

Practice Tips for 2021-22 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).
- 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!

Junior Horn Solo

Moderato

Dr. Brad Edwards

This etude is marked “*Moderato*” so keep it moving along at a relaxed pace. Check yourself, often, on the metronome to avoid dragging the tempo. In the first measure, “*dolce*” is indicated. Of course, this means “sweetly” so strive for a beautiful tone that has resonance and clarity. The first phrase is a four-measure phrase that should slightly crescendo to the downbeat of the 4th measure on the written G. In measures 7-8, increase your air speed as you rise into the upper range, but maintain a beautiful noble tone. The “*maestoso*” in measure 13 indicates a broad, majestic quality that should be bold and played with a large quantity of warm air. In the *fortissimo* measures, there should still be musical direction that leads the listener to the downbeat of the 14th and 16th measures. The chromatic scale in measure 17 should start at *mezzo piano* and slightly diminish in volume down to the low written G. As you descend, lower the jaw slightly and allow the chin to advance forward toward the mouthpiece. This will offer stability in the low register without going flat. Check your intonation with a tuner for accuracy. In the last phrase, crescendo to a big, powerful *forte* to create a bit of drama at the end of our musical journey.

Clinic Horn Solo

Allegretto grazioso

Dr. Brad Edwards

This etude is marked at a quick 156 quarter-note beats per minute. However, don't let this frighten you, it is actually a graceful (*grazioso*) waltz that you should feel in one, or at 52 dotted half-note beats per minute. A waltz is all about feeling the slight stress on the downbeat of each measure; the second and third beats of each measure must be secondary to that downbeat. Set your metronome at 52 bpm, add the triplet subdivision and you will be able to then practice this etude with a lilting waltz-like "groove". The first phrase should be played with a light, free tone without any break until the rest in measure 8. In measures 10 and 12, play the 2nd and 3rd quarter notes with slight separation to enhance lightness. Start softly in measure 13 and crescendo consistently until the downbeat of measure 19. Maintain elegance with a soft, flowing airstream as you negotiate the eighth notes in measures 21-23. This line should lead us to the downbeat F in measure 24. A *forte* is marked in measure 25 but don't allow the line to become heavy. *Con forza* means "with force," so play measure 33 with a huge volume of air and intensity. This provides a welcome contrast to the waltz, so go for it! In measure 37, return to our lighter dance-like feel even though many accents and larger volumes are indicated. The triplets in measures 45-46 are quick at this tempo so think of a *legato* tongue stroke to maintain tempo. In the final measures, perform the *forte* but, again, don't allow the waltz feel to disappear. Play the ending measures with a sense of heroism and confidence!

Senior Horn Solo

Andante cantabile

Dr. Brad Edwards

"*Andante cantabile*" is indicated at the beginning of this delightful etude. This infers a tempo that is moderate and an atmosphere that is singing and beautiful. Set your metronome at 52 bpm and add the triplet subdivision to check the tempo. The downbeats are more important than the other beats in the measure and should be performed with slight stress. Follow the dynamic marking closely for musical shape and direction. At the "*Allegro scherzando*", strive for light, quick lines that sound effortless. You MUST practice this slowly and then gradually increase the tempo for virtuosity. Do you have the discipline to do this? There simply is no other way, and success will be your reward for this meticulous approach. Make sure that the staccato eighth notes are performed with a "tah" or "too" syllable. Saying "tut" or "toot" will chop off the note abruptly and not allow for resonance. The sixteenth notes should be performed with a *legato* tongue stroke, which will allow for the air to stay connected. Concentrating on this approach will offer ease and elegance to a seemingly difficult passage. In measures 25-32, try to float these lines on a supported stream of air. Don't forget the *ritardando* that leads to the fermata. The final measures recall us back to the original tempo of the etude. This musical line is a variation of the opening material and should be played with a bold crescendo that then diminuendos down to a soft, *dolce* ending. As you descend to the low G, lower the jaw slightly and allow the chin to advance forward towards the mouthpiece. This will offer stability in the low register without going flat. Check your intonation with a tuner for accuracy.

Good luck, relax, and most importantly:

HAVE FUN!!!!

Music cannot be made if we aren't having a great time.