

## FRENCH HORN

Performance Notes for 2011-2012 All-State Band Auditions

by

MR. ROBERT PRUZIN  
Professor of French Horn  
University of South Carolina

**JUNIOR BAND:** *Melodious Studies for French Horn*, Miersch (Carl Fischer). Page 6, #6, stop at the end of line 5. Quarter note = 92.

The two main emphases in this etude are interval placement and articulation. From the beginning measure and in subsequent measures six, nine, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, twenty-six, and twenty-seven, the exact placement and centering of the intervals will need careful attention. In order to produce a focused sound, consider say “tah” (or “ah” if slurred) for the lower notes, “tay” (or “ay” if slurred) for the middle notes and “tee” (or “ee” if slurred) for the highest notes of the interval. I call this “voicing” the note -- you shape the oral cavity in the shape of those sounds. This enables the embouchure to position itself naturally.

Careful attention to articulation is also a necessity, as there are many changes throughout this etude. Measure two, ten, seventeen, eighteen, twenty-one, and twenty-two have the same rhythm, but are articulated differently. Measure two has the first two eighth notes slurred followed by two eighth notes tongued. Measures ten and eighteen have the first three eighth notes tongued. Measures seventeen, twenty-one, and twenty-two have all the eighth notes tongued. Make sure that these measures are articulated accurately. In measure nineteen, I pronounce the first eighth note with a “tah” sound and the third and fifth eighth notes with a “dah” sound to provide smooth connection while still adhering to the printed page.

I follow almost all the breath marks except for the end of measure ten and the end of measure eighteen. Eliminating those helps to make the piece less fragmented. But remember, when you breathe, take big breaths!

**CLINIC BAND:** *Second Book of Practical Studies for French Horn*, Getchell (Alfred). Page 13, #89, first 4 lines. Eighth note = 112

In this etude I found it easier to breathe every four measures until the *piu mosso*. At this point, I would breathe after measure eighteen and not at measure twenty; in this way, the crescendo can climax on the E<sup>b</sup> in measure twenty-one. Breathe at the end of measure twenty-two to insure you have enough air to finish with a ritard.

There are no “tricks” needed to play this etude; just count the uneven rhythms (dotted eighth and sixteenth) carefully and maintain a steady air stream to connect the notes.

I would play the last note on the B<sup>b</sup> side of the double horn with two and three, and close the hand to flatten what will be a sharp note. In this way, you can insure a smoother slur while playing the diminuendo.

**SENIOR BAND:** *Second Book of Practical Studies for French Horn*, Getchell (Alfred). Page 16, #95. Dotted quarter note = 72.

In this etude, first pay attention to the dynamics of each line. The first, second and fourth lines are *forte* with accents in the first two measures and then *mp* with slurs and lighter articulation in the last two measures of each line. The third line is all *forte* but with no accents.

I would recommend playing the first measure of lines 1 and 4 on the B<sup>b</sup> side of your double horn all open (except for the G, play that first valve). Whenever you can reduce a passage to a fingering pattern, you have an easier time. Just be careful about intonation and tone quality, as this register tends to become strident and sharp on the B<sup>b</sup> horn. Practice slowly using the conventional fingerings as a model for better pitch and tone, and then compare the F horn to the B<sup>b</sup> horn.

In the second measure of lines 1, 2, and 4, be careful to articulate the first eighth note after the sixteenth-note run since it is clearly marked with an accent. In line three, measure three, make sure you play a B<sup>b</sup>; the tonality is a little bit deceptive after having played B-natural in the previous bar.

The fingering choices here work using either horn, but I have found that using the B<sup>b</sup> side of your double horn produces quicker responses in most of these scale passages.