

# Texas Music Educator's Association

## All-State Etude Clinic for the Saxophone

Presented by:

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### Ferling Etude #26 (Allegro con brio, quarter note=116)

- A. Key of the Etude: Eb Major
  - a. Practice full range scale and arpeggio
  - b. Modulation: none. However, accidentals are used generously to create chromatic, stepwise motion



- B. Scales and arpeggios are the “tools” with which we learn etudes and music. Knowing the key of the etude (or piece) will help the student learn the etude faster and with greater technical ease.
- C. Purpose of the Etude
  - a. Articulation and finger-tongue coordination
  - b. Maneuvering throughout the range of the saxophone with ease of response
  - c. Variety of articulations
    - i. All tongued, m. 7, and 21-22
    - ii. TSTT, m. 20
    - iii. TTSSS, m. 1, 2, 9, 10, 13, 15-18
    - iv. TSST, m. 16
    - v. TSSS, m. 14
    - vi. TSTS, m. 12
    - vii. STST, m. 4
  - d. Development of a “crisp” (i.e. short) staccato
  - e. Improving finger dexterity
  - f. Achieving a clear, even tone throughout the registers
  - g. Phrasing while playing quickly

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<sup>1</sup> Les Gammes by Jean Marie Londeix

D. Finger Selections and Considerations

- a. In most instances, when a B $\flat$  is approached or left on the saxophone by stepwise or chromatic motion, we should use side B $\flat$  (TA). When approached or left by a leap, we should use bis B $\flat$ .
- b. Example of TA (beat 2):



- c. Example of bis (beat 2):



- d. However, there are special instances that require us to use a mix of TA and Bis. We should use TA in these two spots because the technical facility of TA is easier to maneuver than rolling on and off Bis.



- f. The same is mostly true when playing F#. When approached and left by chromatic motion, we should use side F# (TF). When approached and left by whole steps or leap, we should use our right middle finger.
- g. Example of chromatic F# finger on beat 2:



<sup>2</sup> 48 Famous Studies for oboe or saxophone by W. Ferling

<sup>3</sup> Ferling

<sup>4</sup> Ferling

<sup>5</sup> Ferling

- h. If a student is having difficulty in m. 7, one special finger pattern I would consider in this etude is keeping your right index finger down for the entire measure. This will allow the student to focus primarily on their left-hand motion. However, if this fingering proves to be very flat, I suggest avoiding that fingering.



#### E. Achieving a “Light” Articulation

- a. “Tip of the tongue to the tip of the Reed”
  - i. Make sure that your student is not overcommitting to their articulations by using too much tongue or by touching the reed past its tip.
- b. AIR
  - i. Air should start our sound
  - ii. Our tongue should define the “front” of the sound. Too many times students try to start their sound with the tongue.
    - 1. A good practice tool for this is to have your student “air-start” notes so they are relying on supported air.
    - 2. A syllable you can think of is “Ha” when practicing air starts
      - a. Make sure that your tongue stays in a natural, slightly arched shape
- c. Ping Pong Ball
  - i. “How long does the ping pong ball stay in contact with the table?”
    - 1. The answer is not very long. Similarly, our tongue should not stay on the reed for very long.
      - a. Instead of thinking of attacking/going forward to the reed, imagine the motion of pulling your tongue away from the reed
        - i. This can be practiced by having students start with the tip of their tongue on the reed. Have them build up air pressure (while staying relaxed) in their oral cavity. Once they pull their tongue back, air should fill the saxophone and create a sound.
        - ii. Make sure that your tongue is staying within close proximity to the reed. There should not be a lot of tongue motion when articulating.

d. Articulation Exercises

- i. The first example (m. 5-12) will allow students to focus on the quality of their articulation.
- ii. B and C will allow students to focus on hand/tongue coordination.

Musical notation for articulation exercises 5-12. The first line contains measures 5, 6, 7, and 8. The second line contains measures 9, 10, 11, and 12. The exercises consist of eighth-note patterns with various articulation marks such as accents and slurs.

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Musical notation for articulation exercises B and C. Exercise B consists of two lines of notation, with the first line containing measures 1-6 and the second line containing measures 7-12. Exercise C also consists of two lines of notation, with the first line containing measures 1-4 and the second line containing measures 5-12. Both exercises feature eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents.

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F. Practice Strategies

- a. Gradually get faster
  - i. Start a technical passage going note by note.
  - ii. Begin to string notes together in its notated rhythmic pattern at a slow speed. Gradually increase the tempo while maintaining accuracy.
  - iii. Example: 5 accurate repetitions at 60 bpm, then 5 accurate repetitions at 63, 66, etc.
- b. Altered Rhythms

<sup>7</sup> Londeix

<sup>8</sup> Londeix

- i. Let's take a measure (7) from etude 26 in its unaltered form



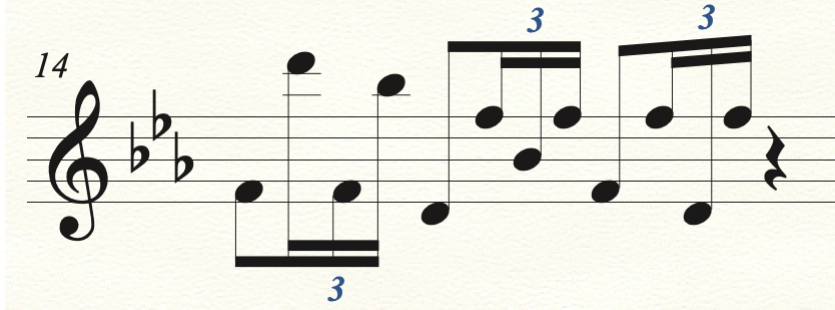
- ii. We can change the rhythm to practice different groupings, which allows us to practice going between the different intervals at varying speeds.
- iii. When you practice these, focus on moving your fingers at the exact same time and in an efficient manner.
1. Keep your fingers close to the keys
  2. Keep your fingers curved
  3. Keep the pads of your fingertips on the pearls
  4. PRACTICE WITH A METRONOME
- iv. Altered Rhythms #1: Dotted eighth followed by a sixteenth note.



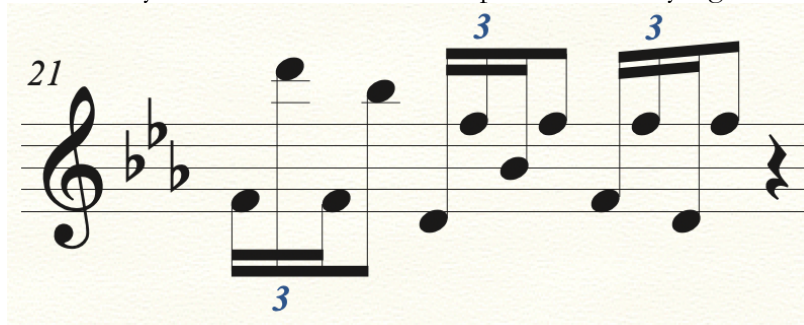
- v. Altered Rhythm #2: Sixteenth note followed by dotted eighth note



- vi. Altered Rhythm #3: Eighth note followed by sixteenth note triplet



- vii. Altered Rhythm #4: Sixteenth note triplet followed by eighth note



- viii. You can continue with this pattern for more variations such as eighth followed by two sixteenths, two sixteenths followed by one eighth, etc. Come up with your own rhythms to make it fun!
- ix. One last practice strategy, pick one note to stop on in the phrase while playing the rest of the phrase in time. The notes with a tenuto should be held for a beat while you play the remaining notes in time.

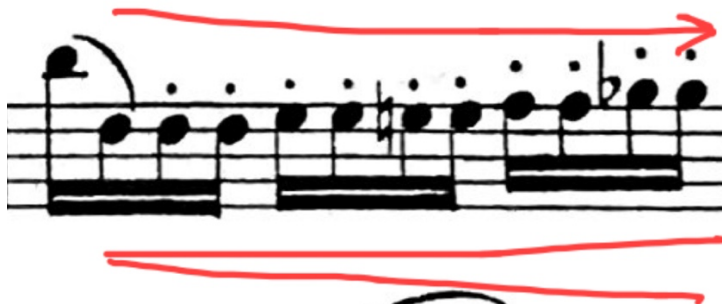
1. In this instance, you will sustain the third note of each grouping for one beat while the remaining notes played as written



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### G. Phrasing

- a. When playing etudes that are straightforward and fast, we can easily lose track of WHY we are playing what we're playing.
- b. Although you might be learning this Ferling for an audition or for lessons as a requirement, look for opportunities to make this etude your own.
- c. In measure 11, as pictured below, think about the forward motion of the piece and add intensity to your playing by adding a crescendo! Make sure you do not rush



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<sup>10</sup> Ferling

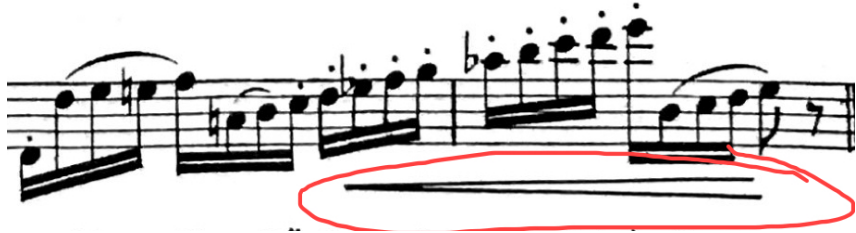
<sup>11</sup> Ferling

- d. I like to enter m. 9 at a softer dynamic to contrast the previous ending to the first theme in m. 8. Adding a wide range of dynamics to your playing will create more depth and color to your sound. This will make the crescendo in the previous example that much more impactful.



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- e. Lastly, consider treating the last line of the etude as one long build. Save a bit of your forte dynamic for the last two measures to that you have room to grow and send the etude off with one triumphant statement



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#### H. Helpful Hints

- a. Always keep your fingers close to the keys
- b. Always keep your fingers curved
- c. Avoid slamming your fingers (stay relaxed)
  - i. Pretend you are typing on a keyboard (unless you slam your keys...then don't do that)
- d. The First Note
  1. Make sure that you breath in time. If you breath in time, you will start in time
- e. Remember to tongue "tAH" not "Tah" – avoid overdoing the accents in each etude
- f. To improve tone and response throughout the register, remember to play:
  - i. Concert A on the alto mouthpiece
  - ii. Concert G on the tenor mouthpiece
  - iii. Concert D/E on the baritone mouthpiece

Good Luck and happy practicing! ☺

For more content, you can go to my website: [trekboyland.com](http://trekboyland.com)

or you can find my YouTube channel @trekboyland

Examples are drawn from the Ferling Book and Jean-Marie Londeix's book "Les Gammes Conjointes et en Intervalles"

<sup>12</sup> Ferling

<sup>13</sup> Ferling