

Composer's Note:

This book of etudes was written with the desire of providing a useful practice tool for aspiring orchestral tubists. Like an athlete training for game day, each etude is designed to provide a thorough musical workout with elements specific to each excerpt. This flexible approach to working with these various elements (stylistic markings, articulations, dynamics, specific intervals, etc.) is intended to help round out the performer's mastery of each excerpt.

Some of the etudes sound noticeably like the excerpts, while others are a bit harder to find the similarities, melodically speaking. In planning each etude, we first wanted to dissect the excerpt and find out 1) what's its focus? 2) where are the tricky spots? With each excerpt stripped down to its components, new material was written to create a unique etude.

It's recommended to practice these etudes as 'serious' solos rather than 'just' exercises. The more attention to detail and nuance, precision and musicality, the better the results when applied to the excerpt.

Best of luck on all future auditions!

~ Ben McMillan

Editor's Note:

The idea for this book came after a discussion with Ben Mcmillan about how I felt my excerpts were getting old and stale after the same preparation for months on end. They began to sound more like technical exercises than music. After brainstorming, we realized there was a need for such a resource for the auditioning tubist, so I compiled a list of popular contrabass tuba excerpts from the standard orchestral repertoire, which lead to the etude book you have here.

A lot of consideration went into the creation of these etudes, trying to capture the fundamental essence of what each excerpt required from the performer and ways to incorporate those ideas into etudes that would push the performer beyond what is asked in the excerpts themselves. This book is a fun, fresh approach intended to supplement any performer's study of the orchestral repertoire, while pushing musicality as the primary focus of your audition process. By mindfully practicing each etude with close attention to detail, you will find that your excerpts begin to have more meaning and tell a better musical story.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Ben for taking on this project with me. It has been truly remarkable how he was able to capture the essence of the excerpts I provided him, while also deciphering the thoughts and comments I tried to provide as well. Another special thank you to Timothy Northcut for his support and encouragement throughout the process. Many of the ideas that have helped me in my audition preparations I have learned from him, and in turn, heavily influenced these etudes.

I hope you enjoy these etudes in your studies and preparation. Happy practicing!

~ Preston Light

1. The Fairy Tale King:

As Gene Pokorny mentions in his excerpt CD, Bruckner tuba parts are full of “licks,” and audition committees like to include many of these licks on their lists. This etude is based on a few excerpts from the first movement of his seventh symphony. Bruckner is often very demanding in his tuba parts, requiring a broad range on the instrument, used both lyrically and heavily articulated, usually under various combinations of accents. To get the most from each etude, the performer needs (among other things) a clear concept of each articulation so that they are clearly distinguishable. Practice by defining an ideal concept of each articulation, then put it into practice while performing this etude.

This etude is in two sections, covering both legato and articulated passages from the first movement of the seventh symphony. The opening is an expansion of some of the more soloistic legato lines found early in the movement, and thinking of them like a solo will help elevate this etude. Try singing through the melodies of the first half to find natural melodic contours and phrasing beyond the markings.

In contrast, the second half features heavily accented, articulated passages or what Bruckner symphonies are perhaps best known for. When performing Bruckner, shape and weight are where most of the focus should be paid while articulating, remembering that accents affect more than just the note’s length.

1. The Fairy Tale King

Espressivo ♩ = 96

The musical score consists of four staves of music in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first staff begins with the tempo marking 'Espressivo' and a quarter note equal to 96. It features a melodic line with dynamics ranging from *mf legato* to *pp*. The second staff continues the melody with dynamics from *mp* to *pp*. The third staff includes a *rit.* (ritardando) section followed by *a tempo*, with dynamics from *ff* to *pp*. The fourth staff concludes the piece with a *mf* dynamic and a *p* dynamic.

15. That One:

Wagner’s “Ride of the Valkyries” from Act III of *Die Walküre* is one of the most well-known orchestral pieces ever. It is no surprise to find it as a staple on orchestral audition lists. This rhythmic, driving excerpt allows the performer to showcase an agile low register at the fortissimo dynamic. While the rhythm is important, remembering that the excerpt is more than just a technical study is what can make or break the auditionee.

The etude is an extended look into the excerpt both in rhythm and low register playing. The “Ride” rhythm is used extensively throughout, with different variations included to keep the performer attentive. While there are many moments at louder dynamics, remember that clarity should be at the forefront. Attention should also be given to the “sonorously” marking at the beginning, so that the entire etude should be broad and big sounding without straying into metallic and blatty. In the excerpt, each downbeat is accented. In the etude, they are used to keep the music driving and pulsing forward.

Unlike the excerpt, the etude includes some moments of slurred lines, challenging the performer to seamlessly alternate between meticulous and flowing styles, without losing time or energy.

15. That One

Driving $\text{♩} = c. 96$

ff sonorously

mf

p