

A guide to Purple Shade by Peter Meechan

Purple Shade is a really great choice for your grade 3 exam and is a very mellow, sustained piece of music. To get yourself in the style of mellow playing with lots of sustained phrases, have a look on YouTube searching brass slow melody pieces or listening to pieces such as Irish tune from county Derry.

First things first, let's do a couple of exercises to get used to the few main bits in the tune!

Exercise 1 – Slurring

Here really listen that the note you slur to is the same length and not shortened.



Exercise 2 – Dynamics

There are a lot of dynamics in this pieces there's two exercises here; one for crescendos and the other for sudden changes in the dynamics.

For this first one, push the air out gradually faster to do a smooth crescendo.

Trumpet in B \flat

Tpt. ³

For the second exercise you will have to change the speed of your air very suddenly; – a very difficult skill to master. Remember for quiet dynamics to push the air out slowly.

Trumpet in B \flat

The last exercise is based on the rhythms. The best ways to practice rhythms is to walk around your room at a steady rate and say different words for different beats (fit all the syllables of the word in one step). At first experiment with;

Crotchets – tea

Quavers – coffee

Minims – soup

Semiquavers – just use the word semiquaver

Then combine them such as;

Tea, Tea, coffee, Tea

Or Tea, Semiquaver , Tea, Coffee

After this try and pick out some of the rhythms from purple shade and see if you can walk them out and saying the words. Below I have written out two difficult rhythms from bars 21 and 23 to get you going;

Percussion 
cof fee coffe se mi quaver *se mi quaver coffee coffee*

Approach to practice

Make sure you start off slowly and simply. Break it down and learn different elements one by one. At first focus on the rhythms of the music, and then add in the pitches and make sure you are using the right valves and slide positions! After this maybe add the articulation (accents and slurs), then the dynamics building it up. After this increase the tempo (speed of the music) little by little making sure you still have all the elements in place.

Have fun playing this piece and enjoy playing your brass instrument!