

The Skills of Flute Playing ~ Classic Techniques for Learning & Modern Innovative Methods

Jennifer Cluff May 2008 www.jennifercluff.com

Flute Skill	Level of Skill	Classic Method	Innovative Methods
Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - middle register centered and refined in tone quality - low register rich, full and colourful - high register pure, ringing, effortless (no strain) - evenness of quality between three octaves - legato large interval leaping is effortless and smooth - dynamic range ever expanding: ppp<pp<mp<mf<ff<fff - subtle variations in tone colours as interpretive skill - remarkable variations in tone colours and qualities - ability to blend with or project above other instruments depending on demands of piece performed. - ability to play in tune (see *tuning* below) - regardless of type of composition or orchestration 	<p><i>Books used in flute lessons to improve tone during daily practise:</i></p> <p>Marcel Moyse ~ <u>De La Sonorite</u></p> <p>Marcel Moyse ~ <u>Tone Development Through Interpretation</u></p> <p>Etudes and Studies by various composers</p> <p>Flute Repertoire by various composers</p>	<p>Roger Mather ~ <u>The Art of Playing the Flute</u>: Repositioning chin plate to suit embouchure, lips and facial ergonomics. Creating resonance & tone colours.</p> <p>Robert Dick ~ <u>Tone Development Through Extended Technique</u>: whistle tones, harmonics, singing-while-playing etc.</p> <p>Werner Richter ~ <u>Conditioning Training for Flute Embouchure</u></p> <p>Fiona Wilkinson ~ <u>The Physical Flute</u>: Eliminating over-gesticulation of embouchure; releasing tension.</p>
Finger Dexterity	<p>Scales, Arpeggios, Chords - Memorized, played evenly and expressively, with all articulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major, Minor, Chromatic Scales memorized - Major, Minor Arpeggios memorized - Major & Minor scales in thirds memorized - Tempo increase in all above scales & arpeggios while maintaining complete evenness of fingerings - Articulation patterns for all above scales/arps - Diminished, Dominant chords memorized - Whole Tone Scales, Exotic scales. - Scales in 4ths, 5ths, 6ths, 7ths, octaves done for agility of embouchure and fingers - Tempo increases in all the above while maintaining finger evenness - Extended scales (from C1 to C4 or above). - Dynamic ranges and musical expression continually added to all the above. - Scales/arps with complex articulation patterns & rhythms 	<p><i>Books used in flute lessons to improve fingers during daily practise:</i></p> <p>Taffanel & Gaubert ~ <u>17 Daily Exercises from Method Complete</u></p> <p>Marcel Moyse ~ <u>Exercises Journaliers [Daily Exercises]</u></p> <p>Thomas Filas ~ <u>High Register Studies</u></p> <p>Scale Method books by various flutists Baker, Barrere, Stalman, Reichert, Maquerre, Wye, etc.</p> <p>Technique development books and etudes by various composers</p>	<p>Walfrid Kujala ~ <u>The Flutist's Vade Mecum</u> (scales & arpeggios using stabilizing fingers, assorted patterns)</p> <p>James Galway ~ "Ironing out your scales" from video and mp3s online at www.thegalwaynetwork.com</p> <p>Paula Robison ~ <u>Warmup Book</u> (includes trill patterns, chromatics, singers warm-ups, scales etc.)</p> <p>Please suggest other high level and innovative methods and titles to jen@jennifercluff.com and they will be added here. Thank you.</p>
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Tuning	<p>Playing in tune</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at mezzo forte & with a pure, centred tone quality, playing in tune with The Tuning CD in all three octaves for scales, tone, etudes, and pieces. - when unaccompanied. Pitching your flute's intervals so it is in tune with itself. - with other flutists (your teacher in duets) - with other instruments. With piano. - at mf and with good tone, playing in tune during wide leap intervals and arpeggios from lowB to B3 - using all dynamics (pp to ff) and a centred tone quality, playing in tune with The Tuning CD in three octaves and for all etudes and pieces. - playing in tune with piano and flute in recital - playing in tune using all dynamics and <u>no vibrato</u>. - using all dynamics and various <u>tone colours</u>, playing in tune in recital and with chamber music groups - playing in tune within an orchestra and chamber group combinations (mixed winds, mixed strings, brass etc.) - playing in tune in extreme orchestration for orchestral performances, live chamber music. 	<p>Marcel Moyse ~ De La Sonorite (exercises for tuning during crescendo/diminuendo)</p> <p>There are few older flute instructions about playing the flute in tune. There are brief chapters in flute books by Trevor Wye, Richard Davies and Vernon Hill. Most methods simply tell you to use your ears.</p> <p>This can be difficult for untrained or less-gifted ears, or students who do not have access to fine ensembles.</p>	<p>Audio: The Tuning CD</p> <p>Books: Embouchure stabilization suggestions that work to reduce over-gesticulated embouchure & incorrect air speeds: Fiona Wilkinson ~ The Physical Flute for vowel dynamics and tapers, soft high register.</p> <p>Also: Keith Underwood Videos online on spit-buzzing & tongue placement. These are similar to Wilkinson's vowel dynamics.</p> <p>Robert Dick - chapters on singing/playing and throat tuning in Tone Development Through Extended Technique.</p> <p>Robert Aitken ~ The Physical Flute Dissertation by Robert Billington: Aitken's suggestions flatten pitch in top register. Walfrid Kujala ~ "Jawboning parts 1-3"; (The Use of FULP & PLOT) article from The Instrumentalist magazine. This article explains how to stabilize your embouchure for tuning the three octaves of the flute at all dynamics.</p>
Posture & Ergonomics	<p>Balancing the flute and posture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keyboard of flute remains stable during fingering changes at all tempi - mouthpiece remains stable during embouchure changes - Breath intake and air use is unobtrusive and reliable. - flutist can practise or perform without fatigue as posture is re-balanced constantly by instinct 	<p>Most classic method books give a scant account of how to accommodate the flute posture to a variety of body types. It has been normal to assume that through constant practise of tone, scales, arpeggios, etudes etc. that the posture will gradually accommodate itself.</p>	<p>Products: The Thumbport to stabilize the flute's right hand thumb. Also: Key Extensions ; Comfort grips to widen flute's body; ergonomic modifications.</p> <p>Books: Fiona Wilkinson ~ The Physical Flute Several very good exercises for releasing tension while playing and using best muscle groups.</p> <p>Soldan & Mellersh ~ The Illustrated Flute Player Drawings showing dos and don'ts.</p> <p>Lea Pearson ~ Body Mapping for Flutists Can follow up with live courses.</p> <p>Walfrid Kujala, Thomas Nyfenger, Roger Mather essays in their flute books concerning modified Rockstro.</p>
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Articulation	<p>Clean, clear, crisp, rapid tonguing. Also: Note endings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the precise use of "tu" or "du" - co-ordination of fingers and tongue at tempi - breath pulse (hal) on staccato notes - the precise use of "ku or gu" for double tonguing - multiple tonguing combinations - breath pulse use in accented tonguing - endurance of articulation during etudes - effortless multiple articulations - stylistic use of note lengths and attacks - developing a variety of note endings 	<p>Note: very few traditional methods for flute explain "how to improve articulation".</p> <p>Taffanel & Gaubert ~ 17 Daily Exercises from Method Complete</p> <p>Marcel Moyse ~ Various (24 Melodies etc.)</p> <p>Scale Method books by various flutists Quantz, Baker, Filas, Stallman, Reichert, Maquerre, Wye, etc.</p> <p>Technique development books and etudes by various composers.</p>	<p>Books/Articles: Sheryl Cohen ~ Bel Canto & The Rampal School this book explores breath supported clarity in articulation Vernon Hill ~ The Flute Player's Book with CD clear explanations of notes starts and finishes. Keith Underwood videos online information about tongue placement which may help some flutists with mouth position Online tonguing articles including Tom Kennedy's double tonguing Maquerre article from Flutetalk. These examine tonguing exercises and methods.</p> <p>Books that can help with style & phrasing:</p> <p>John Krell ~ Kincaidiana Angelita Floyd ~ The Gilbert Legacy Peter Lukas Graf ~ Interpretation: How to Shape a Melodic Line Fiona Wilkinson ~ The Physical Flute</p>
Interpretation	<p>Phrasing & style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - phrasing and style to suit compositional period - phrasing and style to suit composer's intentions - vibrato at various speeds and amplitudes - accents, detache, breath emphasis for style - sightreading in compositional style at tempo - performing in style of orchestra or chamber group - performing using non-vibrato - performing as a soloist with original style and interpretation. 	<p>Note: very few traditional methods for flute explain how to learn phrasing and style. It is expected to be absorbed through music making.</p> <p>Marcel Moyse ~ De La Sonorite small chapter on style and phrasing</p> <p>Marcel Moyse ~ Tone Development Through Interpretation</p>	<p>Innovative books or methods that can help with practising: Timothy Galloway ~ The Inner Game of Tennis ~ Inner Game of Music Burton Kaplan ~ Practising for Artistic Success Practise books recommended online.</p>
How to Practise	<p>Practising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - daily without fatigue or injury - to acquire new skills and solidify basic skills - without boredom - without ingraining bad habits - to reach current high standards 	<p>Note: Very few traditional methods for flute explain how to practise. It is expected that you will complete charts of exercises. Additionally, your private teacher will help suit the practise demands to the individual student.</p>	<p>As higher quality instruction through written word, audio, video and method books becomes more available, more flute students are able to seek out useful explanations of a variety of flute playing techniques. I recommend the above reading highly combined with quality lessons and focused practise.</p>
Conclusion	<p>Levels of flute technique must be developed concurrently in several areas at once. Posture-Tone-Fingers-Breathing-Interpretation-Articulation, along with increasingly focused practise methods. Students are urged to join ensembles, perform often, and to take high quality private lessons to gain perspective on areas to improve. Only a handful will reach world class standards through diligent work.</p>	<p>Traditional methods that stand the test of time (Moyse, Taffanel & Gaubert for example) require competent private lessons with personalized instruction in order to benefit the student.</p>	<p>As higher quality instruction through written word, audio, video and method books becomes more available, more flute students are able to seek out useful explanations of a variety of flute playing techniques. I recommend the above reading highly combined with quality lessons and focused practise.</p>