

TEXAS BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION

BEGINNER INSTRUCTION SERIES

"...STUFF THAT WORKS!"

FLUTE

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CLINICIAN

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Foreword

Teachers unselfishly helping teachers in a fiercely competitive setting is a tradition as old as Texas' school bands. In that tradition, the Texas Bandmasters Association is sponsoring a series of clinics on beginning instrumental teaching methods, presented by some of Texas' premier music educators during the 1995 and 1996 TBA Conventions in San Antonio, Texas. These master teachers, chosen from the ranks of superior music educators in the State, represent a wide diversity in geographic location, as well as, in teaching situations.

A session will be presented on six band instruments each with a companion handout. In these handouts, you will find teaching methods, and classroom organizational skills which are used successfully in today's schools. These clinics represent some tried and true ways of teaching, along with fresh new ideas, all with one common denominator: this is *'STUFF THAT WORKS!'* "

We acknowledge the efforts of the clinicians who prepared these booklets and, who also presented a clinic session. In addition we acknowledge the help and advice of Past TBA Bandmasters of the Year, Mel Montgomery, of Nacogdoches, and J.R. McEntyre, of Odessa. We also thank the many teachers from around the State who have shared their "secrets" for this project.

This series is respectfully dedicated to the legions of band directors who have gone before us and who have built the music education program that is unique in history: TEXAS' BANDS. Representing the best of this tradition was the 1990 President of TBA, the late Malcolm Helm, whose example and teaching inspired and challenged all of us.

Jim Hagood, President, Texas Bandmasters Association

CINDY BULLOCH

Cindy Bulloch is a native of San Angelo, Texas, and has earned Bachelors and Masters Degrees from West Texas A&M University in Canyon. While attending WTSU, Mrs. Bulloch studied flute with Dr. Gary Garner. Mrs. Bulloch is currently the band director at Nimitz Junior High School in Odessa, where during the last six years her bands have produced a high level of excellence. In 1993, the Nimitz Band was selected CCC Junior High Band runner-up. Prior to teaching in Odessa, Bulloch taught in Lewisville and Abilene. Mrs. Bulloch is currently serving on the UIL Prescribed Music List Committee and as Region VI Vice-President. Her affiliations include TMEA, TBA and Phi Beta Mu.

BEGINNING FLUTE INSTRUCTION

A HELPFUL GUIDE

presented by Cindy Bulloch, Nimitz Junior High School, Odessa

I. INSTRUMENT ASSIGNMENT

A. BEGINNING BAND - SUMMER SCHEDULE

1. All 7th grade beginning band students receive a letter in July concerning Summer Band and instrument appointments.
2. Parents meet on the first evening of summer band (around Aug. 1) to sign up for the parent/student interview.
3. Beginning students meet each afternoon for one week for orientation. The Selmer Music Survey is given on the second day to use as a reference, along with the sixth grade report card.
4. Interviews are held in the evenings on 10-15 minute schedules. This process takes approximately one week to complete.

B. THE INTERVIEW • FAVORABLE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Aligned jaw • underbite severely limits 1st octave tone and overall flexibility.
2. No “teardrop” upper lip • splits the air column. Student must have off center aperture to produce a tone.
3. How many flutes? I start 10 to 12. Some students selected for flute will eventually switch to oboe or bassoon.
4. **Equipment** and supplies • All students receive a “shopping list,” detailing specific supplies for class and home practice.
 - a. Good quality OPEN HOLE flute • develops superior hand position-and technique.
 - b. Mirror • Students learn by imitation of the instructor.
 - c. Wire music stand and metronome for home practice.
 - d. Method book, notebook and pencil.
 - e. White handkerchief • **NO CLEANING KITS!** Too many chemicals, used without supervision, can ruin pads and damage key mechanisms.

II. LESSON ONE

A . POSTURE

- 1 . Demonstrate how to sit on the front of the chair.
2. Place flute case in the back of the chair.

B. BREATHING

- 1 . Demonstrate and practice the proper way to breathe. Say the word “HO” backwards as you inhale. Throat will be relaxed and open, also enabling the jaw to relax.
2. Constantly remind the students to breathe and inflate the lungs 100%. Demonstrate the expansion at the waistline when inhaling.
3. Discourage overt extraneous movement, especially from shoulders.
4. Exhale, pushing from the stomach muscles. Students should put one hand on stomach to feel the air escaping. “Hiss” as you push supported air from the lungs.

C. EMBOUCHURE

- 1 . While watching the mouth in the mirror, say "pure." Observe the pout or extension of the bottom lip and corners of the mouth slightly in. The lip actually squashes out over the embouchure hole, covering approximately 1/3 of the hole. The aperture should be small.
2. Constantly stress that the jaw must be relaxed.

D. HEADJOINT

- 1 . Gently hold the **headjoint** with the left hand on the cork end and the right palm stopping the open end.
2. The edge of the tone hole should touch the line of the edge of the lip. There should be no pressure on the lip. NEVER "KISS AND ROLL."
3. RELAX! Do not press against the bottom lip or the embouchure hole will be too covered. Tone will be airy and unfocused.

E. TONE PRODUCTION

- 1 . Mirror on the music stand. Adjust music stand so that the student is looking straight forward, never down.
2. Review and reteach proper breathing and embouchure hole placement.
3. Blow across the embouchure hole with the open end plugged by right hand. The note produced should be an A.
4. Students must watch and listen as you demonstrate. They, in turn, imitate by watching themselves in the mirror and listening. A great listening **exercise** is to have students make suggestions in addition to your evaluation of each student. You should hear each student every day. Improper habits can be formed quickly at this stage.
5. Unfocused, fuzzy tone.
 - a. Aperture is too large.
 - b. Student is trying to blow all the air off the embouchure hole.
 - c. Embouchure hole may be on the lip or too high on the lip.

F. TONGUING

1. With the tongue, touch one taste bud behind the front teeth, close to where teeth and gums meet. Say "TOO."
2. Embouchure must remain consistent.
3. Tonguing THROUGH the teeth will result in unfocused tone. You will also hear the motion of the tongue as air begins. Unchecked, student will have difficulty playing short styles.

III. LESSON TWO - FLEXIBILITY

- A. With the open end of the headjoint closed, demonstrate how the note changes to a higher note by changing the direction of the air. Note produced will be an E.
- B. The **A** is produced when you play down, across the hole, and the E is produced when you play up, with faster air.
- C. Think "**aah**" for the low **A** and "**ooo**" for the higher E.
- D. Have students watch in the mirror as they say "**aah**" and "**ooo**." They should see their jaw move.

- E Add the tongue to the above syllables, making “taah” and “too” and blow with the proper embouchure (always watching the mirror!). Stress that the jaw must be relaxed to move freely.
- F. Now perform the previous step with the headjoint in place.
- G. Play four counts of a combination of the two notes. Students listen and copy. Good for listening skills.

IV. LESSON THREE

A. FLUTE ASSEMBLY

- 1 . Flute must never be assembled while touching or holding keys!
2. Hold the main body of the flute by the barrel with the left hand.
3. Hold the end of the of the foot joint in the right hand.
4. Hold the foot joint and attach by aligning the main body key rod down the middle of the Eb key. If you line the key rod to the foot joint key rod, the pinky finger cannot reach the Eb key.
5. While still holding the barrel of the flute in the left hand, attach the headjoint with the right hand. Align the outside edge of the embouchure hole with the center of the keys. Do not push the headjoint in completely - leave it out about 1/4" to 1/2".
6. To ensure that the headjoint is attached correctly every time, use fingernail polish to mark the alignment spot on both the barrel and the headjoint. The polish is harmless to the flute finish.
7. Cut a small square piece of masking tape and attach on the bottom of the flute, directly under the first trill key. This will mark the placement of the right hand thumb.
8. Never use a lubricant if there is difficulty assembling the flute. Check for dents and dirt.

B. HAND POSITION

- 1 . All fingers should close the key holes with the pad of the finger. Never use finger tips (they are the smallest part of the finger).
2. Hand position must always feel natural and relaxed. Never press! Failure to emphasize this most important issue will usually result in tension in the fingers, hindering dexterity.
3. LEFT HAND • rest flute in lap with headjoint pointing to the left.
 - a. Place thumb at 2 o'clock on the thumb key.
 - b. Rest the base of the first finger against the flute, just above the 1st key.
 - c. Finger #1 forms a box to close the first key.
 - d. Finger #2 forms a large **arch** to close the 2nd key.
 - e. Finger #3 forms a **very slight arch** to close the 3rd key. This finger should have special attention, especially on in-line flutes. If student has difficulty reaching the 3rd key, simply have him/her shift the wrist to the right. The 3rd finger should easily cover the key hole with no leaking. Held correctly, the left hand will be **perpendicular** to the flute.
 - f. The left hand pinky (I call the G# pinky) must be relaxed, arched just above the G# key. Allowing this finger to sag under the flute will result in finger #3 pulling away and leaking.

4. RIGHT HAND - This is easy!

- a. Have students pretend to hold a BIG **MAC™** hamburger. Keep the fingers relaxed so you don't smash your burger!
- b. With left hand in correct position, lift the flute to the right hand.
- c. The flute will balance on the thumb, under the the first trill key (and on the attached tape). Check that the thumb is turned naturally to the side and that it **does not hold the flute!** The thumb is a fulcrum used for balance only.
- d. Fingers 4,5, and 6 will be relaxed and arched to close their respective keys. The right hand pinky (I call the Eb pinky) will arch on the Eb key.
- e. Show students the proper way to bring the flute up to playing position. The right hand wrist should be relaxed and slightly arched. Do not allow the student to bend the wrist down.

5. **HAND POSITION DRILL** - Lay flute in the lap, headjoint pointing to the left. Say "GO!" and students find the correct hand position without looking down. Students stand up when they have it right. Playing this game every day for a week will keep most students from "hunting" for finger placement too long.

6. THE FIRST NOTE

- a. Show the students how to finger top line **F**. Next, show them how to spell the fingering for F: "Thumb, **1,2,3,4**, Eb pinky."
- b. Students orally repeat the fingering as they put down the fingers.
- c. Remind students that fingers 5 and 6 should rest **VERY CLOSELY** to the keys.
- d. Practice raising the flute up to playing position while fingering **F**. Check the mirror for correct embouchure hole placement on the embouchure.
- e. Play the **F**, then students repeat.
- f. Go down the row, you play, student plays. Explain to those who play 1st-space **F** instead of top-line **F** to blow more of the "**ooo**" with faster air.
- g. Next time you play down the row, have students tell the performer what they need to do for the correct pitch. Students learn faster when they give solutions and positive criticism to their classmates.

V. LESSON FOUR

- A. **THE STAFF** - Review the lines and spaces.
- B. **MORE NEW NOTES** - Review fingering for **F**. **Next**, teach **Eb** fingering. Students should spell **Eb: Thumb,2,3,4,5,6**, Eb pinky. Don't let them look down. Alternate playing **F** to **Eb**. (Encourage students to practice on a pencil when finished with work in other classes.) Next, teach **G** (above top line F). Students should again spell the fingering.
- C. "**MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB**" - Students can now play a song by rote.

VI. THE METHOD BOOK

- A. **REVIEW THE PRELIMINARY LESSON** at the front of the book.
- B. **LESSON ONE** - Begins with playing "**F**." Students should play this lesson easily.
- C. **FINGERING CHART** - Show students how to read it. The chart is a reference, not a crutch.
- D. **STAY AHEAD OF THE BOOK** - Add a new note by rote every couple of days until

students have learned the Bb scale. When a new note is introduced in the book, students are more at ease.

VII. THE DAILY WARMUP (see enclosed exercises)

- A. ROTE EXERCISES • These should progress and vary as the students become more advanced. They help develop technique and listening skills.
- B. OCTAVE SLURS • Can be taught by rote in the beginning, but should be read after the first month. Begin with **F**, playing octaves back and forth in half notes, then quarter notes. Watch the students and insist that they move the bottom lip. They can change octaves by overblowing, but quality of tone is poor. Eventually the exercise should include all notes chromatically from 1st-line **E** to 3rd-space **C#**.
- C. C SCALE DESCENDING • Begin on 3rd-space **C**. Slur C down to B; then C,B,A; then C,B,A,G; etc to low C. Crescendo as each note is added. The jaw should gradually move down as the scale progresses. (Air should get “warmer” as the scale progresses down.) Strive for focus, edge and a BIG SOUND!
- D. VIBRATO EXERCISE • Begin by the second month. Vibrato is easy to teach when using the breath-impulse approach.
 - 1. Pulse whole notes in **12/8** time on the F scale.
 - 2. Variation 2 • see enclosed handout.
 - 3. “The Train” • pick a note, conduct each “pulse”, increasing to a spinning speed, then decreasing to stop.
- E. TONGUE/FINGER EXERCISE • Second Semester.
- F. DOUBLE TONGUE EXERCISE • Second Semester.
- G. THE CHROMATICE SCALE • begin ASAP, add notes often.
- H. MAJOR SCALES • I teach F and Bb scales by second month. Second octave of-the F scale is generally easy to learn early on.

VIII. GOALS FOR THE FIRST YEAR • Students can learn as much as YOU think they can!!!!!!.

- A. Pretty, focused tone.
- B. Flexibility! First octave must have edge and volume, third octave must be controlled, but not overblown. Blow low notes down and slow, high notes up and fast.
- C. First six major scales • C, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db.
- D. Chromatic scale • The range of the instrument, 3 octaves, C to C.
- E. Great hand position. No bad habits.
- F. Know when to use thumb Bb, “one and one” Bb, and lever Bb.
- G. Double tonguing • They may not be proficient, but have the tools necessary for development.
- H. Vibrato • Again, the students may not be proficient, but they do have the exercises to help develop vibrato.
- I. Ability to count and subdivide in simple and compound time.

IX. COMMON QUESTIONS

- Q: What can I do with a student who plays with a fuzzy sound?
- A: Several problems could be occurring.

1. The aperture is too big, and the jaw needs to come forward more.
2. The student may not understand that the air column must split and may be trying to blow all of the air into the hole.

Q. What do you do with students who have problems because of braces?

A: Don't press! Try to create a vacuum between the braces and the upper lip so that air does not escape in the space created by the braces.

Q: When do you take away the finger plugs?

A: Give the students a specific day (usually by the 5th week or earlier). On the set day, take up the plugs from everyone. Go "Cold Turkey!" If you have insisted on good hand positions, students will have very few problems by the 3rd day. If there are problems with some students, remind them to use the pad of the finger, feel the entire hole of the key, and stay relaxed.

Q: Why does my flute section play extremely sharp in the third octave?

A: These players are aiming the air for a High C on all the notes. Get the jaw lower and relaxed. Don't overblow. Play "warmer air."

Q: Do you have any visuals you use for certain notes?

A: For lower notes, blow down and slow. For higher notes, blow up and fast.

Flute Exercises

Octave Slurs

Musical notation for Octave Slurs exercise. The exercise is written on a single staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of a sequence of eighth notes, each slurred over an octave. The notes start on middle C and ascend to G5, then descend back to middle C. The notes are: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The slurs connect notes that are an octave apart.

C Scale descending

Musical notation for C Scale descending exercise. The exercise is written on a single staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of a descending scale of eighth notes: C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The notes are grouped into pairs of eighth notes, and each pair is slurred together. The slurs are placed below the notes.

Vibrato Ex. #1

Musical notation for Vibrato Ex. #1 exercise. The exercise is written on a single staff in treble clef with a 12/8 time signature. It consists of a series of eighth notes, each slurred over an octave. The notes start on middle C and ascend to G5, then descend back to middle C. The notes are: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The slurs connect notes that are an octave apart.

Vibrato Ex. #2

Musical notation for Vibrato Ex. #2 exercise. The exercise is written on a single staff in treble clef with a 12/8 time signature. It consists of a series of eighth notes, each slurred over an octave. The notes start on middle C and ascend to G5, then descend back to middle C. The notes are: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The slurs connect notes that are an octave apart.

Double Tongue - Bb Scale

Musical notation for Double Tongue - Bb Scale exercise. The exercise is written on a single staff in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of a series of eighth notes, each slurred over an octave. The notes start on middle C and ascend to G5, then descend back to middle C. The notes are: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The slurs connect notes that are an octave apart. Above the notes are the following tongueings: KuKuKu TuTuTu KKKKK TTTTT KKKTTT KKKKK TTTTT etc.

"The Train"

Musical notation for "The Train" exercise. The exercise is written on a single staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of a series of eighth notes, each slurred over an octave. The notes start on middle C and ascend to G5, then descend back to middle C. The notes are: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The slurs connect notes that are an octave apart.