

Flute Instrumental Update 2

Hello again everyone. Here are some more general tips and hints to apply to your practice sessions at home. The most important thing is to enjoy practising, playing and performing on your instrument.



FOCUS OF THE WEEK

Articulation



We all know that playing the right notes in the right order is only the beginning of learning to play the music correctly. Composers are careful to show us exactly how the music should sound, some notes are tongued, some are slurred and then we have staccato, accents and tenuto markings to adhere to among others.

If you are just starting to learn the flute, begin by identifying how to tongue and how to slur, watch our video tutorial. <https://youtu.be/oThukg6rOD8>

Scales are one of the best ways to improve your articulation. Practise F major, G major and E minor either tongued or slurred until you have a good flow to them. If you are Grade 1 or 2 level work on going all the way up the octave in one breath then breathe at the top and go back down the scale, this applies whether you are tonguing or slurring. By Grade 2 you should be aiming to play the whole 1 octave scale in one breath. When you have 12ths or 2 octaves you may still need to breathe at the top to begin with.

Grade 4 and above

Use your scales and arpeggios to improved your mixed articulation. Try them staccato rather than tongued, it should be harder work! Then do 2 notes slurred and 2 notes tongued. In the arpeggios do 2 slurred and 1 tongued so you get a pattern of 3. Once you've got the hang of that you can reverse the pattern, 2 notes tongued and 2 slurred etc. If you're feeling brave try to tongue 1, slur 2 and tongue 1. You could try placing an accent on the first note in each group of 4 in a scale and on the first note in each group of 3 in an arpeggio. The more you can get used to different combinations of tonguing the easier your pieces will be.

Listen to James Galway playing Gossec's Tambourin, a Grade 6 piece, and take particular note of the different articulations he uses.

https://youtu.be/i_UKZMabdds



SIR JAMES GALWAY OBE

This is a name every flautist should be very familiar with as he is a world-renowned performer and teacher. He was born in Belfast in 1939 and was nicknamed 'the man with the golden flute' on account of the flute he played which was made of pure gold. When I started learning the flute, he was, and still is, a huge inspiration. He continues to travel around the world performing and mentoring flautists with his wife, herself an excellent flautist, Lady Jeanne Galway.

You can see and hear him performing in the link to 'Tambourin' above and if you search YouTube for his name you will see there are hundreds of performances to watch. It is well worth taking the time to listen to a variety of his pieces, some you'll be familiar with and many you won't. He makes it look effortless but don't be fooled, he still puts practice time in almost every day! Pay attention to his beautiful tone, warm vibrato, clear articulation and varied dynamics and be prepared to be wowed!!

Challenge of the week

'Hallelujah' is a well-known song by Leonard Cohen with many cover versions made over the years. The version below is great practice for playing in the lower to middle range of the flute while also thinking about the articulation we talked about earlier and how to count in 6/8 time. Lots of multi-tasking for you! It would be a good idea to listen to it and watch the music before trying to play along with the track. You can then pause the video so you can try small sections before you put it all together.

<https://youtu.be/o-GE6LKcjeU> Follow this link to see the music for Leonard Cohen's 'Hallelujah'. Enjoy!