

ABSOLUTE FLUTE

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Pulse, Pitch, and Pipes

From the piercing brilliance of the piccolo to the rich, resonant depths of the contrabass, the flute family boasts a staggering dynamic range and a kaleidoscope of tonal colors.

Unlocking the full expressive potential of the flute family requires far more than just pressing the right keys. Playing flute needs an understanding of the underlying rhythms, musicality and phrases within our pieces to really bring it to life.

As part of this, I have decided to explore a little of the elusive concept of vibrato in this newsletter. Vibrato is the key to emotion in our pieces but is notoriously hard to understand, control and explain. There are so many schools of thought on the 'correct' stylings of vibrato and can often present a minefield of information. I encourage players of all levels to have a try at this in lessons as, if you can master vibrato, you can really begin to tell a tale with your music!

Also included today are some fun rhythmic ideas to help you approach semiquaver rhythms with confidence as well as a dive into the top half of the western flute family. There are so many types of flute out there, I encourage you to have a look and listen to as many as you can (you might find a new favourite)!

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

Victoria Heath

In this newsletter you can expect:

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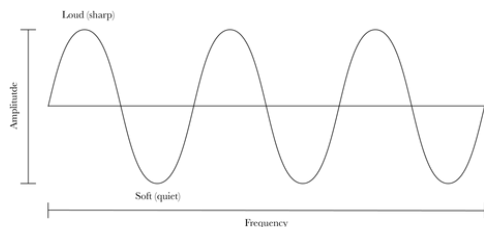
Vibrato on the Flute - What, How, Why and When to Use it!

James Galway wrote: 'Vibrato is another subject on which experts violently disagree, and all of them are right. If one thing rather than another expresses the individual, it is vibrato. There is no last word on what vibrato should be used, or how it should be varied to suit the musicality and individuality.'

Let's start with, fundamentally; what is vibrato?

Vibrato is the fluctuation or pulsing of air pressure to create movement within a single note. This can cause change in both the pitch and the volume of the sound you are producing. The use of vibrato only really started in the 19th century as a way to emphasise the peak of the phrase, with the technique being used more liberally from the 20th century on metal flutes into the present day.

Within music we always want to seek expression. Using vibrato can add movement, drama and intensity to your music. It can help your audience feel anguish, sadness or joy. Then, the moments we remove the vibrato can feel more poignant - a moment of complete stillness and serenity. Vibrato is a powerful tool as a musician but it is a tricky skill for most.



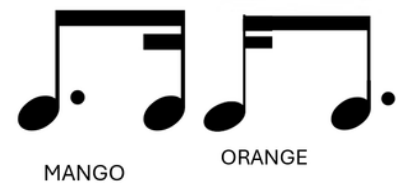
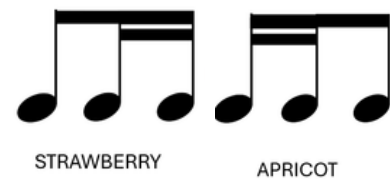
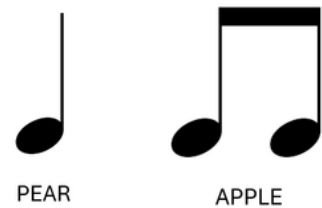
Flute players have a hard job of deciphering what is going on inside the body to create vibrato. Often, players can create 'nervous' vibrato - the shaking that comes across when there is tension in the throat, especially in exams and performances.

To learn vibrato, you must first be able to play a straight note with no fluctuations, using support from the diaphragm. Once this is achieved, we use the push and pull of the abdomen (intercostal muscles) to create a pulse. Start with a slow and deliberate pulse in the belly (see and feel the movement thinking 'ha'). Speed this up slowly and you will feel the external movements lessening and the internal pressure increasing and rising slightly to the chest. You will want to practice this as if it was a trill (measured and with a strong pulse) to begin with, before letting it flow in a variety of speeds and depths to create increases in intensity or 'shimmery' effects. Keep the pulse under control and the air flowing freely for the best results.



Rhythms

This half term I will be doing a special focus on semiquaver rhythms in lessons using fruits!



See if you can spot some of these rhythms in your pieces or by writing your own rhythmic composition!

Tips, Tricks and Information Continued...

flutetunes.com

Hardiman the Fiddler

Traditional Irish



Meet The Flute Family - The higher Members

The flute family has a long history and is made up of a variety of instruments. We all probably know of the C flute (concert flute) and the piccolo (the highest member of the flute family) but did you know there are flutes in between these?

The treble flute is in the key of G and is pitched a 5th above a concert flute. These are rare and only really found in Northern Ireland and Scottish flute bands now (after being left behind in the Renaissance).



There is also a Soprano flute which is in Eb, a minor 3rd above the C flute. These flutes were once used in marching bands to replace Eb clarinets when they were not available, any remaining Eb flutes now tend to be used for beginners with smaller hands.

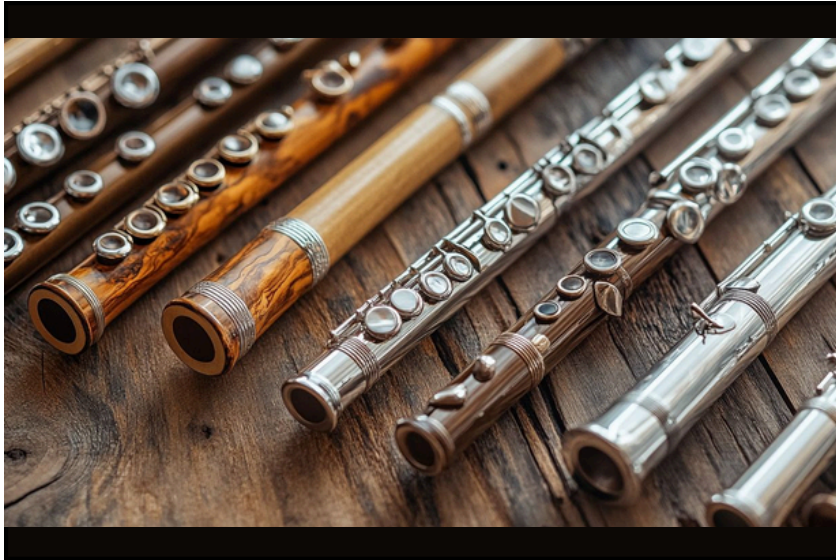
Flûte d'amour is another rarity which is pitched between a C flute and an alto flute. This instrument was developed during the Baroque period as part of the set of other 'd'amore' instruments, such as the viola d'amore and oboe d'amore instruments. This is sometimes also known as a mezzo-soprano flute and can be pitched in Ab, A or Bb. Verdi, Telemann and J.S Bach wrote pieces for this particular flute in chamber works, cantatas and sonatas.

Here is a video about the flute d'amour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyyvOBXe65o>

Exam Details

- ABRSM In Person Exam bookings are now closed. The exams will take place 8th June 2026 - 11th July 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:

Widor - Suite

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fCBOCc0bxs>

Something unknown:

Beeftink - Birds Flute Trio

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuy-1_3ThAQ

Something a bit different:

Painted Heart (on Dizi)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGYgz_cMCYE

Upcoming Events

Just Flutes

Chamber Music Day at Just Flutes with Chris Hankin

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

Lessons with Robert Winn

Saturday 14th August at Just Flutes

<https://www.justflutes.com/instore-events/lessons-robert-winn-2026-08-14>

Janna's monthly Saturday flute class, Online

- 13th June (topic: Paul Harris "With a Hint of Lime" / Bryan Kelly "Prelude Francais")
- 11th July (topic: Hindemith Sonata 3rd movement)
- 15th August (Doppler's Hungarian Pastoral Fantasy).

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

Flute School London Flute Day

Saturday 4th July, WCIH 9LP

Led by Janna Hüneke and Abigail Burrows, the day will focus on engaging ensemble sessions and practical workshops.

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

Blackheath Conservatoire

Free On Fridays

Fridays 1:30pm

www.conservatoire.org.uk/events

5th June - Irina and Chiara (Cello and piano)

12th June - Philip Lesley (piano)

19th June - Thomas Walsh (guitar)

Bristol events

Wissam Boustany - Rising from the Ashes

Saturday 13th June, 7:00pm BS8 3ED

<https://www.palmusic.org.uk/events/blog-post-title-one-cr7xc-834lb>

Rockhampton Folk Festival Saturday 20th June, GL13 9DX

[https://](https://www.rockhamptonfolkfest.org.uk/)

www.rockhamptonfolkfest.org.uk/

Thank you for reading!

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www.victoriaheathmusic.com