



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

**Power, Presence, and Passion: The Best of
the BAC Brass Program**

CLINICIANS:

Jarrett Lipman, Gino Cipriani

**DEMO GROUP: Boston Crusaders
Hornline**

SPONSOR: Boston Crusaders



HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Power, Presence, and Passion

The Best of the Boston Crusaders Brass Program

Presented by:

Gino Cipriani, *Assistant Director & Brass Caption Supervisor, Boston Crusaders Drum Corps*
Jarrett Lipman, *Brass Caption Manager, Boston Crusaders Drum Corps*

Why are we here?

Utilizing the spectacular Boston Crusaders Hornline, Brass Caption Head Gino Cipriani and Caption Manager Jarrett Lipman will guide clinic attendees through the ingredients needed to inspire performers and audience members alike. As teachers and designers, we want our audiences to respond to our performances with the full range of emotions; wonder and awe, anguish, tears of joy, and the highly coveted spontaneous standing ovation. Using segments of the 2022 competitive show and exercises from the BAC brass technique program, this clinic will explore strategies to improve technique, power playing, and volume control on the field in order to create a greater connection with audiences. This clinic will showcase the very best of what BAC Brass has to offer.

Part One - Fundamentals

With so many possible uses of fundamentals time, it is easy to get overwhelmed and wonder what to cover in a day. To avoid randomness in our warm-ups or skipping over an essential part of a musician's diet, we insist on a few things in our fundamentals each day:

- Breathing
- Singing
- Long tones
- Lip slurs
- Articulation exercise

During Spring Training, we will spend nearly an hour each day working through our technique packet and developing skills necessary for our performers to succeed in an outdoor arena. Our technique packet consists of traditional long tones and lip bends but also includes four exercises that target specific skill sets for our performers. These challenging exercises combine elements of flexibility, range, and articulation. *You'll note the exercises also incorporate the mark time during the ends of phrases to help performers coordinate time their releases and breaths.*

As the season progresses, we will condense the time spent on our technique packet to about 30 minutes. We will also incorporate other tonguing or volume exercises that target specific challenges in the brass book. For example, if we have multiple tonguing passages, we might perform the rhythm on chromatic Bb or F scales while marking time.

Technique No. 1 - Expanding Interval Flow and Flexibility Study

This exercise facilitates responsiveness and flexibility. It combines elements of flexibility and volume, as well as interval control over the partials. The recommended tempo is 126, however it can be performed slower or faster depending on the goal.



Technique No. 2 - Advanced Flexibility and Flow

This exercise is one of the most challenging in the book and develops flexibility and control. The recommended tempo is 126, however it can be performed slower or faster depending on the goal.



Technique No. 3 - Advanced Flexibility, Range, and Glissando

This exercise combines elements of flexibility, register extension, and glissando. The glissandos help the performers smooth out slurs. The recommended tempo is 126, however it can be performed slower or faster depending on the goal.



Technique No. 4 - Articulation and Technique

This exercise is the most challenging in the technique book. It develops tongue and finger coordination, as well as the ability to articulate cleanly coming out of slurs. This exercise also develops breath management skills as performers learn to enter and exit technique for quick replacement breaths. We perform this exercise at the tempo that best serves our goal.



These exercises, crafted by Mr. Cipriani, have also been developed to keep our performers engaged during technique sessions. The challenges of each one provide an inviting “puzzle” for our students to solve during their daily warm-up and develop their minds and bodies.

Part Two - Technique

The musicians at the Boston Crusaders relish the opportunity to perform demanding literature with extremely challenging visual responsibilities. Our arranger Ryan George provides engaging, creative, and virtuosic compositions that satisfy performers and audiences alike. The simultaneous demands placed on our musicians require a detailed approach to breaking down the material to achieve it at the highest level. As a brass staff, we create short fundamental exercises that develop targeted skills needed for a specific music book. The performers also require a movement program that matches the detail of the music program to maximize the end product.

Our process for breaking down technical passages:

- Perform the passage down tempo, broken into small fragments, with no movement/body
- Perform the passage at tempo with no movement/body
- Perform only the movement/body - break this down with counts
- Perform the movement/body with performers singing, speaking, or counting
- Perform the passage on air-valve with mark-time or movement/body
- Perform the passage on the notes with mark-time or movement/body

We will also put our performers in the “form” or “shape” they might be in during the drill, rather than perform things in an arc or block. Arcs/blocks present additional challenges and do not replicate the environmental challenges as well as putting the performers in forms.

During technical moments, we remind our performers of a few important points:

- Clarity is the most important effect when performing technique
- The technique must be perfectly together performer to performer
- Performers should remain calm while playing technique

Part Three - Expression & Passion

Audiences are picky. Each audience has a distinct personality and responds differently to stimuli. Sometimes a crowd is influenced by a hometown group performing, like when we perform in Boston or Texas. We might not receive the same ovation in a different location. Regardless of crowd dynamics, there are several ways for musicians to connect and communicate with all audiences using dynamics and expression. We work on chord progressions to develop the control needed to play at extreme dynamic ranges. These chord progressions work on ear training, tone quality, breath management, balance performer to performer, and the ability to control extreme volumes.

Audiences respond positively to a variety of textures, timbres, colors, and volumes. The more you can vary the approach to these items, the more you can develop a connection with your audiences. Tranquil, sensitive moments can cause your listeners to lean in closer and enjoy a moment of calm repose, while extremely powerful moments can inspire passion and enthusiasm. Consider asking students questions - “*Is this the volume you intend to play?*” or “*Is this how you want sound?*” or even “*What do you want your audiences to feel in this moment?*”

Michael Cesario, former Artistic Director of Drum Corps International, would often remark the most incredible moment for performers and audiences is the “*crying, happy standing ovation.*” This standing ovation is spontaneous and usually results in tears of joy. Performers share in this moment through that strong connection with their audiences.

You’ll want a process that develops the performers’ ability to create these moments. The method may result in unpleasant sounds as performers learn how to control extremes. As a coach, you can help them navigate these challenges by returning the focus to the skills needed to achieve their best sounds at all dynamic levels. We like to remind performers, “it’s not how LOUD you play. It’s how you PLAY loud.” In other words, if the tone quality is distorted or overblown, it will likely not inspire the correct emotional response from the audience. Likewise, a softer sound that is unstable, thin, or brittle will also create discomfort for audiences.

Strategies/Recommendations

- Consider a numerical dynamic system from 1 to 10 - 1 is the softest they can play, 10 is the loudest, and 5 is the middle/mezzo dynamic. These dynamics can be relative and instructors can set these volumes based on movements or moments in the show.
- When working moments of extreme range in the show, consider sustaining just the first pitch to help performers “find the sound” you are looking for.
- Create a breath management plan that helps performers “stagger breathe” in both the loudest and softest moments. “Early, middle, late” is a strategy you can use in forms that assigns performers a count to breath in based on counts within a measure. Early breathers can go on count one, middle count two or three, and late count four. Any assigned stagger breathing will eliminate randomness and the potential for “holes in the sound.”
- Work stagger breathing exercises where performers learn to enter and exit for a breath without calling attention to themselves.
- Remind performers not to “breathe before a new note” and to “breath within a note, not between a note.”
- Remind performers “the rule of long notes: don’t get softer unless defined and hold them still/follow-through.”
- Remind performers to pace the speed of crescendos and decrescendos the same as those around them in form to avoid balance/blend issues.
- Work crescendo/decrecendo exercises that allow performers to develop the control in both directions. Often performers struggle with getting too soft too soon, or pacing their breath in the crescendos.
- Define dynamics with specific count structures to help performers control their responsibilities. You could define a passage as sustain four counts, crescendo two counts, sustain two counts at that volume, decrescendo two counts, and sustain four counts. Be specific.
- Remind performers as they get louder, “Don’t think only about decibels, but think about *intensifying* the sound, *centering* it, and *focusing* it more.”
- Be patient.