

ABSOLUTE FLUTE

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Faster Fingers on Flute

Happy 2026!

I hope your year has gotten off to a good start and you have gotten back into the swing of things. There is a big expectation this time of year to better yourself, make big goals and be at your optimal productivity. Maybe you made some new year's resolutions: to exercise more, to become a social butterfly, to practice music every day. However, it is worth considering if this is really an achievable pace to maintain all year?

I want to spend some time in this newsletter to think about ways to set both achievable goals as well as being able to recognise your achievements, no matter what size.

You will also find the third installment of the history of the flute and will look more specifically at the rise of the Boehm flute (the keywork system we largely use today). At the end of the Baroque period, the flute became a virtuoso instrument and would need to rise to the challenges presented at this time!

At the back of the newsletter, you will find some further musical recommendations and also some photos of my brand new home music studio!

Victoria Heath

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you can expect:

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Positive Mindset and Goals

Last January, I talked about how to set achievable goals using various methods. Today, I want to talk about noticing and celebrating your smaller wins - something we don't do nearly enough.

Your musical goals don't have to be big, but it is always a good idea to really see and recognise your own progress. This will allow you to feel proud and motivated to continue forwards along your musical journey. Below, you will find some small goal examples which you may want to celebrate this year!

- **Holding that note for 10/20/30 seconds.** Breathing is so important in woodwind playing so stretching that goal and adding another 5 seconds on this year is well worth it!
- **Getting on top that really hard scale.** It doesn't have to be fast, just focus on it being even and that will be a major win!
- **Play your piece without stopping.** This seems counterintuitive for a good practice, but making our mistakes feel like they were supposed to happen is a valuable skill. Continue playing to the end and aim to recover quickly - it is a great area to work on.
- **Learning that one piece you always wanted to play!** Is there a favourite theme tune, a pop song or a classic piece you want to play? You can absolutely learn it this year! There are so many tools out there you can use to find a version to suit your level of playing (or ask me to make one!).
- **Play a duet/ with someone.** Playing with others can be super rewarding so give it a go this year if you can. By doing this you can easily develop your ear, musicality, tuning and timing all in one go.
- **Perform to someone!** It can be an audience of stuffed bears, pet, a family member or friends. It doesn't need to be a hard piece, but any opportunity to play out can be a massive win for your confidence.
- **5 minutes a day.** Consistency is key when it comes to practice. Even 5 minutes a day spent effectively practicing can yield great results.
- **Start a listening diary.** Write down a piece of music you listen to each week. This will broaden your horizons and you will be a much better musician for it!



Musical Words

Find below a selection of musical words you may or may not know!

- Allant - Going on, lively.
- Polyharmony - Two or more streams of harmony played against each other; common in twentieth century music.
- Ruvivando - Animating, brightening up; quickening.
- Tacet - Literally, "he is silent". An indication that a performer is to be silent for some time.
- Mixolydian - The Gregorian mode based upon the fifth tone of the scale. This mode, based on G, includes all the tones of the C major scale.
- Transcription - Either notating an unnotated piece, or rewriting a piece, either simply recopying, or as an arrangement for another instrument.
- Minor - Term referring to a sequence of notes that define the tonality of the minor scale. The main difference from the major scale is the third, which is lowered by a semitone. The sixth and seventh degrees are usually lowered, too, generating the natural minor scale.



Tips, Tricks and Information Continued...

flutetunes.com

Moll in the Wad

Traditional Irish

$\text{♩} = 108$

6

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The History of the Flute - 1800s & Boehm

Theobald Boehm (1794-1881), was a Bavarian Court musician and industrial innovator. He was increasingly frustrated with the limitations of the wooden flute in the Baroque period. As keys were added to increase the chromaticism of the flute (up to the 8-key models), Boehm wanted to cultivate a louder sound, better key placement and simplify the fingerings of the flute.

After a trip to London, Boehm tried to enlarge the flute holes for better sound projection. In enlarging the holes, he had to devise keywork to cover them - they could no longer be comfortably covered by fingers. He created a 'full venting' system where the keys were placed at optimal positions and all rested in an open position. He then used interlinked rod-axels to control keys further from the fingers.

In 1832, Boehm introduced his metal conical bore flute to the markets but many players were not sure, saying the flute sounded too trumpet-like. He had to revert to wooden flutes with his added keywork to gain traction.

In 1847, he tried again to introduce a fully metal flute to the markets, this time with a cylindrical bore. This flute became quite popular in London and Paris, but German players were still a little reluctant due to the metal sound.

It wasn't until the early 20th Century that the Boehm flute was made in metal more often than wood, with his system being used increasingly widely. His design also helped influence clarinet and saxophone systems in the coming decades.

Exam Details

- ABRSM In Person Exam bookings are now opened from 13th Jan-26th Jan. 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.





Upcoming Events

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



Just Flutes

Chamber Music Day at Just Flutes with Chris Hankin

Sunday 1st February 10:00
https://www.justflutes.com/events/chamber-music-day-just-flutes-chris-hankin-2?no_frame=1

Janna's monthly Saturday flute class, Online

- 24th January (topic: Gossec's "Tambourin")
- Friday 13th February at 8pm (topic: "Prelude" from Suite Antique & focus on the high register)
- 14th March (topic: a selection of Grade 1 - 3 pieces)

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

Monthly Music



Something classic:

Saint-Saens - Volieres
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFJf3rHd69c&t=2s>

Something unknown:

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

Something a bit different:

Sissay & Scott - My Mountain Top
<https://soundcloud.com/astutemusic/flute-my-mountain-top>

The Conservatoire

Free On Fridays

Fridays 1:30pm
www.conservatoire.org.uk/events

23rd Jan - Micah Rose-Trespeuch (piano and original compositions)

30th Jan - Maria Jose Andrade (singer songwriter)

6th Feb - Cathal Herron (Jazz trio)

13th Feb - Elliott Morris (Guitar)

27th Feb - Ben Kempner (Jazz trio)

Thank you for reading!

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