EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING TONE IN YOUR FLUTE SECTION

Dr. Kathleen Melago
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Kathy Melago is Assistant Professor of Music at Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, where she supervises music student teachers and teaches music education and introduction to music courses. She received her Bachelor of Science in Music Education degree from Slippery Rock University, her Master of Music degree in flute performance from the University of Northern Iowa, and her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from The Ohio State University. Kathy has taught music in Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Ohio, both in schools and privately.

Kathy serves as the faculty advisor for the Slippery Rock University Chapter of the Pennsylvania Collegiate Music Educators Association. She is the District Director for the Eastern Great Lakes 2 District of Mu Phi Epsilon International Music Fraternity. She serves on numerous committees at Slippery Rock University, including the planning committee for the National Student Teaching and Supervision Conference, the College of Education Chairpersons Council, the College of Education Teacher Education Chairs Council, and the Teacher Education Advisory Council. She also teaches in the distance-learning program for the Community College of Allegheny County.

While earning her doctorate at Ohio State, Kathy worked as the graduate assistant for The Ohio State University P-12 Project, a university-wide initiative created to assist in improving Ohio’s schools with a special focus on the education of Ohio’s underserved children and youth through the development of strong partnerships and the fostering of effective research and practice in P-12 education. Other past appointments include teaching flute and establishing and directing the flute choir at Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa, and serving as a graduate teaching assistant at the University of Northern Iowa, teaching the Flute Techniques class for music education majors and applied flute lessons.

Kathy enjoys research and writing, and has recently been published in Flute Talk, The Instrumentalist, and OMEA Triad (Ohio). She has been a frequent contributor to The Principal’s Office, a web resource that reaches over 5,000 subscribers throughout the state of Ohio each month and that is supported by The Ohio State University. She was the first-place winner in the Arts Division of the 23rd Annual Ohio State University Hayes Graduate Research Forum in 2009. In addition to today’s presentation, Kathy has presented for the Midwest Clinic International Band and Orchestra Conference, the Music Educators National Conference Eastern Division conference, Ohio Music Educators Association Conferences, Outreach Scholarship Conferences, Pennsylvania Music Educators Association events, and at National Flute Association Annual Conventions.

As a flutist, Kathy has performed at National Flute Association conventions, the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association conference, the Iowa Bandmasters Association conference, and the Ohio Music Educators Association conference. She was the flute soloist with The Ohio State University Collegiate Winds, performing Cecile Chaminade’s Concertino, Opus 107, in May 2010. Additionally, Kathy has performed with the Central Ohio Symphony Orchestra, Dubuque Chamber Winds, National Flute Association Professional Flute Choir, National Intercollegiate Band, Butler Symphony Orchestra, and numerous college ensembles at Slippery Rock University, the University of Northern Iowa, and The Ohio State University. Her principal flute teachers include Katherine Borst Jones, Angeleita Floyd, Stacey Steele, and Vanessa Candreva.
What does good tone sound like to you?

Setting the Stage for Success

A Checklist of Basics

Embouchures: http://www.larrykrantz.com/embpic.htm

Tone Development - Low Register

Tone Development - Into the Higher Registers

Flexibility

Intervals

Lyrical Passages

Troubleshooting

Taking Tone to the Next Level
Objectives:

- Rich, focused sound (not airy)
- Smooth connection between notes
- Even tone quality from the beautiful first note to the very lowest note on the flute
ACCENTED LOW-REGISTER EXERCISE

Objectives:

- Rich, focused sound (not airy)
- Breath attacks, then tongued
- Even tone quality
- Fortissimo dynamic in the low register
- No cracked notes!
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Octave Exercise 1

Objectives:
· “Drag” wonderful low register tone into upper register
· Even tone quality
· Resonant, focused sound – not airy
· Endurance
· Correct fingerings
· Keep air moving between notes/octaves
· Intonation – keep octaves in tune
· Minimal lip/jaw movement, if any
OBJECTIVE EXERCISE 2

Objectives:

- “Drag” wonderful low register tone into upper register
- Even tone quality
- Resonant, focused sound – not airy
- Endurance
- Correct fingerings
- Keep air moving between notes/octaves
- Intonation – keep octaves in tune
- Minimal lip/jaw movement, if any
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FLEXIBILITY EXERCISE

Objectives:

· Keep an open and even sound always

· Be sure intervals are in tune and that every time you return to C, it has the same quality

· Play at various tempos, working to increase speed without missing notes
**INTERVAL EXERCISE**

Objectives:
- Keep an open and even sound always
- Be sure intervals are in tune – check to be sure the third note in each measure is accurate with a tuner and/or with the rest of the section
- Work to improve tone, especially on the lowest notes.
ADDITIONAL TONE RESOURCES


This book is extremely important as a source for studies to develop the extended techniques needed to play Dick’s music, as well as many other avant-garde composers’ music. A wealth of information is available in this book, making it a “must” for all serious advanced flutists.


This book is a collection of melodies in which tone should be the focus. One or more variations are given after each melody. Very little text is included. A general focus or goal is given for many of the exercises. These goals would help to foster finesse and expression in playing. The melodies are not technically difficult, but the difficulty lies in the expressiveness with which they are played.


This book covers aspects of tone, including: timbre and homogeneity of tone in every register, suppleness of tone (especially in the low register), attacking and slurring notes, fullness of tone and management of tone in interpretation. In each section, the text is highlighted by musical exercises and examples. The difficulty level is fairly consistent throughout the book. The concepts are attainable by intermediate flutists, but they will continue to be valuable as the flutist becomes more advanced.


This book is a collection of tone exercises, excerpts from orchestral works, and arias. There are no written instructions or comments. These melodies are mostly not difficult. The difficulty lies in the expressiveness with which they are played. They are also meant to be transposed at sight.


Trevor begins with general tone exercises that cover each register, and then he moves to specific areas that require separate attention. These specific areas include: Gnomes (E natural and F sharp), Tone Color, Breath Control, Flexibility, and Pitch Control. He ends the book with excerpts from the standard flute repertoire where his concepts would enhance the performance. This book is written well and presented well. Trevor gives good descriptions of each concept and includes practical applications of these concepts.