



SMARTIES

FOR BRASS

by Robert Miller

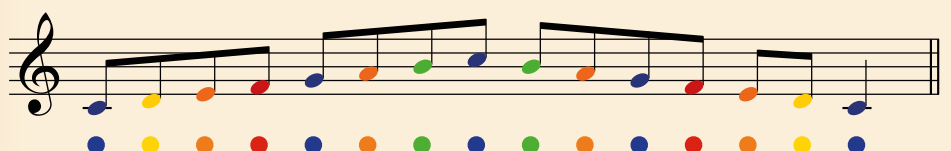
TRUMPET

B \flat CORNET & FLUGELHORN

Scales & Arpeggios

Suitable for ABRSM Grades 1-8

"The smart way to learn scales"





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Scales & Arpeggios for TRUMPET B^b CORNET & FLUGELHORN

Suitable for ABRSM examinations, grades 1-8

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SMARTIES for BRASS - an introduction

Many young trumpet players struggle to learn scales; they are often seen as a chore and a hurdle necessary only for progression onto the next grade. Scales may even discourage young players from practising, developing their talents and, more importantly, enjoying playing the instrument. At least, that was my experience.

Through the use of colour, this book provides a novel method aiming to engage trumpet players in scale learning. It is not a substitute for theoretical knowledge, but aims to facilitate the learning process.

I developed 'Smarties for Brass' with my father when studying for ABRSM Grade 8 in 2001. It uses the principle of pattern recognition and 'implicit memory'. Fundamentally, scales, as well as many elements of music, are patterns. It is the brain's job to learn, recognise and then reproduce these patterns.

What is implicit memory?

Imagine this: You are given ten buttons, one under each finger with each one connected to a different coloured light. When pressed, each button corresponds to a particular coloured light. For example, you press the button under your left index finger and the red light shines; press the button under your right little finger and the green light shines and so on. You are then shown a sequence of colours and asked to repeat the sequence as quickly as possible by pressing the correct button to turn on the correct coloured light.¹

Scientific research suggests that if the sequence of colours you are shown is random, your reaction time will be slow. If, however, there is a pattern within the coloured sequence, your reaction time will improve progressively. Most importantly, this will happen even if you are not consciously aware of a pattern within the colour sequence. This is 'implicit memory' in action; memory of previous events aiding performance of future tasks without the involvement of conscious thought.

Replace those ten buttons with three valves. When pressed, each valve, and each valve combination, corresponds to a different colour and the coloured sequence becomes coloured notes on a page: now you have a novel method to aid pattern recognition within trumpet scales, facilitating rapid scale memorisation.

In addition to the science behind the method, there is also the obvious appeal of a page full of colour compared to the traditional and intimidating black and white page. This is particularly important for young players; the mere sight of a scale book can be enough to discourage them from practising!

Reference 1: Cleeremans, A (1993) Mechanisms of Implicit Learning. Cambridge, MA:MIT Press cited in Eaglema, D, (2011), Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain, Canongate Press

How it works



Each colour corresponds to a valve combination. For example: yellow corresponds to the first and third valves being pushed down. Every note is coloured appropriately for the valve combination needed (see diagram below). The coloured dots below the staff are for clarity and to aid pattern recognition. The colours are not a 'substitute' for the notes but they aim to facilitate learning of the notes.


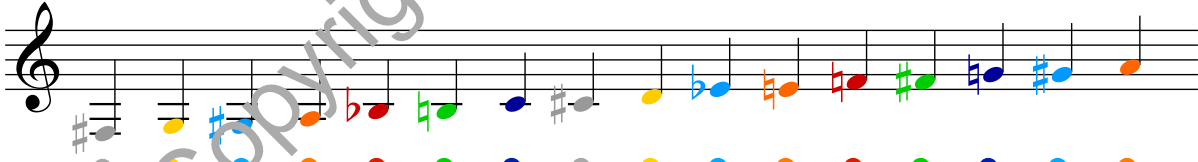
The layout of the book corresponds to the scales required for each grade within the ABRSM syllabus, accompanied by the appropriate tempo markings.

Also included are further exercises for the benefit of the pupil which are not required for ABRSM examinations. They aim to illustrate the 'Smarties for Brass' method and to help develop the pupil's playing ability in relation to the scales.

The chart below indicates colours corresponding to fingering.

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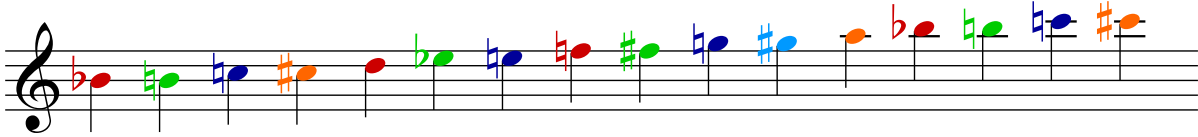


F#G G#A BbB C C#D EbE F F#G G#A

1 1 2 1 1 2 0 1 1 2 1 1 2 0 2 1

2 3 3 2 2 3 2 2 3 3 2 1 2 0 3 2

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3



BbB C C#D EbE F F#G G#A BbB C C#

1 2 0 1 1 2 0 1 2 0 2 1 1 2 0 1

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

ii

Approaching the Smarties

The exercises included in this book are for the benefit of the player; they should *not* be seen as a hurdle or a chore.

It is important for young players to be engaged and focused in their practice and the exercises can be used to break up scale practice.

I believe that in order to learn scales effectively, a few basic principals are helpful:

1. Stay **relaxed**. I found practising scales frustrating, and that prevented effective learning. If you are getting frustrated then stop. Have a break, put the trumpet down or play something you enjoy, and then come back to the scales in a good frame of mind.
2. Start **slowly** – do not expect to be able to play all the scales for a grade perfectly in a day. Practise the scale at a speed at which you can play it perfectly and then slowly increase the tempo.
3. **Mix it up**. Always practising scales in the same way can become boring! The exercises included aim to help avoid this. Students should be encouraged to make up their own exercises or even improvise in a variety of keys.

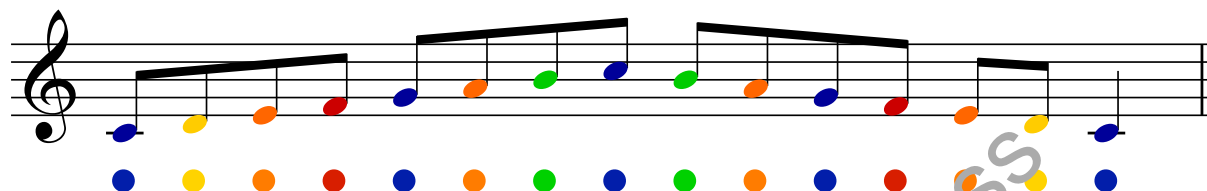
Good luck learning your scales!

Rob.

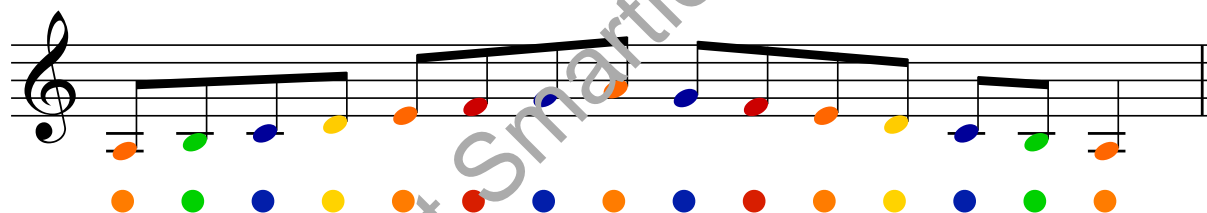
Grade 1

SCALES to be played both slurred and tongued. Suggested tempo ♩ = 50

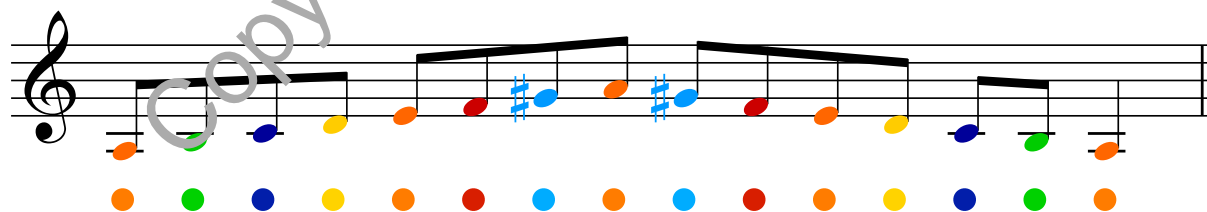
C major (one octave)



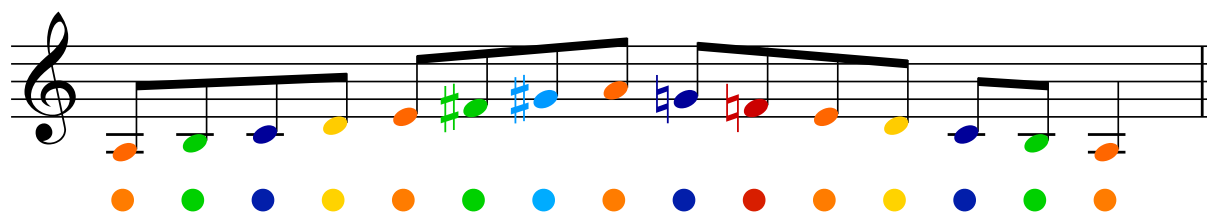
A minor Natural (one octave)



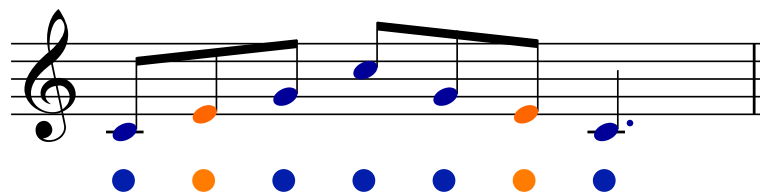
A minor Harmonic (one octave)



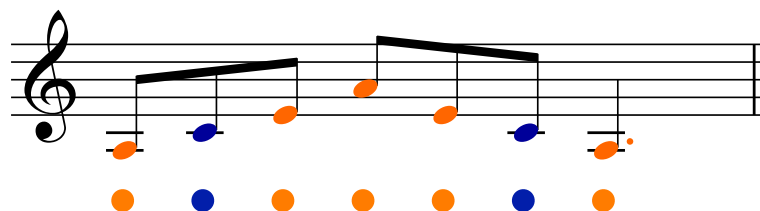
A minor Melodic (one octave)



C major arpeggio (one octave)

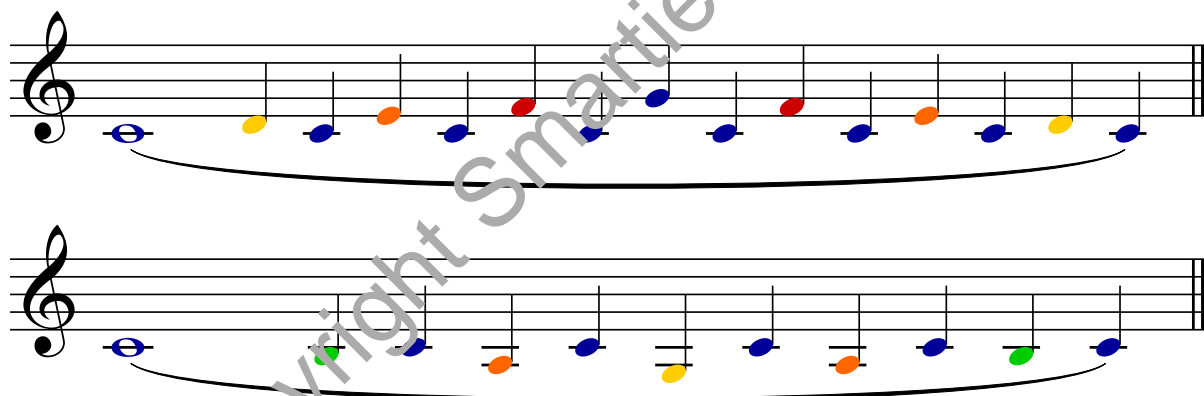


A minor arpeggio (one octave)



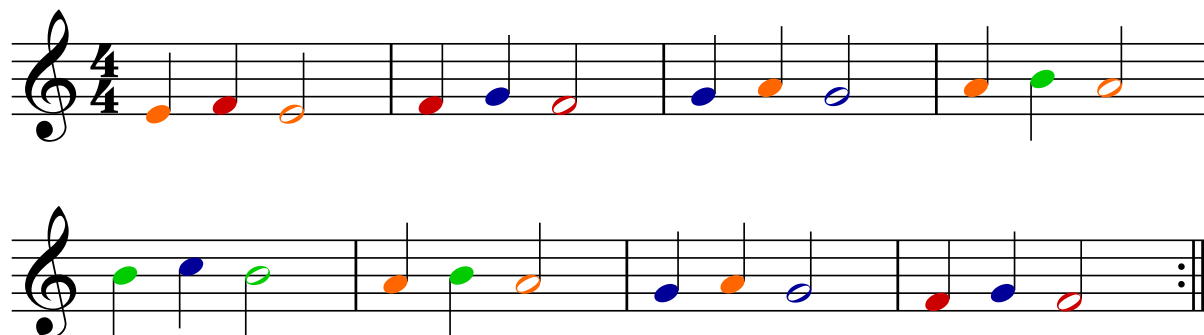
WARM-UPS & EXERCISES

these exercises are not a part of the ABRSM syllabus, but are included for the benefit of the student



• Make sure to use plenty of air, and **be relaxed** when playing the semibreve. Imagine you are 'sighing' - this is the feeling you want.

• Try to transfer the same relaxed feeling that is obtained from the semibreve to the moving notes.



• Imagine you are only playing one note in each bar, and transfer this feeling when moving notes using air speed and tongue position to change note.