

Schuman, William Sym. #3

Toccata movement D Leggiero half note = 108-112

This solo has become famous among bass clarinet players despite the limited appearances it has on the concert stage. Tradition has placed it on a great many audition lists. There's a lot to think about in this solo. It's fast and goes all over the instrument. Here are the things to look for in preparing this solo that begins the Toccata after a brief snare drum introduction. As a side note, the old Philadelphia orchestra recording, very old, goes faster than the listed tempo marking and Leon Lester nails it perfectly.

#1 – Rhythm: You must make a difference between the dotted 8<sup>th</sup> note-16<sup>th</sup> note figure and the triplets. As well as the grace notes and the 16<sup>th</sup> notes. In the case of the grace notes, they should be very late and short. The danger is making everything sound the same.

#2 – Technique: This solo moves and has some difficult spots. Measure # 180, is particularly awkward. I suggest the first two side keys for the first F# and the regular fingering for the next one. This will help to stabilize this measure. In measure #174 it is a big help if you have a left-hand Ab. In measure #166 I prefer the standard fingerings for high F, E, and D, as they have a much richer sound than the alternatives but many players prefer the others and do it very clean and full sounding. Try them both ways and choose the way that you can sound the best.

#3 – Tone Quality: Because this solo goes through all the registers, you have to be very aware of your tone quality. Try not to force the high F or it will either pop or squawk. It needs to sound just as full as the register below. Of course, you have to watch those throat tones as well. Playing everything perfectly is not very impressive if your tone gets distorted. Getting a solid and consistent tone and intonation through all the register is what sets a lot of players apart. There are not many dynamics indicated, so follow the line and observe what is written. This solo needs to be practiced in four first to assure that it is played evenly and clean. It needs to sound easy yet aggressive. Once you have a command of the notes and rhythm, phrase it in two and work up the tempo.