

TEXAS FLUTE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SPRING 2014

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Letter from the President

Greetings! It has been a cold and icy Winter, but Spring is finally in the air! The hustle and bustle of Mother Nature is contagious, and the Texas Flute Society board is harnessing this energy to put together yet another fantastic Flute Festival.

Things started to heat up with our Spring Event, a recital with flutist and composer Laurel Zucker on February 8th at the Langdon Center in Granbury. Unfortunately, I was attending to my very unhappy daughter as she sprouted her third tooth and started her six month growth spurt at the same time, so I was unable to attend the recital. I have heard nothing but glowing reviews of the performance. I would like to give an enormous thank you to our incredible Vice-



President, Brittany DeLaVergne, for organizing this event and singlehandedly manning the fort!

For those of us that missed our chance to be inspired at the Spring Event, another opportunity is coming our way! The 37th Annual Texas Flute Festival will be held May 15-17, 2014 at the University of North Texas in Denton. Guest artists Jean Ferrandis, Lisa Garner Santa, John Thorne, and Brittney Balkcom are hard at work planning their recital programs and workshop presentations. Recordings have come in from across the country promising to make this year's Myrna Brown, Donna Marie Haire, and Masterclass competitions feats of spectacular flute virtuosity. And flutists throughout the Metroplex are spending countless hours practicing for their performances for clinicians at the Festival. Are you interested in seeing behind the scenes of the Festival? Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Mariana Gariazzo, at mgariazzo@tamu.edu to volunteer. Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks including helping out at the registration table, hospitality, setting up rooms, and taking care of our clinicians.

Whether you are attending the Festival to hear great performances, perform for a clinician, or help out, I look forward to seeing you there! Until then, may the promise of great inspiration and insight warm your heart and carry you through the remainder of Winter into Spring!

Best Wishes,
Lisa Phillips

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Spring Event: Laurel Zucker Recital

On February 8th, Laurel Zucker performed a beautiful recital at the Dora Lee Langdon Educational and Cultural Center in Granbury, TX to a standing-room only crowd. The program featured works by African-American composers in honor of Black History Month. The program opened with works by Julio Racine and Adolphus Hailistork followed by more treats by Joseph Bologne Chevalier de Saint-Georges and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson. With works from the 18th Century to current day and styles varying from Classical to folk and jazz, their pieces created a fantastic program by introducing the audience to new repertoire.

Laurel included two of her own compositions on the program. Her *Andante for flute choir* was masterfully performed by the Tarlton State University Flute Choir and *Simplicity for flute trio*, performed with Ronda Winter-Eldridge and Brittany DeLaVergne, added variety to the program. Flutists' favorite works by Georges Enesco and Louis Ganne were also performed. The recital concluded with a standing ovation by the attendees.

Following the recital the audience had the opportunity to view Peggy DeLaVergne's beautiful handmade African-American themed fabric art and chat with Laurel Zucker at an intimate reception complete with a wide array of sweets and snacks.

Photos



Quite the turnout!



Laurel Zucker, Ronda Winter-Eldridge, and Brittany DeLaVergne



Tarleton State University flute choir, Brittany DeLaVergne, Laurel Zucker, Ronda Winter-Eldridge

Fundamentals: Flute Pedagogy
By Lisa Phillips

The fundamentals of music and playing the flute provide a foundation upon which all musical success is built. Just like the foundation of a building, the keystones must be perfectly formed and strongly built. The engineering must be perfectly understood and executed. If any cracks or weaknesses exist in the foundation the building will crumble. These fundamental keystone concepts of flute playing include breathing, embouchure, ergonomics of the instruments, and the production of the first note.

A common misconception shared by most flute beginners is the amount of air involved in playing. When asked to produce the first sound, the average student immediately takes a gigantic breath raising their shoulders to their ears and puffing out their chests sucking in their stomachs to accommodate their top heavy lungs. They then hold this large breath and expel all of it quickly. If the student is lucky enough to produce a sound on the flute, it will most likely be airy and short. In order to be successful, the student must first learn to properly inhale and exhale.

When world-renowned flutist, Jean-Pierre Rampal, was asked for his secret to breathing, he replied "I just open my mouth. Do you have a breathing secret when you speak? No, you just open your mouth and breathe." Breathing is such a natural and automatic process that most people do not realize how they breathe. They do not know which muscles are involved or not involved. Some do not even know the proper position of the lungs. Breathing to play the flute is an extension of the natural breath. The students must first notice how they normally breathe before they can breathe properly for the flute.

Werner Seltmann and Günter Angerhöfer point out that "the mastering of a deliberate breathing technique is the foundation of playing." The inhalation is permitted by the enlargement of the chest area while the reduction of the chest area creates the exhalation. The diaphragm, located at the lower ridge of the rib cage, moves downwards during inhalation thus allowing the lungs to expand. However, this is an involuntary muscle, so it cannot be controlled. The outer intercostal muscles extend from the back of the ribs to the front allowing the back and chest to expand during the inhalation. Seltmann and Angerhöfer also say that "while inhalation requires the work of the breathing musculature, normal exhalation is to a certain extent a passive process." The exhalation is produced simply by allowing the muscles used during the inhalation to contract back to their starting position.

One is rarely asked to stop everything and simply pay attention to himself or herself. A student lying on the floor for a few moments in silence begins to notice things that normally pass them by – a clock ticking, the feel of the carpet, the sound of the breath. When asked to explore what the breath is doing – what is moving, what is not moving, what it feels like – the student begins to feel the three dimensional breath. The chest does not swell. The shoulders do not rise. The stomach rises gently followed by the chest. The back expands closer to the floor. The sides push out. Each rib slowly stretches away from its neighbor. This is the inhale.

When applied to the flute the inhale must be faster and deeper. This feeling most resembles the sensation of a "stealth" yawn. The stealth yawn occurs when the mouth does not open to allow the rush of air during the yawn thus creating a closed and more contained yawn. The throat and tongue relax to allow as much air as possible into the large oral chamber. The feeling of a full-fledged open mouth yawn is the sensation to be avoided. During this type of yawn the throat closes off and the chest expands to a

restricting and uncomfortable point. To understand the speed involved in breathing when playing the student should try to expel all of the air in their lungs until they feel as though they will implode. When the student finally inhales the lungs will expand quickly reaching desperately for all surrounding atoms of oxygen.

An exercise called the “L” breath helps the student harness the power of this inhale into a low breath. Have the student place their hand in front of their mouth so that the “L” formed by the thumb and forefinger is against their lips. If the inhale is proper a deep, resonant rush of air will result. If the inhale is shallow and tight the breath will sound high pitched.

Another way to help the student understand the inhale is to say the word “ha” and imagine that word hanging in the air before them. They then inhale it backwards swallowing the breath of “ah”. The student should feel a cold rush of air on the Adam’s apple.

Although the inhale prepares the sound, it is the exhale that actually makes the sound. The key to playing the flute is controlling and focusing the exhale. This feeling of control is best reproduced by blowing cold air on hot soup. If the student blows too hard the soup will splatter. If the air is focused a small ripple will appear in the soup. Another analogy is making a candle flame flicker but not extinguish or blowing on a feather to keep it up in the air. The abdominal support engages as though coughing or sneezing. The exhale to be avoided is the “hot” exhale. This exhale represents fogging up a window using the breath. The mouth widens and scatters the air slowly rather than focusing the airstream aimed at a specific point.

For some students it proves helpful to actually visualize the breath. This can be accomplished through the use of a breathing bag or a regular plastic bag. When the student exhales all of their air into the bag, they are shocked to see how much air they have. They are even more shocked at the feeling of opening up when they inhale back in the air that they just exhaled. To further develop control the student may practice inhaling for a certain amount of beats and exhaling for a certain amount of beats each time increasing the number of beats.

Now that the student can breathe they are ready to play. The first step to playing the flute is learning how to form an embouchure. The embouchure is a very natural position controlled by several intricate muscle groups. The muscle forming the “O” shape around the lips is called the obicularis oris. The lips may be pursed or narrowed through the use of this muscle. For the correct flute embouchure the obicularis oris must be round and taut. This is accomplished through many actions taken by the antagonist muscles controlling the obicularis oris. The quadrangular muscles should remain relaxed leaving the upper lip down rather than pulled tightly towards the nose. The zygomatic muscles running from the outer cheek down to the upper lip pulling the upper lip upwards and backwards when contracted proves crucial. The levator labii controlled by the medial and lateral components which cause upward movement of the upper lip should remain disengaged. The muscles of the lower lip consisting of the quadratus and triangular muscles contract pulling the bottom lip downward and outward. The risoris or “smiling” muscle needs to remain retracted so as to keep the corners of the lips more forward and relaxed. The contraction of the risoris muscles results in a tight and restricted sound. The buccinator or “cheek” muscles must retract focusing the lips forward thus producing a forward projection of the airstream. With all of these factors in place, a proper flute embouchure is formed.

The flute embouchure resembles the blowing on hot soup position that the student has already formed. It may also be associated with blowing across the top of a bottle. The flute embouchure must be relaxed and supple. The lower lip rests gently against the lip plate of the headjoint covering about one third of the embouchure hole. The upper lip falls naturally above directing the air. A pouty frown like the French pronunciation of “eu” best accomplishes a good sound. The corners of the mouth remain taut to focus the air. The flute embouchure must not be tight. The corners of the mouth should not be pulled back. The feeling of the proper flute embouchure forms the complete opposite of a wide grin. At this point the student should be able to produce a sound on the headjoint.

Many students find that the easiest way to change octaves is to simply blow harder. While this does work, the sound produced is sharp and shrill. The student must learn to initiate the octave jump with the lips. By moving the air stream up the air will cut higher on the embouchure hole thus producing a higher tone. The airstream is raised by allowing the bottom lip through the contraction of the quadratus and triangular muscles to come forward and the corners of the mouth controlled by the risoris muscle to push in to focus the air. The student may experience this change in direction by raising their palm in front of their face. Blowing down at the wrist produces the low register. Blowing up to the tips of the fingers raises the pitch. The student is now ready to put the flute together.

The flute is divided into three sections – the headjoint is the only piece with no keys on it. Just as the human head has an opening (the mouth) to produce sound, so does the headjoint have the embouchure hole to produce the sound. The body is the long joint containing the majority of the keywork. The footjoint is the smallest piece and contains a small amount of keys. The best way to avoid damaging the flute is to begin with the body. Holding the body by the end with no keywork called the barrel gently twist the footjoint on. The side with the keywork of the body should attach to the side with the keywork of the footjoint. Line up the footjoint so that the post of the footjoint splits down the middle of the body keywork then gently push it a little forward. By pushing it forward it will slightly offset the backward rolling weight created by the posts of the body. Still holding the body by the barrel the student may twist on the headjoint. The headjoint should be lined up so that the first key of the body splits down the middle of the embouchure hole.

The flute is one of the most unnatural and awkward instruments to hold. Students easily fall into poor habits of cocking the wrist and gripping the keys. When the wrists are cocked too far forward or backward the flexors and extensors responsible for the movement of the fingers are contracted too much to allow the free movement of the fingers. By pinching the right ear with the left hand, the left wrist perfectly aligns for proper flute playing. The right wrist aligns when the right arm extends up as though picking up a book lying flat on a high shelf overhead. The student may feel improper wrist position by moving their wrists along with the flute forward and backward.

Naturally relaxed hands create the perfect curved fingers for proper technique. When the student grabs a water bottle or wallet their thumb is in proper flute position. The student should place their fingers on the correct keys by first putting their hands in a fist and then extending each finger beginning with the pinky. Correct placement can be reinforced by repeatedly taking the flute away from them and then handing it back to them.

The flute becomes easier to hold when the student understands the opposing direction isometrics of the balance points. The flute rests on the third joint of the left hand index finger and on the first joint of the right hand thumb. These two hands push against each other creating opposing

forces of stability. The student should be able to hold the flute with just these two points. The chin provides a third stabilizing point, and the right hand pinky which remains depressed for most notes also helps balance. When the student tries holding the flute with the rest of the fingers and pushing roughly against their chin they will notice that their fingers do not move as easily nor do they feel they have control over the balance of the instrument. If the flute is properly balanced the fingers are free to move about uninhibited.

With the proper breathing, embouchure, and technique the student is now ready for success. The first notes should be in the easier to produce upper notes of the low register. By reinforcing these basic concepts and insisting on correct execution of fundamentals the student will succeed at a faster rate with fewer bad habits to correct in the future.

Bibliography

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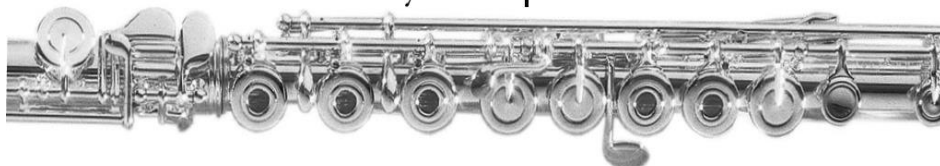


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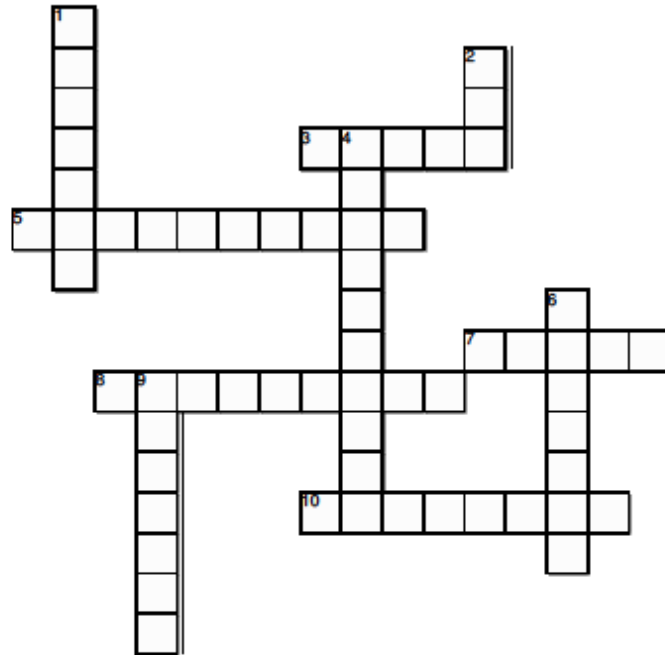
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Sudoku

		3	5				2	
	7			2	8			
	6		1	9				3
7		5			4	2		
	3	6						8
				3			6	9
	9	8	7			3		
	4	1	6	8		7	5	2
	5							

Musical Crossword



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

Across

3. Often shown as 'tr' in notation, denotes alternations between two adjacent pitches
5. at a fairly brisk tempo; a little slower than allegro
7. Creator of the modern flute
8. Famous female pianist and composer, first name Cecile
10. A musical composition for solo instrument or instruments accompanied by orchestra

Down

1. Generally conical (but sometimes cylindrical) instrument pitched an octave higher than the flute
2. A needle pulling thread
4. Gradual slowing of tempo
6. Symbol meaning to hold. AKA 'Bird's Eye'
9. a metrical pattern in which two bars in simple triple time (3/2 or 3/4 for example) are articulated as if they were three bars in simple duple time (2/2 or 2/4)

Solutions

8	1	3	5	4	6	9	2	7
4	7	9	3	2	8	1	6	5
5	6	2	1	9	7	4	8	3
7	8	5	9	6	4	2	3	1
9	3	6	2	7	1	5	4	8
1	2	4	8	3	5	6	7	9
6	9	8	7	5	2	3	1	4
3	4	1	6	8	9	7	5	2
2	5	7	4	1	3	8	9	6

Musical Crossword

1. Piccolo
2. Sol
3. Trill
4. Ritardando
5. Allegretto
6. Fermata
7. Boehm
8. Chaminade
9. Hemiola
10. Concerto