

## TMEA All-State Etudes, 2014-15

**Etude 1:** Is Number 20, found on Page 22  
 The Tempo Marking is listed “Tempo di marcia”  
 The Quarter Note is marked in the Performance Guide as quarter note = 82-94  
 The Key is B flat minor  
 Errata: None

Measure No.	
General Comments	Although the tempo is marked “tempo di marcia”, or, “march tempo”, there is considerable latitude with regard to the tempo that a march can take. In general, American marches, for example, have a tempo marking of quarter note = 120, and they tend to be faster than British or European marches. Since this march is in a minor key, one could opt for a slightly slower tempo. The Performance Guide has a suggested tempo of quarter note = 82-94, and I think that is entirely reasonable. Although written in a minor key, the march should not sound “dead”. In fact, the style marking, “animato”, means “animated”, or, literally, “with breath” or “with life”. This can be somewhat accomplished by putting a slight separation between the notes, except in the quasi-lyrical passages in measures 27-32 and 34-40, when the notes should be of normal value. “Animato” can also be accomplished by looking for occasions to crescendo and decrescendo with the line, as well as by watching for opportunities to speed up or slow down the tempo on runs slightly. Remember, life has an ebb and flow, and a piece marked “animato” should reflect this.
	Here are some specific comments that may help with your preparation of this piece:
1	Practice triple tonguing! The syllables are “ta-ta-ka” or “ka-ta-ka”. So, the first measure is “ta---- ta-ta-ka-ta”, and so forth.
5	Triple tonguing on the low F involves the same syllabification, but the mouth cavity must be slightly more open by dropping the jaw. However, if the jaw is dropped too much, it becomes difficult to move the mouth fast enough to triple tongue. Experiment a bit to find a good balance.
8	Make sure that the contrast between the f and mf are evident!
9	Be careful that the dotted eighths and sixteenths in general are not played like quarter note/eighth note triplets. Set a metronome on sixteenth notes to get a feel for the length of each note. Given the animated but minor nature of the piece, it would not be inappropriate to play the eighth note slightly longer and the sixteenth note slightly shorter than in metronomically accurate. This will help give the impression of moving the piece along.
10	The fifth position B-flat is a good idea, as in general are the valved third position low B-flats, as marked in the music.
15-16	It is probably easiest to play the D-flat in double valve second on the way to and from the pedal B-flat. If this is the case, the F should be played in valved first (make sure that it is in tune!), or in double-valve second.

18	The B-flat can be played in either first or fifth position. It is the same amount of work sooner or later to go from the D-flat to the B-flat or the B-flat to the F. Another strategy is to play the B-flat in fifth, the F in sixth, and the D-flat in measure 19 in flat fifth position. That way, every note in measure 19 can be played in fifth position except for one! Look for opportunities to use alternate positions or valve combinations!!
21	The valved B-flat is a great idea!
23	The D-flat should be played in double-valve second position.
25	Here the strategy could be to play the D-flat in double-valve second and the F in single trigger first or G-flat trigger second as an alternative to what is suggested.
32	A crescendo into measure 33 would be highly effective.
33	The B-flat could be played in valved third as well, facilitating movement to the C in valved first.
34	The B-flat, played in fifth position, if played in tune, is another good idea!
40	The contrast between ff and mf should be greater than that heard in measure 8.
50	The upper B-flat can be played in first, third (trigger), or fifth position, according to your flexibility and intonation.
52	The B-flat should be played in trigger third.
56	The low D-flat should be played in double trigger second.
58	Use a good, full breath on the pedal B-flat, but don't over accent it! To play the pedal B flat in the last bar, drop your jaw and think "Awh". Also practice buzzing the note without the mouthpiece to get your lips used to the wide vibration necessary. It doesn't take a significantly greater volume of air to get this note to sound. The air should move slowly through the horn. The key is to use enough air to get the note to initially sound. Again, the more flexible your lip, the easier it will be to get the initial buzz that is so critical in making pedal tones sound. Many people can play loud pedal tones, and many young bass trombonists are guilty of trying to show off how low they can play. It takes someone who has diligently practiced the bass trombone to play beautiful pedal tones throughout the range of dynamics.
Final Comment	This etude is very rich in its dynamics and differing styles throughout. Try to think about what would convey a sense of marching in a minor key throughout the piece, and how you would express it. Music is about expressing emotion as well as playing the notes. There are many fine players who can play notes, but it is the masterful players who can make us feel something while they are playing. Listen to recordings of some of the masters of the bass trombone (Charles Vernon, James Markey, Douglas Yeo, Ben van Dijk, and Denson Paul Pollard are good examples) to get a sense of the variety of sounds that are possible. The more you listen to great bass trombonists, the more you will get a sense of the kinds of sound you can make. Then work to make your own unique, thrilling sound on the horn.