

The Essence of Tone

I wrote the following tone exercises to address the production of open, clear, thick tone and the transition of that sound between registers. It is a constant challenge for developing flute players to produce clean, even tone in all three registers because of the differences between each. For instance, the low register often requires a more practiced, precise aim just to get any sound out at all (for beginners, anyway) while the middle register is the easiest in terms of response.

The first exercise is designed specifically to open up the low register by beginning with whichever middle-register note is the most thick, full, and resonant. For me, this note is "c." So, when playing this exercise, start by playing as loudly and fully as possible but do not follow a strict tempo. Rather, hang on to each note until it sounds as good as the previous note. One can also play very quietly, striving for the utmost control of intonation in the low register.

Exercise number two challenges the flutist to develop a smooth, rich, and controlled high register. Beginning in the middle register, the goal is to carry the best sound possible up into the stratosphere where us flute players so often find ourselves struggling with intonation, playing softly, and the projection of deep, rich sound. The key with this exercise is to make the leaps as silky and thick as possible while retaining the smooth line of the previous two half notes.

The final exercise is designed to aid in the transition between registers, beginning with the middle and low registers. The key is to start and retain the most open, clear sound possible, especially when descending as the tone can become airy. The eighth and sixteenth patterns challenge the flutist to find that same kind of tone when playing faster passages. Obviously, it is extremely important to keep the air flowing in order to achieve the same dynamic as in the slower patterns.

These exercises are merely guidelines used for the purpose of introducing a flutist to new approaches when it comes to developing good tone. They can be altered in any way the flutist desires in order to reach maximum potential. Happy practicing!


Joshua Hall

1. fff- with clear, open, resonant sound
2. ppp- with delicate, steady, clear sound

2

3. 

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 = 52-60



34

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, measures 34-37. Features a melodic line with slurs and accidentals (flats and sharps).

38

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, measures 38-41. Features a melodic line with slurs and accidentals (sharps).

42

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, measures 42-45. Features a melodic line with slurs and accidentals (sharps).

46

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, measures 46-49. Features a melodic line with slurs and accidentals (sharps).

50

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, measures 50-53. Features a melodic line with slurs and accidentals (sharps).

55

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, measures 55-58. Features a melodic line with slurs and accidentals (sharps).

59

Musical staff 7: Treble clef, measures 59-62. Features a melodic line with slurs and accidentals (sharps).

63

Musical staff 8: Treble clef, measures 63-66. Features a melodic line with slurs and accidentals (sharps).