along the way by going down the line

Vowel Sounds

- Use vowel sounds to make voicing and tongue placement as simple as possible
- Euphoniums should think of a long “OO” or “U” mouth shape while blowing air (pronounced like “tU” or “shoe”)
- Tubas should think of a more exaggerated “AUH” or “EAUX” mouth shape while blowing air. Think like the way a dramatic opera singer would pronounce “toe”...and make the inside of your mouth as big as possible

Embouchure

For the Teachers:

- Keep it as simple as possible with as little technical explanation as possible “Sim-Poo”
- Go around the room and **show** students what to do using mirrors for self assessment
- Look for an oval shaped aperture- Avoid a “smiling” or “stretched” embouchure
- Keep it simple, only address problems as they arise on an individual basis
- Cheeks stay firmly placed against the teeth- no puffy cheeks

For the Students:

- “Flat Chin, Corners in, No poofy cheeks!” and “Sim-poo”

Adding Air to Embouchure

- Demonstrate your air on their hand (And keep some hand sanitizer at the ready!)
- Keep the air direct and focused into a concentrated area on the palm
- Draw attention to the evenness and consistent direction of the air flow
- Let them blow their air on your hand, then have them copy the feeling on their hand
- Closely monitor the texture of the lips and the size and shape of the aperture
- Use as many fun tools and visualizers as possible. Balloons, pinwheels, breathers, paper airplanes, hand exercises, breathing gym, etc.

Mouthpiece Placement

- Place the mouthpiece for the student yourself at first
- Use mirrors to help students see mouthpiece placement
- General lip proportion inside the mouthpiece will be ½ top lip and ½ bottom lip
- The most extreme you will need to go is 60% top lip and 40% bottom lip
- Monitor students placing the mouthpiece on their own

Adding the Mouthpiece to the Air

- Demonstrate and model each element before over explaining details
- Mouthpiece and air first, no vibration - be specific with what the air should sound like

- Adding vibration: euphoniums may find it easy to vibrate, but tubas may not
 - Consider adding pinky to close off half of shank is okay, just don't force anything that will develop tension early
 - Demonstrate the vibration and stress the importance of even air flow
- Start with a comfortable pitch to get everyone vibrating together
 - Everyone might be starting on different pitches- that's okay for now
- Transition to a specific pitch (F is a good starting pitch) and check this individually

Adding the Mouthpiece to the Instrument

- Check individuals!
- Start with air only first, no vibration, then add vibration
- Avoid playing as a class until 90% are on the "F"
- Reinforce basics of posture, breathing, and embouchure daily

ARTICULATION

- The tip of the tongue touches the back of the bottom edge of your front teeth
- Think of the authentic spanish pronunciation of the word for "you"- tú
- Euphoniums - tU or tOO
- Tubas - tAUH or tEAUX

FLEXIBILITY

- To play lower - "Air column gets bigger and warmer"
- To play higher - "Air column becomes thinner/more laser-like and cooler"
- Your students' first bugle should be "Concert F" to "low Bb"
- Over time, slowly add more positions to this bugle to play lower. E-A, then Eb-Ab, etc.
- Build range through chromatic exercises before slurring upwards

DAILY FUNDAMENTAL ROUTINES

- 1) Theory or Rhythm Reading
- 2) Breathing Exercises
- 3) Mouthpiece Exercises
- 4) Call and Response Longtones - Tempo = SLOW
- 5) Bugles
- 6) Remington Exercises
- 7) Articulation
- 8) Music

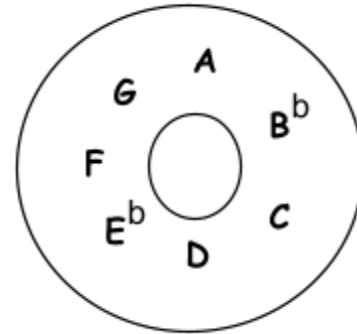
SCALES

Order of scales:

Bb, Ab, G, F...A, Gb...B, C, Db, D, Eb, E, F(upper)

Provide scales both written on a staff (traditionally), AND written out by letter. *Playing* scales is one skill, *reading* scales is another.

Key of Bb (Concert Bb) - 2 flats, Bb Eb



Equipment

Beginner Instruments

Euphonium - Yamaha YEP-201

Tuba - Yamaha YBB-105

Intermediate Instruments

Euphonium - Yamaha YEP-321

Tuba - Yamaha YBB-641

Advanced Instruments

Euphonium - Yamaha YEP-642SII; Besson BE968

Tuba - King 2341WS; Eastman EBB534

Mouthpieces

Euphonium - Schilke 51D

Tuba - Conn Helleberg 120s

Lubricants and Maintenance

Tuning Slide Grease - Hetman Lubricant 10 "MIG"

Piston Valve Oil - Hetman Lubricant 1 "Light Piston"

Rotor Valve Oil - Hetman Lubricant 11 "Light Rotor", Hetman Lubricant 13 "Light bearing & linkage", Hetman Lubricant 15 "Ball Joint"

Polishing Cloth

Mouthpiece Brush

Accessories

Mouthpiece Pouch - Protec 2 Piece Tuba Mouthpiece Pouch

Shelf Liner - search "shelf liner original drawer" on web

Tuba Stand - Hercules DS553B

Biography

Chris Meredith is currently the Director of Bands at Lewisville High School in Lewisville, Texas. Prior to his position at Lewisville, Meredith served as Director of Bands at Shadow Ridge Middle School in Flower Mound, Texas for thirteen years. In addition to his graduate degree in Music Education from Southern Methodist University, Meredith holds a Bachelor's degree in Music Education from the University of North Texas.

Meredith's bands at Shadow Ridge Middle School were consistent sweepstakes award winners at UIL and invitational festivals. They had been selected by the Foundation for Music Education as a National Winner in the National Wind Band Honors Project (2010-2018), and were official performers at The Midwest Clinic in Chicago, IL in 2012 and 2018. Additionally, Honor Winds had placed as a top 5 Finalist in the Texas CC Honor Band Contests multiple occasions and was awarded the John Philip Sousa Foundation's Sudler Cup in 2017.

As an active trombonist, Meredith performed twice at the 2003 International Trombone Festival in Helsinki, Finland as a finalist in both the ITA Solo Competition and ITA Quartet Competition, has performed as principal bass trombonists of multiple groups including San Angelo Symphony Orchestra, North East Orchestra and at the Pierre Montoux School. Meredith has also been a multiple recipient of the Lewisville Education Foundation's "Foundation Award", honored with the Texas PTA Lifetime Member Award, and was the 2012-2013 Teacher of the Year at Shadow Ridge Middle School.

Meredith is an active adjudicator, guest clinician and lecturer, and is honored to have professional affiliations with Texas Bandmasters Association, Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Music Adjudicators Association, and Phi Beta Mu. Current projects include the Musical Mastery Beginner Band series with Asa Burk, Alicia DeSoto, Kathy Johnson, and Dominic Talanca. Meredith resides in Highland Village with his wife, Kimberly, and their daughter, Charlotte.

Josh Smith serves as the Director of Bands at Heritage Middle School in Grapevine-Colleyville ISD. He previously taught in Keller ISD, where he established a thriving band program at Vista Ridge MS. Ensembles under his direction/assistance have earned "Superior" ratings and "Best In Class" awards in the state of Texas. In 2019, Mr. Smith was nominated to receive an Influential Teacher award from the Fort Worth Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Mr. Smith graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of North Texas in Denton, TX where he received his bachelor's degree in music education under the guidance of noted tuba professor Don Little. Prior to becoming a band director, Smith taught private tuba lessons and masterclasses around the Houston and DFW areas. As an active musician, Smith has performed in many pit orchestras for musical productions in the North Texas area, as well as touring the country performing with both the Carolina Crown and Madison Scouts Drum and Bugle Corps.

Reference Materials from *Musical Mastery - Teacher's Edition: Brass*

Teaching Euphonium Hand Position and Posture

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Details to demonstrate to your students



GENERAL

- Always bring the euphonium to you, do not move your upper body to the euphonium.
- The posture of the upper body and head should be straight and tall. Eyes should be focused forward (at conductor or music).
- The euphonium lead pipe should be centered and a few degrees below level. (This angle may need to be adjusted slightly for students with an over/underbite.)
- The bottom bow of the euphonium should rest near the left hip. Depending on the height of the player this contact point will be near the waist and will help create the desired natural angle of the lead pipe.
- The weight of the instrument should be supported by the left hand. The right hand should be relaxed and free to move.

RIGHT HAND

- The thumb of the right hand should be placed either in the thumb rest, between the first and second valve casings, or just under the grip bar. This all depends on the type of euphonium you have. The intent is to have your valve hand in the correct shape to facilitate appropriate valve action.
- The thumb should be mostly straight and it should not support the weight of the instrument.
- The fingers are curved and the fingerprints are placed on the tops of the valves.
- The wrist should be straight and in line with the forearm.
- Constantly check the curves of the fingers, and make sure the valves are never pressed at an angle.
- The overall shape of the hand is that of holding a drinking glass.

LEFT HAND

- The balance of the euphonium will be supported in the left hand.
- The 3rd valve slide is a good place to hold if you do not have a compensating valve.
- The wrist should be straight and strong.
- The student should be able to remove the right hand without the position of the euphonium changing.



Proper breath control is the single most important aspect of wind playing. Careful instruction and inspection of the breathing process will prevent bad habits from forming. Continue to watch for students who may tighten up and/or move their shoulders when breathing. It is recommended that students initially learn to breathe completely separate of their instrument. They can evenly bring their hand to and from their mouth to demonstrate even control of the inhale and exhale. Students should always breathe with their best posture and can be combined with a foot tap to externally demonstrate understanding of pulse and counting while breathing. In conjunction with breathing, students can be taught how to form their embouchure on the exhale, still separate of the instrument.

Euphonium Breathing

Breathing Chant

INHALATION (breathing in)

1. Posture is one of the most important aspects of correct breathing
 - Sit tall in your chair
 - Keep your feet flat on the floor
 - Let your shoulders fall down in a relaxed manner
2. Breathe through your mouth
 - Open your mouth in a relaxed "OH" shape
 - Relax and let your throat open
 - Keep your shoulders down
3. Keep your air down low
 - Think of saying "HOW" as you breathe in
 - Expand all around the abdomen and lower back as you breathe down to your "pockets" – push the air downward
 - Keep your chest open and your shoulders down

Breathing should initially be taught independent of the instrument and embouchure.

EXHALATION (breathing out)

1. Focused Air
 - You should aim the air straight forward
 - Think of a word like "WHO" when blowing the air out
 - Steady and Even Air: release the same amount of air at the beginning, middle, and end of the breath; keep your chest and shoulders relaxed as you blow cold air
2. Expanded Abdomen
 - As you release the compressed air from your lungs, maintain a downward blowing pressure on your abdomen so that your tummy remains expanded

Euphonium students should start with their lips touching and blow out using the word "WHO".

Get rid of your extra stale air during counts 1 & 2 before taking new air in.

Breathing Chant



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The Breathing Chant is a method used to internalize counting and is the foundation for later rhythm counting. Initially, you can use it to establish good and thorough breathing technique. So, when you say "count it in your head" you can refer to the Breathing Chant.

Continue repeating as needed.

Explain and then demonstrate the steps of the embouchure for the students with a mouthpiece only. Say "M", place the mouthpiece on the face, breathe in, blow out. Use air first (no vibrations yet) to make sure the focus is on air for tone production. Have the students practice this several times. When this is comfortable and the focus is on the airstream, repeat the steps while holding the lips in the "M" shape, blowing steady air until the lips begin to vibrate. Do not be concerned about how the note starts. At this stage, only be concerned that the note starts with air and the air creates the vibration of the lips.

Euphonium Embouchure

Face & Lip Placement

Embouchure Formation - always use a mirror

1. Put lips together as if saying the letter M.
2. Bring the mouthpiece to embouchure with approximately 50% of top lip and 50% bottom lip touching the mouthpiece. Your teacher will adjust ratio of top/bottom lip as needed per individual.
3. Holding the lips in the M shape blow a hole in the center of the lips with a "pooh" syllable. Strive to make the aperture the size of a grain of rice.
4. Continue to hold the lips together while blowing until they begin to vibrate.
5. Keep the corners of the lips firm and avoid stretching the lips back into a smile.

Finer Points to Embouchure Formation

1. Set the embouchure first then bring the mouthpiece to face.
2. The teeth should be slightly apart and the lower jaw should be open.
3. The center of the aperture should feel softer than the engaged muscles of the embouchure.
4. Always blow the air THROUGH your lips/mouthpiece/leadpipe.
5. Keep the throat open and other facial muscles relaxed.

When adding the mouthpiece, make students aware of the angle of the shank in relation to the floor. There should be a natural 10 degree downward slope to the shank.

As the students say "M" check to make sure that it is natural and relaxed, but firm. The lips should not roll in too much.

It may be helpful to place the shank of the mouthpiece between the teeth to make sure each student is using their air correctly. This is also the perfect amount of space needed between the teeth for a full resonate sound.

Most students are generally 50/50 top/bottom lip.

Use the syllable "pooh" to start the air/vibrations. Once the student is consistently able to produce a tone with their airstream you can introduce articulations.

At first, you may want to have the students breathe in through their nose to keep the embouchure from changing after it is set before they exhale.

Continue to focus on correct flow of air as we add the breathing chant. Demonstrate forming the embouchure while using an air stream daily!

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The focus on embouchure should be two-fold
1) The embouchure should look natural and relaxed
2) The air should be what creates the vibrations. Air first then sound.

Evaluating student performance on the mouthpiece can lead to greater success with initial partial placement (slotting the first sound in the 3rd partial). Consider using the mouthpiece to isolate working on breathing and exhalation with air only.

Initially practice the correct "air only sound" as much as "vibration". The speed of air and shape of air column should be the primary focus while working on this page.

Euphonium Mouthpiece

Air, Vibration & Sound

1. Focus on a full capacity breath in

2. Blow steady & smooth air out

Always model the correct sound (air only or vibration) for students. Use the whole rest in each line as an opportunity to model the sound. This will create a call and response exercise. As students mature you may select individuals to model the sound as an assessment opportunity!

Initially always model for students so that they have a pitch reference to match. Building the inner ear should start immediately!

Mouthpiece Studies

Pitches can be variable. Strive to maintain steady air flow during inhalation and exhalation at all times.

3. Steady

4. Descending

5. Ascending

6. Siren Down

7. Siren Up

The initial bending of notes should begin downward very gently. At first students will find greater success with going down rather than up.

Listen for a steady air stream and correct shaping of the oral cavity. At first, always model the exact sound you want!

After a few days of Line 4 add Line 5 and be sure to model first! Make the initial upward bend very minimal (building awareness of how to create this sound is more important than mastering it the first time).

Have students look at your embouchure as you demonstrate each line. Do these lines with a mirror to be sure that the corners of the embouchure are not moving and that the shank of the mouthpiece is not pivoting.

Sound and volume should be the same quality as students siren or bend the pitch. Use the aperture in combination with the air, not just blowing harder, to control pitch bending.