

EXTENDED TECHNIQUES

Breath sounds, percussive tonguing, key clicks, singing while playing, pitch bending, whistle tones, microtone trills, multiphonics, flutter tonguing. These sounds and colours are part of the expressive musical language of our time. They have become mainstream in orchestral, chamber and solo repertoire and as such are important skills for any flute player to develop.

There are many different systems for notating extended techniques. Composers will often clarify with an instruction but not always!

Sounds with a sealed lip plate

1. Consonants: “sssss,” “shhhh,” “t,t,t,t,t,” “rrrrr,” etc. These work best with low note fingerings so that more of the tube resonates.

Forest Murmurs

lip plate sealed

shhh t t t rrrr

2. Vowels: “eeee,” “oooo,” “aaaa,” etc. Can also include singing or saying whole words and phrases. Finger the notated pitches and whisper the vowel sound.

Monk's Prayer

lip plate sealed

ee aa ee aa oo - ee ee aa ee aa oo ee oo - ee

3. Tongue Rams: With lips sealing the lip plate and fingers in place, aim to make a very quick and strong increase of breath culminating in the tongue suddenly blocking the exit of air through the lips... “wwwuut.” The resulting pitch is a major 7th below the fingered note.

Range:

Fingered

Sounds

In my Little Snuff Box

Fingered

Sounds

Tongue ram

Raindrops

Slow
all tongue rams

(sounds a major 7th lower) *f* *f*

4. Jet Whistles: These are made by sealing the embouchure hole completely and blowing fast, high-pressure air through the tube similar to warming up the instrument. Use the resonance of the whole tube by closing all the keys (finger low C or B). It cannot last for more than about a second as it relies on the air being expelled very fast. It can be played with a rising or falling pitch.

For low to high pitch use the mouth shape “hooo-eee”

For high to low pitch use the mouth shape “heee-ooo”

jet whistle

hoo-eee or hee-ooo

Sounds with an open lip plate

1. Breath tone: There are a range of sounds that could be called breath tone. They all incorporate some element of pitch with an airy sound. Start a note with a normal tone then push your right hand forward as you play the note so that the airstream gradually goes out of alignment with the lip plate. By varying the angle of the flute you can control the proportion of tone to breath. This works best on low notes.

Another approach is to form an embouchure but lift the top lip as if saying the consonant “fffff.” That will give you a ghosty/breathy effect with a hint of the fingered pitch. Gradually lower the top lip to allow the normal sound to emerge from the breath.

breath tone normal tone breath tone

ppp *mf* *ppp*

Wind Through the Trees

All airy tones (tremolo)

2. Percussive articulation

(a) “tch”: This is a percussive pitched articulation using a very sudden and strong breath like a cough or sneeze. The lips should be open, not formed into an embouchure. It only works on notes in the bottom octave; that is, notes which are fundamentals not harmonics.

Jazz Flute

tch tch tch tch tch

1. 2.

(b) “Pizzicato” tonguing is a very strong tonguing but without any follow-through of breath. This results in a very short and dry “pop” at the fingered pitch.

Two Chinese Melodies, bars 36-39 from *Fluteworthy Repertoire Book 3*



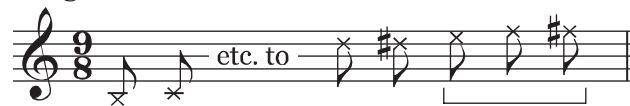
Double Bass Pizzicato Line



Key clicks

Key clicks can be just the sound of the keys without any tone.

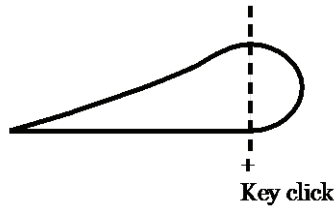
Range:



These will work as key clicks if you open the second trill key.

The keys which give the best percussive pop are L.H. 2 or 3. When playing notes such as F & E click with the L.H. 2 or 3 fingers.

The resonance of key clicks can be enhanced by a slight puff of unfocussed air through open lips. It's like going “wvhoo” with the air



and co-ordinating the peak of the air with the key click. Usually the composer will say whether they want the key click with air or without.

Rock Clicks



Singing while playing

1. Singing in unison or octaves: This is a technique used in jazz and rock styles. It creates a “dirty” tone colour which can cut through better than a straight classical sound.

Play first without singing to learn the pitch.

The diagram shows three stages of playing on a single staff. The first stage, 'Play normally', shows a melodic line with slurs. The second stage, 'Sing without playing but finger pitches', shows the same melodic line with square boxes below the notes, representing finger positions. The third stage, 'Sing and play together', shows the melodic line with the square boxes still present, indicating simultaneous singing and playing.

In this duet the 2nd flute does **Beat-boxing**. This is similar to the “tch” percussive articulation but it uses the consonants of the phrase “boots ‘n cats” to copy a drum beat. Use lots of air to make the consonants explosive. Remember the vocal chords are not used; it’s similar to very loud whispering, quite noisy and spitty.

♩ = ca.70

The notation shows a single staff in 4/4 time with a tempo of ca. 70. The lyrics 'boo - ts'n cats' are repeated four times, each corresponding to a measure of music.

Boots'n cats C. Draeger

♩ = 126

The notation shows two staves. The top staff is for 'Flute 1 & Voice' and the bottom staff is for 'Flute 2 Beatboxing'. The tempo is 126. The lyrics are 'Boo-ts'n ca-ts'n boo - ts 'na ca-ts'n' repeated. Chords C7 are indicated below the top staff.

The notation shows two staves. The top staff is for 'Flute 1 & Voice' and the bottom staff is for 'Flute 2 Beatboxing'. The lyrics are 'Boo-ts'n ca-ts'n boo - ts 'na ca - ts'n' repeated. Chords F7 and C7 are indicated below the top staff.

The notation shows two staves. The top staff is for 'Flute 1 & Voice' and the bottom staff is for 'Flute 2 Beatboxing'. The lyrics are 'Boo-ts'n ca - ts'n boo - ts 'na ca - ts'n' repeated. Chords G7 and F7 are indicated below the top staff.

2. Voice as a drone: The easiest way to develop this technique is to start with the voice on a single note, as a drone, while playing a melody.

Warm-up

The Twisting of the Rope
Casadh An Tsugain

Traditional Irish Air

Pitch bending

Technique No 1: Sliding fingers on and off open-holed keys.

By gradually sliding fingers of the keys you can glissando smoothly between the following notes. The same fingering also works for notes the octave below and for the harmonic fingering versions of higher notes.

Slide off R.H. fingers. When only the rim of the F key is down the pitch is F#.

Slide the fingers of the L.H. off. When only the rim of the A key is down the pitch is Bb.

Technique No 2: Changing the direction and speed of the air.

This includes changing the embouchure, rolling the flute in or out, opening or closing the inside of the throat and mouth. Most notes can be changed by about a semitone but very high and very low notes are not so flexible. For the following exercise keep the D fingering and bend the pitch down and up.

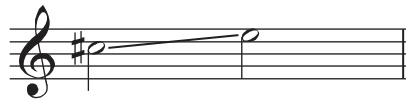


Mushy Peas

Slow & Sickly

Technique No 3: Using trill keys

Start with the flute rolled in a little, sounding slightly flat, so that the effect of the ascending glissando is enhanced. Begin the C# with R.H. 1 & 2 already lightly braced against the rods, fingertips touching the two trill keys. As you play, gradually open first trill 1 then trill 2, and at the same time roll the flute outwards.



Experiment with using the 3 different techniques.

Whistle tones

These are very high and soft notes resonating mostly in the chimney of the head joint. The most stable whistle tones sound two octaves above a note fingered in the first octave.

Pout lips forward and blow very little air.

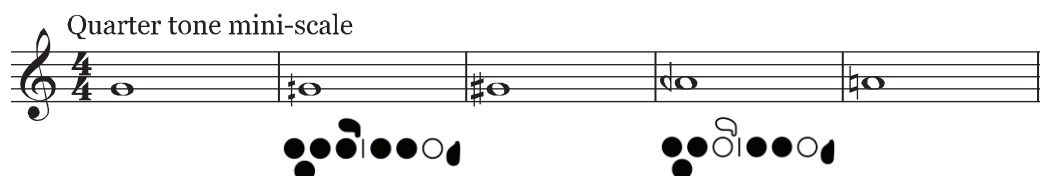
Try playing simple tunes like *Hot Cross Buns* to develop pitch control.

By varying airspeed and embouchure these whistle tones can move through the harmonics series. Improvise on these sounds to create a ghostly atmosphere.

An alternative technique is to simply whistle into the flute thereby “forcing” whatever pitch you want regardless of fingering.

Quarter Tones

The notes that sit in the middle of the semitones are called quarter-tones. The notation varies but commonly ♭ is a quarter tone flat and † is a quarter tone sharp. ♭ is a 3/4 tone flat (or a quarter tone below a ♭) and † is a 3/4 sharp (or a quarter tone above a sharp).



Finger vibrato or microtone trill or colour trill

This is a way of creating an interesting texture on a sustained note. Quantz mentions finger vibrato as an expressive effect in his book *On Playing the Flute* (1752) so it has been around for a long time! The pitch variation is less than a semitone. The composer usually suggests a fingering. However individual players and flutes vary so you can experiment with adding or subtracting fingers to get the best effect. Not every pitch has an effective fingering for finger vibrato but here are some good ones.

As you move into the 3rd octave alternate real fingering with harmonics for effective colour trills.

Duet

♩ = 60

Multiphonics

Usually two pitches sounding together, these are created when you use a low register embouchure combined with a fast airspeed. First, using the multiphonic fingering, alternate the low and high pitch. Next, play the low note and, keeping your embouchure fixed in the low note position, increase your airspeed until the higher note also comes out.

From *Melusina's Dream*, C. Draeger:

The musical notation shows five measures in 2/4 time. The notes and accidentals are: G4, A4, B4, C5, and B4. Below each note is a fingering diagram for the right hand, showing the positions of the fingers (black dots) and the state of the keys (white circles).

Some fingerings will give you different multiphonics at different dynamic levels.

The musical notation shows four measures in 2/4 time. The notes and accidentals are: G4, A4, B4, and C5. Below the staff are two diagrams of fingerings for the notes, with 'f or p' written below each diagram.

Flutter tongue

This is made by fluttering either the tongue or the back of the throat (the soft palate). Some players do both techniques. Some can do just one, and some find it hard to do either.

The most common problem is not being able to sustain the flutter longer than one or two flaps of the tongue or throat. If this is you, be persistent and patient. Find a note where your flutter tonguing works (no matter how briefly). It will probably be in the middle register. Work to extend the duration on a single note. It may take days or weeks but if you persist it will improve. We understand how frustrating it can be because some players can flutter tongue without any thought or effort. Don't give up! You will get there! Notation can be flz., f.t., frull. or just tremolo marks through the stem.

The musical notation shows two lines of music in 4/4 time. The notes and accidentals are: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F1, E1, D1, C1, B0, A0, G0, F0, E0, D0, C0, B-1, A-1, G-1, F-1, E-1, D-1, C-1, B-2, A-2, G-2, F-2, E-2, D-2, C-2, B-3, A-3, G-3, F-3, E-3, D-3, C-3, B-4, A-4, G-4, F-4, E-4, D-4, C-4, B-5, A-5, G-5, F-5, E-5, D-5, C-5, B-6, A-6, G-6, F-6, E-6, D-6, C-6, B-7, A-7, G-7, F-7, E-7, D-7, C-7, B-8, A-8, G-8, F-8, E-8, D-8, C-8, B-9, A-9, G-9, F-9, E-9, D-9, C-9, B-10, A-10, G-10, F-10, E-10, D-10, C-10, B-11, A-11, G-11, F-11, E-11, D-11, C-11, B-12, A-12, G-12, F-12, E-12, D-12, C-12, B-13, A-13, G-13, F-13, E-13, D-13, C-13, B-14, A-14, G-14, F-14, E-14, D-14, C-14, B-15, A-15, G-15, F-15, E-15, D-15, C-15, B-16, A-16, G-16, F-16, E-16, D-16, C-16, B-17, A-17, G-17, F-17, E-17, D-17, C-17, B-18, A-18, G-18, F-18, E-18, D-18, C-18, B-19, A-19, G-19, F-19, E-19, D-19, C-19, B-20, A-20, G-20, F-20, E-20, D-20, C-20, B-21, A-21, G-21, F-21, E-21, D-21, 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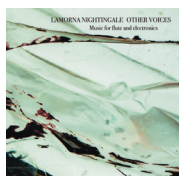
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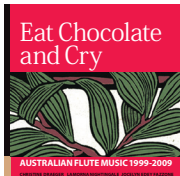
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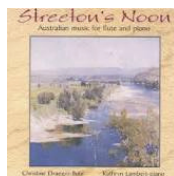
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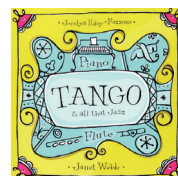
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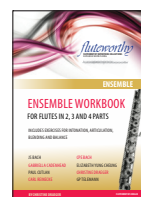
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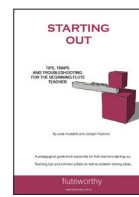
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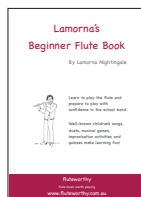
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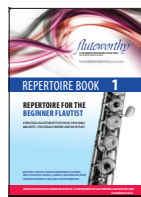
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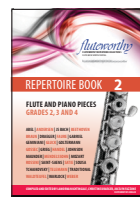
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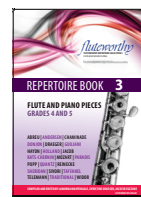
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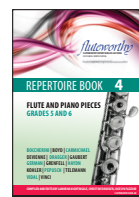
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