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**Texas Flute Society Membership Application**  
**January 1, 2010 - December 31, 2010**

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Spring 2010

### Letter from the President

Greetings Flutists!

I hope everyone enjoyed the winter weather that we have experienced and look forward to the spring weather ahead.

In January, the Texas Flute Society in conjunction with the University of North Texas, College of Music, hosted the arrival of Rachel Brown, professor of baroque flute at the Royal College of Music in London. We would like to thank Vice President Ann Vinod and Lee Lattimore for coordinating this fabulous event. Ms. Brown's class was very informative and her performance was absolutely exquisite.

Our largest event of the year, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Texas Flute Festival, is coming up fast! Visit our website to check out our events and any additional information at [texasflutesociety.org](http://texasflutesociety.org). There you will find information on the Myrna Brown Competition, masterclasses and our 2010 festival guest artists: Amy Porter, Ian Clarke, Elizabeth McNutt, and Daniel Alexander.

In this issue you will find some great features. There is a wonderful Spotlight Interview with Amy Porter, professor of flute at the University of Michigan. Be sure to check the articles written by Jocelyn Goranson, professor of flute at Texas A&M Commerce and Dr. Susan Fain. I am sure you will find their articles edifying.

As always, I wish all of you happy fluting!

*Mary T. Reyes*



#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

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## UPCOMING EVENTS...

### *Mark Your Calendars!*

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Texas Flute Festival will be held on May 20-22, 2010, at the University of North Texas, College of Music in Denton, TX. Our guest artists include Ian Clarke, Amy Porter, Elizabeth McNutt and Daniel Alexander.

### *New at the Festival!!!*

The Texas Flute Society is happy to announce a new addition to the festival. Dana Clements, a massage therapist in the DFW area, will set up a booth this year. Make sure to stop by and get a relaxing massage while enjoying the festival.

### *Advanced Flute Choir!!!*

Come join the fun by participating in the Advanced Flute Choir at the Texas Flute Festival. Guest artist, Ian Clarke, will be conducting some of his pieces with this group. Be sure to sign up soon. It is going to be FABULOUS!

### *Next Texas Flute Society Business Meeting*

Join us at our next meeting at La Madeleine's French Café and Bistro on Saturday, April 10, 2010, at 2:00 p.m. The address is 900 Hwy 114, Grapevine, TX 76051. We have an open door policy and welcome anyone who would like to attend! Can't wait to see you there!

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## “Could you be diagnosed with ‘First Fluteitis’?”

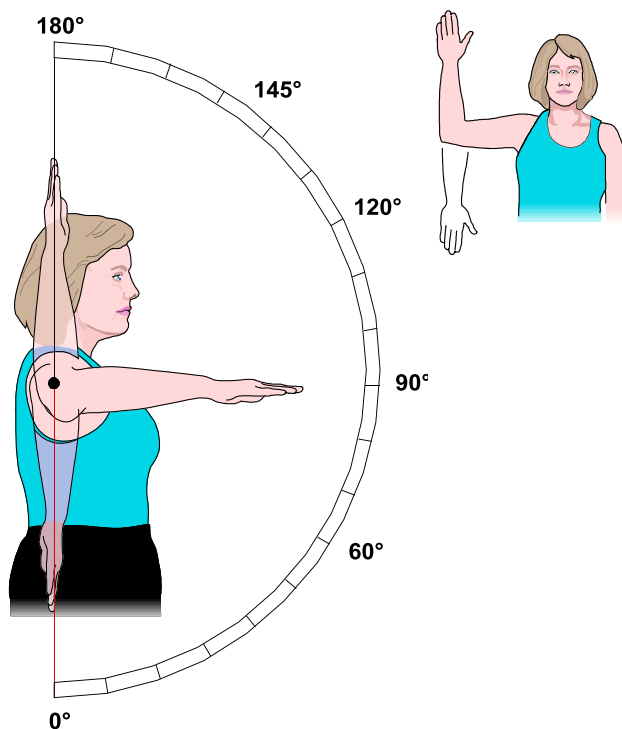
OR

## “How you should position your elbows during flute playing”

Susan D. Fain, DMA

In an earlier TFS newsletter, I wrote an article summarizing the survey I did as part of my dissertation on the physical issues related to flute playing. Although most of the results were expected, some of the answers to the survey questions were a surprise. One of those questions concerned where flutists positioned their left elbow during playing. Over half of the respondents indicated that they slightly raised their left elbow. I thought why would you need to do that? Is it to better reach the G key, or might it be more related to balancing the flute as a whole? I can think of several problems that result from this position that relate to anatomy and simple physics. In addition, there are several advantages to be gained by keeping both elbows down. To get a better understanding of the problem, let's take a quick look of the anatomy of the shoulder.

The *shoulder*? I thought we were talking about *elbows*. Well, that's true. But with our arms bent as we hold the flute, the motion that raises or lowers the elbows actually occurs in the shoulder. In the picture on the right, you can clearly see this rotation taking place. With the arm bent 90 degrees and the hand pointing upwards, the shoulder is laterally rotating (which means turning towards the outside). When the hand points downward, the shoulder is medially rotating (or turning inward toward the body). Contrary to this illustration, normal medial rotation is closer to 60-70 degrees (the picture shows 90 degrees). Normal lateral rotation is 90 degrees.



When we are holding the flute, our hands are, of course, fixed. But if we move our elbows up or down, the axis of rotation still occurs in the shoulder joint. Try a little elbow flapping and you'll see. When our elbows move up, the shoulder joint rotates inward (medially). When the elbows are down, the shoulder joint is closer to a neutral position.

Obviously muscles are used to effect these movements. Instead of going into a lot of detail about their names, we'll keep it simple. A group of muscles inwardly rotates the shoulder joint when we raise our elbows as we play the flute. But if you think about it a little more, things get way more complicated. This internal rotation of the shoulder moves the elbows up but when the movement stops, and the elbows are suspended in this lifted position, what muscle group holds them there? The internal rotators? No! They've already done their job getting the elbows up. It's the external rotators, the opposing group of muscles, that contract in opposition to the internal rotators to hold the elbows up in this lifted position.

The external rotators are a smaller group of muscles than the internal rotators, which makes sense from a practical viewpoint. Imagine how fast a pitcher can throw a baseball in front of him as he brings his arm

forward, internally rotating as he goes. Compare that to him throwing a ball over his back, externally rotating the arm in the shoulder joint. The pathetic toss wouldn't even come close to being as strong, fast, or accurate a pitch. It makes perfect sense that we have stronger muscles to control activities that happen in front of our bodies, where we can see them. Internal rotators bring the forearms into the front of the body; external rotators move them out to the side and back.

OK, back to flute playing. So when we balance the flute with our elbows up, our poor little external rotators go into overtime trying to keep them up there. Besides these tired muscles, there are some other problems that occur with this position. Most of the shoulder rotators attach the upper arm bone (humerus) to the shoulder blade. You know how moveable the shoulder blade is over the back of your rib cage; it can be loose as a goose! So the shoulder blade has to be firmly stabilized to serve as a base for the contraction of the rotators. What stabilizes the shoulder blade? Muscles that attach to the spine and rib cage. So these stabilizing muscles can get fatigued and strained while they hold the shoulder still. To complicate matters further, all this occurs in an asymmetrical way since our arms are in slightly different positions, both on the right side of our bodies. This heavy work load can (and does!) lead to back and neck pain, and even less efficient breathing.

Breathing? What's breathing got to do with this? Well, there are muscles that connect the shoulder blade to the rib cage. Some of these muscles (including the pectoralis minor and serratus anterior) have been shown to be activated by flutists during the long exhalation we do when we are producing a sound. So if the shoulder blade needs stabilizing, these muscles might volunteer for the job. But they can't! We need them for breath control!

The moral of the story? Get your shoulder blades and arms into a position that is as close to neutral as possible. Keep your elbows down and let those shoulder blades stay in as neutral a position as possible. You can do this by getting your left hand *under* the flute and not alongside it. Also turn your head to the left and bring the right end of your flute forward in relation to your trunk. This will give more room for your right arm and decrease the reach required by your left arm.

Take a look at a lot of the great players. James Galway (before his accident, poor guy). Emmanuel Pahud. Michelle Debost. They all keep their elbows down. It seems to be a bigger problem for us women.

This discussion has probably raised a lot of questions in your mind. If my elbows are down, do I have to bend my neck to the right? What if my arms are short? What if they're long? What about in-line versus off-set G keys? Is there any way that it would make my breathing easier if my elbows are up? The list goes on and is too much for today. But I got you thinking, didn't I? (wink, wink) Thinking is always good.

So what is "first fluteitis"? You remember back in high school, when the pecking order got established in the flute section, the newly designated first chair flutist might assert her superiority by sticking her left elbow up and out just a little bit more than anyone else during the first song, ostensibly leading the group. Little did she (or he) know that she was sabotaging her own playing in the process. But now we all know better than to get caught in the same trap. So keep those elbows down and relaxed!



Dr. Fain is a recent graduate from the University of Oklahoma where she studied with Dr. Valerie Watts. Her prior experience as a physical therapist informed her DMA dissertation, *An Application of the Principles of Anatomy, Physiology, and Neurology to the Balancing and Playing of the Flute*. In addition to free lancing as a professional flutist, Dr. Fain is re-entering the field of physical therapy to specialize in the healthcare of performing artists.

## GUEST ARTIST

L C B Z D X V C U N A I G I D E G E N N A I R A M N M  
 J G N E W O B K N A R F X V Z T P B J L O L X O R J W  
 S R E S S E R T X A B E N N A E J E O A B Z L E U Y R  
 P A U L A R O B I S O N L M I B A I L X F Y N E R W D  
 C V V I J P R L X J P L U H P N S E C V H R F E M C C  
 H G S T E V E K U J A L A J L S C T L H A R K A N R M  
 R G L J Z T G Q E N C S C A C O W P S G Y L R R H P S  
 I M A N E B X U Z F E Z R H Y I E O D M A G L P S T J  
 S E I Z S Q B S X P G S A O P J A A F W A B W W T R G  
 T J C G Y O H P W O O E L I M X R E S R A T A X L E L  
 I S M Q U A S K W N F L A A J B N E E Z O N W M N K X  
 N W X S B Q N L G E I M J Z J O M T Z R Y Y E M G C W  
 E N V O E W E A R T O A I E P A R N K H L T E G C O E  
 P N P A N J R S T F N P I N J E R I L A E Q V Y M H Y  
 O N D J O V Y A O G R V Z R D T L C R R C I N J I C W  
 T R Q Z E F P C I Y B J H C K B M A V E S V R R M S R  
 T V X R L G A P C Z Q G A D Y X W M V B M K U L I Y O  
 E D J T E X P B T T H T Y R E B T N I P R N L Y M L S R V  
 R S E R C O H T T E N N E B M A I L L I W Y I I T A E  
 X H G K R O B E R T D I C K Z X Y X N H V Q X T I G R  
 R O B E R T C O L E R E T T O P E I R E L A V S L V T  
 Y E N A L E D S E L R A H C L M P B E Q L G B A L G T  
 L K C N E C N I W L O R A C A E J W C A I X H X M I B  
 P P B U G Q J S P J T Z I Z K R U T Y L L A S E A R G  
 M R I C H A R D M A Y E Z J Q B J A F J C Q T L N E O  
 O J V G Q B O N I T A B O Y D M S N H C Z G T A K W O  
 T T W N H M A R C O G R A N A D O S G S H K R F U G R

Alexa Still  
 Bonita Boyd  
 Brad Garner  
 Carol Wincenc  
 Charles Delaney  
 Christine Potter  
 Frank Bowen  
 Gary Schocker  
 Greg Pattillo  
 James Walker

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 Jeanne Baxtresser  
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## *Rachel Brown Performs Telemann*



On January 25, 2010, the Texas Flute Society hosted a well attended event performed by Rachel Brown on the campus of the University of North Texas. Ms. Brown, professor of baroque flute at the Royal College of Music in London, is known for her versatility on modern and historical flutes and recorders. She discussed her interpretation of Telemann's Fantasias and included many stories to bring them to life. Her inspired performance on baroque flute kept the entire room riveted as she artfully ornamented and played the Fantasias. Two days later she performed another recital in which she played selected works by Quantz, J.S. Bach and Marais. TFS member Lee Lattimore was also featured on baroque flute in this exquisite performance.



**Lee Lattimore and Rachel Brown**

## *Flute Festival 2010*

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Texas Flute Festival will be held May 20-22, 2010, at the University of North Texas, in Denton, TX. The festival will showcase guest artists Ian Clarke, Amy Porter, Elizabeth McNutt, and Daniel Alexander. For more information about these wonderful guest artists, please visit [www.texasflutesociety.org](http://www.texasflutesociety.org).



## Spotlight Interview: *Amy Porter*



*Photo: Amy Porter, age 12*

### **How did you choose the flute?**

I grew up playing piano because my father was a part-time piano teacher. When I was nine years old, my father suggested I look into another instrument. Finally, I saw a flute being played up close. All the nerves in my fingers began to tingle. I had to try it.

In the first three days of playing the flute, I skipped the first three classes in the summer band program. Somehow I knew right there that I had been given the greatest gift in my life.

### **What was your first flute?**

An Armstrong at age 9 and a silver Muramatsu at age 12. (After that, I never looked back.)

### **Please tell us about any musical influences.**

In the beginning, it was my parents, of course. They held classical music above all. And being from Wilmington, DE, I would have to say the greatest influence was Philadelphia – everything about it. I enjoyed the Philadelphia Orchestra concerts. I loved playing in the Youth Orchestra, and at Settlement Music School. I had lessons with Deborah Carter Smith, and her husband, Philadelphia orchestra conductor William Smith, would talk to my father in the living room while I had a lesson. I was impacted by listening to recordings of James Galway, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Yo-Yo Ma, Claudio Arrau, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera on the radio to name a few. My alma mater, the Tatnall School allowed me room to grow. After entering Juilliard, my teachers – including the non-flutists – were patient and encouraging. My dream slowly became reality.

### **Tell us about where you studied flute and the teachers you studied under.**

In Delaware, I studied with Virginia Atherton and in Philadelphia, with Deborah Carter Smith. Samuel Baron (BM) and Jeanne Baxtresser (MM) from the Juilliard School. Mozarteum Summer Academy with Alain Marion and Peter-Lukas Graf. Trudy Kane in New York post-Juilliard.

### **What is a typical work day for you?**

Wow! When? Where? It could be anything! Every day is new. I wake up always by 7 AM and am doing exercise, training with a trainer on Tuesdays/Thursdays, or running 4 miles, spin class, yoga, whatever... I have to do it for so many reasons so why not mix it up? I have a lot of career business to attend to every day, combined with teaching, practicing, traveling, school administration, having a personal life, keeping up with a dog and a 100 year old house – no day is really typical. I like it that way!

### **Tell us what is in your CD/Ipod player right now.**

I use the IPOD to work out to Diana Krall, Rhianna, Madonna, Aerosmith. I like the dance music when I run. But jazz is what I really hold in high esteem. In my I-Tunes I have every genre under the sun.

### **Who is your favorite composer?**

I love all composers – they write for me a lot so I can't pick a favorite. They have all influenced me in some way. I know I learn a lot by practicing Bach every day. I know I love Brahms and Prokofiev and Daugherty but I can't really pick a favorite.

### **Do you have a favorite flute piece/recording?**

Again - no favorites – but I think we all are influenced by Jean-Pierre Rampal and James Galway's wonderful recordings. And I like listening to the viola-da-gamba play music of Marin Marais and I like listening to Fritz Wunderlich sing Schubert Lieder. And I try to keep an open mind and approach to all music. I love it all. So I suppose I can't give you a favorite anything – except my favorite flavor of ice cream. And then it would have to be – hands down - mocha almond fudge.



**What qualities do you think are most essential to musical excellence?**

The ability to combine practice with theory. The ability to sing from the heart and express what words cannot.

**Through the years, what has been the most valuable lesson that music has taught you?**

Music has taught me to move on. Move through. Keep moving. Air moves, life moves, change is inevitable. Keep creating yourself, just like a new interpretation of an old song.

**Do you have any amusing early career stories you would like to share?**

Read the old Flute Talk article interview of me from 1987 or 1988... I learned the Bach Sonata in E minor for the Flute Talk Competition. The night before the competition, in the dorms, I overheard someone playing the E major Sonata of Bach. I ran to look at the requirements again and there it clearly stated Bach Sonata in E Major. What a moment of clarity realizing I had learned the wrong Sonata! Thank goodness I had the edition where they are published together. I had just worked on the E major with Sam Baron. I quickly released the key of E minor from my brain and I was able to work the E major Sonata back into my fingers and memory and win the competition. Afterwards, in the interview, the magazine recounted the story for the readers. But, for me, the most embarrassing part was how that article began. "Amy Porter didn't practice that day." I learned several lessons in that situation that I will teach for a lifetime!

**How about some non-flute stuff:****If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?**

I will always love the here and now. So I am happy wherever I am in the world!

**What is the last book you read?**

"Insatiable" by Gael Greene. I am a foodie so THAT was a fun read.

**What is the best dish you can cook?**

Not a fair question! I love to cook! How about this: Sea Bass in black & white sesame seeds poached in carrot/ginger juice. Or how about butternut squash risotto? Or a fun (bran, berries, etc) muffin? Hungry?

**What is your favorite movie?**

I like the Christopher Guest movies. "Waiting for Guffman", "Best in Show" and his others. I am more of a book-worm than a movie buff.

**If you could play any other instrument, which would it be?**

Trumpet – again, It's a true story - I played for eight years, less seriously than the flute, in various ensembles but not in the orchestra!! I loved it - until one day I could no longer get away with it. It had negatively affected my tone. Now I only play it on April Fools Day or Halloween. I think I still have a little brass player in me!

## ***Congratulations: 2010 NFA Convention Performers/Presenters***

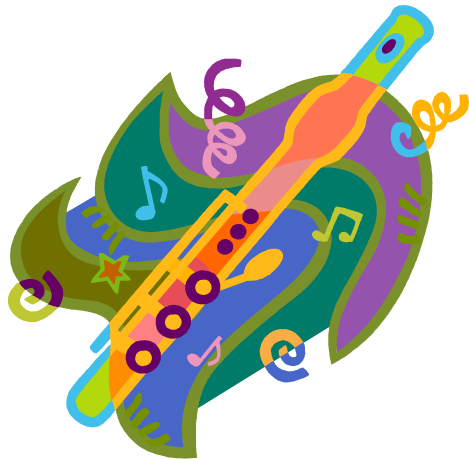
The Texas Flute Society would like to congratulate the **Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra Flute Choir** for being selected to perform at the 2010 National Flute Association Convention in Anaheim, California. The Flute Choir will present a program entitled "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" featuring music from the different eras of the NFA. A new commissioned piece in honor of the late Jim Fisher (former TFS member and flutist with the Mesquite Symphony) will be included in the "Tomorrow" segment. For more information about the GDYO Flute Choir, visit <http://gdyo.org/fluteChoir.cfm>.

The Texas Flute Society also congratulates **Maria Harman** for being selected to present a lecture recital at the 2010 National Flute Association Convention in Anaheim, California. The 45-minute presentation and performance is entitled "Flute Music of Mélanie Bonis". Maria Harman is an adjunct professor at Texas Wesleyan and Southwestern Adventist Universities, has performed in Europe, Asia, Mexico, and is a DMA candidate at the University of North Texas studying with Mary Karen Clardy. She has been a prizewinner in the National Flute Association Young Artist and Masterclass Performers Competitions and has performed and presented at NFA Conventions and the International Arts and Humanities Conference.

GUEST ARTIST-SOLUTION

L C B Z D X V C U N A I G I D E G E N N A I R A M N M  
 J G N E S S O B K X A R F X V Z T P B J O L X O R U J W R  
 R E S S E R T X A B E N N A E J E L A B Z L E E R Y W R  
 P A U L A R O B I S O N L M I B A S E L X F Y N E E W D  
 C V V I J P R R L X J P L U H P N S C T L H R R K K A M C C M S  
 H S T E V E K U J A L A J J P S C T L H R R K K A M C C M S  
 G L J Z T G Q U Z F E N C S C A H O C O W P O S G A Y L G R R N H S P T J  
 R I T E V E K U J A L A J J P S C T L H R R K K A M C C M S  
 S E I Z G Q B S X P G S S A L H O P J A A F W R A A B B W W T L G L  
 J C G O H P W W O P F L A A Z J B N E T Z O Y Y E M G C X W  
 M X Q A S K L L A A Z J B N E T Z O Y Y E M G C X W  
 N W V O Q N W E A A I E P P A R R N N H L T E G G C O O C O  
 F O N D J Z V Y A A I E P P A R R N N H L T E G G C O O C O  
 R Q X F E C C I Y B J H C K E M A V E S V R R M W H H C S S Y Y  
 T V D J T R E X H T T E N N E B M A I L L I Y Y I I S S E E E E  
 S E R C O H T T E N N E B M A I L L I Y Y I I S S E E E E  
 X H C K R O B E R T D I C K Z X Y X N H V Q X X H H H H H H H  
 R O B E R T C O O L E R E T T O P E I R E L A V V V V V V V V V V  
 Y E N A L E D S E L R A H C L M P B E Q L G B G T  
 L K C N E C N I W L O R A C A E J W C A I X H I B  
 P P B U G Q J S P J T Z I Z K R U T Y L L A S S S S S S S S S S  
 M R I C H A R D M A Y E Z J Q B J A F J C Q T E O O  
 O J V G Q B O N I T A B O Y D M S N H C Z G T K W O  
 T T W N H M A R C O G R A N A D O S G S H K R F U G R

- |                  |                    |                 |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Alexa Still      | Jan Gippo          | Richard May     |
| Bonita Boyd      | Jean Larson Garver | Robert Cole     |
| Brad Garner      | Jeanne Baxtresser  | Robert Dick     |
| Carol Wincenc    | Leone Buysse       | Sally Turk      |
| Charles Delaney  | Lois Schaefer      | Steve Kujala    |
| Christine Potter | Marco Granados     | Torkil Bye      |
| Frank Bowen      | Margaret Redcay    | Trevor Wye      |
| Gary Schocker    | Marianne Gedigian  | Valerie Potter  |
| Greg Pattillo    | Mimi Stillman      | William Bennett |
| James Walker     | Paula Robison      |                 |



CONGRATULATIONS!

Texas Flute Society would like to congratulate **Joann Lee She**, the 2010 First Place Winner of the National MTNA Junior Woodwind Competition, sponsored by Music Teachers National Association. Joann is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at Rice Middle School and studies flute with TFS member Monica Song. Other accomplishments Joann has won include the 2010 Dallas Symphonic Festival 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner, 2009 TFS Outstanding Performer Award, and 1<sup>st</sup> Chair, 2009 All Region, Collin County.

# Vibrato

Jocelyn Goranson, professor at Texas A&M, Commerce



When it comes to tone, vibrato is one of the most personal elements of the flute sound. We spend years perfecting, imitating, evaluating, developing, and analyzing. We listen to our teacher's sound, the voices of great singers, the shimmering of string players, and other admired flutists and musicians. And eventually, we find ourselves in a place where the sound – and the vibrato along with it – is completely our own.

Flutists with good teachers and years of experience will often find themselves discussing vibrato in lessons. We learn how to enhance phrasing, color, and dynamics with vibrato. After all this saturation in vibrato analysis... it's no wonder we often lose memory of the most basic of all vibrato issues: how do you *do* it? How do you create the effect that is vibrato on the flute? And furthermore, how do you explain it to a young student who has never before created a sound with vibrato?

Over the years I've worked with students ranging from age 7 to age 70, and while my current students are almost all in college with established vibrato techniques, I have had many opportunities to explain to beginners a few possible methods that can "kick-start" a vibrato in the sound. But, I must first emphasize that these suggestions should only be attempted *after* a basic focused tone can be consistently produced.

If there's one thing I've learned from the process of teaching vibrato, it's that no two students are alike. We all have our own style of learning, and while one method may work perfectly for one student, it may fail miserably for another. So I find myself going through my bag of tricks. Inevitably, one of them always works!

There are *many* great ideas out there for introducing flute vibrato, and I'm sure we could create quite a collection if we polled all the teachers in the Texas Flute Society! If you're looking for some fresh ones, here are five of my favorites:

(1) **Imitation:** the most sincere form of vibrato. Picture this: a student says to you, "My band director told me I need to start using this thing called vibrato. What's vibrato?" The first thing you should try is, in a nonchalant manner, picking up your flute and saying, "Oh! This is what your band director is talking about." Play a long tone with vibrato, and then encourage your student to try. If they get a reasonably good vibrato sound at the first attempt, *leave it alone!* You have all the time in the world to discuss speed, depth, amplitude, intensity, etc. later. For now, let them get comfortable with the natural vibrato that they already have, and by all means, *don't* let them know it's hard!

(2) **The Pulsing Snake:** Have the student place one hand on the tummy and make a "SSssSSssSSssSS" sound. (This should be done without stopping the air, and *never* closing the throat.) This allows the student to be aware of the aural sensation of vibrato pulses, along with the physical sensation of the tummy muscles working, without that pesky flute getting in the way. I like doing about five pulses, alternating back and forth from teacher to student. You can then try doing a similar air-pulsing practice without the "S" sound, and with the lips in the shape of an "oo". Finally, make the transition to the flute.

(3) **The Vibrato Train:** this is a *great* technique for students who are visual learners. Have the student play a straight tone and, while facing them with one hand raised, "direct" a vibrato pulse as a conductor would give a single, accented cue. If a single successful pulse is produced, direct another accented cue. Continue this until the student is out of air! Have them fill their lungs again, and start over, this time

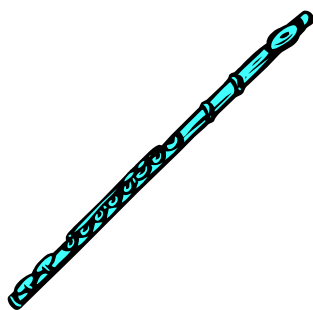
letting the cues get closer and closer together (much like a train pulling away from the station – hence the name “vibrato train”). When successful, the student will often be so engaged in the visual part of the exercise, that they will not even realize immediately that they are using a good vibrato!

(4) **“Ha Ha!” I tricked you!** Sometimes, even after trying these methods, a student will struggle with the basic physical ability to alter their air stream. When this happens, I ask them to play separate pulses with a “HA” sound. (This is like practicing staccato articulation, but without the tongue.) Again, I prefer five short pulses, alternating from teacher to student, starting very slowly, and with lots of time between each pulse. Gradually move the pulses closer together, getting a little faster each time, but keeping them separate. Let the student get faster too, as they alternate their five pulses with yours. Inevitably, your pulses will get so close together that when the student attempts their imitation, they can no longer keep the pulses separate. BINGO! Vibrato! I love seeing the looks on their faces when they first hear that sound.

(5) **The Bouncing Baby:** Have you ever bounced a baby or toddler on your knee? Little ones love to make a long “AH!” sound with their voices while they bounce up and down. The sound of their voice fluctuating is always so fascinating to them! When all else fails, I sometimes try this vocal approach. We make an “AAaaAAaaAAaaAA” sound (like when you bounce a baby on your knee). This has often worked as a “last resort”. It’s a little embarrassing sometimes for the particularly shy student, but they always get a good laugh out of it!

Ask me again in about fifteen years – I’ll probably have at least five more beginning vibrato favorites by then! I’m always learning new things as I observe my very capable colleagues working with students. Never forget to be patient, encourage students to listen, and have fun! I’ve had students that struggled for a full year to incorporate a basic vibrato into the tone, that later find themselves as all-state players. And once they get the basic idea, look out! That’s when the real work begins!

Happy pulsing, everyone!



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