

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 the TMEA All-state tryout music for Bb 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.

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 written a pdf file on practice methods which you might find useful. This document can be found at the TTU Clarinet Studio Website under the handouts link.

The second thing I would like to discuss is the importance of concentrating on tone production as you are starting to work on the etudes. Tone should not be attributed to finding a good reed on audition day. Tone is practiced. With every repetition, the muscle memory for producing your sound is being reinforced along with the muscle memory of the fingers.

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 are 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 22, number 20 is in the key of G Major. The tempo is Quarter Note = 76 - 84 Play from the beginning to the end.

Errata: Measure 65, beat 3, change articulation to slur two tongue two

1. This etude is very demanding in its style and ornamentation. A Polonaise is a dance, so this etude needs to have a dance feel throughout and should not simply be played as fast as possible.
2. When starting to work on this etude, one should practice with a metronome set to an eighth-note. Start slowly, perhaps 100-120 and gradually work up to 152-168. This will help develop precision and solidify subdivision of the beat. With the various ornamental trill figures throughout the piece, it is easy to distort the rhythm if one does not learn them correctly from the beginning. Practicing with an eighth note beat can help prevent this.
3. 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 your 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.
4. The most difficult figure to play in this etude is the grace note, trill, sixteenth figure which begins the etude, and occurs throughout the piece. To practice this figure, try using the following method. First, set the metronome to the eighth note beat of 100 or slower. For the opening figure, practice the first seven notes, up to the D eighth note without any grace note or trill. Do this ten times. Next, add the trill. You will do only one shake. It is important to keep the three sixteenths after the trill in perfect time. Maybe go back and forth between trill and non-trill versions a couple of times to really lock in the rhythm, then do the passage with trill 10 times. When this is comfortable, slip in the grace note just before the beat. Do this ten times. As you increase the metronome speed, use the same three-step process. As the figure becomes easier and easier, thinking of playing with style

- and a dance-like character. Apply this same technique to all trill figures in the etude.
5. In measures 3 and 4 lightly clip the slurs but keep the forward motion and the rhythm of constant sixteenth notes going. The editor indicates this above in parenthesis. The notation in the etude is intended to instruct the performer to play with a lighter, more playful character.
 6. In measure 8, lean on the forte G eighth note with a little extra weight. This figure also occurs in measure 36. Practice the trill figure on beat 3 using the same method as I outlined in measure 1.
 7. In measure 9, I would recommend playing B natural with the right pinkie finger. This will make the intervals cleaner. In measure 10, the C natural needs to be played with the left pinkie finger because of the D# preceding it. This also sets you up to play B with the right pinkie on the next beat.
 8. In measure 31, the C trill figure can be done a number of ways. One should use a trill fingering for the D in the trill. The best fingering to use is the second from the top, right hand trill key, but playing the throat G# for the trill will work as well. The second trill key is better in tune but may not be as familiar. For the D grace note, one can use regular D or one of these trill fingerings as well. Experiment a little bit and see which works best for you.
 9. At the key change, the slurs with dots articulation should be played very long with clearly defined attacks. There should be no space between the notes with only the tongue being used to start each note. Listen to the performance to hear how this is done.
 10. In measure 67, Poco meno means to slow down a little bit. This helps to set up the return of the opening material.
 11. In general, there are a number of accents in this piece. These should not be played with a heavy stinging articulation, like one might do in a march. One should simply lean into these notes with more air.
 12. Finally, take the opportunity to really show the dynamics in the piece. Dynamic changes are one of the most effective ways to demonstrate your musical ability. However, when demonstrating large contrasts in dynamics, always use your ear to make sure the music sounds natural and expressive. One thing I always emphasize is not to play dynamics with your eyes, but to use your ears. Sometimes students over exaggerate the contrast so much that it sounds forced and unnatural, so contrast your dynamics as much as possible while having the music sound natural. Again, listen to performance to hear how this is done.

4. Selection number two, found on page 61, number 16 is in the key of Bb Major. The tempo is eighth note equals 88 - 100. You are to play from the beginning to the end.

Errata: M.8 three notes before the end of the measure should be a Bb.

M. 8 four notes before the end of the measure should be C natural, not C#

M. 12 B flats, six and seven notes from end of measure should be tied together.

5. (Master Class – selection number two)

1. This is the slow etude for the audition. It is very important that one count in eighth note beats while performing this piece. The judges will be beating the eighth note pulse behind the screen, so it is important that you are thinking the same pulse as they are.
2. When counting in eighth notes, one must be careful to play the rhythms accurately. Usually it isn't the fast notes that are the problem, but careless mistakes made with slower rhythms. For example it is easy to play quarter notes for one beat or eighth notes for a half beat. Remember, while counting in eighth notes, quarter notes are held two beats and eighth notes are held one beat. This is easy to forget when coming out of a sixteenth note or 32nd note passage.
3. This etude will not only test how beautifully and expressively one can play, but will also test rhythmic integrity.
4. There are rhythmic traps in almost every line of the etude. It is important that you work with your private teacher or band director to make sure that you are playing the rhythms accurately. You can also listen to the recording to help check your accuracy.
5. Selecting the correct tempo is very important for this etude. To determine the correct tempo, look at the fastest note duration. This occurs at the end of the first line. In an eighth note beat, these notes will be played like sixteenth notes. The tempo that these notes can be played is the tempo you must use for the whole etude. You can not start faster and then slow down when you get to the 32nd notes. The 32nd notes should not be too fast but move quickly in a flowing melodic way. Listen to the performance to hear this.
6. In measure 8, there is a chromatic scale cadenza. Start this slowly and accelerate. Resume the previous tempo when you reach the high D.
7. In line 4, there are a wide variety of rhythms. It is important that the shift from 16ths to 8ths to 16th note triplets is precise and sounds natural. Practice this by counting and singing the rhythms before you try to play them. If you can't sing it, you can't play it.
8. Singing rhythms is a very effective strategy for any passage where you might be confused or a little uncomfortable with the rhythm.
9. The turn in measure 20 is a little confusing, but is written in a way that is supposed to help. If you are counting in eighth notes, play a D-C-B natural triplet on the "te" or "and" of the beat. Continue to the next beat by playing the C and D that are written. Listen to the performance to hear how this is done. The bottom note of this turn sounds better playing a B natural. This is not indicated in the part or in the errata, but playing a B natural is what most schools will do and what I would tell my students. I think it is safe
10. Measures 22 through 29 are a true test for your rhythmic skills. Although the cuts for you audition are determined at the time of the audition, I think it is safe to bet that this passage will be included in any cut. Work with a teacher, band director or really study the recording so that you can be assured that the rhythms you are playing are accurate and stable. If you can play this passage comfortably with an eighth note pulse beating, you will be in good shape.

11. When you work out all of the counting for this etude, always remember dynamics and phrasing along with a beautiful sustained tone. This etude is very beautiful and should be played very musically with long sustained phrases.

7. (*Performance of number two*)

8. Selection number three, found on pages 94-95, number 9 is in the key of F major. The tempo is quarter note equals 110-112. You are to play the entire etude.

Errata:

none

1. This etude is similar to the first in that not only is the technique challenging, but the style and phrase contrasts are also difficult.
2. To learn this etude successfully, it is very important that one spend a lot of time with the metronome under tempo. As I always recommend, set the metronome to the eighth note and find an initial tempo that you can play with 100% confidence and control. It doesn't matter how much off the final tempo this number is. Once the etude can be played perfectly at a slow tempo, getting it up to tempo does not take very long. However, if you play for many weeks a little slower and "almost" playing the etude correctly, many bad habits and insecurities will be put into your muscle memory, and these will be difficult to fix later.
3. To start, I would suggest dividing the etude up into three or four line sections and start at half tempo. From there work your way up in 5 point increments over the course of many weeks. Always feel in control and calm in your mind. Remember to keep the anxiety/panic scale at 1 or 2.
4. To practice the sixteenth note trill and grace note figure in measures 3, 17, 47 and 48, use the same practice strategy I outlined for the first etude. Start by leaving off the trill (and grace note for measure 3). Do this perfectly 10 times. Once you get the straight sixteenth note and rhythm in your ear, add the trill. It is imperative that the second, third and fourth sixteenth notes are not delayed or pushed back in the beat. They should be locked in. Do this passage with the trill 10 times. In measure 3, once you get the trill learned, then put the grace note in.
5. In measure 6 and similar places, don't clip the slurs. Practice all slurred once or twice to make sure the notes are perfectly even, and then lightly tongue the beginning of each articulated pair without clipping. It should sound flowing and expressive.
6. In measures 23-29, if you choose to do the slurred pair option, again don't clip the slurs. When playing the accents, lean on the first notes with a little more air and don't over do the attacks on these accents. Use your ears so that the passage sounds musical and appropriate. Listen to the recording to see how this passage should sound.

7. At measure 30, there is a change in tempo. I found this section very difficult when reading it initially. Be very careful about accidentals, and the accidentals carrying through the measure. You might consider marking notes where accidentals carry through particularly the Dbs and Gbs.
8. In measure 34, it is necessary to do a pinky slide. I slide my right pinkie on the last two notes of beat two, the C to Eb.
9. I would highly recommend practicing measures 30 – 41 at half tempo for as long as necessary until you can play each phrase with 100% confidence and with your hands relaxed. Again, apply the anxiety/panic scale and keep it at 1 or 2. You have time to work the tempo up slowly if you start on this etude early.
10. In measure 47, in addition to practicing the trills as I instructed earlier, try using less air, or slightly gentler air. It will help solidify the feel of the trills, and it will help to prevent them from dragging.
11. Once you get the technique in your fingers, work hard to show contrasts in style, dynamics and expression. The more you can show contrasts, while still sounding natural and musical, the more successful you will be in your audition.

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.