

IN THE CLEAR: CLEAR STEPS TO IMPROVING YOUR TONE

**Dr. Kathleen Melago
National Flute Association Convention
Anaheim, California
August 14, 2010**

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Kathleen (Cameron) Melago is supervisor of music student teachers at Slippery Rock University and teaches music education and introduction to music courses. Additionally, Kathy teaches Introduction to Music Distance-Learning for the Community College of Allegheny County. She holds music degrees from The Ohio State University, University of Northern Iowa, and Slippery Rock University. While at Ohio State, Kathy worked as a graduate assistant for The Ohio State University P-12 Project, which is a university-wide initiative created to assist in improving Ohio's schools, with a special focus on the education of Ohio's underserved children and youth through the development of strong partnerships and the fostering of effective research and practice in P-12 education. She has taught music in Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Ohio, both in schools and privately.

Kathy enjoys research and writing, and has recently been published in *Flute Talk*, *Momentum*, *OMEA Triad* (Ohio), and *Pastoral Music*. She is a frequent contributor to The Principal's Office, a web resource that reaches over 5,000 subscribers throughout the state of Ohio each month and that is supported by The Interprofessional Commission of Ohio and The Ohio State University P-12 Project. She was the first-place winner in the Arts Division of the 2009 Ohio State University Hayes Graduate Research Forum at Ohio State. Kathy has presented for Ohio Music Educators Association Conferences, Outreach Scholarship Conferences, Pennsylvania Music Educators Association events, and at National Flute Association Annual Conventions.

Before she began her doctoral studies, Kathy taught flute and founded and directed the flute choir at Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa. Prior to that, she served as graduate teaching assistant at the University of Northern Iowa, teaching the Flute Techniques class for music education majors and applied flute lessons. Her principal flute teachers include Katherine Borst Jones, Angeleita Floyd, Stacey Steele, and Vanessa Candreva.

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What does good tone sound like to you?

Setting the Stage for Success

A Checklist of Basics

Tone Development - Low Register

Tone Development - Into the Higher Registers

Flexibility

Intervals

Lyrical Passages

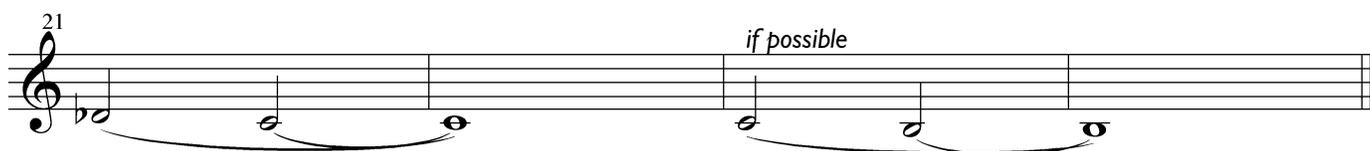
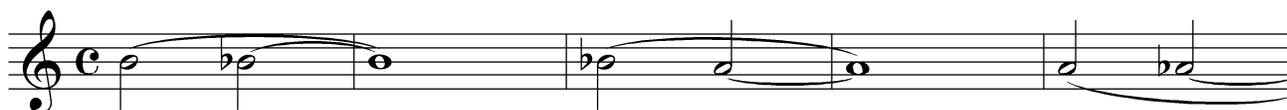
Troubleshooting

Taking Tone to the Next Level

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SLURRED LOW-REGISTER EXERCISE



Objectives:

- Rich, focused sound (not airy)
- Smooth connection between notes
- Even tone quality from the beautiful first note to the very lowest note on the flute

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ACCENTED LOW-REGISTER EXERCISE

Ha Ha

Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha

Tu Tu

Objectives:

- Rich, focused sound (not airy)
- Breath attacks, then tongued
- Even tone quality
- Fortissimo dynamic in the low register
- No cracked notes!

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OCTAVE EXERCISE

The musical score consists of seven staves of music in treble clef and common time. Each staff contains two measures of music, with a slur spanning across the measure boundary. The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: Measure 1: C4, D4, E4, F#4; Measure 2: G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff 2: Measure 1: C5, B4, A4, G4; Measure 2: F#4, E4, D4, C4.
- Staff 3: Measure 1: C4, B3, A3, G3; Measure 2: F#3, E3, D3, C3.
- Staff 4: Measure 1: C3, B2, A2, G2; Measure 2: F#2, E2, D2, C2.
- Staff 5: Measure 1: C2, B1, A1, G1; Measure 2: F#1, E1, D1, C1.
- Staff 6: Measure 1: C1, B0, A0, G0; Measure 2: F#0, E0, D0, C0.
- Staff 7: Measure 1: C0, B-1, A-1, G-1; Measure 2: F#-1, E-1, D-1, C-1.

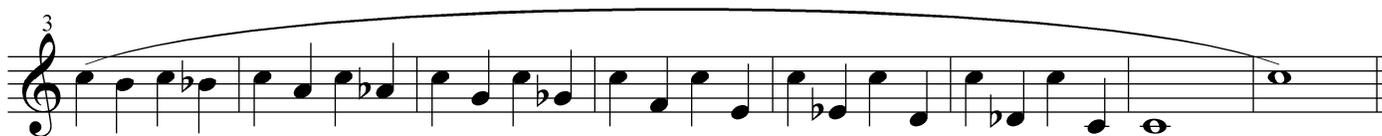
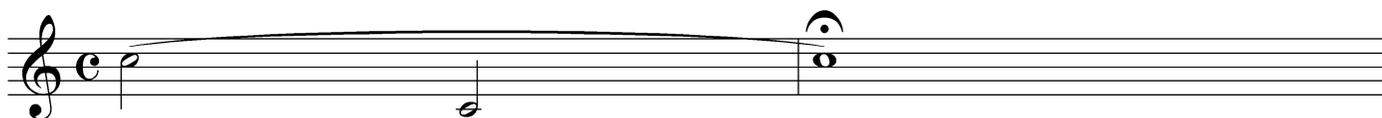
Objectives:

- “Drag” wonderful low register tone into upper register
- Even tone quality
- Resonant, focused sound – not airy
- Endurance
- Correct fingerings
- Keep air moving between notes/octaves
- Intonation – keep octaves in tune
- Minimal lip/jaw movement, if any

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FLEXIBILITY EXERCISE



Objectives:

- Keep an open and even sound always
- Be sure intervals are in tune and that every time you return to C, it has the same quality
- Play at various tempos, working to increase speed without missing notes

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INTERVAL EXERCISE

The musical score consists of five staves of music in treble clef with a common time signature. Each staff contains two measures of music, separated by a double bar line. The first measure of each staff is a half note with a fermata, and the second measure is a half note with a fermata. The notes in the first measure are: G4, A4, B4, C5. The notes in the second measure are: G4, F4, E4, D4. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a common time signature. The second staff has a '4' above the first measure. The third staff has an '8' above the first measure. The fourth staff has a '12' above the first measure. The fifth staff has a '16' above the first measure.

Objectives:

- Keep an open and even sound always
- Be sure intervals are in tune – check to be sure the third note in each measure is accurate with a tuner and/or with the rest of the section
- Work to improve tone, especially on the lowest notes.

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ADDITIONAL TONE RESOURCES

Dick, Robert. *Tone Development Through Extended Techniques*. St. Louis: Multiple Breath Music Company, 1986.

This book is extremely important as a source for studies to develop the extended techniques needed to play Dick's music, as well as many other avant-garde composers' music. A wealth of information is available in this book, making it a "must" for all serious advanced flutists.

Moyse, Marcel. *24 Petites Etudes Melodiques avec variations (facile) pour flûte*. Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1932.

This book is a collection of melodies in which tone should be the focus. One or more variations are given after each melody. Very little text is included. A general focus or goal is given for many of the exercises. These goals would help to foster finesse and expression in playing. The melodies are not technically difficult, but the difficulty lies in the expressiveness with which they are played.

Moyse, Marcel. *De la sonorite*. Paris: Leduc and Cie, 1934.

This book covers aspects of tone, including: timbre and homogeneity of tone in every register, suppleness of tone (especially in the low register), attacking and slurring notes, fullness of tone and management of tone in interpretation. In each section, the text is highlighted by musical exercises and examples. The difficulty level is fairly consistent throughout the book. The concepts are attainable by intermediate flutists, but they will continue to be valuable as the flutist becomes more advanced.

Moyse, Marcel. *Tone Development Through Interpretation*. McGinnis and Marx, 1973.

This book is a collection of tone exercises, excerpts from orchestral works, and arias. There are no written instructions or comments. These melodies are mostly not difficult. The difficulty lies in the expressiveness with which they are played. They are also meant to be transposed at sight.

Wye, Trevor. *A Trevor Wye Practice Book for the Flute, Volume I: Tone*. London: Novello and Company, Limited, 1980.

Trevor begins with general tone exercises that cover each register, and then he moves to specific areas that require separate attention. These specific areas include: Gnomes (E natural and F sharp), Tone Color, Breath Control, Flexibility, and Pitch Control. He ends the book with excerpts from the standard flute repertoire where his concepts would enhance the performance. This book is written well and presented well. Trevor gives good descriptions of each concept and includes practical applications of these concepts.