



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
Convention/Clinic July 21-23, 2022**

**Pedagogy From the Podium**

**CLINICIAN:  
Fred J. Allen**

**DEMO GROUP: Tyler Junior College  
Band**



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

# Pedagogy from the Podium

Fred J Allen

Texas Bandmasters Association

July 22, 2022

*[NOTE: This is the full handout for this clinic, with addendum.]*

Band directors can and should improve playing techniques of ensemble members from the podium. Continued tonal development and refinement depends upon the teacher having well-defined sound models for each instrument and a strong desire to incorporate instrumental pedagogy into daily rehearsals.

*Disclaimer: This presentation is not about ensemble skills or warm-up routines. The objective of this presentation is to identify statements and techniques that will help the playing skills of individual students on the various instruments of the band.*

Prefatory statement: NONE of these techniques matter if players do not have good tone. The foundations of good tone ARE possible in the beginning year, and they can and should develop in the following years. Good tonal concepts must be in place or the pursuit of these techniques is futile.

## **Instructions that make all wind instruments sound better**

1. "More air."  
*Fast air, concentrated air, consistent air, lots of air, steady air, controlled air, etc.*
2. "Activate the corners of your embouchure."  
*Move the corners forward in most cases.*
3. "Are you sitting as tall as you can?"  
*Neck tall, shoulders down. Mid-rehearsal posture reminders are valuable!*

## **The "teacher" part of being the band director**

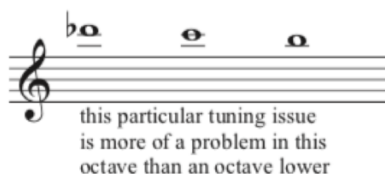
1. Have language for what the students do to produce an accent (especially the sideways accent: > ).
2. Have language for playing higher on brass.  
*Upward lip slur AND lines that move upward.*
3. Directed listening. Specify what you want: "Listen to \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)."  
*Ensemble means "together" in French. Unity is therefore the goal. Unify tone color, balance, intonation, articulation, rhythm, pulse, etc.*

## Every Band Director Should Know These Things

The purpose of this list is to focus on 3 (and only 3!) things every band director should know with certainty about each instrument, without having to look anything up. There are many more items for each instrument, of course; consider this a starting place and add on your own.

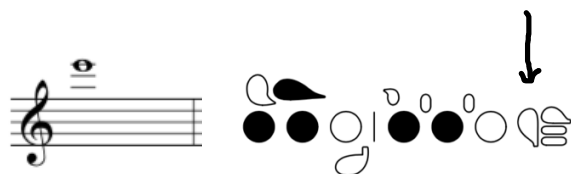
### Piccolo

1. Don't use a tuner for piccolo, use a drone (or your ears).  
*The highest octave on the piano has to be stretched upward by piano tuners—human ears need to those highest frequencies tuned sharper than a tuner would indicate. See: "Railsback Curve" for fascinating reading and background.*
2. Tuning tendencies of individual notes are not the same as flute!  
*Piccolo has a reverse conical taper in its bore, whereas the flute is cylindrical from the barrel to the foot. This affects the tuning tendencies of the piccolo.*
3. Because of its short body, pulling/pushing the head joint affects the notes closest to the head joint (Db, C, B) more drastically than on flute.



### Flute

1. Air direction is the prime factor. Blow across the embouchure hole.  
*Air down=pitch down, air up=pitch up. Flute is about "out and up."*
2. High E is really sharp—solution: no right-hand pinky



3. Most young flute players play with the embouchure plate too high on the lip.  
*Do NOT teach "kiss and roll" to set the embouchure—this places the lip plate too high on the lip.*

### Oboe

1. Three half-hole notes: the three Ds: Db, D and D#. (no octave key used)



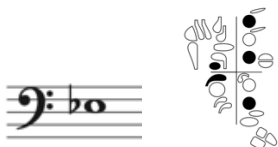
2. Try to make the embouchure as round as possible. *Corners forward.*
3. A little less reed for low register, a little more reed for upper register.

## Bassoon

1. Three half hole notes: The three Gs: Gb, G, G#. (whisper key IS used)

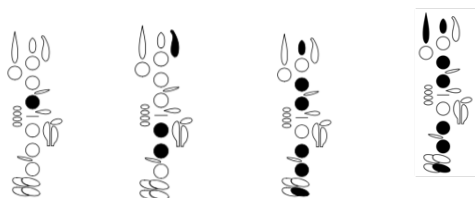
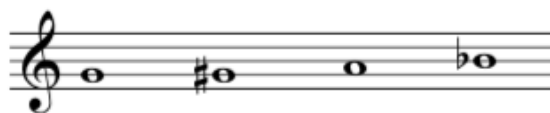


2. A little less reed for low register, a little more reed for upper register.
3. Teach the “resonance” Eb from the beginning.



## Clarinet

1. Firm the top lip. This helps get rid of the “fuzz” especially in the throat tones.  
*“Hug the mouthpiece” with top lip; should be able to feel the corners of the mouthpiece with the top lip; corners of the embouchure in toward the fangs.*
2. Throat tones resonance fingerings G – G# – A – Bb



3. Push up with the thumb(s) to anchor mouthpiece under top teeth. *“Wedge it in.”*

## Bass Clarinet

1. Firm the top lip. This helps get rid of the “fuzz” especially in the throat tones.  
*Same verbiage as Bb clarinet.*
2. Throat tones are G – G# – A – Bb. *Same as Bb clarinet, and same solutions.*
3. Drop the jaw for the clarion register. *A more “free” feeling than Bb clarinet.*

## Saxophone

1. Every sax is sharp on D and A. These are easily lipped down. *Fingering solutions:*



2. C# resonance fingering:



(right hand fingers 1-2-3 may be added, in any combination)

- Drop jaw for response in lowest register.  
*Make a "V" with your face, chin down more, but keep lower lip "pad" in place.*

## Trumpet

- 5<sup>th</sup> partials (written pitches) E – Eb - D (*C# usually isn't an issue due to valve comb.*)  
These sound flat, *compared to equal temperament.*



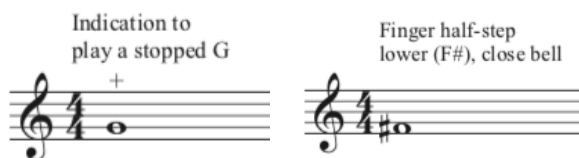
- 6<sup>th</sup> partials G – F# - F  
These sound sharp, *compared to equal temperament.*



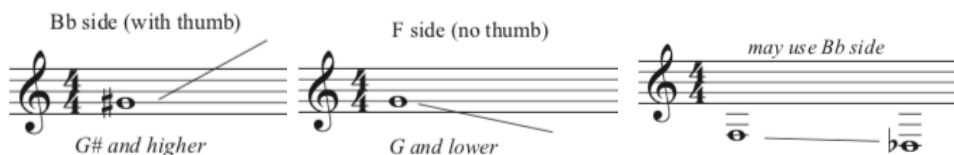
- Taller vowel sound for low register. "Aw" or "Ohh."

## Horn

- Stopped horn: finger half step LOWER than written pitch, close bell off with palm.  
*Foreign term.: gestopft (Ger.) bouché (Fr.) chiuso (It.)*  
*Symbol: a plus sign over the note.*



- Use Bb side (thumb) of instrument from G# upward. F side (no thumb) from G downward. *Many players also use Bb side for 5 notes in low register, Db – F.*



- Angle of lead pipe. *Angled downward, matching the angle of the teeth.*

## Trombone

- 5<sup>th</sup> partials D – Db – C – B  
These sound flat, *compared to equal temperament.*



(play this D 4<sup>th</sup> to adjust)

2. 6<sup>th</sup> partials F – E – Eb

These sound sharp, *compared to equal temperament.*



3. When the F attachment is engaged, positions are farther apart. Most often encountered are C and B-natural.



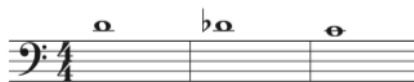
T 1 plus a little bit more  
(use a tuner to see how much)

T 2 plus a little bit more  
(use a tuner to see how much)

## Euphonium

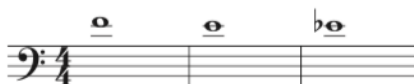
1. 5<sup>th</sup> partials D – Db – C (B usually isn't an issue)

These sound flat, *compared to equal temperament.*



2. 6<sup>th</sup> partials F – E – Eb

These sound sharp, *compared to equal temperament.*



3. Don't lean into or up to the instrument.

## Tuba

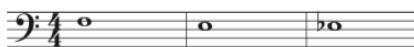
1. 5<sup>th</sup> partials D – Db – C (B usually isn't an issue)

These sound flat, *compared to equal temperament.*



2. 6<sup>th</sup> partials F – E – Eb

These sound sharp, *compared to equal temperament.*



3. Don't lean into or up to the instrument.

## Percussion

1. Have players hold up smaller instruments, such as triangle, finger cymbals, woodblock, etc. for better projection.
2. Play keyboard instruments in the proper octave. [Williams and King, The Complete Instrument Reference Guide for Band Directors, Kjos, 2001, pp. 48-49. See below.]
3. Tune the timpani.  
*"Close" is not any more acceptable on timpani than it is on any other instrument.*

## Addendum

Going beyond three items for each instrument!

These are additional helpful items – feel free to add your own to each category.

### Piccolo

- Push the wet part of the embouchure forward to focus, and/or get rid of fuzz.  
*(Important on flute, very important on piccolo to find focus.)*

### Flute

- Forehead parallel to the wall, embouchure hole parallel to the floor.
- Say "pure" ("pooh") and blow air through the center of lips.
- Near edge of embouchure is 1/16" below where the lip and skin meet. *May adjust for thicker or thinner lips.*
- NEVER teach "kiss and roll" to find the placement of the lip plate. It places the lip plate too high on the lip.
- Bottom lip on flute is relaxed. Top lip is more flat across the teeth.
- Bottom lip covers about 1/3 of embouchure hole.
- Push the wet part of the embouchure forward to focus, and/or get rid of fuzz.
- Use "eee" for low and "oooo" for high. *Opposite of brass.*
- NEVER "roll in" or "roll out" for intonation. Intonation on flute is controlled by the corners of the embouchure, aiming the air.  
*Aim air up=raises pitch      Aim air down=lowers pitch*
- Most low notes tend toward flatness. All third register notes are sharp except High D (flat!) and high Bb (either in tune or slightly flat).
- Flutists need side room. *Each flutist has a stand.*
- Use right hand pinky on all notes except "top three, bottom three and middle D."
- Head joint alone plays A (442, according to some sources), but **don't** fret over matching a tuner—some faces will be a little higher or lower. USE YOUR EARS—the bigger goal is to use head joint practice to teach students to evaluate tone production.

### Oboe

- 45° angle
- Never teach "cover your teeth with your lips."

- Make a circle with lips, bottom blade on bottom lip, roll reed in slightly—it will take enough top lip with it.
- Reed crows a “C”.
- Reed should be inserted all the way in, so as not to allow for a bubble of air at the base of the reed.
- Start teaching left F in the beginner year (if the instrument has one!).

## English horn

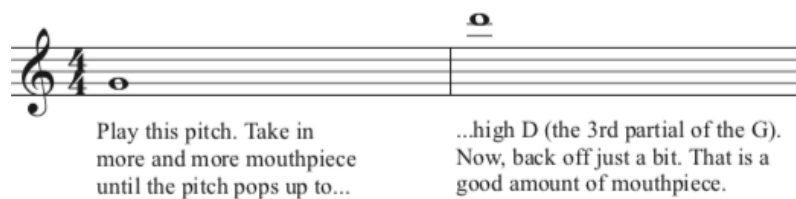
- Bocals for English horn come in sizes! 1 – 2 – 3. Standard size is 2.

## Bassoon

- Player should not be leaning or contorting to reach the reed—the seat strap should be positioned so that the reed goes naturally into the embouchure.
- Typical bocals at sized 1 – 2 – 3. Standard is 2.
- Reed should be inserted all the way in, so as not to allow for a bubble of air at the base of the reed.
- First portion of bocal should have a slight downward angle.
- Bassoonists need side room. *Each bassoonist has a stand.*

## Clarinet

- 30° angle (have to watch this on mouthpiece/barrel exercise).
- Here is how to know if a clarinetist should take more mouthpiece. Almost every young player needs to take more mouthpiece. Have student play an open “G.” Move the mouthpiece in gradually until the G overblows to altissimo “D.” Then back off the mouthpiece just before the point at which it overblows. *Yes, that is the third partial of that fundamental.*



Play this pitch. Take in more and more mouthpiece until the pitch pops up to...

...high D (the 3rd partial of the G). Now, back off just a bit. That is a good amount of mouthpiece.

- Mouthpiece + barrel = concert F#, though most good players will be on the high side of this. Students who play lower than F# need attention, students who are above it are less of a problem, unless they are pinching or biting.
- One of the major benefits to assigning several scales, arpeggios and the chromatic is that the clarinetist will have the opportunity to use and learn the many chromatic fingerings available. Insist on the use of alternate fingerings.
- It is possible to purchase a clarinet barrel at slightly longer or shorter lengths. *66 mm. is standard.*

## Bass Clarinet

- The most secure set-up is to use BOTH peg and neck strap.
- If the instrument has a “modern” neck, you will see that it angles upward to



replicate the 30° angle of the Bb clarinet. If it is an older/cheaper neck, it will protrude straight into the embouchure. If this is the case, pull the bottom of the instrument under the chair as far as possible to get angle closer to 30°.

## Saxophone

- The neck strap supports the weight of the instrument. Do NOT push forward with the right thumb! *Right thumb stabilizes.*
- Instrument comes naturally to the face. *No leaning forward or manipulating the head.*
- Beginners should start with alto saxophone on the side.
- Saxophonists need side room.
- Alto mouthpiece/neck=A<sub>b</sub> concert; tenor mouthpiece/neck=E concert.

## All brass

- Straight mutes sharpen the instrument a little. *Teach students to pull out the appropriate amount when using a straight mute.*
- Cup mutes flatten the instrument a little. *Teach students to push in the appropriate amount when using a cup mute.*
- Vowel sounds: “oh” or “aw” for low and “ee” for high.
- Fingering combinations affect intonation:
  - 1 – 2 slightly sharp*
  - 2 – 3 can be slightly flat*
  - 1 – 3 very sharp*
  - 1 – 2 – 3 extremely sharp*
- Overtone series cause some partials to be out of tune compared to equal temperament:
  - Partial 3 = slightly sharp. Compared to equal temperament.*
  - Partial 5 = flat. Noticeably flat.*
  - Partial 6 = sharp. More of a problem than 3<sup>rd</sup> partial due to range*

## Trumpet

- Trumpet is very directional. Be aware of where the bell is pointing.
- Kick on low D and C#. *If the teacher doesn't insist on this, it may not be done.*

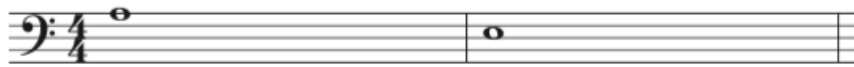
## Horn

- Right hand placement: horn experts recommend anywhere from 1:30 to 2 o'clock (if off-leg). Hand goes in to the knuckle.
- Off the leg playing has gotten to be more and more prevalent!
- The effect of the overtone series compared to Equal Temperament is not as noticeable on horn as the other brass. 6<sup>th</sup> partials on horn are in mid-range, as opposed to the high range of the other brass, so hornists can easily lip these down. *(Same for 5<sup>th</sup> partials on horn.)*
- Hornists need side room. *Each hornist has a stand.*

## Trombone

- Trombone is very directional. Be aware of where the bell is pointing.

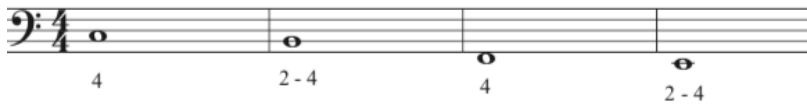
- Music stand goes to the right. *Every trombonist has a stand.*
- Mystery positions: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. *Pay a lot of attention to where these get placed.*  
2<sup>nd</sup> position A and E are often encountered in the first years of playing.



These two pitches frequently act as leading tones in the keys of Bb and F, respectively: all the more reason to be sure the 2<sup>nd</sup> position is not played out too far.

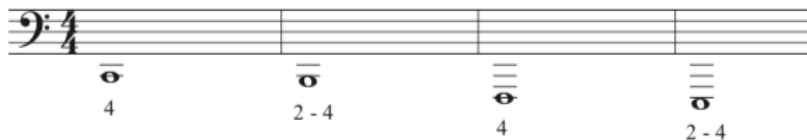
## Euphonium

- Each euphonium player has a stand.
- Insist on the use of the 4<sup>th</sup> valve, especially for students who are transitioning from a 3-valve instrument.



## Tuba

- Each tubist has a stand.
- Insist on the use of the 4<sup>th</sup> valve, especially for students who are transitioning from a 3-valve instrument.



## Percussion

- Notice where the student strikes the instrument
- Every band director should be able to demonstrate an appropriate cymbal crash
- Every band director should know appropriate bass drum technique
- Know the difference between mallet grips (Stevens, Musser, Burton)
- Use the proper beater for each instrument

### *Recommendation:*

Jagow, Shelley. Tuning for Wind Instruments. Del Ray Beach, FL: Meredith Music Publications, 2013. This is best book I have ever seen for fingerings, including those which help intonation problems. Every band hall should invest in this book.

Williams, Richard and King, Jeff. The Complete Instrument Reference Guide for Band Directors. Kjos Music, 2001. Great charts for basic, alternate and trill fingerings.

Email me for clarification, more information, etc.:

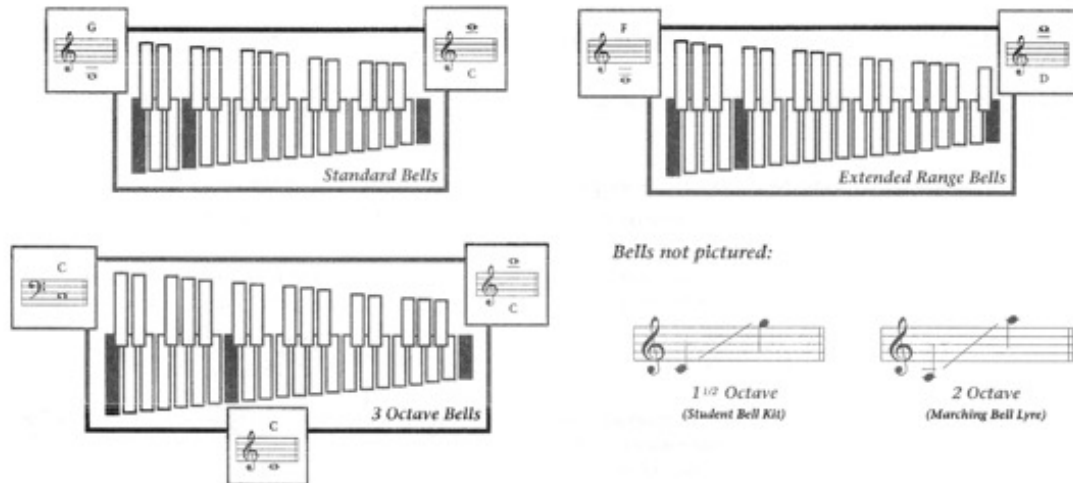
Mr. Fred J Allen [frjallen1994@gmail.com](mailto:frjallen1994@gmail.com)

Williams and King, *The Complete Instrument Reference Guide for Band Directors*, Kjos, 2001.

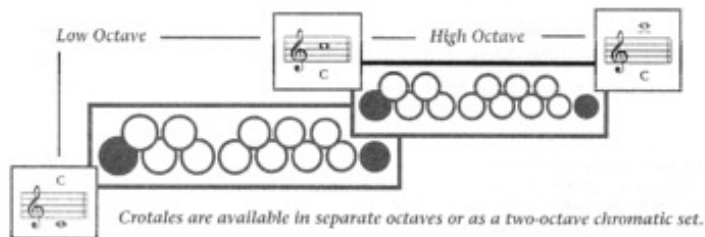
48 **Keyboard Percussion Ranges**

The following diagrams outline the full range of each instrument. The lowest and highest notes are indicated as well as the location of written middle C. Please note that instrument size and range may vary according to the manufacturer.

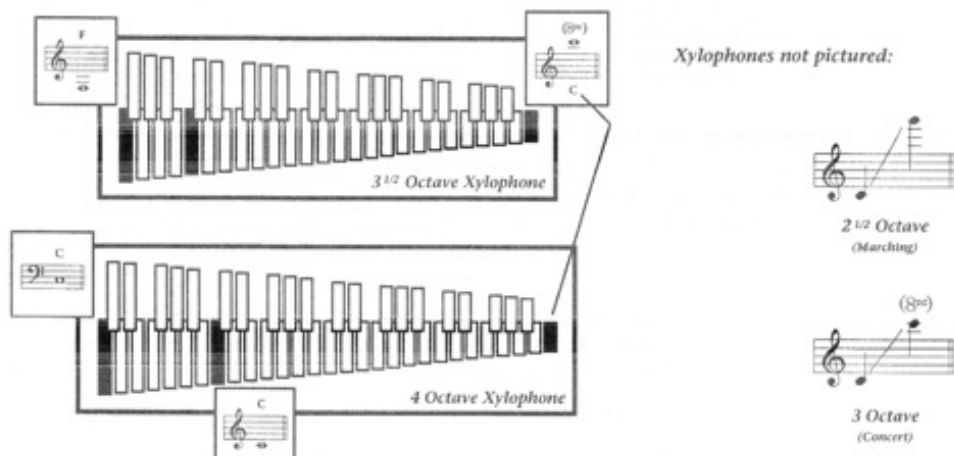
*Orchestra Bells or Glockenspiel (sounds two octaves higher than notated)*



*Crotales (sounds two octaves higher than notated)*



*Xylophone (sounds one octave higher than notated)*



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**Marimba (sounds as notated)** 4

The diagram illustrates five types of marimbas, each with a keyboard layout and a corresponding musical notation example. The instruments are arranged vertically from top to bottom: 4 Octave Marimba, 4<sup>1/3</sup> Octave Marimba, 4<sup>1/2</sup> Octave Marimba, 4<sup>2/3</sup> Octave Marimba, and 5 Octave Marimba. Each instrument's keyboard is shown with a central C-clef and a treble clef. Lines connect the notation examples to the specific keys on the keyboards. The notation examples include: 4 Octave Marimba (C-clef, treble clef, C4-C5), 4<sup>1/3</sup> Octave Marimba (A-clef, treble clef, A3-A5), 4<sup>1/2</sup> Octave Marimba (F-clef, bass clef, F2-F5), 4<sup>2/3</sup> Octave Marimba (E-clef, bass clef, E2-E5), and 5 Octave Marimba (C-clef, bass clef, C2-C5).

**Marimbas not pictured:**

Two musical notation examples are provided for marimbas not pictured. The first example shows a treble clef with notes on the 2<sup>1/2</sup> Octave (Marching) and 3 Octave (Concert) staves. The second example shows a bass clef with notes on the 1<sup>1/2</sup> Octave and 1<sup>3/5</sup> Octave (Bass Marimbas) staves.

**Vibraphone or Vibes (sounds as notated)**

The diagram illustrates three types of vibraphones, each with a keyboard layout and a corresponding musical notation example. The instruments are arranged vertically from top to bottom: 2<sup>1/2</sup> Octave Vibraphone, 3 Octave Vibraphone, and 3<sup>1/2</sup> Octave Vibraphone. Each instrument's keyboard is shown with a central C-clef and a treble clef. Lines connect the notation examples to the specific keys on the keyboards. The notation examples include: 2<sup>1/2</sup> Octave Vibraphone (F-clef, treble clef, F4-F5), 3 Octave Vibraphone (C-clef, treble clef, C4-C5), and 3<sup>1/2</sup> Octave Vibraphone (C-clef, bass clef, C3-C5).

**Vibraphone not pictured:**

One musical notation example is provided for a vibraphone not pictured, showing a bass clef with notes on the 4 Octave (Concert) staff.