
Principles of Elocution (2006)
For Flute Alone

Jonathan Sokol

Principles of Elocution (2006) For Flute Alone

written for Erin Hunt

Jonathan Sokol

jonathan_sokol@yahoo.com
www.jonathansokol.com



SP - 00015

Performance Notes

Durations

I. Articulation: 0:50”

II. Inflection: 1’40”

III. Accent & Emphasis: 0:30”

IV. The Voice: 1’20”

V. Gesture: 1’45”

Total: approx. 6’05”

Accidentals apply only to the notes in which they proceed.

Preface

Speak the definitions of the movement titles before performing each movement (they are written in the score). Since these definitions will not appear in the program notes, the interaction between the player and the listener is imperative. Elocution is, after all, proper speaking (with attention to pronunciation, grammar, style and tone).

Though most of the following ideas are expressed in the score, they are expanded upon in these performance notes for further clarity.

I. Articulation

All articulations, dynamics and durations should be exaggerated to their furthest extremes. For instance, the first rest after the opening note, a written suggestion of four seconds, is the longest silent duration in the movement and should therefore be treated as such. This does not mean that it must be four seconds exactly, but only that it should be longer in comparison with the following silences. The same idea applies to the loudness and softness of the dynamics, and the differing lengths of the articulations.

Additionally, the grouping of C#’s near the beginning (the slow to fast collection) should not be limited to the seven written notes, but should instead include as many as the individual performer wishes to play (this idea also applies to the similar event in the final movement).

Notes that have syllables above them (i.e.: **Ta**, **Ka**, **Ch**) should be played by pronouncing those syllables at the onset of the attack.

The overall character of the movement is quick and light, but the fast passage-work should not be a temptation to rush over the long silences and prolonged notes.

II. Inflection

Inflection, in addition to the definition given on page 2 of this manuscript, is a potent musical concept, whereby notes of resolution (i.e., cadential notes) may change while the overall collection of notes or ‘tonality’ remains unvaried. Since this piece does not rely on tonal centers or “keys”, the performer must convey this idea with clarity.

Notice that each small grouping of notes (anywhere from two to five notes) begins and ends in completely different ways. While the final resolution note may have

occurred previously in the movement, the approach to it is different each time; the same can be said of each phrase's beginning (phrases are clearly identified with a breath mark).

Be deliberate with each successive note change by almost dwelling on the change to the next resolution. The tempo indication of **Slowly** only reflects the idea that each phrase should be expansive; in addition, when a phrase ends with a *fermata* over the resolved note, that note is to be held as long as the performer's remaining breath allows.

III. Accent & Emphasis

The two opposing forces of *Accent & Emphasis* are Key Clicks and Residual Tones, the latter being a deliberate un-focusing of the sound. This is produced by holding the flute at a 35° - 40° angle downward from normal playing position; it can also be described as the position in which one plays when one wants to hear the result of their practicing but does not want to play loud enough for others in proximity to hear.

The Key Clicks are notated with "x" note-heads. Normal note-heads are to be played as Residual Tones unless otherwise denoted as *full tone*. The indication to perform them is signified by the large beaming connections. This, of course, demands control over the positioning of the flute as these two oppositions alternate.

A further addition to these two techniques is the speed at which they are played. The Residual Tones should be played as fast as possible; the Key Clicks, though almost always written as sixteenth notes, should be performed with the quarter-note near 72 to allow space for the "notes" to speak. (The marking *in time* near the center of the movement also refers to the quarter at 72).

IV. The Voice

As explained in the preamble (spoken part) to this movement, the natural pitch of the speaking voice involves a keynote (the pitch that the voice most readily returns to when it is tired). This is emulated musically with G#4, the center for the small range of this movement. If viewed as a spoken statement, it becomes obvious that G# serves as a "tonal center" for *The Voice*.

The main musical force behind *The Voice* is the act of blowing air through the flute. This is notated with diamond shaped note-heads, those conventionally used to notate harmonics in string music (any other technical instructions are explained clearly in the score).

Several ideas from previous movements apply to *The Voice*: *fermatas* should be held as long as possible, suggested durations can be altered so long as they balance with the remaining ones and the tempo indication only implies a general character for the movement. Syllabic pronunciations are taken further in this movement but are to be performed in the same way.

V. Gesture

This movement is divided into seven small phrases, clearly identified with either a rest or a breath mark. Each phrase is to be played as long as possible, as long as breath can be supported. If needed, one can stagger extra breaths; they are marked as (‘).

Although the material in *Gesture* is technically less difficult than the preceding movements and contains little to no extended techniques, it is the communicative properties that provide the challenge. Preparing breath distribution beforehand is essential to successfully communicating the seven phrases of *Gesture*.

As with *Articulation*, the grouping of E's in the third phrase (fast to slow) are not limited to the seven written notes, but should instead include as many as the performer's remaining breath allows. In addition, these notes alternate between natural and harmonic fingerings, marked as n and o.

-Jonathan Sokol

Program Notes

Principles of Elocution was heavily influenced by the teachings and writings of William H. McGuffey (1800 – 1873). McGuffey, a minister, teacher, lecturer and former president of both Ohio University and Woodward College (Cincinnati), is accredited with the creation of the first schoolroom textbooks, *The McGuffey Readers*.

In the Introduction to the sixth of these readers, the subject of elocution is introduced and detailed, and is later supported with excerpts from the literary canon. The Introduction is outlined into six categories, and all but one of those categories finds a musical counterpoint in *Principles of Elocution: Articulation, Inflection, Accent and Emphasis, The Voice and Gesture* (the category not used, incidentally, is called *Instructions on Reading Verse*).

In writing *Principles of Elocution*, I made a conscious effort to transcribe McGuffey's teachings of vocal speaking into musical terms. For clarity of this transcription, the performer reads McGuffey's literal definition of each term before each movement is played. The resulting interaction between performer and listener emphasizes the concept of elocution as public speaking, but the gesture, vocal tone and delivery of the subject through musical interpretations expand the idea.

Dur.: c. 7'

For Erin Hunt

Principles of Elocution

for flute alone

Jonathan Sokol (2006)

I. Articulation

Speak before playing:

Articulation is the utterance of the elementary sounds of a language, and of their combinations.

Paced

Musical notation for the 'Paced' section. It includes exercises with dynamic markings such as *fp*, *sf*, *ff*, *pp*, *mp*, *molto*, and *sfz*. Performance instructions include "4\"", "2\"", "3\"", "(slow to fast)", and a triplet of 3 notes.

As fast as possible

Musical notation for the 'As fast as possible' section. It includes the syllable "ta - ka ch" and dynamic markings such as *f*, *fp*, *ff*, *sfz*, *mf*, *pp*, *ppp*, *f*, *mp*, and *f*. Performance instructions include "2\"", "start slow; quick accel. to *", and "Deliberately".

Deliberately

Musical notation for the 'Deliberately' section. It includes triplet exercises and dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, and *ff*.

(fl. tg.)

Musical notation for the '(fl. tg.)' section. It includes slurs and dynamic markings such as *sf* and *ff*. Performance instructions include "2\"".

(fl. tg.)

Velocè!

Musical notation for the '(fl. tg.) Velocè!' section. It includes dynamic markings such as *sfz*, *ff*, *sfz*, *fp*, *f*, *p*, *f sub.*, and *n.*. Performance instructions include "short" and "molto".

LH Th (Bb), 2
RH 2(tr), 3(tr)

II. Inflection**Speak before playing:**

Inflection is a bending or sliding of the voice either *upward* or *downward*.

Slowly

feel the weight of each resolution

, bend , bend ,

n < *f* *mf* > *n* *p* < *mf* *pp* *sub.* *pp* < *mp* *f* > *pp* > *n* *f* > *pp*

separate, defined

mf > *n* < *mf* > *pp* *pp* *possible* *n* < *sf* *p* < *f*

bend bend bend

p > *n* *mf* > *pp* *p* > *pp* *mp* *p* > *n*

III. Accent and Emphasis

Speak before playing:

The syllable in a word which is uttered more forcibly than the others, is said to be *accented*. Emphasis consists of uttering a word or phrase in such a manner as to give it force and energy, and to draw the attention of the hearer particularly to the idea expressed.

For ♩, ♩ = 72

♩ = Residual Tones - as fast as possible;
flute held at downward angle: ↘

The musical score consists of seven staves of music in treble clef, primarily using eighth and sixteenth notes. The first staff begins with a 'short hold' on a dotted quarter note, followed by a series of eighth notes with slurs and accents. Dynamics include *ff*, *n*, *sf*, and *pp*. The second staff continues with eighth notes and includes dynamics *f*, *p*, and *f*. The third staff features a series of eighth notes with dynamics *p*, *f*, *p*, and *f*. The fourth staff has a bracketed section labeled 'full tone in time (♩ = 72)' and includes dynamics *mp*, *f*, *mf*, *ff*, *ff*, and *pp sub.*. The fifth staff is a single line of music with a bracketed section labeled 'full tone'. The sixth staff is marked '(fl. tg.)' and shows a dynamic shift from *ff* to *p*, with a final section marked *f*, *p*, *f*. The seventh staff includes a bracketed section labeled 'full tone (on D, F, F#)' and another labeled 'short as fast as possible', with dynamics *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *f*, and *p*.

IV. The Voice

Speak before playing:

The **natural pitch** of the voice is its keynote, or governing note. It is that on which the voice usually dwells, and to which it most frequently returns when wearied. It is also the pitch used in conversation, and the one which a reader or speaker naturally adopts - when he reads or speaks - most easily and agreeably. The **compass** of the voice is its range above and below this pitch. To avoid monotony in reading or speaking, the voice should rise above or fall below this keynote, but always with reference to the sense or character of that which is read or spoken. The proper natural pitch is that above and below which there is most room for variation.

Slow until next indication

blow air through flute;
finger G#; no tone

at least 5" 3" - 4" Sh Ch lyrical; slowly gradually dim. into just air Ch Ta Ch

mf < *sf* *mf* > *n* *p* *pp* < > *pp* > *n* *p* > *ppp* 3

Excitedly

As fast as possible,
with full tone

1/2 speed; play lower stems;
echo hum upper stems

blow air through flute bend Ch Sh Sh Ta Ka Ta

mp < *n* *mp* > *sf* *f* < *piú f* *p* *mf* > *p*

Excitedly

as fast as possible

lyrical; slowly as fast as possible

mp *pp* *mf* *f* > *p* *f* > *p* < *f* < *sf* *sf*

LH Th. 3, 4, 5 LH Th. 3, 4
RH 2, 3, 4, 5(Eb) RH 2, 3(tr), 4(E)

(fl.) (♩ = 84) air to full to air

sf *fp* < *rfz* > *pp* *pp* *piú pp* *ff* *pp* < *mp* > *n*

quick dim.!

V. Gesture

Speak before playing:

Gesture is that part of the speaker's manner which pertains to his attitude, to the use and carriage of his person, and the movement of his limbs in delivery.

Slowly, Drawn out

treat all tenutos affetuoso

alternate between normal and harmonics

The musical notation for 'Slowly, Drawn out' consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a melodic line with a 'molto ten.' marking above it. Dynamics include *mf*, *n*, *pp*, *f*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. An '(echo)' marking is placed above a note. The second staff continues the melody with a triplet of eighth notes, a trill, and further melodic development. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *mf sub.*, *n*, and *mp*. A final chord is marked with a circled '3'.

Quickly, Sporadically

Slowly, as beginning

The musical notation for 'Quickly, Sporadically' and 'Slowly, as beginning' is on a single staff. The first section, 'Quickly, Sporadically', features a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It includes a series of rapid, sporadic notes with dynamics *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *fp*, *sf*, and *f*. The second section, 'Slowly, as beginning', starts with a circled '3' and a dynamic of *sfz*, followed by a long note with a dynamic of *n* and a 'molto dim.!' marking.