

“*Tuning by the numbers*”

Concert Band Tuning Procedure

Begin: Assemble your instrument to the “normal” tuning position (your tuning slides, barrel, headjoint, reed, neck, bocal, etc., are all where they were the last time you’re *sure* you were well in tune)

Warm-Up: Get yourself (your embouchure and posture/breathing) and your instrument ready to play well. If you have several types of warm-ups you like to do, choose the one (or make one up) that relates best to the kind of pieces you’re about to play.

Tuning Strategy:

- 1 – **Tubas:** B^b. Match the *given* pitch, then match each other to reach a beatless unison. Hold. Continue to hold. When you pass out, keep holding.
- 2 – **Baritone Sax (G), Bass Clarinet (C), Contra-Alto Clarinet (G).** Test, adjust and hold.
- 3 – **Trombones, Euphoniums:** Check B^b, then F. Adjust as needed, then hold *one*.
Tenor Sax: Check low G, high G, and C, adjusting as needed. Hold *one*. **Bassoon:** Slur downward B^b – A – G – F. Adjust for F, then hold B^b or F.
- 4 - **Alto Sax:** Check low G, then high G. Adjust as necessary. Then check both middle and low D (adjust embouchure or fingerings to tune D’s, but don’t re-tune). Hold G.
- 5 - **Horns:** Play the following four notes slowly (watch the conductor) - G – A – B – C. When you pass A, the band will have a major chord for the first time. When you arrive at C, test *both sides* (open = F Horn; Thumb = B^b Horn), then adjust the main & B^b /F tuning slides to get C in tune equally on both sides. Hold either C, keeping the right hand in proper position.
- 6 - **Clarinets:** Open G (adjust at the barrel), then Clarion G & Chalumeau C (adjust at the middle joint), then Clarion C (adjust at the bell joint). Test Altissimo C (adjust the embouchure). Hold any C or G.
- 7 - **Oboes, Flutes:** B^b (adjust for tuning), then F (further adjust as necessary). Important – Test *both octaves*. Hold B^b or F.
- 8 - **Trumpets:** On cue, play “*Sol-La-Ti-Do*” or “G-A-B-C”. Use both the G and the C to adjust the main tuning slide. Note: be careful to tune in the register in which you’ll play most of your music.

Percussion: At any time during the process, add softly-rolled B^b and/or F at the marimba and/or vibes. Timpani can also check the low F (probably “heel down” on the 29” open drum) and B^b (probably “heel down” on the 26” open drum). When those are tuned, raise the 29” to match the sound of B^b, and check/adjust the letters on the tuning gauge, if the instruments have gauges. Raise the 26” to high F, and check/adjust the gauge.