

All-State Solos – tenor trombone

Overall Advice:

Establish a good daily warm-up and routine, if you don't already have one. If you need one, I have a warm-up packet that I'll send to you. Email me at: mwilkinson@mozart.sc.edu, let me know your name and what school you attend, and ask for it. Every trombonist has a slightly different way of going about their routine, but most routines have these commonalities: long tones, lip slurs, and tonguing. I've addressed each a little bit, below.

Long tones: play relaxed and non-metered long tones every day. Focus on *your sound*. Have a sound in mind that you want to emulate (from your teacher, a recording, a trombone performance you attended, etc...), and chase that sound, every day. I like to think of long tones as the most relaxing thing I do, all day, and I believe that *your sound* is the most important thing about you, as a musician. Without a beautiful core sound, it is difficult to do much else. I like to play my Remington series with a floated first note (only air to start the note, no tongue), and a relaxed glissando to the next note (then, breathe before the next two notes). I also play slow scales, using as little tongue as possible, while playing legato or glissed.

Lip slurs: play these to develop flexibility on your instrument, learning to navigate the harmonic series, without using your tongue. Start with easy slurs (4th-line F down to low Bb, and then back up), and work your way up to adding more partials and playing faster (while staying relaxed). Always play these slowly to start. A relaxed accuracy is key in the beginning, but even after you feel you have more control, still keep things as tension-free as possible. If you have an F-attachment, try playing these also down through your trigger positions.

Tonguing: after you have gotten some air moving through the instrument while playing long tones and lip slurs, **then** work on tonguing, while keeping the *same sound* that you've been producing, previously. Don't allow the notes in this part of your routine to not sound as good as everything else. Practice tonguing repeated notes (static, or non-moving slide), and also practice tonguing moving notes (dynamic, or moving slide). Make sure to move your slide quickly between notes, avoiding any unnecessary glissandos/portamento (while at the same time making sure that your slide arm stays as relaxed as possible). Scales are a great thing to practice here, varying your articulations - specifically, practice the scale that relates to the key of the etude that you're working on.

Finally, when learning these etudes, take the time to practice *slowly* and *accurately*. Make sure that you are being attentive to *every detail* in the music, first. Use a music dictionary to make sure that you know and fully understand each musical term contained in these solos (I like the Wotton Dictionary of Music app).

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Junior Trombone: Audition Solo 1B, Moderato

-Practice the dynamic and articulation contrasts - the composer is very specific about these things. Practice with a metronome, and be as exact in your performance details as possible, staying within the tempo marking.

-This solo is mostly all diatonic to the Eb major scale, with the exception of two measures of a chromatic scale and a few chromatic notes between Eb scale notes. Practice the Eb major scale (the all-state pattern and any other patterns that you've learned from your band teacher, private lessons teacher, my warm-up packet, etc...) and also your chromatic scale – this will be good “cross-training” for learning and performing this solo.

-Make sure that there is a noticeable contrast between:

1. the slurred *dolce* passages at the beginning (also in m.25-26 and at the end)
2. the 8 measures (m.17-24) of accented *forte* and *marziale* playing
3. the two measures (m. 29-30) of *fortissimo* and *marcato* playing

-Style: for the slurred *dolce* passages, focus on blowing all of the way through each phrase, connecting one note to the next. Don't move your slide *too early* or *too late* - move it right in time with your legato articulation. For the *marziale* and *marcato* phrases, make sure that you play with *good tone* first, accent and louder dynamics *second*.

-For m.25-26, practice your chromatic scale, as mentioned above. Be precise and metered in your slide movement, and move your slide quickly when moving from 4th to 1st and back to 4th. Make sure that your slide isn't “bouncing” along the way - go *right to* each position.

-Breathing: plan out your breaths as you practice and prepare for the audition. For most of these phrases (at the marked tempo), you should be able to play 4 measures in one breath. If you need to take a breath after one of the 2- measure phrases, make sure that it is a quick breath; however, challenge yourself to only do that as absolutely needed, and work towards playing longer phrases with each breath. For the a. and b. endings, you'll need to decide whether to take a big breath right before, and/or whether to breath after the half note in the 2nd measure of each ending. In the a. ending, you have another spot for a breath right before the last two notes, but in the b. ending you don't have that option.

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Clinic Trombone: Audition Solo 2B, Allegretto

-Practice the dynamic and articulation contrasts - the composer is very specific about these things. Practice with a metronome, and be as exact in your performance details as possible, staying within the "Allegretto" and “*brilliante*” markings.

-Practice your C major scale, as the etude is centered around that key and scale (with obvious accidentals that aren't in the key of C). In m. 9-12, these are just arpeggios from the C major

scale, minus the chromatic notes. The next two measures (m.13-14) are just C major arpeggios. In m.21 & 23, these are “skippy” scale patterns (also, mostly in C). Elsewhere, you’ll find melodic lines that follow a straight scalar line (like m.1, 3, 25-28, 29, 31, 37, 39, and 41). In other words, if you know your C major scale, you’ve already “learned” a large portion of this solo.

-Style: make your dotted 8th/16th note rhythms snappy...ie: don’t let them sound like triplets. Make the contrast in articulation and style evident everywhere you see it marked. In m.1-4, *forte* and *brilliante*, followed by m.5-8, *piano* and *dolce*. In m.9-12, follow the slur-two, tongue-two markings carefully, and don’t forget to crescendo up to the *forte* in m. 13.

-Style and Slide Technique: for the slurred *dolce* passage (m.5-8), phrases in m.17-20 and 25-28 (as well as m. 32-33 and 35), and the slurred notes in m.9-12, focus on blowing all of the way through each slurred phrase, connecting one note to the next. Don’t move your slide *too early* or *too late* - move it right in time with your legato articulation. For the *brilliante* and other louder/fuller passages, make sure that you play with *good tone* first, accent and louder dynamics *second*.

-It would be easy to let your tempo lag, as the style, articulations, etc...change between passages. Be diligent, practice with a metronome, along with a friend, for your band teacher, and focus on keeping your tempo constant.

-a. ending: don’t let the *forte* or *fortissimo* passages get out of control – only play as loud as you can play with a completely controlled and still full sound. The tricky part here is quickly “turning the volume down” to *mezzo-piano* and playing a little more delicately, for the last two measures.

-b. ending: also, don’t let the *forte* dynamic get out of control; however, *do* make sure that you stay *forte* all of the way to the end, being especially carefully on the low and accented G. If you focus on making that note a little bit accented and also tenuto, it’ll be easier to not let it get out of control or blatty (which you definitely don’t want, right at the end of your performance!). Last – make sure that your octave C’s are perfectly in tune and also *in tune with each other*. Be careful not to overplay the upper octave - make it a “period” at the end of a sentence, not an “exclamation point”.

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Senior Trombone: Audition Solo 3C, Andante cantabile / Allegro agitato / Andante cantabile

-Practice the dynamic, articulation, and rhythmic contrasts - the composer is very specific about these things. Practice with a metronome, and be as exact in your performance details as possible, staying within the Andante cantabile marking at the beginning (and for both of the endings) and Allegro agitato for the middle section. Learn to make a smooth transition between these two tempos, eventually without the metronome.

-Practice your C major scale, as most of the Andante cantabile (beginning and endings) sections are diatonic to C major. Meaning: if you know your C major scale really well, you “already know” how to play most of this solo. Knowing your related minor scale (A minor) will help to learn the middle Allegro agitato section. However, the composer alternates between using at least two different forms of minor, so make sure to differentiate between F and F# in that minor scale (practice natural, melodic, and harmonic to be thorough).

-Style and Slide Technique: for all of the slurred *sempre dolce* passages in the Andante cantabile sections, focus on playing smooth scalar runs (like in m.4, 5, 6, 7, etc...) and also smooth arpeggiated runs, or phrases with larger leaps (like m.1-2, 3, 8, etc...). Focus on blowing all of the way through each slurred phrase, connecting one note to the next. Don't move your slide *too early* or *too late* - move it right in time with your legato articulation.

-For the louder/fuller passages in the Allegro agitato section, make sure that you play with *good tone* first, accent and louder dynamics *second*. Practice this section slower to clean up the 16th note passages, and don't underestimate the speed of the triplets (it is easy to drag when playing them).

-Triplets in m.15-17: this is simply one long diminished arpeggio. If you practice playing the notes in a B diminished arpeggio independent from the solo, you'll be farther along (just like knowing your C major scale, as mentioned above). If you haven't worked on this concept before, a diminished arpeggio is just stacked minor thirds (here: B, D, F, G#). Side note: no matter which of those four notes you start on (when practicing it), it is still the same arpeggio, since the intervals are all the same, or symmetrical.