

ABSOLUTE FLUTE

VICTORIA HEATH

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Tricks of the Trade

With the cold weather recently, we may be struggling to stay in tune and to get our fingers moving. It is important to fully warm up when playing, so beginning your practice with some long tones, tonguing and scales can be really beneficial.

After our warmup exercises, well, it's on to tackling the hardest parts of your piece. This can be straight forward or... frustrating. Especially if you cannot get the finger changes right.

I thought I'd give some tips and tricks to help you with any pesky finger-work you may be coming across, whether that be trills, high notes or faster passages. Have an experiment with some of the fingerings in this issue and you may find something that helps you out!

You will also find the final installment of the history of the flute which touches on some of the changes we have seen in flutes since Boehm popularised his design. These make up some of the fun bells and whistles you might find on your flute today!

As always, I have included some music listening and events to have a look at. There are some fabulous workshops happening soon so do check these out.

Victoria Heath

In this newsletter you can expect:

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Alternative Fingerings on Flute - Why and When to use them

The flute generally has a single fingering for each note and this is taught from the beginning BUT sometimes we might need to use another fingering. There are many reasons for using alternative fingerings - intonation, tricky passages or legato playing. I will go through a few you might know (and hopefully a few new fingerings) below!

Bb keys - did you know there are 3 Bb fingerings on the flute?

- Bb thumb key - this should be used when Bb is in the key signature and there are not many B naturals (and no high F#s!).
- Long Bb - this uses the regular B fingering + the F key. This is useful for passages which you switch between B and Bb a lot.
- Bb lever - this is a fabulous option using the lever by your F key. This is helpful for Bbs in passages that are quick, where the main movement is in the left hand. It doesn't require much movement to press and operates less keywork for a seamless note change.

C#/Db in the stave - due to very few fingers being down for this note, it tends to get very out of tune. You can add any combination of fingers on the right hand to help flatten the note. This is worth an experiment!

High E - the normal fingering for this can be quite sharp and unstable. However, take the pinky finger off and it can really help the sound pop out more easily. Give it a try!

High F#/Gb - this note is notorious for being a pain to get out. It is normally sharp and unstable. Instead, try swapping your right hand 1st finger with the middle finger for an easier sound. This is especially useful for a quiet F# at the start of a phrase.

High G#/Ab - another unstable note here that can sometimes do with extra tlc. Next time you're playing this is a slow passage, try adding your right hand 2nd and 3rd finger to flatten and stabilise it.



Trills

Trills can be even more awkward when it comes to fingering so I have also added some good fingerings below for you here.

C-D (in the stave) - use C fingerings and your 1st trill key.

C-D (above the stave) - use C fingering and your 2nd trill key.

C#-D# - just use your pinky and both trill keys.

Eb-F - play your Eb and move your right hand middle finger.

E-F# - play E and move your right hand 1st finger.

Ab-Bb - finger Ab and move your left hand middle and 4th fingers.

High F-G - use your F fingering and move the thumb (also works for F#).

High F#-G# - use F# fingering and move thumb and left hand 1st finger.

If you would like to practice more trills, you can find them here: <https://www.flutetunes.com/fingerings/trills.php>



Tips, Tricks and Information Continued...

flutetunes.com

Maiden Lane

Traditional English

$\text{♩} = 160$



The History of the Flute - The Modern Flute

Following Boehm's flute design, the flute standard was set with a steady tone and efficient keywork systems in place. There were very few tweaks after this time.

Materials: After Boehm pushing the metal flute during his innovations, today's flutes are often made from silver, gold, or even platinum, allowing for richer tonal qualities.

Key Mechanisms: Innovations in key design continued, making it easier for you to play complex passages with fluidity.

- Briccialdi, introduced the lever for the thumb Bb fingering which gained popularity very quickly.
- The foot joint key design also changed in shape and placement to allow for better placement under the fingers.
- Offset Gs were introduced to help the players reach the key more comfortably and to reinforce the metalwork.
- Split E mechanisms added to make the pesky high Es easier.

Intonation: Modern flutes are engineered for better intonation. Makers began enlarging tone holes and using pads with holes in them to cover the holes but still allow for Boehm's fully vented design.

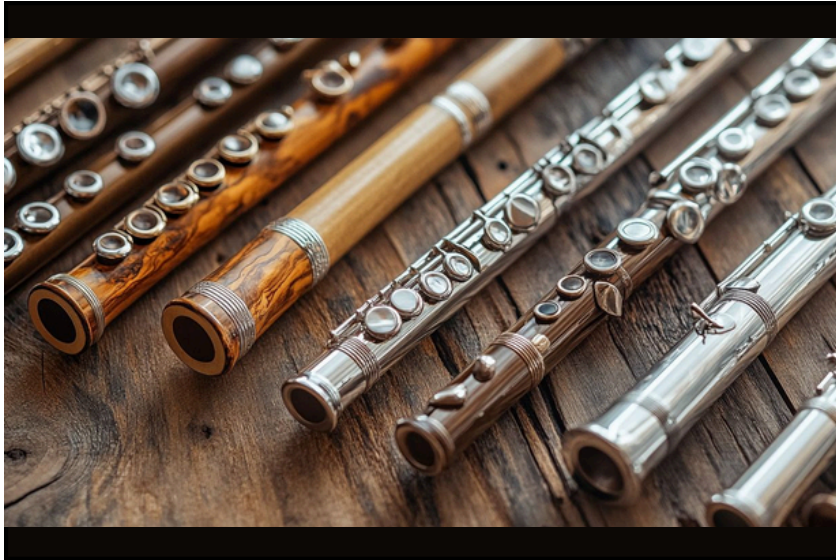
Customization: Many manufacturers now offer customization options, allowing you to tailor your instrument to your unique playing style.

- Extra keys added for trills (C# trill key).
- B foot joint added as an option.
- Kingma system flutes are now made which allow for microtones to be played (pictured to the right).
- Open and closed hole styles.

Exam Details

- ABRSM In Person Exam bookings are now closed. The exams will take place 23rd Feb 2026 - 28th Mar 2026.
- ABRSM Performance (Online) exams can be booked any time and videos submitted within a month.
- ABRSM Theory Exams can be booked any time.
- Trinity In Person Exam bookings are now open for this term!
- Trinity Digital can be booked any time and videos submitted within a month.





Monthly Music



Something classic:

Tchaikovsky - Sérénade
Mélancolique

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mtH29itxQk&t=21s>

Something unknown:

Esih - Something

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_2U_-PKE6s

Something a bit different:

Danse Espagnole

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jo6A8UI88BE>

Upcoming Events

Just Flutes

Flute Choir with Gareth McLearnon

Friday, 27 March 2026, 19:30 at
Just Flutes

[Not an upcoming event but I thought I'd share some photos of my music studio as I'm pretty pleased with it!](#)

Chamber Music Day at Just Flutes with Chris Hankin

Sunday, 14 June 2026, 10:00 at
Just Flutes

[Not an upcoming event but I thought I'd share some photos of my music studio as I'm pretty pleased with it!](#)

Janna's monthly Saturday flute class, Online

- 14th March (topic: a selection of Grade 1 - 3 pieces)
- 13th June (topic: Paul Harris "With a Hint of Lime" / Bryan Kelly "Prelude Francais")

<https://www.fluteschoollondon.co.uk/events>

Flute Retreat with Andrea Kuypers

Friday, 10 April 2026, 18:00 -
Monday, 13 April 2026 12:00 in
Cumbria

<https://www.justflutes.com/events/>

Flutes and Yoga Retreat

Sunday, 21 June 2026, 16:00 -
Friday, 26 June 2026 12:00 in
Asturias

https://www.justflutes.com/events/flutes-yoga-retreat?no_frame=1

The Conservatoire

Free On Fridays

Fridays 1:30pm

www.conservatoire.org.uk/events

13th March - Orion Trio

Music for Love and Hope

Wednesday, March 18, 2026,

2:00 PM-3:00 PM in Chard

www.chardmusic.com

Thank you for reading!

VICTORIA HEATH

www.victoriaheathmusic.com