

# **Honegger's Danse de la Chèvre: Practice Guide**



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### **Good warm-ups for this piece:**

Tongue the rhythm of m 4-26 on one note, keeping the air speed constant.

Chromatic scale exercises

"Fingers ahead" and varied rhythm patterns to create security on all the tricky passagework.

### **Opening section ( m 1-13)**

In the passages with slow moving rhythms (m 1-5, 8-10, 62-66) change fingers in a smooth, gentle way to avoid bumps or accents and be sure to vibrate on all notes, avoiding lining up the vibrato with the note starts.

Differentiate between duplets and triplets, keeping the triplets flowing and unaccented.

Account for ties (m 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, and 12). You might practice tonguing the ties, then removing them, avoiding an accent on the tie.

A general technical consideration in this piece is the use of B-flat fingerings. Carefully consider which B-flat fingering you wish to use in each place (thumb B-flat, lever key, or 1 and 1) and mark indications in your music (it helps to have these written in for an audition--in case you lose your concentration. Experiment with using the lever key m 11-13. I actually decided to use the thumb B-flat in this passage until the last B-flat in m 13.

### **Danse**

The obvious issues in m 14-34 and m 49-53 are the rhythm and articulation. This also applies to m 7 and m 60.

Double check your rhythm by inserting a note in the sixteenth rests and subdividing the quarter note into 2 eighth notes. Keep the rhythm steady in m 20-24. Add eighth notes in the eighth rests to double check yourself, and even subdivide all the rhythms into constant tongued sixteenths. The trill in m 23 and the first note of m 26 are often rushed.

Keep your tongue wide and air speed steady at the end of each staccato note, and listen carefully to your tone at the end of each note.

### **Plus lent**

In the plus lent sections (m 35-38 and m 54-57) keep your vibrato going through the repeated tonguings. Crescendo to the grace notes. Listen to be sure pitch is the same on all the repeated notes.

### **Vif (m 40-48)**

Carefully plan your breaths to not interrupt the rhythm and momentum of this section. Fingers ahead and varied rhythm patterns are especially helpful in m 47. Work for full, clear tone on each note of this measure. Demonstrating good tone through the register changes is important here. Wide tongue and relaxed upper lip help accomplish this. During your practice of this section, stop frequently and buzz a note to keep the upper lip loose. Also check to see that your head is balanced and mentalis muscle is activated (this helps focus the low notes when you arrive there.

The last note of the piece-- m 66 --is an overtone of the fingered low "C"

Rather than specifically focusing on the audition and winning, see how much progress you can make while practicing. Any contest we enter is really only worth the benefits of the work we do while preparing for it. Sometimes we win, sometimes we don't, but feeling good about our own efforts and progress, and playing beautifully--at least part of the time--is what is important!