

Practice Tips for 2023-24 All-State French Horn Etudes

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Some general practice tips:

- Practice the material slowly at first. Use a metronome and do not proceed at a higher tempo until you have mastered the slower speed(s).
- Use a tuner often and listen carefully to your pitch. Try singing the phrase to fully understand the intonation of the musical line.
- Embouchure and technical development will progress at a faster rate if the etudes are practiced every day. Try practicing for shorter amounts of time but more often. 15 minute sessions, several times a day, will produce superior achievement than the once a week “cram” session.
- Record yourself!!! You will be amazed at the amount of progress you will make by simply listening to your playing. Awareness is the key to success and nothing increases this awareness like listening to recorded segments of your practice. Be forewarned – at first you might be discouraged by what you hear on the recording but, stick with it, you will be surprised at the amount of progress that you will make.
- Perform these etudes for a teacher, friend, or colleague. Remember that an audition is a performance, so make sure that you get comfortable performing in front of an audience.
- Finally, RELAX, don't get frustrated. Tension will hinder your performance. This music will stretch your musicality and technique. Just do your best!

Good luck, and most importantly:

HAVE FUN!!!

Joy is essential to the music-making process

Junior Horn: Audition Solo 1E, Moderato

This lovely etude is a study in contrasts. It begins with beautiful *cantabile* (singing) phrases that then switch over to a *marziale* (martial or military) style. Check yourself often on the metronome to avoid dragging the tempo. Start this etude with a tone that is beautiful and lush. Think of using warm air to provide the best stability and sound. Group the first four measures together into one continuous phrase with hairpins that lightly climax on the downbeats of the 2nd and 4th measure. Be sure to start measure 5 softly and crescendo to a robust mezzo-forte. Forte is indicated in measure 9 and should be treated as a glorious fanfare. There are two of these fanfares that are interspersed with soft staccato motifs. Remember to differentiate these two volumes and articulations accordingly. This *marziale* section gives way to a return of the opening *cantabile* idea, so concentrate on a relaxed, smooth airstream. In measure 17, the bold, military fanfare makes a reappearance that is interrupted by a softer chromatic, slurred passage. This interesting line quickly crescendos back to the fanfare motif. Both endings have a heroic character that requires confidence and a bold, stable tone quality. Concentrate on breathing deeply while not forcing the sound to be loud but allowing the air to flow naturally with relaxed ease. As you enter these ending rhythmic statements, make sure that they have obvious musical direction and intent.

Clinic Horn: Audition Solo 2D, Adagietto / Animato / Adagietto

This etude has an extensive variety of colors and contrasts that need to be made obvious to the listener. The metronome marking is 108 beats per minute and the eighth note receives the beat. But, start at a slower setting in your practice and increase the metronome setting as you achieve confidence and excellence. In the first four measures, the mezzo-piano dynamic is indicated and should be played with a waltz-like lilt. Pay attention to the intonation on the bottom-line E as this note is the 5th partial and tends to be a bit flat. This is further exacerbated by the fact that the etude is in A minor (horn pitch) and that particular E is the fifth of the chord, needing to be a tad higher for proper just intonation. Measure 9 introduces a new *Animato* style that requires lightness and frivolity. Pay attention to the articulations and varied dynamics. The downbeats of measures 14 and 16 are marked with accent/tenutos; think of using more weight of air than a sharp tongue attack to achieve a more buoyant style. In measure 17, start forte and celebrate a bold phrase that culminates in a *rallentando* statement diminishing in volume, returning the music to the opening macabre waltz. A low, accented G is indicated in measure 19 so lower the jaw slightly and allow the chin to advance down and forward toward the mouthpiece. This will offer stability in the low register without going flat. Check your intonation with a tuner for accuracy. For the two endings, return to a lush, elegant tone quality that evokes mystery as the music descends to the final low A.

Senior Horn: Audition Solo 3F, Andante con amore / Allegro agitato / Andante con amore

“*Andante con amore*” indicates a moderate, walking tempo but also requires a romantic, passionate quality to the music. A warm, beautiful tone is ideal here so concentrate on relaxed breaths. Start at the mezzo-piano dynamic but allow for small crescendo/decrescendo hairpins that have a subtle climax on beat three of measures 1-7. As the music progresses into a triplet based dance meter, focus on a playful sound that crescendos to a boisterous forte in measure 15. Start practicing this section under the indicated 88 beats per minute and only increase the

metronome speed once you've achieved excellence. Measures 17-25 require patience and slow practice. Make sure that the music still has a dance-like quality. A low F is indicated in measure 15 so lower the jaw slightly and allow the chin to advance down and forward toward the mouthpiece. This will offer stability in the low register without going flat. Check your intonation with a tuner for accuracy. As the music proceeds to the two endings, return to a gorgeous, singing tone quality. Concentrate on increasing the airspeed as the music ascends to the upper tessitura of the horn. Stay relaxed and don't pinch the aperture to force out the high notes. Demand beauty and ease for these final statements. Bask in the quality of your sound!