

BUILDING BETTER BANDS

Missouri Bandmasters Association



Tackling Audition Etudes by Brad Hudson-MBA President

District and State Band Auditions are approaching quickly. To be successful, it is important for our students to be coached by their band director or a private instructor as they work through the audition process.

The first time students open their audition packet, they often become overwhelmed. Students see all the major and melodic minor scales written in 16th notes, their full range chromatic scale, and then they see all of the etudes!

Students should approach the etudes in a systematic manner, considering the following for each etude:

- **Key Signature:** Identify the key and play the scale that is associated with the etude. This will help students understand what the purpose of each etude is. For example, students practice the exercise in thirds, but they do not realize it is going up and down a major scale. Playing the scales will also help students identify scalar patterns in the longer etudes.
- **Terminology is important.** Many students play a beautiful piece too fast because they see 16th notes, but the tempo may say adagio.
- **Play with a metronome.**
- **Speed kills!** Slow all exercises down to get the patterns under their fingers and then **SLOWLY** speed it up.
- **Articulations:** students will ignore articulations and then try to put them in once they have the piece more prepared. Play with the correct articulations from the beginning.

There are great recordings of the All-State Band Audition material from the [University of Missouri Music Department](#). I do not share these recordings with the students until after they are playing the pieces pretty well. If they hear the recordings too early they often become overwhelmed.

Our bands become better when our students build their individual skills. Encourage them to audition and help them through the process.

IMPORTANT DATES

NOVEMBER 7-21, 2023
ALL STATE BAND
REGISTRATION

DECEMBER 2, 2023
STATE BAND AUDITIONS

JANUARY 24-27, 2024
MMEA

JUNE 16-19, 2024
MBA SUMMER
CONVENTION

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Sponsor Feature: TEX Method Books

Our summer convention would not be possible without the support of our sponsors. This year our Gold Sponsor was Dennis Meyer Music, TEX Method Books. Dennis has worked as a composer and arranger throughout his musical career, including during his 35-year career teaching music at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Dennis has been a long-time supporter of the Missouri Bandmasters Association and has been an exhibitor at the MBA Summer Convention. Information about the TEX Method Books can be found at <https://tex4band.com/>.

Thank you Dennis for being a gold sponsor for MBA.

Scale Preparation by Paul Fliege- MBA Board Member

Scale preparation is imperative to a successful All-State Band Audition. Here are some tips to share with your students.

The scales are the first thing the judges will hear when you enter the room. An auditionee who performs scales accurately and musically with exemplary tone and intonation will let the judges know right away that they have a potential all stater in the room!

When preparing, make sure that you check the scale sheets carefully - be sure to recognize the ranges on each scale and use the "plateau" rhythm on the major and melodic minor scales. Your priority when practicing needs to be focused on tone quality and intonation throughout the range of each scale, accuracy, smoothness, and evenness. Once that is established, THEN gradually work in tempo. No judge in the history of all state band auditions has ever used a stopwatch to determine who the best player is, but also do what you can to make sure it is not too sluggish.

Make scale flashcards - if you nail it, put it in the good pile and if you don't, put it in the bad pile. Try not to go into the audition thinking "I hope they don't ask a# melodic minor" - that will add to your anxiety and self doubt. This may be a little overwhelming for younger students auditioning, but just give it your best effort - the work you put into scale preparation this year will "stick" and make it easier for your auditions in future years!

Best of luck to everyone auditioning!

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