

## BASSOON

Performance Notes for 2011-2012 All-State Band Auditions

by

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**JUNIOR BAND:**     *Second Book of Practical Studies for Trombone*, Bordner (Alfred).  
Page 3, #58. Quarter note = 88.

The E-flat on the third space (the first note of this etude) should be fingered using a “forked” fingering in the left hand to produce better intonation. Make sure you are using the index and ring fingers of the left hand along with the whisper key; the middle finger should not be down. In addition, add the B-flat key and the index finger in the right hand. It may seem like a lot of work for this note, but it is worth the effort.

Decide carefully where you are going to breathe. I have chosen to perform the first four measures in one breath, but you can certainly sneak a breath after the dotted-quarter note in the second measure. Once you make your breathing decisions, make sure you practice them and stick to them!

The style of this piece is that of a slow march, so keep the dotted-eighth/sixteenth rhythms exact (avoid turning them into triplets). Although the composer has not indicated any dynamics, you can be creative and come up with your own. For instance, in the phrase beginning at the end of the second line, I like to start soft and then crescendo through the chromatic note.

**CLINIC BAND:**     *Practical Method for Bassoon*, Weissenborn (Fischer). Page 81,  
#2 (all). Eighth note = 120.

Resist the temptation to put an unnecessary accent on the first note of each measure at the beginning of this piece—Weissenborn clearly marks an accent on the last eighth note of the bar, so make sure you are putting it in the right place. Although there are few crescendos and diminuendos in this piece, you should make sure your audience can hear them—just like an actor on stage who makes his or her gestures big so the people in the last row can see them, you should make your dynamic changes big!

One trick to getting a good sound on high E and F is to make sure that the corners of your embouchure are tucked in and pulled back while at the same time slightly dropping your jaw. This way you can force more air through the reed. Also, you should always add the resonance key (the key the left pinky uses on low E-flat) to the high E and F, and everything above. It will give the notes a rounder, fuller tone.

This etude falls nicely into four-bar phrases throughout. In the first four bars, make sure you are going to the change of harmony in the fourth measure (the E on the downbeat). Think of a crescendo through the first three bars, then a diminuendo from the E down to the C in measure four.

**SENIOR BAND:**     *Practical Method for Bassoon*, Weissenborn (Fischer). Page 87, #13, first 4 lines, stop at fermata. Quarter note = 84.

The two most difficult things about this etude are maintaining good rhythm and playing the right notes at the end of the third line and into the fourth. For rhythm, make sure you are hearing the piece in 3/4 from the beginning; give yourself at least two bars for nothing in your head, and pretend that there's a big bass drum hit on the downbeat of the first measure—this will insure that you are not late off the first eighth rest. Also, be careful to make the dotted-quarter notes beginning in measure 3 long enough—practice with a metronome!

The patterns that begin in the fifth bar of the third line are difficult and require special attention during a practice session. Think of each pattern leading into the next measure (as the slurring indicates) and practice each one beginning on the highest note (the “and” of 1). Note that at the end of the first few patterns this is a little chromatic motion; if you can play a chromatic scale, you should be able to handle these notes easily. The rest of the notes will require some creative practicing: try dotted rhythms, changing the placement of the beat, thinking in groups of three, etc. Also, try to get away from being stuck in the visual realm—all those accidentals are hard to process—and memorize each pattern so that you are using your ear to guide your practice.

As noted above regarding the clinic etude, for good sound on high E, F, and above, make sure to use the resonance key (the key the left pinky plays for low E-flat) on each of these notes. Also, when you play the high A at the end of the second line, take the trouble not to bite the note up from your embouchure; instead try adding air support and relaxing your jaw—this will produce a much more attractive sound.