

Saxophones

48 Famous Studies for Oboe or Saxophone, W. Ferling, Revised by Andraud, Southern Music Company

Performance Guide

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48 Famous Studies is a collection of concert saxophone etudes written by a German oboist named Franz Wilhelm Ferling. These etudes are among the most widely used and well-known in the saxophone repertoire. They serve as excellent preparatory studies for traditional classical saxophone solo repertoire such as Alexander Glazunov's *Concerto*, Jacques Ibert's *Concertino da Camera*, Paul Creston's *Sonata* and Paule Maurice's *Tableaux de Provence*. As you prepare these etudes, take time to listen to some of the great concert saxophonists like Marcel Mule, Donald Sinta and Frederick Hemke. Listen to their sound and how they approach music-making, and use them as models for your own playing.

As you begin to prepare these etudes, keep in mind that they are *short pieces of music*, and that the process of practicing and performing them is really no different than the process of practicing or performing a longer piece of music such as a sonata or a concerto. Consider the style of each etude – and ask yourself some questions, such as: what is the character of the music? What do you think Ferling was trying to say or communicate with this etude? What would you like to say or communicate? As you begin to look at each etude and the phrases within them, ask yourself: where is the music or the phrase going - and how does it get there? Your mental image of the sound of the music can direct your practicing and performing.

Selection 1

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Etude Title: No. 18

Tempo: Dotted Quarter Note = 80-92

This etude has many middle and high b flats in it. Take some time to experiment with various b-flat fingering of side b-flat and and bis b flat. For example, in measure 25 and 26 I use side b flat throughout, except

sextuplet, where I use bis flat. Also, for the last note of measure 26, I use side b-flat. Your fingering should increase the tempo. Experiment also with various groupings on the 16th notes. Many of them can work or, 2 groups of 3 notes. The character of this etude tends to be light and fun. Avoid overplaying it.

Selection

2

Page(s): 1

Etude Title: No. 1

Tempo: Eighth Note = 84-96

While all three of these Ferling etudes can be thought of as exercises in sound, this slower etude in particular can become a showcase for the wide range of beautiful sounds that are possible on the saxophone. As you prepare this etude, use your imagination and listen carefully to your tone. Try singing the figures first with your own voice, then imagine that you are singing through the saxophone. You may even want to try conducting the figures.

An even, round jaw vibrato will not only enhance the singing quality of the saxophone's tone, but can sometimes aid tone production and intonation as well. There are many useful vibrato exercises. Be sure to practice your vibrato over the full range of the horn. Monitor the speed of the vibrato by practicing with a metronome. A common range of vibrato speed is 4 pulsations per beat at quarter note = 69-80. An effective vibrato will depend on at least three things:

- 1.) breath support
- 2.) a relaxed embouchure (including the chin and jaw)
- 3.) a clear aural concept and sense of musical taste

Excessive jaw and facial pressure is a common problem of saxophonists and can pinch off the sound and create intonation problems. To ensure that you are not using too much facial pressure, remove your mouthpiece from the neck and play a long, sustained pitch on it. The resulting pitch (especially on alto) is a very sensitive and accurate indicator of embouchure pressure. Many younger saxophonists use excessive pressure and produce a concert C on the alto mouthpiece. Strive for a concert A on alto and a concert G on tenor. Listen also to recordings of other instrumentalists and singers who use vibrato. Start your vibrato with the note. In this style of music, avoid the tendency to start the vibrato after the note has begun.

Selection 3

Page(s): 14 Key:

Etude Title: No. 28

Tempo: Quarter Note = 112-126

This etude is more dramatic and perhaps heavier than the Ferling etude # 9. Even so, avoid overplaying it. The writing in this etude emphasizes downbeats and a strong eighth note subdivision. Because of the writing style, it is easy to create a “boxy” or “stopped” quality. Rather than overplaying the downbeats, think about moving the music from left to right.

These etudes can be both challenging and rewarding. Let your imagination direct your practicing. The hours that you invest in these etudes will be very rewarding if you remember that they’re not so much about the saxophone but about music. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at Texas Tech University. My email address is d.dees@ttu.edu