INTRODUCTION TO LIP SLURS

by Dr. Brian A. Shook

I. Basic Slurring Requirements

a. Smooth and constant airflow

b. Consistent buzz

c. Proper tongue level

   i. Think "Ahh" for lower notes and "Eee" for higher notes. This will make the transition between notes much easier.

d. Fast fingers (whenever different valve combinations are utilized)

II. The Process – (apply to examples on the following page)

a. Sing, Wind Pattern, Buzz, Play

   *Whenever you come across a tricky passage, stop and put the horn down

   i. Sing the phrase or interval

      1. When going from a lower note to a higher note, sing "Ahh→Eee"
      2. When going from a higher note to a lower note, sing "Eee→Ahh"
         a. Whistle analogy: when you whistle higher notes, the middle of your tongue raises. When you whistle lower notes, the tongue drops lower. The same is true when you play the trumpet.

   ii. Engage your airflow by doing a wind pattern

      1. Take your mouthpiece out of the trumpet and turn it around so the small end (shank) is facing you
      2. Place the shank of the mouthpiece inside your mouth and put it just in front of your teeth, with your teeth about a ¼ inch apart (just like they are while you are playing the trumpet)
      3. Take a big breath, close your lips around the shank, and then "play" the phrase on air, focusing on smooth airflow
         a. The natural elasticity of your lungs will push the air out, you do not need to force the air by pushing hard; it should feel rather effortless and comfortable.

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iii. Buzz it (or "play" it) on just your mouthpiece
    1. Always buzz at a medium soft dynamic or softer. Loud buzzing will hurt your chops!
    2. When buzzing from one note to the next, do a very slow glissando at first to ensure smooth and consistent vibration
    3. As you get more comfortable with the interval, you can begin making the glissando faster
    4. Once you are very comfortable with the interval, you should be able to buzz directly to the note without fuzzing out (or overshooting or undershooting the notes)
iv. Next, combine all of these elements by playing it on the trumpet
v. Finally, back up a few measures and play the phrase in context

b. If you can sing it, wind pattern it, and buzz it, you *can* play it on the trumpet!

III. Other Resources

a. Arban – Complete Conservatory Method (see pages 39–56)
b. Irons – 27 Groups of Exercises
c. Bai Lin – Lip Flexibilities

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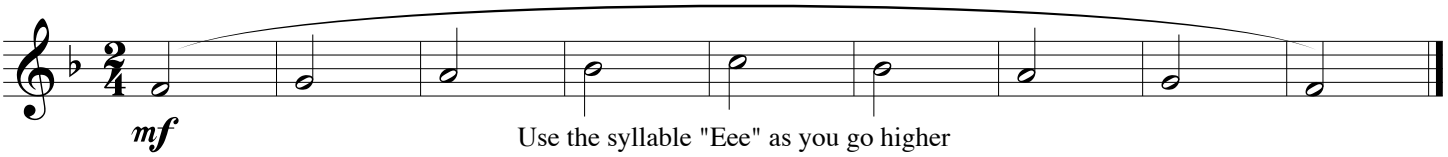
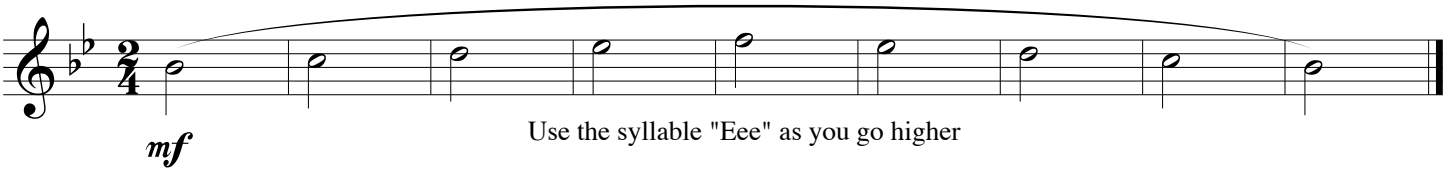
*Each example below is to be practiced in the manner prescribed on the previous page:
1) Sing each line
2) Wind pattern the line
3) Play the line on just the mouthpiece
4) Play the line as written on the trumpet

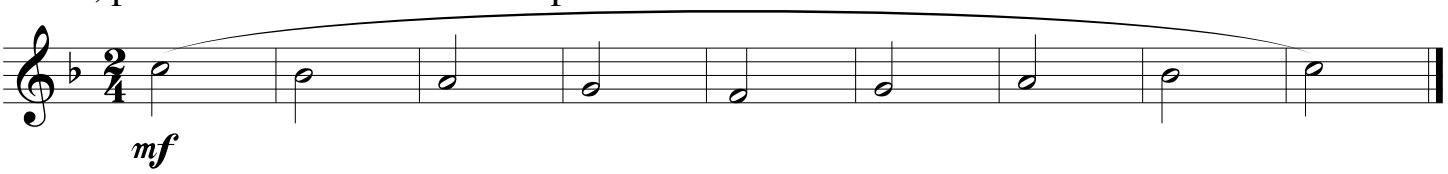
Ex. 1a



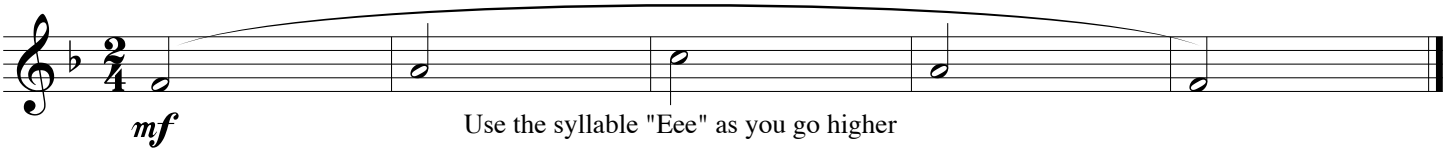
Ex. 1b



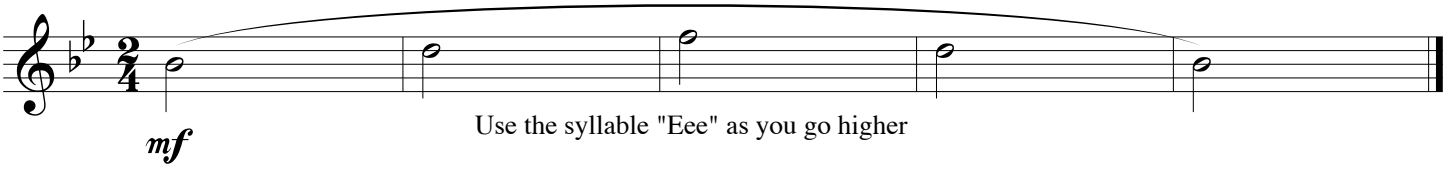
Ex. 1, part 2 - Also do each example inverted



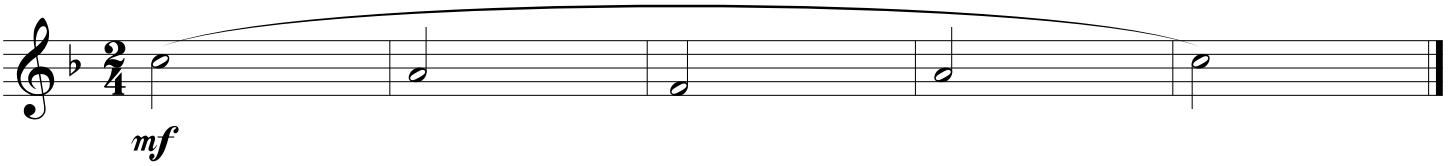
Ex. 2a



Ex. 2b



Ex. 2, part 2 - Also do each example inverted



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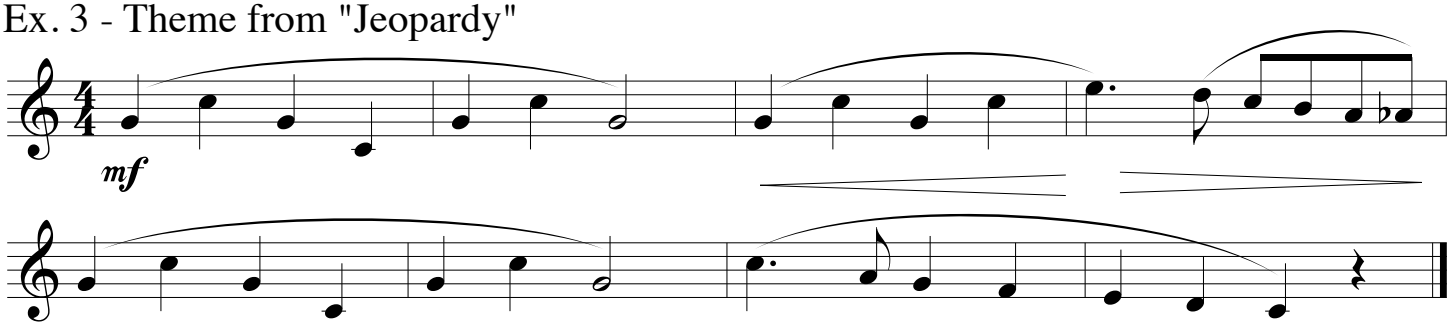
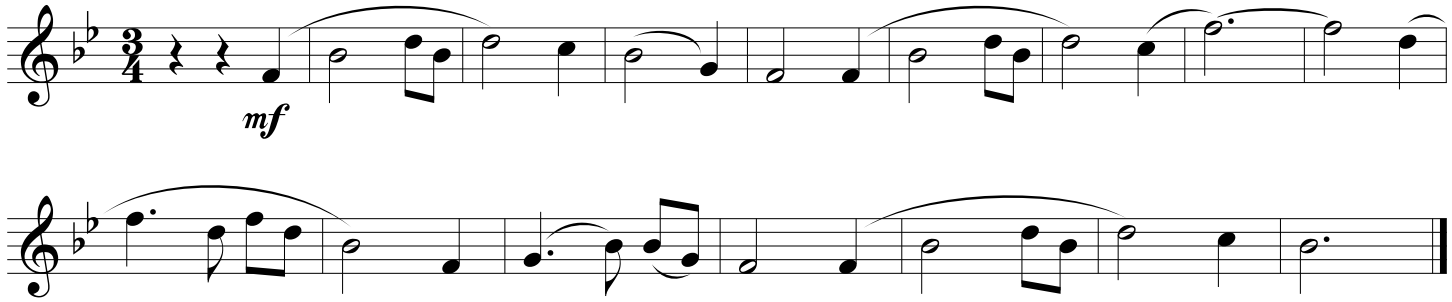
Articulations have been changed in order to maximize lip slur benefit

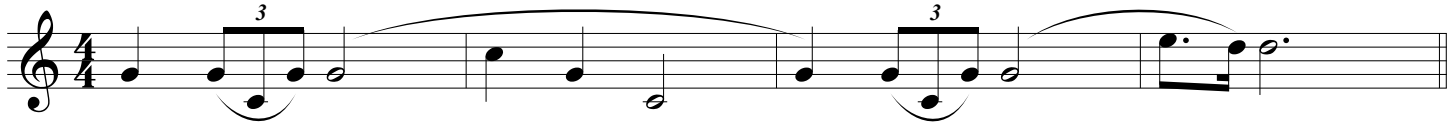
Ex. 3 - Theme from "Jeopardy"



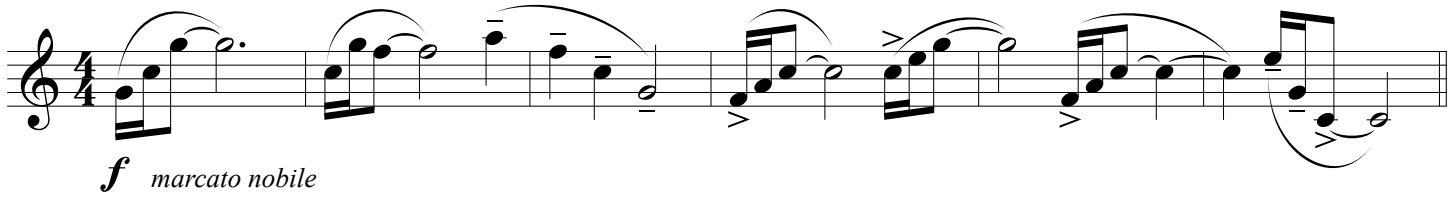
Ex. 4 - "Amazing Grace"



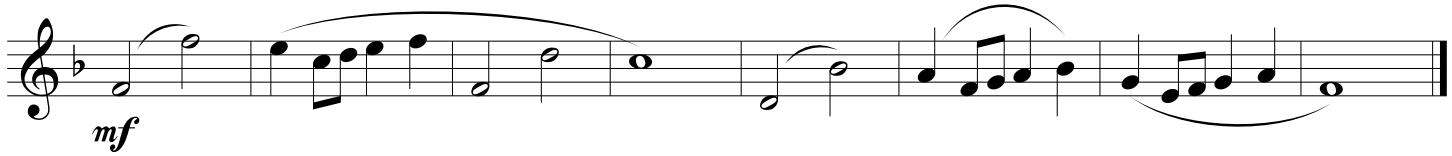
Ex. 5 - Theme from "Superman"



Ex. 6 - "Fanfare for the Common Man"



Ex. 7 - "Somewhere Over the Rainbow"



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