

## ETUDE CLINIC

### 1. What is an “Etude”?

“A composition designed to improve the technique of an instrumental performer by isolating specific difficulties and concentrating his or her efforts on their mastery. A single etude usually focuses on one technical problem; etudes are usually published in groups more or less systematically covering a range of such problems in a range of keys. In present-day usage, the etude falls between the exercise, a short formula not worked out as a formal composition and the concert etude, which can stand as a self-sufficient piece of music...”

--The Harvard Dictionary of Music

- The differences between Etudes and Exercises/Routines/Drills/Patterns
- Differences between preparing etudes and other compositions [solos, excerpts, ensemble pieces for performance]
- Choosing representative etudes for a brass instrument

### 2. Etude Preparation: Preliminary

- Determine the etude’s musical/technical focus [key/scale, intervallic, flexibility, phrasing, style, legato, velocity, rhythm, range, Bel Canto, endurance, odd meter, sight reading, lyricism, orchestral style, improvisational application, etc]
- Determine the etude’s technical requirements [tempo, range, single/multiple tongue, breathing map, alternate fingerings, endurance, wide/awkward intervals, “tongue-twister” articulation, extreme dynamic shifts]
- Develop a vivid mental/aural picture of you playing the etude, FULLY MASTERED [you can imagine sounding “like” someone else, or another instrument/singer. You should strive to hear each sound/pitch in your head. What is the overall effect you are trying create with this kind music and how will this etude serve that purpose in other musical situations?]

### 3. Applying Musical Fundamentals to the Etude

- Fixed Fundamentals [need to remain consistent through each passage of the etude]  
sound, pitch, tempo, rhythm
- Variable Fundamentals [need to be varied to develop overall musicality]  
Articulation, phrasing/style, dynamics, vibrato/timbre
- Trombone Fundamentals [can be removed to isolate on technically challenging passages]  
air, buzz, slide [fingers], tongue

#### 4. Allowing for “what if” questions...

====>The performer can/should improvise different scenarios to increase mastery in the process.

- What if I change the clef/key of the etude?
- What if I change/alter the tempo?
- What if I take any or some of the fixed or variable fundamentals to their extremes?
- What if I change the instrument I play this on?
- What would [insert favorite musician name] sound like playing this?

#### 5. Creating Etudes

- Pulling passages from solos and excerpts and improvising etudes from them
- Key center [scale] improvisation
- Duets for ear training
- Creating etudes from Exercises/Drills/Routines/Patterns

#### 6. Etude Drills

- Slow down for sound/technique
- Sing/Buzz passages
- Clap rhythms
- One Pitch for challenging rhythm/intervals
- Skeletal structures
- Subdivision Drills
- Octave Displacement
- Isolation Loops
- Backwards Practice
- ”10 times through” Rule

#### 7. Tools and their uses

- Recording Device: for listening back to practice and for duet/sightreading practice
- Metronome: on the beat, up beat, anticipating beats, short and long subdivisions
- Tuner: to help develop sense of internal tendencies and to increase pitch consistency

#### 8. HAVE FUN!!

- Pull out an old familiar etudes once in a while for a “brain quick start”
- Sight read new/challenging etudes with NO STOPPING.
- Steal etudes from all other instruments.
- Don’t be frustrated if a given etude remains far-from-perfect! You might have learned some of the most valuable lessons and grown as a player even if you haven’t mastered the entire etude!

