

Note from “Tuning Tips with Matt Harloff”

In order to be in tune you must be in tone

- tone quality and mouthpiece work make the biggest difference (long tones, embouchure, etc.)
- match quality of sound person to person
- singing across the ensemble helps tuning, intervals, and chord structure (wishes he did more of this with his ensembles)

Tuning basics

- tune the fundamental pitch
- tuba tuning slides require much more adjusting due to increased room for error
- students who are an extreme (sharp or flat) but the slide is where it “should be” should check fundamentals of playing (i.e. tone, buzz, sound)

Students struggling with brass pitches

- don’t force tuning on “typical notes”. Get students to play where comfortable to help sound and support. Trumpets - don’t force a high C when you can easily play a G (in staff)

Crown Tuning Sequence (in book)

- all start concert F. Bring tubas up to Bb (f-g-a-Bb) and release everyone to hear tubas.
- crunch/space chords are all within a minor 3rd of tubas on Bb.
- hearing lots of waves (or beats) is a problem. Slower the waves... closer to being in tune. Faster... is very out of tune. If the ensemble has many waves they stop and start whole sequence over.

Pitch Tendencies

- put the instrument where it should go. Weather will obviously change pitch. But get the instrument shouldn’t be extreme. Ears will often help!
- tuning chart (in book): play a certain note at certain dynamic levels (record where you are - sharp or flat). Don’t try to make it in tune. Just play and record where you are. This allows players to understand where tendencies are.
- trombones. Keep in mind you have a tuning slide in your hand. Lip slurs should just sit in a position. Feel free to adjust
- using tuner. Do not look at tuner when you play. Play note. Be comfortable. Have a good sound. THEN check the tuner to see where you are.

“Just Intonation” - chart in book

- you have to tune intervals (not notes)
- use tonal energy app to hear how intervals adjust vs equal temperament
- in order for intervals and chords to be perfect, you must play specific notes imperfect

Score studying and impacts

- be sure to make notes in your show about the chords you want to have a big impact. Focus on these to start and then work away from there.

Instruments and equipment

- plastic mouthpieces, equipment, etc. - do not let the cold jeopardize your equipment. Play with your “norm” and be comfortable. However... tuning will not be a factor in 20° weather. lol
- keep in mind that uniformity is key during shows and competitions

Statements

- “It doesn’t count...”
- “It doesn’t count unless you’re on the move”
- “It doesn’t count unless you’re playing”
- “It doesn’t count if there is metronome”

This of these statements and how they relate to our shows, practices, and performances.

Materials:

- Inside the Circle (Book)
- Tonal Energy Tuner (App)