

TMEA ALL-STATE TRYOUT MUSIC

BE SURE TO BRING THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. Copies of music with numbered measures**
- 2. Copy of written out master class**

1. Hello, My name is Dr. David Shea, professor of clarinet at Texas Tech University. On this CD is recorded this year's TMEA All-state tryout music for Bass Clarinet. Each etude is first recorded at a performance tempo and then again at a practice tempo. I also offer some comments, which I hope will help you prepare for your upcoming auditions. I wish you the very best of luck and hope to see you as a member of the TMEA All-state band at the T.M.E.A. convention in February. The tryout music this year is from Artistic Studies, Book 1 – from the French School edited by David Hite, which is published by Southern Music Company.

Before I proceed with the specifics of each etude, I would like to give you some general suggestions to help prepare you for your audition.

I would like to start by emphasizing that it is very important that you have a working instrument. If notes do not work on your horn, see if your band director can make arrangements to get them fixed. Playing the bass clarinet should not be a physical and frustrating struggle. With a working instrument it should be relatively easy to play.

Preparation is very important. If doing well in the audition is important to you, then prepare intelligently and do the necessary hard work. Many students wait until late October or November before they get serious about learning these etudes. This may work for some advanced students, but if you are trying to make the all-region, all-area or all-state band for the first time, I would strongly encourage you to start earlier and let time work for you. Mastering difficult music takes a steady consistent effort and great patience. Start slowly and allow yourself the time to let the music get thoroughly into your fingers. I would recommend starting your work on these etudes as soon as school starts, and apply a slow steady effort throughout the Fall semester. I have supplied a pdf on using practice methods which you might find useful. This document can also be found at the TTU Clarinet Studio Website.

My last suggestion is to practice all etudes for an audition by starting with a cold run-through. This means play from the beginning to the end without stopping just like you would do in your audition. This run-through illustrates how well you truly know your etude, but is not necessarily the best you can play it. In a pressure situation, however, you can only count on how well you know the etude. The other benefit of this run-through is that it provides an opportunity to practice making mistakes and recovering. Many talented students become so obsessed with not making mistakes that they stop playing every time one occurs. One cannot do this in an audition, so it is necessary to practice what it feels like to play through mistakes. The cold run-through practice may be a bit discouraging at first but you will notice that if you continue to do it everyday

over the course of many weeks, it will get better and better. When you can play all of your etudes from beginning to end without stopping or practicing the hard spots, you are ready to have a great audition.

Now to the etudes

2. (*Master Class – Selection Number One*)

Selection number one, found on page 55, number 9 is in the key of F Major. The tempo is quarter note = 96-112. You are to prepare the entire etude.

1. When starting to work on this etude, one should practice with a metronome set to an eighth-note pulse. Start slowly, perhaps 144-160 and gradually work up to 192-216. This will help develop precision and solidify subdivision of the beat. Practicing slowly not only helps with developing technique in the fingers, but it also allows one to monitor tonguing quality and embouchure control.
2. A good rule of thumb whenever you are practicing with a metronome, is to find a speed that you can play a section without any confusion or anxiety. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being panicked and insecure and 1 being totally calm and in control, always be practicing at a 1 or 2. Don't worry about how slow this may seem initially. Speed will come easily once you get the etude worked out at a slow tempo. In the long run, practicing like this is much faster and the quality of your final product will be significantly greater. One just needs to be patient for the first couple of weeks. If you follow this strategy, you will feel much more confident and in control when you take your audition and you will be much happier with the results.
3. The opening four measures should be played with great confidence and a good forte sound. To keep a good sustained sound, avoid clipping the slurs with your tongue. With slurred two tongue two articulations, the tongue should touch the reed at the beginning of an articulated note, while not over clipping the previous note. To get a feel for this, imagine that you are blowing the articulation through an imaginary straw. Notice how the air moves constantly and the tongue only touches behind your teeth at the beginnings of notes. Try blowing the articulation this way without the clarinet and then play the passage. You will be surprised at the improvement in the quality of your articulation.
4. Another common problem when doing the slur two tongue two articulation is that the first two notes often get crunched together. To fix this, think of lengthening the first note of each slur slightly in each slurred pair. This should take care of the problem and improve your tongue finger coordination.
5. In measure 6, the accents under the slurs should be lightly tongued and accented with the air. The effect here is to play the notes with more weight to them and not to play them with a sharp articulation attack. Listen to the recording to hear how this is done.
6. In measure 7, the four note turn occurs on the "te" or and of the third beat. The notes in the turn are G-F-E-F.
7. Beginning in measure 9, and continuing throughout the rest of the etude, the

- texture is more legato and requires many dynamic contrasts. Although you want to clearly show the contrasts in dynamics, be careful to use your ears at all times so the phrasing sounds natural. In my opinion, many of the dynamic changes are awkward and do not work very well. Focus more on longer phrase shapes and then try to do some of the quicker dynamic changes the best that you can. Make it sound elegant and natural and you should be fine.
8. A good rule of thumb about tone and phrasing, is that the tone quality or timbre should never change significantly within in a phrase. Dynamic changes should maintain a consistent tone quality.
 9. In measure 18, do not over do the wedge articulation. Simply think of a change in style. Listening to the performance to see how this is done.
 10. In measure 19, if you like you can relax the tempo slightly here. If this piece isn't difficult for you at tempo, you do not need to slow down but you do have the option if it helps you.
 11. In measures 19 and 21, do not over do the accents on the sixteenth notes. Play them deliberately, almost with a march-like character.
 12. While trying to capture the march like style, be careful not to play the dotted eighth and sixteenths as triplets. Since there are many triplet measures in this section, it is easy to be careless with the dotted eighth sixteenth figures.
 13. In measure 23, the staccato sixteenths with lines over them should be full length with no real space between the notes. I think of this articulation as simply a clear tongued attack on each note, but without a defined space between the notes.
 14. In measure 32, play the grace notes before the beat. Be careful to not skid over the eighth note they are attached to. Think of holding the first eighth note of each beat a little longer to make sure that the beat is stable and that the subdivision is solid.
 15. In measure 45, the sixteenth note after the dotted eighth note should be played later so it does not sound like a triplet.
 16. In the final line, return to the exuberant character of the first line of the etude and end with a lot of power and confidence.

3. (Master Class – Selection Number two)

Selection number two, found on page 51, number 5 is in the key of G Major. The tempo is quarter note = 50-58. You are to prepare the entire etude. If you are playing the contra clarinet, play measures 46, 47, 48 and the first beat of measure 49 down one octave, then as printed to the end.

Before discussing some specific issues with this etude, I would like to begin by reiterating the importance of using a metronome in every practice session. For this slow etude, it is very important to have it set to an eighth note pulse.

1. Using a metronome in this way will help to insure good rhythmic subdivision as one has to move from sixteenths, to sixteenth note triplets to 32nds. Rhythm is perhaps the most important quality that is being judged in your audition, so use the metronome to help show that you have good subdivision.

2. Another benefit of practicing with the metronome set to the eighth note is to help with the timing, or pacing, of the crescendi and decrescendi. Many of these crescendi and decrescendi are stretched out over many beats in this slow tempo, so it helps to use the metronome to help increase or decrease volume incrementally with each click.
3. Finally, the use of a metronome will help to create a solid foundation for your performance. You will just sound more confident and mature in your playing.
4. Now for some more detailed comments:
5. In the second and fourth measure, be sure to play 32nd notes. If your foot is beating the eighth note, these pairs of 32nd notes will occur on the “and” or “te” of the eighth note beat. Do not play them on a beat.
6. The staccato under the slurs in measure 5 should be played very legato with a clearly defined attack to the note. Think of the tongue only starting each note and connecting them with no space. This same articulation occurs in measure 16.
7. In measure 20, the opening melody returns with a lot of ornamentation. This section continues until measure 28. Be mindful of the accuracy of your rhythm in these measures. If you are counting an eighth note beat, the 32nd notes will feel like sixteenths and the sixteenth triplets will be played like regular triplets.
8. In measures 24 and 25, trill the half notes for three eighth note beats and play the grace notes on the fourth beat.
9. Measures 25-27 are more difficult rhythmically, make sure that you can sing the rhythms while tapping a beat before you try to play them. Listen to the recording just to make sure you are counting these measures correctly.
10. In measure 31, the style completely changes. The tongued 32nd note should be played as late as possible. Think of them like tongued grace notes, and simply slip them in right before the beat.
11. In measure 39, if you are counting in eighth notes, be careful not to play the triplets twice too fast. They should feel like quarter note triplets when beating eighth notes.
12. And the last detail that needs comment, occurs at the turn in measure 48. The four notes of the turn a-g-f#-g will occur on the “and” or “te” of beat 3.
13. So, overall, this etude contains many rhythmic traps, so prepare carefully. Listen to the recording and maybe even play along with it to make sure that you understand the rhythm.
14. Finally, Once you have worked out the details for this etude, practice playing the entire piece over and over again to get a sense of the pacing. If you can develop a narrative quality with different moods and characters unfolding in a natural way, you will do a better job selling this etude to an audition committee.

7. (Performance of number two)

8. Selection number three, found on page 69, number 24 is in the key of Eb Major. The tempo is quarter note equals 86-104. You are to play the entire etude.

Errata:

(Early Editions Only) In mm. 33, 34 the 3rd and th sixteenth notes are slurred like mm. 1, 2. This errata is corrected in later editions of the book.

5. (Master Class – selection number three)

- a. This etude is relatively straightforward. Do what is on the page.
- b. Try practicing this piece with the metronome set to the eighth note beat, maybe between 120 and 150 for a slow practice tempo. While maintaining a 1 or 2 on the panic scale, gradually over time move the metronome up in 5 point increments. You have the time so be patient and you will like the results.
- c. Do not clip the slurs and over articulate the sixteenth note passages. I recommend practicing all the non-repeated sixteenth notes slurred to make sure they are even. Next practice using very legato articulation and then work your way down to the desired articulation length.
- d. In measures 19 and 20, it is necessary to toggle, or flip fingers, when going from F to Gb.
- e. In measures 26-28, the large leaps up to and from Bb can sometimes not respond very well. It is important to not overblow here and to keep your bottom lip very still. If you have a still embouchure and work with the resistance of the instrument, the notes should come out with little problem.
- f. The most difficult aspect of this selection is the octaves passage beginning measure 37. When practicing slowly, try to keep the hands relaxed. As you speed up, trying not to tense up. There is a tendency in a passage like this to grab the instrument which will make the passage feel harder and cause hesitations in response.
- g. Also do not clip the slurs too much. If there is a big gap between pairs of slurs because the tongue is being over used, it will cause problems with speed and facility. .
- h. This etude is not too difficult once you spend the necessary time wood shedding the notes and articulations. Practice intelligently using the guidelines mentioned at the beginning of this CD and you should do well.

9. I hope you enjoy exploring the etudes as much as I have. Use your imagination...have fun! The hours that you invest in etudes will be very rewarding if you keep in mind that they're not so much about playing the clarinet but about making music. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Texas Tech University at david.shea@ttu.edu or 806-742-2270 ext. 269, or visit the Clarinet Studio Webpage at webpages.acs.ttu.edu/dshea.