

## TROMBONE / BARITONE

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. (Transpose for treble clef baritone).

This etude has no marked dynamics, but you might try writing some in to make it interesting. Play the opening and the ending *forte* to show off a big sound. Imagine you are bouncing that big sound across a giant room to someone in the distance. Take a big, relaxed breath and blow! Mark in every breath you plan to take (check these with your band director), and make every breath as good as your first.

Be exacting with rhythm in this etude. Be especially careful with the dotted eighth / sixteenth note rhythm. Make the sixteenth note fast enough so it doesn't sound like you are playing triplets.

Try buzzing this melody on your mouthpiece. Can you buzz the right notes? Is the buzzing sound rich and full or is it thin and airy?

Communicating the appropriate musical character is important in any music. Make this piece exciting, like you are playing a processional for the king and queen.

If anybody wants to send me a YouTube video of this etude, I'll try to give some feedback. Any questions? You can contact me at [Brad@bonezone.org](mailto:Brad@bonezone.org).

**CLINIC BAND:** *Selected Studies for Trombone*, Voxman (Hal Leonard). Page 20, "A minor" by Rossari, start at "Meno" on line 5, measure 3, and end at the fermata in measure 1 of line 8. Quarter note = 84. (Transpose for treble clef baritone).

This short excerpt gives you a chance to show off a "full voice" tone. In fact, the words "*a voce spiegato*" mean just that: "with full voice and becoming louder." In mm. 1 and 3 (counting the "meno" section as m. 1), you have a sustained C. You want to show off your best sound on this note, so don't just automatically play it in first position with the trigger. Sixth position, if it is

played in tune, will probably give you a better tone quality. Experiment by playing it both ways. In m. 11, that same C is best played in trigger first (m. 7 could go either way).

Use a metronome with etude this every time you practice it. I'm pretty sure the judges behind the screen will be keeping time as you play. Don't give up points by rushing or slowing down. This sounds strange, but most people tend to rush in the harder sections. In this piece, the 16<sup>th</sup> note run in m. 9 is probably going to attract a lot of rushing. Another common spot for rushing is the staccato notes in measure 5. There's something about all that separation between the notes that tempts players to speed up. Keep your tempo steady and you will have an advantage in the audition!

Look at all the little details in this piece. Notice which notes are staccato and which have accents. Record yourself playing this piece and listen to see if those articulations you think are doing can actually be heard on the recording.

I often tell my students that I'm only really listening for two or three things: good sound, good time and musical interest. For good sound, you should work on breathing, relaxation, long tones and mouthpiece buzzing. For good time, you should use a metronome but not as a crutch to replace your own counting. For musical interest, make sure that there is intelligent variety in what you do. Don't allow everything to sound the same. Make it compelling.

I hope to add some practice exercises for this etude to my website, [www.bonezone.org](http://www.bonezone.org). Keep an eye out for them. If anybody wants to send me a YouTube video of this etude, I'll try to give some feedback. Any questions? You can contact me at [Brad@bonezone.org](mailto:Brad@bonezone.org).

**SENIOR BAND:** *Selected Studies for Trombone*, Voxman (Hal Leonard). Page 19, "Largo Cantabile" by Gatti, stop at the first note of measure 14. Dotted quarter note = 52. (Transpose for treble clef baritone).

This little Italian piece gives you an opportunity to be expressive and finish with a little flash. As with any piece, it is smart to translate all the foreign terms. This one throws you a few curve balls, including *flebile* ("plaintive, weak"), *rinf* (an abbreviation of *rinforzando*, meaning "a sudden loud accent") and *tratt.* (an abbreviation of *trattenuto*, meaning "held, sustained, slowed down").

In a performance, I wouldn't worry too much about a perfectly steady tempo but, since this is an audition piece, do use a metronome for the steady sections. In mm. 2, 6 and 11, I predict most people will not play the right rhythm. Make sure you're not one of them by playing that eighth note following the longer note with a correct triplet feel. Don't let it sound like a duplet.

Pay attention to the details of articulation. This is especially true in m. 13. Make sure you have a clearly separate first note followed by a clean legato. Also in that measure, notice the marking "*ten*" below the G. This is an abbreviation of "*tenuto*," and in this context I would play the G with a mini-fermata.

Bar 12 presents an annoying breathing problem; the slur marks weren't thoughtfully placed. Unless you have many liters of air, you'll need to break a slur after one of the long E's. Either break can work (I prefer the second) but don't do both or it will become too choppy.

Remember that on most trombones the higher E (first note of the piece) tends to be sharp. That entire partial (6<sup>th</sup> partial) is sharp on all brass instruments. As trombonists, we have the luxury of easily moving the slide out a bit to fix the intonation. I suggest you write a "flat 2" over that note to remind yourself. Also check it with a tuner and make sure it doesn't go sharp.

Vibrato can add a lot of beauty to the sustained notes but, if done poorly, can really ruin them as well. Experiment with adding a little vibrato and have others listen to give you feedback.

Remember that to succeed in this audition you need two skills: trombone skill and "pressure playing" skill. Work on that "pressure" skill by playing in front of people frequently. Remember to keep your breathing easy and relaxed as you start to feel those butterflies.

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