

ABSOLUTE FLUTE

VICTORIA HEATH

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Expanding your Range

I hope you all had a great Easter Holidays and are enjoying the sunny weather we have been having recently.

Sometimes, this time of year, when the sun is out, we can lose motivation to play. We want to be outside, out with friends or even inside cooling off. It is coming to the end of the school year and perhaps we are also tired and busy waiting for summer.

If this is you, it may be time to find out some new repertoire that will bring a new bit of life into your playing this term. In this article, I have included some suggestions of good pieces and books to inspire you going forwards. This is not an exhaustive list though - if there is a piece you hear that you like, find the music and give it a go! (I did the same a while ago with a piece I liked from a video game - it was great fun and became a favourite in my concert!)

I also have a focus in this issue on flute embouchure - tricky to begin with and tricky to develop. It is important in change or sound, clarity, projection, register and dynamic range. So much depends on us having flexibility here.

I hope you find something useful here or, at the very least, enjoy listening to some music!

Victoria Heath

In this newsletter you can expect:

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Embouchure

There are many factors in flute that go towards creating a great sound, but one of the main elements is the embouchure.

Embouchure refers to the hole in the lips when we play flute - this is what the air comes through and it can affect your pitch, dynamic range and tone.

To get a great embouchure -

Start with your bottom lip covering roughly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the hole. This is a good guideline for beginning off. This can be adjusted a little for different size and shaped lips. The hole should be facing the ceiling.

Relax, try not to smile. Flute playing is fun, but smiling while playing the flute and pulling the corners of the lips back actually creates tension and will prevent the flexibility needed later on.

To **strengthen** the lips and embouchure, push the middle of your lips forward slightly while engaging the muscles in the middle of the lips. Keep the corners of the mouth relaxed or down instead of up.

Extra tips -

Note bends are great for increasing lip flexibility. You can use your bottom lip to bend the air up and down. This should alter the pitch of the note as well to go up and down. If you are struggling with this, you can use a device like a pneumo pro.

If you want to push this further, have a go at **whistle tones**. Aim a thin airstream up, splitting on the upper edge of the embouchure hole. You should hear a sound like wind whistling through the trees. This takes ultimate control especially if you aim for a long sustained whistle with no change in sound.

Rabbit movement - hold a low note and, in a mirror, try to maintain this while moving the top lip like a rabbit (up and down towards your nose). It is not practical while playing normally but funny and useful in a warm-up.

Keep the back of your **jaw open**, like a yawn or a gobstopper - yes it isn't technically embouchure but it'll make your sound louder and fuller!

The Greats

Even 'The Greats' do not have a picture perfect embouchure - this shows just how unique it is to each person. If your tone is great and you can do what you want on the flute, don't knock it!

My own embouchure is not ideal according to some. My hole is off to one side BUT it has flexibility and I can get the tones I want with it.

Pictures of the embouchures of some of the best flute players in the world on the next page!



Exam Details

- ABRSM In Person Exam bookings are currently open 29 April 2025 - 12 May 2025.
- ABRSM Performance (Online) exams can be booked any time and videos submitted within a month.
- Trinity In Person Exam bookings are currently open!
- Trinity Digital can be booked any time and videos submitted within a month.



Tips, Tricks and Information Continued...



Jean-Pierre Rampal



Marcel Moyse



Claude-Paul Taffanel



James Galway



Emmanuel Pahud



Aurele Nicolet



Julius Baker



William Bennett



Altamiro Carrilho

Music Suggestions

If you are not aiming towards exams, flute practice can sometimes slow down this time of year as things get busier. I have included a list of great pieces and books to get to supplement your learning and spice up your playing!

Beginner

- Razzamajazz Flute - Movie Buster
- Funky Flute book

Grade 1

- Fifty for Flute - Dreamy Flute
- 15 Popular Practice Pieces Grade 1 - A Sky Full of Stars

Grade 2-3

- The Chocolate Box - Vienese Vanilla Valse or Toffee Tango
- Winner Scores All for Flute - Mamma Mia

Grade 4-5

- Guest Spot - Jazz Playalong for Flute - Fly Me To The Moon
- Guest Spot - Big Film Hits Playalong for Flute - Everything Is AWESOME!!!
- Jazz Play-Along: 10 Disney Classics

Grade 6+

- Schocker - Flute Forest for Solo Flute
- Debussy - Syrinx
- Chaminade - Concertino
- Clarke - Sunstreams
- Gossec - Tambourin

Bonus Tips

If you are feeling tired of playing challenging music, try getting a simple study book. You can choose a piece at a level you want to try and try to play it as musically as possible. I particularly love this book:

125 Easy Classical Studies for Flute

Pick a piece, play it through. maybe then add some articulation, dynamics, breathing and shaping. See where you can take it!

Alternatively, look at the FluteTunes website for their daily pieces!



If you would rather get away from the music, try putting on a drone (you can find these on youtube) and improvising in the key of your choice. This is a very freeing and fun exercise to try!





Monthly Music



See below for a few music listening recommendations:

Something classic:

Blavet: Flute Sonata in G minor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6D-1sEEQKtQ>

Something unknown:

Cavicchi - Sonata for Two Piccolos and Piano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPBeYegiW-o>

Something a bit different:

I will not Be Sad in this World on Duduk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVxS0MsU9ak>

Events

The Conservatoire

Free on Fridays

This is happening every Friday at 1:30pm. Have a check out below for what is next!

<https://www.conservatoire.org.uk/events>

Alice in Wonderland Concert

1st June 2:00pm and 3:30pm
<https://www.conservatoire.org.uk/events/530-alice-in-wonderland-family-concert>

Lambeth Orchestra

(I am in this one!)

10th May 7:30pm
<https://www.lambeth-orchestra.org.uk/events/an-evening-of-slavic-masterpieces-sgsal-8eyae-wgk6f-7f9l5-wzcle>

Just Flutes Festival 2025:

Masterclass with Emily Beynon

16th August 9:00am-4:00pm
https://www.justflutes.com/events/?srltid=AfmBOog2tldgYlVRjISv2tFcAcuS9_iYzCEu1C2zD9slb-v2iLm5DcEe#gref

Chamber Music Day with Chris Hankin

Sunday, 8 June 2025, 10:00
<https://www.justflutes.com/events/?srltid=AfmBOopfKYZVo9qgre-27omS4EdZaL6THlowryU5x5frng-38CRp-Pl0v#gref>

For Sale:

1607 Altus brought in 2016 being rehomed due to an upgrade.

It's in lovely condition and available to trial in London.

Being sold for £2,500

If you are interested, please let me know and I can pass along the seller's details.



Thank you for reading!

VICTORIA HEATH

www.victoriaheathmusic.com