

Brass Basics

Most of us were probably attracted to playing a brass instrument because of it's wonderful social opportunities.

Now in these challenging times, we are faced with a more solitary relationship with our 'old friend' so, a brief look at real basics might be a useful investment for post Coronavirus artistic life.

As I am sure we are all aware, playing a brass instrument is much like being an athlete, combining **physical**, **mental** and of course the all too familiar **psychological** aspects of human life.

Without knowledge of a handful of fundamentals, bringing these things together to produce satisfying, consistent performance can become a frustrating and often confusing challenge.

It can really be summed up in a few key words and actions.

Controlled **Inhalation** and **exhalation**.

Vibration of lips to stimulate air column in the tube

Coordination : Tongue/Fingers/Slide

Playing a brass instrument involves two basic skills;

Separate notes and legato

Separate Notes : **coordination** of

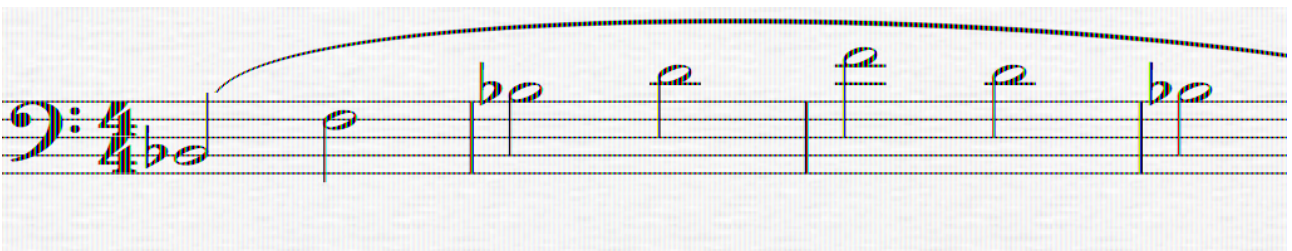
air (abdominal muscles)

articulation (embouchure/tongue)

valves/slide (fingers/slide).

Legato (2 types)

I : synchronise **airspeed** and **embouchure** to achieve rise and fall across harmonic series.

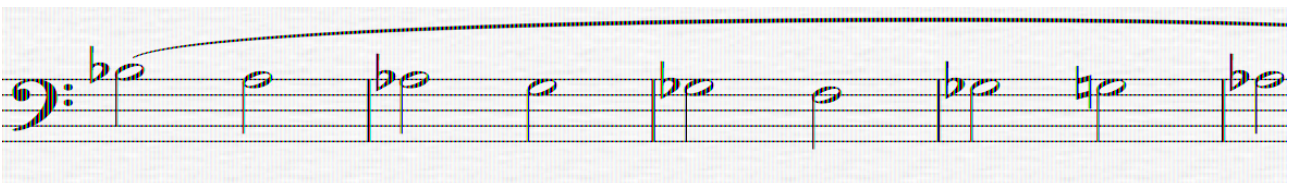


II : **coordination** of

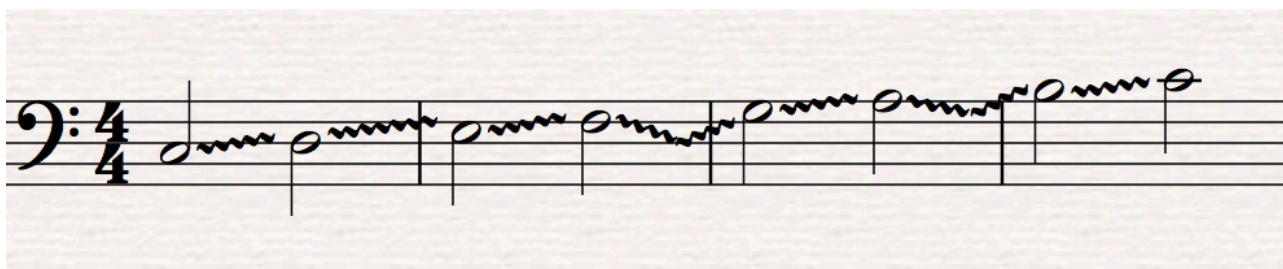
tongue (tempo)

air (breath support)

valves/slide (fingers/slide grip) on same harmonic.

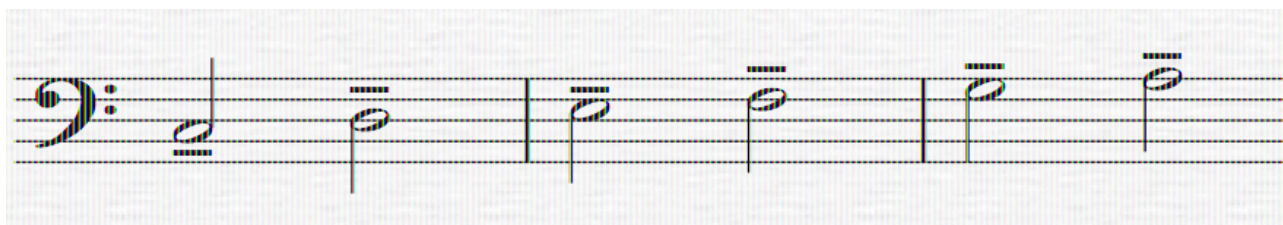


Because we often focus on the valves or slide as our 'note getter' it is easy to lead with this aspect of our playing resulting a rather elementary, uncoordinated, glissando.

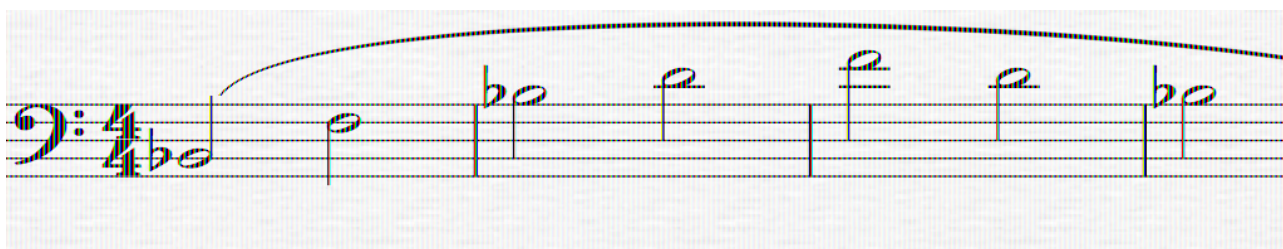


Set the **tempo** you desire in your head and make sure your **tongue** delivers this direct to the mouthpiece.

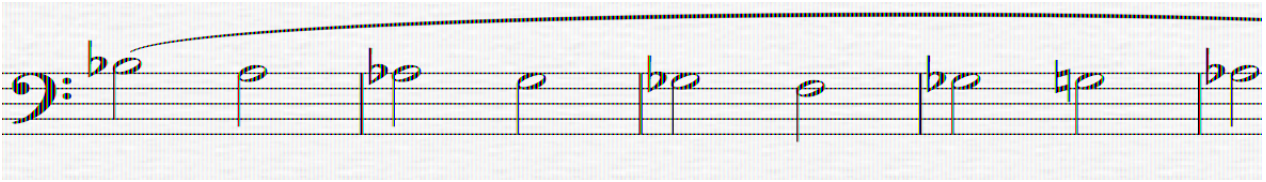
Support this rhythmic pattern with the **air** column and just allow the valves or slide to **follow**.



With legato we just need to combine moving across the harmonics



with notes on the same harmonic



to standardise a smooth melodic line to be enjoyed by your listeners.

To add that 'magic' ingredient just imagination singing your melody, giving your performance resonance, tone colour and maybe a touch of tasteful vibrato !

♩ = 72

Danny Boy

p espr.

A musical score for the song 'Danny Boy' in bass clef, 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 72. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with the instruction 'p espr.' (piano, expressive). The music features a series of slurs over the notes, indicating a smooth melodic line. The notes are: G2, A2, Bb2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, Bb3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5. The score ends with a fermata over the final note.