

## **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 this year's TMEA All-state tryout music for Bass 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.

I would like to start by emphasizing that it is very important that you have a working instrument. If notes do not work on your horn, see if your band director can make arrangements to get them fixed. Playing the bass clarinet should not be a physical and frustrating struggle. With a working instrument it should be easy to play.

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 supplied a pdf on using practice methods which you might find useful. This document can also be found at the TTU Clarinet Studio Website.

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 become 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 pages 38-39 is in the key of C major. The tempo is Dotted Quarter Note = 52-66. You are to play from the beginning to the end of measure 59.

Errata for this selection, In measure 35, lower the second sixteenth note f one octave lower and use a legato articulation

1. Even though the tempo marking for this etude is given to the dotted quarter note, I would do a majority of you practice with the metronome set to the triplet pulse. Practice with a range beginning at a slower tempo of 120 and work your way up to a performance tempo between 156 – 198. Once this can be done with flawless technique and comfort, then move the metronome to the dotted quarter note beat and do additional work at that setting.
2. One of the musical features of this etude are the trills and grace notes on third notes of triplets. In measures 2 and 4, the tempo will be too fast to do two or more shakes on the trills, so it is good to determine from the beginning that all of these trills will involve one shake. They will essentially become five note turns.
3. I also found that the articulations of these trills vary randomly throughout the etude. With the tempo that is indicated, I do not rearticulate the beginning of the grace notes in measures 2 and 4. I play all of these trill figures as it is notated in measure 18. This makes the most musical sense and brings out the character of the gesture, and makes the technique more manageable.
4. The slur markings over staccato notes that occur throughout the piece are to be played with no space between the notes. Articulate the notes but do not stop the air. The result will be a very legato sound, but without the weighted emphasis that series of legato marks would indicate.
5. In measure 13, the first appearance of an accented third triplet note with two grace notes occurs. To play this, do not tongue the note harder but think of using a little more air to emphasize the note. Then, before playing the grace notes relax the air slightly and the result will be a stylized ornament that gives these notes a special character. Listen to the recording to see how this is done.
6. In measure 19, use the top trill key while holding down the throat A key for the B natural grace note. You can also use this top trill key fingering at the end of measure 26, measure 30, and measure 45.
7. In measure 27, you can also use this fingering to play the B naturals, and likewise in measure 49. I prefer to use long B fingerings in these two measures, but if the trill fingering works better, it is perfectly acceptable to use it in these places.

8. In measure 23-26, the character of the music changes, especially in mm. 28-29 and 32-33 where the gestures require a more singing and cantabile character. If you can show this change in character effectively, it will help your audition to stand out.
9. In measure 34, one is faced with the first of many octave passages. Here are a few tips for executing these passages. First, monitor the bottom notes so that they are played with a good full and stable tone. Second, keep your stomach relaxed and out and your upper windpipe open. If our air is tight and restricted, it makes passages such as these difficult to play. Finally, monitor the top note of each slur and make sure it is long enough. If you hurry off of it to quickly to get to the next bottom note, it may not speak. If you are experiencing difficulty with the bottom notes speaking, try holding the top note before it a little longer. This often solves the problem.
10. In measures 38-40, I find that if I really concentrate on the throat A in the A octave slur, that it helps me play the whole passage. It might be a different interval for you, but I found I missed the As much more than the others. By giving them a little more of my attention and concentration, it increased my success of playing the passage.
11. A final suggestion, try to prepare this etude slowly and methodically over a longer period of time. Take the time to stay at slower tempos for awhile, and don't be in a hurry to play fast. In an audition, stable, solid and accurate playing will always do better than fast tempos with lots of slips and starts and stops. If you practice too fast, you are training yourself to play with lots of stops and starts. Instead, get started on this etude early and let time work for you as you work from a slower tempo to a fast tempo.

4. Selection number two, found on page 34, number 32 is in the key of e minor. The tempo is eighth note = 48-60 (eighth = 96-120). The cut for this selection is the beginning to the downbeat of measure 49.

1. Using a metronome set to the eighth note pulse will help to insure good rhythmic subdivision. Rhythm is perhaps the most important quality that is being judged in your audition, so use the metronome to help show that you have good subdivision.
2. Another benefit of practicing with the metronome set to the eighth note is that it helps with the timing, or pacing, of the crescendos and decrescendos in each phrase. Many of these crescendos and decrescendos are stretched out over many beats in this slow tempo, so it helps to use the metronome to help increase or decrease volume incrementally with each click of the metronome
3. Finally, the use of a metronome will help to create a solid foundation for your performance. You will sound more stable and mature in your playing.
4. Now for some more detailed comments:
5. In the second measure, do not over accent the down beat, but simply lean on the note with a little more weight to the air. Also, wait as long as possible to place the 32<sup>nd</sup> note. It should be played as if it were a grace note to the next beat.
6. The slurs over staccato marks in the second measure indicate that you are to play these notes connected and as legato as possible. They are slurred so there is no

- space between notes, but the tongue lightly articulates each note. Think super legato with a defined attack on each note. This is how you always play this articulation.
7. In measure 8, leave the left pinkie down on the B key as you play the first 5 32<sup>nd</sup> notes. In the same measure, the notes for the turn are E F# E D#E and are played like a fast fivetuplet.
  8. In measure 12, the thirty second notes will feel like 16<sup>th</sup> notes if you are beating eighth notes. These notes need to flow quickly but still need to be played musically. Do not choose an overall tempo for this etude that makes this passage unplayable. At the end of the passage, pull back slightly as you approach the downbeat of the next measure. This is a nice musical nuance if done gracefully
  9. In measure 23, there is the first subdivision test of the etude. Make sure you are comfortable with the transitions. Measure 38 is a similar place. You should plan on these measure being included in any cut, so prepare them carefully so they can be performed with 100% confidence.
  10. Finally, in measure 44, the fingerings and technique in general will be a bit awkward for the bass clarinet. You will have to flip the F# to the E#. Try to make this passage flow effortlessly and be as musical as possible.
  11. Once you have worked out the details for this etude, practice playing the entire cut over and over again to get a sense of the pacing of the piece. If you can develop a narrative quality with different moods and characters unfolding in a natural way, you will do a better job selling this etude to an audition committee

### *7. (Performance of number two)*

8. Selection number three, found on page 73, number 28 is in the key of E Major. The tempo is dotted eighth note equals 56-66. You are to play from the beginning to the end.

### *5. (Master Class – selection number two)*

1. The most difficult aspect of this etude is the key. When working on this etude, be careful to avoid injury to your fingers and wrists. With the excessive pinkie combinations of this etude, you can wear your arm muscles out very quickly. If you start to feel a burning sensation or pain in your wrists and fore arms, take a break.
2. Since you are in the key of E major, long B's will primarily be played on the right in scale like passages. However, also look for opportunities to use right hand pinkie notes in the arpeggio sections. The following measures should be marked for right hand pinkie notes: 3, 11, 14, 25 (first c#), 29, 30, 31, 33, 35-41, 45, 49,55, 61.
3. There are a lot of instances in this etude where you have to toggle (or flip fingers) when there are lower chromatic neighbor tones. It is okay to do this and required

- for this etude, or any piece in a key of many sharps and flats. Do your best to find fingerings that work for you.
4. In measure 7, if regular C# does not speak well on your instrument, you might try overblowing a throat F#. In measure 38, you can do the same thing by overblowing a throat G to produce a high D. In general, overblowing throat tones for the high notes on the bass clarinet is a very important skill to develop. Try experimenting with it in these passages if you have never tried. It is not difficult with a bit of practice. If you do better using traditional fingers, by all means use them. However, if you develop the ability to use these over blown fingerings, they will become part of your everyday technique.
  5. This etude is about spending time figuring out the correct notes to play. With all of the chromatic embellishments, double sharps, E and B sharps can be confusing. Spend time making sure they you carry your accidentals through in relevant measures and work through each measure very carefully. It is easy to learn a few notes incorrectly initially and as result, certain passages can be established in your ear incorrectly.
  6. I would recommend circling all B#s and E#s and make sure you are fingering them like C natural and F natural respectively. In measure 56, the X in front of the F is a double sharp, which should be fingered like a G natural. Periodically throughout the semester, listen to the recording to make sure the notes that you are playing are indeed accurate.
  7. Do not worry about speed so much on this etude, but focus on making sure the notes are even and flowing. As your facility increases, it will be easier to increase the tempo. However, fast and uneven is not satisfactory in an audition, so don't practice the etude with fast and uneven technique. At the time of the audition, if you have to choose, take a slightly slower tempo and be in control and don't let your nerves or peer pressure force you into a tempo that is not manageable.

**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](http://webpages.acs.ttu.edu/dshea).