

**2011 Texas Music Educators  
Clinic/Convention**

**Pathway to a Beautiful  
Flute Sound**

**Presented  
by**

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11am, CC001

# Pathway to a Beautiful Flute Sound

## Guidelines for the Teacher

### *Tips for the Start of a Good Embouchure*

- Place the headjoint in the valley of the chin and the lip plate where the pink part of the lip connects to the skin below the lip; avoid the touch and roll
- Blow and form the “pooh” syllable with the air
- Keep the corners down and avoid a smile
- Aim for 60% of the air going into the flute and 40% outside

### *As the Student Progresses*

- No more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the embouchure hole should be covered by the lower lip
- Keep the embouchure plate as low as possible below the bottom lip
- Right arm should be forward
- Aperture hole of the mouth should be aligned with the embouchure hole on the flute
- Avoid worrying about lack of symmetry with the embouchure – do not torture the student with this
- The player should find the sweet spot on the riser wall. This is the far side of the embouchure hole. When just right, the tone is focused; otherwise it is airy.
- Dynamics while practicing should be *f* until a good forte is developed
- For brands of flutes, I recommend matching the flute to the player
- Let the players listen to beautiful flute sounds, Emmanuel Pahud is an example

### *Posture Issues*

- No more than two players should share a music stand in an ensemble
- Leave plenty of room between chairs
- Flutists should stand for practicing and solo contests
- Shoulders should be rotated 45°; shoulders should not be parallel to the stand; the head should be turned to the left

### *For Improvements in Pitch*

- Good intonation will greatly enhance the tone
- Have your students match pitch with a drone and develop a good ear
- Low register is flat; high register is sharp; C#<sup>2</sup> is very sharp
- Cooper scale flute is somewhat improved
- Watch for correct fingerings especially venting on middle d and e<sup>b</sup>

## Exercises for the Flute Student to Practice

### Tone Studies - Example

A musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 44. The music starts with a dynamic marking of *ff*. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter). Each note is beamed to the next, and there are slurs over the pairs (A4-B4), (B4-A4), (A4-G4), and (G4-F4). The piece ends with a double bar line and the text "etc." below the staff.

- Work for evenness of tone quality
- Work for beautiful phrase and note endings by avoiding a dip in pitch and unmusical abrupt endings, bring the lower lip out as in a pucker, use a tuner

### Harmonics

Harmonics exercise in treble clef, common time. The first staff shows a "Fingered" G4 and "Harmonics" for G4, A4, B4, and C5. The second staff is a sequence of notes with circles above them, starting with a "Finger" marking. The third staff continues the sequence. The fourth staff shows a "Finger" marking and continues the sequence. The fifth staff continues the sequence.

- Develops the lip flexibility required to change the direction of the air into the flute

- Pneumo pro (Blocki) – Developed to aid with visualization of the changing directions of air
- Pulsing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> note in the harmonic series (esp) will help the flutist acquire a ringing tone quality

#### *Oral Cavity and Aperture Strengthening*

- Use any exercise utilizing harmonics
- Have the player freeze the embouchure and change registers by altering the tongue placement and oral cavity shape
- Change registers by isolating the variations in aperture size
- For Oral Cavity – make sure the back teeth are separated
- Avoid glottal stops (articulating with the throat when the note changes should be connected)

#### *Breathing*

- Breath builder
- Breathing bag
- In addition to building the lung capacity, flutists must learn to conserve and use air efficiently

#### *Vibrato*

♩ = 60 80 100

hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo

hoo - hoo hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo - hoo

3 3 3 3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3 3 3 3

- Pulse with a series of hoo-hoo-hoo in triplets starting at quarter note = 60
- Make these staccato at slower speeds; with faster tempi they should connect

#### *Tone Color*

- Timbre is the quality given to the sound by the overtones present; helps the ear identify a particular instrument
- Fewer overtones creates open, pure, hollow, maybe dull tone
- More overtones results in full, rich, brilliant, perhaps harsh

- For variety in color:
  - Vary the lip opening from round (pure) to elliptical (full)
  - Vary the blowing angle – firm upper lip directed downward is more penetrating vs. relaxed upper lip is uncolored and hollow
  - Vary the airspeed
  - Vary the vowel shapes formed in the oral cavity

**Recommended Reading:**

Kathy Daniel, *Advanced Flute Pedagogy*. 2007:  
[www.shsu.edu/~music/faculty/daniel\\_k.php](http://www.shsu.edu/~music/faculty/daniel_k.php)

Trevor Wye, *Practice Book for the Flute*, Bk. 1 Tone. 1980: Novello.

**Kathy Daniel**, Associate Professor, teaches flute at Sam Houston State University. She has had an active performing career and has appeared as a flute and piccolo soloist in many concerts throughout the United States. She served as principal flutist, section leader, and soloist with the United States Navy Band, Washington, DC, performing in and around Washington as well as on national concert tours. She was a soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra in Symphony Hall and has performed in New York City at Carnegie Hall. Ms. Daniel has been a member of numerous professional ensembles in the Washington area, including the Mid-Atlantic Chamber Orchestra, the Maryland Festival Orchestra, and the Annapolis Chamber Orchestra. She completed several seasons with the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra and has performed with the Fairfax Symphony, National Women's Symphony, the Prince George's Philharmonic, and on concert tours with the United States Air Force Band. Since joining the faculty at Sam Houston State University in 1999, Ms Daniel has performed with the SHSU Faculty Chamber Players and conducted the SHSU Flute Choir at National Flute Association Conventions (2005, 2001). She has remained active as a clinician at Texas Bandmasters Association, the Midwest, the International Clarinet Association, Texas Music Educators Association and Texas Flute Society Conventions. She has been named to *Who's Who Among America's Teachers* and *Who's Who in America*.

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