

PREPARING THE ALL-STATE BAND AUDITION
A Clinic presented for the 'Music to the Power of 3' Conference – 2004

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I. Preparing the Scales – the 'backbone' of your audition!

(Scales are never requested in "concert pitch". Ex. A Bb scales begins on your Bb.)

- A. Play at indicated speed; $\text{♩} = 88$ (in sixteenth notes)
 - 1. Faster is NOT better; better is better!
 - 2. Establish a sense of pulse – Use a metronome as your practice
 - 2. Make sure each note 'speaks' – don't let it all be a 'blur'
- B. Play with good characteristic tone throughout full range of instrument
(Make sure that you play all scales the required number of octaves for your instrument)
- C. Prepare scales both tongued and slurred
- D. Learn major/minor scales in relative pairs, so that key relationships become familiar
- E. Use a 'flash card' system to quiz yourself; Don't always practice scales in the same order.

II. Preparing the Music

- A. Technique – Make sure that each of these elements is in place; begin slowly, then gradually work up to performance tempo
 - 1. proper notes and fingerings; (use appropriate alternate fingerings where applicable)
 - 2. proper rhythms
 - 3. proper articulation – check carefully
Tip: Practice technically difficult passages with mixed/dotted rhythms (i.e. This helps with motor skill development.
- B. Musicianship – Remember, *making music* is what it's all about!
 - 1. characteristic tone
 - 2. proper tempi (faster is not always better....check with metronome!)
 - 3. dynamic markings and shadings
 - 4. proper phrasing
- C. Audition Preparation 'Tips'
 - 1. Audition time constraints will not always allow for each etude to be played in full. Don't always practice starting at the beginning of the full page exercises. Get used to starting in the middle, near the end, the last section, etc.
 - 2. If in doubt about whether to take a repeat, D.C. or D.S., take it.
 - 3. Perform several 'mock' auditions before the big day. This is the best way to prepare your nerves! Make sure you work the 'three steps to performance confidence'
 - a. Play it right
 - b. Play it right *lots of times*
 - c. Play it right *under pressure*
 - 4. Practice sight reading regularly!

III. 'The First Saturday in December'

This is a day that can wreck havoc on nerves. As your band directors, we understand your fears about this process and have become familiar with the pain/pleasure aspects of this day. We are there to help you. (Many of us remember enduring the same experience, and believe me, we feel your pain!) Some things to remember:

1. There will likely be call backs – make sure that you stay informed as to what is going on with the audition process for your instrument. Don't be caught unprepared for call backs!
2. For all orchestral wind instruments, this audition is also an audition for the All-State Orchestra. If you score high enough within your section, you will have the option to choose band or orchestra. Both folders with the concert music are made available during the audition day. Look at this music, *and be prepared with a decision*, should you have one.
3. When you enter the audition room, make sure you read/understand all instructions thoroughly. If you do not, DON'T speak to the judge; have the room monitor clarify.
4. On audition day, don't 'overplay' before your audition. By now, the work is done – warm-up, run through it a few times, then GO!
5. Be prepared to sight read! All judges have the option of requiring this in an audition.
6. Should you be selected to either the All-State Band or Orchestra, ***congratulations!***

Now – your work has just begun! You will need to make sure that you pick up your folder in the main ensemble selection room. Check and double check to make sure that you have all forms and money turned in on time! As for the music, PRACTICE! Make sure the technical preparation is complete before you arrive at Tan-Tar-A.

Being a member of an All-State ensemble is one of the highest honors available to a high school student. It is also a tremendously rewarding musical experience! However, preparation for this audition should not be considered a success or failure based solely on your success in 'making the group'. Your investment of time and effort has paid off in many ways – You have become a better musician! You have learned the value of 'raising the bar' for yourself as a musician and as a person. You are to be congratulated! *Remember; 'Success lies not in the destination, but in what we learn through the journey'*