

Dear Students,

I love playing the oboe! Why? Because I think that it can make the most beautiful sounds on earth. However, the most challenging part of playing the oboe is getting past the technical and reed difficulties to get to artistry. In the end, artistry should always be our goal. Artistry means communicating one's musical ideas with thoughtfulness and an open heart. The comments below are my efforts to provide insights on how to get to artistry more purposefully, quickly, and intentionally.

Junior Oboe: Audition Solo 1C, Moderato

For me, this solo is all about sostenuto. In music, sostenuto is a term from the Italian that means "sustained." Throughout this solo, the performer should play with a perfectly intact musical line that seems to never end! Next, as the performer works toward playing perfectly sostenuto, she should ensure that high notes sound "up" and "ringing" and that low notes sound "deep" and "rich." Finally, the key of Bb is warm and rich but can be challenging to play in due to the disparate pitch tendencies of the Bb Major triad (Bb- stable/D-sharp/F-varied), so make sure to always play this melody along with a Bb drone. Some additional thoughts.

- Consider "how" your mp dynamic should sound in the first measure. This will allow you to effectively differentiate between louder and softer dynamics as the solo evolves.
- This solo is marked quarter= 92, so don't play too slow.
- At m. 5, try to play a three-bar phrase that ends on the Bb in m. 8
- The A natural in m. 8 on beat four requires some thought:
 - a. It is marked as the last part of a diminuendo; however, the note after it is marked "p." Therefore, what volume should this note be?*
 - b. I'd recommend leaving room to reach the downbeat of m. 9 "at" the piano volume.*
 - c. Therefore, you might think of the A natural in m. 8 as "p+."*

- At m. 13, play a healthy “f” dynamic, with staccatos here interpreted more as “separated” than short.
- The triplets, which begin in m. 17, should sound full, expressive, and fluid.
- In the A ending at m. 21, make sure to return to the opening “mp” dynamic. Finally, ensure that the final downward slur from F to A is silky smooth, resolving to the final Bb of the solo.

Clinic Oboe: Audition Solo 2C, Allegro

Simply put, this solo should sound joyous and exuberant. Throughout this solo, I would encourage very short staccato notes with clipped eighth-note arrivals. For example, the end of m. 1 into m. 2, m. 5 beat one into two, and so on. The middle section of this solo, beginning at m. 13, should sound dramatic and dark. I would encourage the performer to bring out the syncopations in the music. Lastly, make sure to ensure that you are using a tuner as you work with this solo. Playing in the key of C, I have found to be very difficult over the years, with C, E, G, and B requiring much attention to ensure excellent intonation. Next, in the closing sections (m. 33/43), keep all the running sixteenth note passages orderly and in time. Finally, ensure you delight the listener by playing the last measures of each ending as quiet, charming, and playful as possible.

Senior Oboe: Audition Solo 3C, Allegro agitato

I love this solo! I find it to be high-energy, playful, and jazzy. While the solo is marked quite fast for the 4/4-meter material, it should sound “non-rushed” for the 7/8-meter music. Naturally, we shall take a moment to discuss the elephant in the room here-rhythm! I would start by playing the solo in eighth notes. Meaning, in 8/8 and 7/8- this keeps the eighth note constant. After developing comfort, I would keep the metronome on eighth notes to ensure the 7/8 bars are

perfectly in place. Throughout this solo, make sure that the accents are in the “right places” where the composer actually wrote them instead of simply placing them where one might expect them to be.

The moderato cantabile contains a beautiful melody that should sound broad, sprawling, and elegant. However, this must be achieved at the “p” dynamic. In m. 17, I prefer to play the grace note on the beat. Next, m. 21-23, simply put, are trouble! I would encourage practicing these measures in four and gradually increasing their speed until every note is perfectly in place and heard. In m. 27, try to make the High E sound rich. Often, young oboists shy away from the instrument’s high register, but in this case, I’d encourage you to go for it!

Finally, in this solo’s closing section, have fun; you’ve already made it through the most challenging part. In both closing sections (A and B), hold the final line (A-m.26 and B-m.44) back from pushing ahead. In this case, rushing takes away from the solo’s jazzy and “cool” style.

In closing, remember that life should be more about the journey and less about the destination. So, in that spirit, I would encourage you to enjoy the “process” of learning these excerpts: the trying and trying again, the happy accidents of discovery, and the satisfaction of a phrase played just right! This means that you have fully committed to the process, no matter the outcome of your audition. When all is said and done, I believe doing one’s best is the secret to having a genuinely great artistic and personal life.

Happy Music Making,
Professor Anderson

