

# Practice Tips for 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).
- Use a tuner often and listen carefully to your pitch. Try singing the phrase to fully understand the intonation of the musical line.
- 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!

Good luck, relax, and most importantly:

***HAVE FUN!!!***

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

## Junior Horn: Audition Solo 1B, Andantino

This etude is marked “Andantino,” so keep it moving along at a relaxed pace. Check yourself often on the metronome to avoid dragging the tempo. Start this etude with a tone that is beautiful and lush. Think of using warm air to provide the best stability and sound. Group the first 4 measures together into one continuous phrase with hairpins that lightly climax on the downbeats of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> measure. Allow the sound to become more robust in the 5<sup>th</sup> measure with the marking of mezzo-forte and slightly crescendo to the downbeat of the 6<sup>th</sup> measure. Forte is indicated in measure 9 and

should be treated as a glorious fanfare. This fanfare provides a stunning contrast to the piano marking in measure 13. Start with a soft volume and crescendo all the way back to forte. In measure 17, strive for a sweet *dolce* quality by returning to the soft, warm air.

At the beginning of the two different endings, try to accentuate the syncopated feel with the marked accents. As you enter the ending rhythmic statements, make sure that they have obvious musical direction and intent.

### **Clinic Horn: Audition Solo 2C, Allegro non troppo**

This etude has an extensive variety of colors and contrasts that need to be made obvious to the listener. The metronome marking is 92 beats per minute, but start practicing this at 54 beats per minute and strive for clarity and cleanliness. Only increase the metronome setting once you have achieved this level of excellence. In the first four measures, the forte dynamic is indicated and should be played with a certain level of flourish. Measure 5 brings the volume down but watch that the syncopated accents drive the rhythmic interest and maintains tempo. Be sure to crescendo back to the forte marking. As you descend to the end of the phrase in measure 8, 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. A sweet, singing tone quality is required to communicate the beauty of the phrase from measures 9-14. Use the crescendo-decrescendo dynamics marked to guide your musicality. In measure 14, we start transitioning back to the opening dynamics and musical feel. Measure 15 is a fanfare of sorts, so articulate clearly with a bit of separation. More technical skills are required for the 16<sup>th</sup> notes that follow, but take your time to learn them slowly and carefully.

The endings are marked fortissimo, so take a big breath in measure 20. Fortissimo is NOT an effort level, but a function of flow which requires relaxation and ease. Keep the airspeed fast as you ascend and blow through the technical passages. In ending B, if you have trouble with the lip slur from E to F#, simply finger the F# trigger-1-2. Finish this solo with much confidence and bravado!

### **Senior Horn: Audition Solo 3D, Allegro giocoso**

“*Giocoso*” means lively and humorous, so follow the accent markings carefully at the opening of this solo. Use a large, robust airstream to produce the opening volume but maintain the fun and joy of this melody. In measure 9 we have to switch the musical feel to *leggiero*, which means this must be performed lightly and gracefully. Use a “dah” articulation to produce a ringing staccato. Saying “tut” or “toot” will chop off the note abruptly and not allow for resonance. Work the octave jumps by practicing slowly and then gradually increase the tempo for virtuosity. The *leggiero* section eventually crescendos back to the opening musical style so make sure you take large breaths and flow your air accordingly. After measure 16 there is a written caesura, this indicates a

slight pause so be careful not to rush into the next section. The Andante is marked at a faster tempo than the previous section but is softer and more song-like in feel. Watch the dynamics carefully as they will guide the musical shape. Crescendo in 21 back to a large forte but pay attention to the articulations as they are marked not only with an accent mark but with a tenuto as well. Think of these as long and accented. Check the tuner for your intonation on the octaves in measures 23-24. There is no caesura after measure 24 so make sure you have a clear tempo in mind when progressing to the endings.

Use your metronome for rhythmic accuracy in the endings and return to the *giocoso* style. In ending A, pay close attention to the volume change in measure 29 which offers a light, humorous ending. Ending B, proves to be challenging on a couple of different fronts. First, the high register in measure 32 needs to be approached with fast air, but be careful not to use too much mouthpiece pressure or pinching of the aperture as this will cause the sound to be thin and unfocused. Secondly, the time signature is creatively altered in measures 33-35, which requires us to count carefully!