

2016 Large School Horn Master Class
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1. My name is Christopher Smith, the horn professor at Texas Tech University. This CD contains the Large School All-State audition music for the 2016-2017 school year.
2. I would like to share with you some ideas that I think will help in your preparation of the audition material for TMEA.
3. First I would like to give you some general thoughts when preparing for any audition.
 1. Always play with your best sound, regardless of the level of difficulty.
 2. Learn the music correctly the first time. Remember, every time you play your etude incorrectly, you are reinforcing bad habits. That means you should play with the correct pitches, rhythms, and expressive markings. This may require slowing down the music or taking notes up or down an octave at first and, always practice with a metronome.
 3. Be creative! Remember, first and for most, you are a musician. Here are three categories that all music is derived from.
 - i. Basic skills, these are, range, tonguing, vibrato, flexibility, dynamic control, endurance, and finger dexterity.
 - ii. Technical skills, these are, scales, arpeggios, intervals, chromatics, sight-reading, and trills.
 - iii. And last but not least. Musical skills, which include, style, phrasing, vibrato, tone, and tempo interpretation.
4. Before your do any practicing you must warm up carefully. The best way to achieve this is by using a well constructed warm up routine that is played daily, and not only prepares you for practice but helps improve flexibility, playing ability, and fundamental techniques. **There is a more extensive section to this masterclass pertaining to warming up and how to practice, this can be found in an attached PDF document.**

For all warm ups, work constantly to keep mouthpiece pressure at a minimum, and air pressure well supported, don't play loud necessarily, but work for a full, even tone. Here are is suggested routine:

Buzz your mouthpiece- buzz long tones, sirens, and slurs.

Long tones-focus on making the best tone possible with a gradual crescendo and decrescendo.

Lip slur exercises- lip slurs of the overtone series, etc. on the f horn (no trigger) in varying patterns.

Scales or an Arban Study-slow then fast. Focus on keeping the air constantly forward and moving through valve changes. Scales should be

played in the low range tongued and slurred slowly ascending chromatically into the high range.

Range exercises- work to expand both your high and low ranges.

Technique studies-such as articulation drills, lip trills, and accuracy studies.

5. Now, onto “How to Practice”.

Step 1. Sight-read your assigned etude, solo, etc. Always sight-read at a tempo that you can maintain throughout the piece. Remember that practicing mistakes reinforces the mistakes... so concentrate, play slowly and correctly.

Step 2. Isolate problems. Figure out which measures gave you the most trouble while you were sight-reading.

Step 3. Problem solve. Design ways to practice the trouble spots that will guarantee your success in performing for your audition, lesson, or recital.

Here are some techniques for problem solving:

1. Use a metronome.
 2. Slow, accurate practice before fast practice.
 3. Repetition of the correct rhythms and pitches guarantees success...Repetition of anything incorrect guarantees you will perform the piece incorrectly. You must practice the passage correctly more times than incorrectly. You must be able to play a passage three times correctly in a row before moving to the next tempo.
 4. Use a pencil...remind yourself of sharps, flats, rhythms that give you trouble, dynamics and articulations you are overlooking, etc. Do not keep rediscovering errors.
 5. Buzz on the mouthpiece to solve pitch problems and basic technique problems
 6. Use the “land on the note” or the “accent the note” technique for accuracy or fingering problems.
 7. Use a recording device...sometimes you don’t realize the mistakes you are making until you hear them recorded.
 8. Listen to recordings of professional horn players.
 9. Use the “add a note” technique for difficult passages.
 10. Variation practicing; such as:
 - Vary the rhythmic pattern
 - Vary the articulation
 - Vary the register (play high passages down an octave)
 - Vary the dynamic level
 - Play passages backwards, or even upside down!
 11. Practice singing rhythms, pitches, and musical phrasing
 12. Clap and count out loud difficult rhythms
 13. Know alternate fingerings to help yourself through technical trouble.
- Step 4. Repetition and performance of all that you have learned. Practice performing for parents, friends, etc., repeat passages you have learned

enough times to feel confident to perform the piece for your audition, lesson, recital, test, etc.

4. The last general thought that I would like to leave with you before discussing this year's studies is the one thing that can make you the best possible player. That one thing is what most players avoid. That one thing is, Practice! Here's a little food for thought. A couple of famous sayings from a very famous horn player, "Practice only on the day's that you eat." And, "If you're not practicing, someone else is."
5. This year's etudes are chosen from the **335 Selected Melodious, Progressive and Technical Studies-Book 1, by Pottag and Andraud**, which is published by Southern Music Company.

1. Selection number I is on page 63 No. 48 in C Major, marked *Vivace* suggested tempos are dotted Quarter note = 106-120. Play beginning to end. **Known errata for this etude: play top note in measure 2, 18, 61, and 81.**

This etude is a very playful and difficult for stamina. Work on keeping clarity and style as you increase your tempo. Don't allow this etude to sound frantic, keep your tempo at a place in which you can execute the entire etude at the highest level. Keep the articulation light with sudden bursts of dynamic contrast at the SF points, including the heavy air accents. One's air needs to be fast and always moving forward. Make sure the grace notes are not too fast, slow them down enough so that they sound "easy" and not like you're missing a note. Strive for obvious dynamic contrast, make sure there is a difference between your pp's and your ff's.

2. Selection number II is on page 50 (the top etude), C minor, marked *Andante Grazioso* eighth note equals 112-138. **Known errata for the etude: play measures 10 and 14 with the same articulation as found in measure 12.**

I think this is way too fast, I would suggest that you aim for 92-108. This will help bring out the musical side of the piece, and give more room for taking breaths when you have an eighth rest. This particular etude will give you the chance to show your musical side. Phrasing is very important, as well as incorporating your breath marks. You should play with a shape to the phrase that represents a crescendo and decrescendo even when they are not marked. I would also recommend taking time at the end of phrases where appropriate. The use of rubato is important in throughout and especially when the cadenza occurs. The trill in bar 20 moves between a "g" and an "a flat". There is no good fingering for this, however thumb 1 to thumb 2 may be the best. You can achieve a lip trill

if you finger both notes 1,3; on the “F” side and playing the upper note lower than normal.

Helpful hint, Kling was the master of writing very expressive etudes, so make this one come from the heart.

3. Selection number III is on page 59, No. 43 in E minor and then in E major, marked Allegro Vivace, suggested tempo is quarter note = 132-170.

There is no known errata for this etude.

This is a piece that you should have fun with, exaggerate the character and personality of the two different keys, almost like taking on a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde approach. Aim for clear staccatos, clarity and lift with forward motion and lightness. Be sure to show contrast with dynamics in the first melody, and shape as indicated. Go for a very musical side in the dolce section (which means sweet), play smooth lyrical lines that are as connected as possible. The turns in measures 40 and 48 should be played in the rhythm of a quarter note on beat one, three eighth note triplets on beat two, followed by two quarter notes on beats three and four.

In closing I would like to wish you the best of luck in your preparations for the various rounds of the large school auditions. Be patient and diligent in your practice, and you will begin to see improvement. Remember these etudes were chosen because of their difficulty, so don't get discouraged if you can't play them right away. Keep working on the etudes slowly and improve various skills as you become comfortable with them.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at Christopher-m.smith@ttu.edu