

## 2019 All State Oboe Etudes

### General Practice Tips for Students

- Mark alternate fingerings from the beginning!
- Identify scales, arpeggios, and other patterns
- Practice SLOW first. Aim for accuracy, clean finger movements, etc.
- Be careful with rhythms. Rhythmic relationships should stay the same at any practice speed
- Dotted rhythms can help technical passages
  - Long-short
  - Short-long
- It can help to practice in small pieces.
  - Measure to measure or beat to beat (include the first note of the next measure or beat unless the phrase actually ends at the barline.)
  - Note groupings

### English Horn

- Send kids on English horn, if you have one.
  - MUCH better odds; great parts if they make State
- Make sure your instrument works (even sitting unplayed for a long time can lead to repair troubles, esp. in poor climate control.)
- English horn reeds last longer and are more forgiving. You can adjust the opening slightly with the wire.
- Rubber tubing on the reed is a good idea to make a good seal and keep it firmly on the bocal.
- Bocal length affects pitch. You should probably use the #2 bocal. Bocals often lose cork—don't pick the bocal by the best looking cork.
- Try taking in more reed.
- Half hole is a platform, not a hole. On a closed half hole, you should be touching both keys, not just the top one.
- Different pitch tendencies--keep an eye on the tuner for a while; don't assume it will be the same as oboe. Different volume and tone tendencies: 2<sup>nd</sup> octave notes can be quiet and difficult to work with on English horn.
- Air goes away more with the larger instrument. Breathing plans may need to change.
- Super high register fingerings may respond much differently in regards to pitch. Check them, especially any short fingerings you might be considering, with a tuner first.
- Use a neckstrap!!! (If the neckstrap feels too inflexible, or if you're using a saxophone neckstrap that won't fit through the thumbrest loop, tie a rubber band through the loop and attach the neckstrap to that.) Pause and stretch any time your arm feels sore or tense.

### Etude 1 (Ferling 30)

E Major, 4/4 time

- Scales: E Major, chromatic
- Arpeggios: E Major, B Major, B dominant 7, C# diminished, D# diminished 7

## General skills

- Clean tonguing
  - Don't try to overdo the staccato. Keep the air moving and the tongue light.
  - Practice complex passages slurred first to make sure fingers are clean.
  - Be careful not to rhythmically shortchange the first note of a slur, especially when it's on the beat, especially two-note slurs.
- Jumps (m. 3, mm. 19-20, m. 24)
  - Fast air for good high notes, keep the embouchure open for good low notes.
  - Try to have a set up that will let you keep the air and embouchure reasonably consistent during these parts, though you may need to voice some for the different ranges.
  - Make sure nothing sticks out of the overall sound just because of its range.
- Always play musically and look for opportunities to shape phrases!

## Tricky parts

- M. 3: Jumps to accented high C. Don't let the high C stick out *too* much or let things sound too separated. Tone and pitch on high C are important—don't bite.
- M. 11: Be careful that the fingers are clean and accurate on high D# and C# to avoid response issues. Consider using the Bb key instead of the B key on the high D# to aid response (it does lower the pitch some, though).
- M. 16: The lowest two notes of the B arpeggio are very tricky on oboe. You will have to either use the alternate C key on the low B OR set up the left pinky to go from the left D# key to the low B key.
- Mm. 19-20: Jumps, tricky fingerings, tonguing. This will likely be the part that decides your personal maximum tempo. Practice it slurred first, with extra attention to where the lower note goes from F# to G and back (cross fingerings). Practice it some without the C's.
- M. 24: Make sure your air and embouchure are set up for that low B to respond.

## B Major arpeggio

Disclaimer: If your private teacher has a preference or an entirely different way, listen to them.

- The first option is to use the "banana" alternate C key next to the low D key *instead* of the normal pinky C key on low B (you still must cover the hole in the D key.) This frees up your right pinky to hit the regular D-sharp on the previous note (the D-sharp key will force up the banana key).
- The second option involves the Left D-sharp key, and can be done in two ways:
  - Poke your left pinky directly between the low B and left D-sharp keys. Pull for B and push for D-sharp (remember to coordinate your low C pinky). This is rather like sitting in the middle of a see-saw and forcing it.
  - Finger a left D-sharp, and then drop your wrist until your knuckle is touching the tip of the low B key. Drop your wrist further to play low B with the knuckle; bring it back to almost-normal for D-sharp. This is rather like laying across a see-saw, and has the benefit of also being usable for low Bb.



## Etude 2 (Ferling 9)

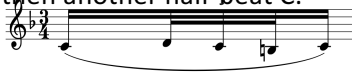
F Major; written as 3/4 time, but the eighth note gets the beat

- Scales: F Major, G melodic minor, chromatic
- Arpeggios: F Major, Bb major, C# diminished 7, D minor, G minor, Eb Major, C Major

### General skills

- Rhythm and counting
  - Those long notes at the beginning are easy to miscount. Be sure to start with a clear pulse, and count carefully at the eighth note pulse.
  - Be careful with the counting between sixteenth notes, sextuplets, and thirty-second notes. Know how much of a beat each should be before you play. It can help to mark where the beats are.
- Breathing and endurance
  - Make a breathing plan. Not every breath has time for both out and in. Some should be only out; some should be only in. You don't *have* to actually breathe on breath marks.
  - Endurance is a challenge here, especially with the jumps at the end. Practice long tones and slow scales early on to improve endurance, and in the last month, do plenty of full runs of the etude, working to keep good posture, air support, and embouchure despite fatigue.
- Jumps down (mm. 24-25, mm. 37-38)
  - Work for great tone in all ranges. Fast air is needed for good high notes, keep the embouchure open for good low notes. Thinking about the air support pushing more out and down can help low notes.
  - Try to have a set up that will let you keep the air and embouchure reasonably consistent during these parts, though you may need to voice some. Be careful not to let the embouchure tighten or the air weaken from fatigue.
  - Don't try to perform these measures more quietly than you can reliably play them.
- Always play musically and shape phrases, especially in the slow etude. Try to show off a wide dynamic range, and look for points to emphasize dynamic contrast.
  - Many of these phrases are quite long. Be careful to shape smoothly across the entire phrase; don't let things get choppy.
  - Remember that vibrato speed is also a musical tool you can use. Increasing and decreasing vibrato speed appropriately can help you shape these long phrases well and sound much more musically mature.

### Tricky parts:

- Beginning: Start with a clear pulse and count carefully!
  - M. 3: Watch the transition to sextuplets (really triplets).
  - Mm. 5-6: Remember that several staccatos under a slur mean tongue legato.
  - M. 7: Use air and vibrato to emphasize the accents. Make sure you can get to and from the high E cleanly with correct fingerings on E and D.
  - M. 12: The turn has a B-natural, as per the accidental underneath the turn sign—a good way to play this turn would be: a half-beat C, a half-beat triplet D-C-B, and then another half-beat C.
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- M. 18, mm. 20-21: Notice the hemiola feel of these measures.
  - Mm. 24-25: Be careful with the slurs to low D. Shape the diminuendo musically through the higher notes.
  - Mm. 37-38: Watch the slurs to low C, especially in the pianissimo. Keep the corners forward and the air support strong and set for low notes, in spite of fatigue! Watch posture as well. Consider using forked F in the pianissimo measure.

## Etude 3 (Ferling 36)

F minor, 6/8 time

- Scales: F harmonic minor, Eb Major, just a little Bb minor
- Arpeggios: F minor, C Major, B diminished, G Major, C# diminished 7, F# diminished 7, Bb minor, Ab Major, Gb Major, Db Major, B diminished 7, G diminished, Eb Major

General skills

- Varied articulations
  - Keep your air moving consistently and your tongue light at this speed. Don't let the staccato marks lead you to have choppy air or a heavy tongue .
  - Remember that good, musical accents are usually more air than tongue.
  - Look out for places where the articulation pattern may change (m.27, mm. 19-20)
- In this key especially, take care to mark alternate F and Eb fingerings!
- Arpeggios are everywhere. They're easier to play if you recognize them.
- Always play musically.
  - Think about how to musically group the notes—the last several sixteenth notes in a bar usually have a forward musical direction.

Tricky parts:

- M. 7: Identifying the arpeggios will help. Don't let the natural signs make you forget the Ab. Those higher notes may need some work to make them clean—remember that second octave key notes don't require the thumb; on the C, you should consider lifting the thumb in preparation for the third octave key on high E.
- Mm. 13-14: Remember that the F# still carries through. A to C is a notoriously treacherous combination on oboe. Work to be sure it's clean.
- Mm. 15-16 and mm. 29-30: Some tricky fingering combinations here. Work to manage all the half hole and octave transitions cleanly, and group musically.
- Mm. 19-20: You will need to decide whether to deal with the Db to low C part with the alternate low C key (banana key next to the D key), or by straightening and curving the pinky. It will take some work. Be careful of the articulation in the ends of the measures.
- M. 25: You should probably do something musically with this gesture approaching the rest.
- M. 27: The articulation is different than it was at the beginning.
- M. 33: Again, several careful decisions must be made regarding fingerings.

Db to low C (mm. 19-20, m. 33)

- The first option is to hit the D-flat key with the tip of your pinky, and then straighten your pinky so that you're hitting the C key with the first knuckle, and the tip is off the D-flat key. It is okay if you hit both keys on D-flat. Be careful not to lose control of your D finger, which must continue to cover its hole.
- The second option is to use the alternate C key (banana key) next to the low D key on your D-flat. You must keep the hole in the D key covered completely. You need then only move the D-flat pinky to go between D-flat and C.
  - For m. 33, the banana C key can simply stay down on low B, taking the place of the normal C key; no need to move the right pinky again until the next D-flat. However, if you choose this option for m. 33, I strongly recommend using left F and right Ab instead

of forked F and regular Ab, as forked F does not work if the banana C key is down. If you would prefer the forked F and regular Ab, use the first option instead at the end.

### Relevant fingerings

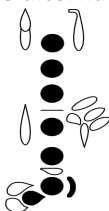
Low B with the alternate low C key:



Low C with the alternate low C key:



Low C# with the alternate low C key:



High E, regular fingering:



For high F, just remove the G finger from the above.

### Online Resources

- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMGGqUtk3AV441QfAUzAgnZIxDWdQzEq9>
- Ferling remixes on youtube: both full performances and backing track only
  - Etude 30: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8FPsz3EnX0>;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWoTW-jogf0>
  - Etude 9: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIDvsT0a4Is>;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS18kcskX4g>
  - Etude 36: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DU8poJhVNA>;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qd844VavuDE>
- Other youtube recordings:  
[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLW7x5DIs7FDHClabNtPb8I\\_ABRmG0CLXT](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLW7x5DIs7FDHClabNtPb8I_ABRmG0CLXT)
- A commentary on the etudes: <https://www.idrs.org/scores/Ferling/Narrative.html>
- A critical edition of the etudes chronicling minor changes across several editions:  
[http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/8725/1/A\\_critical\\_edition\\_on\\_the\\_48\\_studies\\_for\\_OBOE\\_-\\_vol2.pdf](http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/8725/1/A_critical_edition_on_the_48_studies_for_OBOE_-_vol2.pdf)
- An older, public domain edition on imslp. Note that there may be some articulation and dynamic differences from the official edition:

[http://ks4.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/c/cd/IMSLP16933-Ferling -  
48 Studies for Oboe, Op. 31.pdf](http://ks4.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/c/cd/IMSLP16933-Ferling_-_48_Studies_for_Oboe,_Op._31.pdf)