A Roadmap to Successful Intonation

TUNING FOR WIND INSTRUMENTS

Discover the newest resources for understanding instrument pitch tendencies. This clinic will demonstrate common tuning problems while providing resources to improve the pitch within each section of your ensemble.

71 TUNING TRUTHS

Alternate Fingerings

(Using alternate fingerings will result in variations of timbre from original fingerings.)
4th-valve can be substituted for 1st- and 3rd-valve combination.
3rd-valve can be substituted for 1st- and 2nd-valve combination.
2nd- and 4th-valve can be substituted for 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-valve combination.

Compensating 3 and 4 valve instruments. The instrument “compensates” for the inherent sharp valve-combination of first and/or second used in combination with the third-valve, by adding additional length by means of loop-tubing.

The fourth valve on euphonium and tuba compensate for the most out-of-tune notes, and provides for extended lower range (lowers the fundamental a fourth).
Young trombonists often play 2nd and 3rd positions too long (thus flat), and 5th, 6th, and 7th positions too short (thus sharp).

Valve brass instruments may use alternate fingerings in the harmonic series to assist in adjusting pitch for certain chord positions, but trombones should use regular slide positions and merely adjust length of slide. [Example: In concert Ab, a trumpet player has a fourth-line D in the staff; this note is the M3 of the chord and could be fingered 1 versus 13 to play a flat concert C, which brings it into tune.]

On woodwind instruments, closing keys/holes can lower a pitch, and opening keys/holes can raise a pitch.

Pulling the barrel joint on the clarinet will slightly affect the overall pitch, but significantly affects the pitch of the throat tones.

RESOURCES:

Teaching Instrumental Music: Developing the COMPLETE Band Program by Shelley Jagow (Meredith Music, 2007).

Teaching Instrumental Music: Developing the COMPLETE Band Program - DVD by Shelley Jagow (Meredith Music, 2008).

Tuning for Wind Instruments: A Roadmap to Successful Intonation by Shelley Jagow (Meredith Music, 2013).
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Equal vs. Just

Equal-Tempered Tuning
- Approximate Usage = 90%
- Most wind band music is largely melodic in nature and thus ET is recommended for pieces of faster tempo, and/or many key modulations.
- ET has equal sized seconds (100 cents) that makes it impractical for harmonic (vertical) tuning.

Just/Pure Tuning
- Approximate Usage = 10%
- Just tuning should be used for all choruses, slower lyrical sections that have sustained cadential points, final chords of any tempo, or any sustained harmony where there is time for the ear to hear beats.
- JT has unequal sized seconds that makes it impractical for melodic (horizontal) tuning.

How to Tune Intervals

How to Tune Chords

Francis McBeth:
Pyramid of Ensemble Balance

Download Fingering Charts: http://www.halleonard.com/meredith-tuning-for-wind-instruments-fingering-charts