

Theobald BOEHM

24 Caprices Études for Flute

Edited and performed by Sir James Galway



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[MUSIC]

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for Solo Flute

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Introduction

In writing these short pieces, Boehm gave us 24 miniature gems incorporating the difficulties we face daily while playing the flute. Many of the études require work with the low octave and will demand the revision of the position for the right hand. They are of course difficult to play, but using the method of practice I have outlined, you will learn to play in all the major and minor keys with an unimaginable fluency. Boehm gave precise instructions in some of the studies and very little in others. I have inserted some slurs and dynamics to help you play them.

Breathing

I would like to draw your attention to breathing and what happens when a flautist takes a great breath. Before you take a breath in the middle of a piece, you open your mouth, surrendering your good embouchure. Would it not be better to keep your good embouchure formed, breathing in through the lips and nose? I personally take many more breaths than many of my colleagues.

In most music, a breath is unfortunately marked in only one way, while there are many ways to take a breath. In this edition, the breath marks are of two kinds: (√) being a very quick and short breath whereas (') is a regular breath mark. For a short breath, I would recommend that you don't open your mouth so much, but that you acquire the technique of taking a lot of breath in the embouchure position as described above.

Performance and Practice Notes

Accents (>) should not be forced, but rather be played more expressively and with a good, fuller tone than the notes which follow. Sometimes, I will use the tenuto (-) sign to indicate a note requiring a fuller expression.

Several of the études have to do with fingering, dealing with the acquisition of a smooth touch on the keys. When practicing these studies, you should try at all times to play with a soft touch on the keys, and not to slap the keys as many players do. This smooth touch also helps with a better *legato*. The way to go about practicing these studies is to use a different rhythm. There are examples included with the études below where this method is particularly helpful.

The *Caprices Études* can be broken down as follows:

- Training for the fingers: Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 15, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24
- Training for trills: No. 5
- Training for tonguing and articulation: Nos. 6, 9, 10, 16, 19, 22
- Training for flexibility: Nos. 7, 19, 22
- Training for *legato* and soft fingering: Nos. 8, 20
- Training for lyrical *legato* and flexible embouchure: Nos. 11, 12, 13, 14, 20

No. 1 in C Major, p. 8: This étude is among the most difficult and is aimed at getting a good position for the right hand. The right hand should be inclined to the right with the thumb behind the F key of the flute. This position is aimed at giving increased length to the third and fourth fingers, making it easier to play the low notes of the flute. Try to cultivate a soft touch on the keys, perhaps keeping in mind the difficulties of *Daphnis and Chloe* and the middle of the third movement of the Prokofiev *Sonata for Flute*. Use the following examples to practice this étude:

1. etc.

2. etc.

3. etc.

4. etc.

No 2 in A minor, p. 10: While learning the notes of this étude, and indeed any of them, it is advisable to play a little under tempo, using a different articulation and rhythm as suggested for No. 1. In playing studies like No. 2, one often succumbs to the habit of playing metronomically. To avoid this, one must learn to play a little more broadly while maintaining the same beat. When playing soft, try to play *dolce*. These little tips will help you to bring your own interpretation to the study in question.

You will notice Boehm suggests playing the same phrase loudly and softly. His newly-invented flute had much more dynamic possibilities and we need to train the embouchure to take advantage of these qualities.

I have left all Boehm's markings while adding those of my own. You will notice in the first two bars Boehm uses the (>) sign and you have to consider what this means. I feel that it indicates that you should stress the note with your best tone, rather than an accent.

Bar 17 is a good place to begin to play *dolce* and softly. Bar 33 is where you should try to play broadly while maintaining the tempo. Bar 41 is where you should try to play *piano* while maintaining the tempo. At Bar 101, try to play as softly as possible and use the softest touch you can. Use these patterns to develop your touch while playing at a good tempo:



Also try the following articulations:



No. 3 in F major, p. 12: This beautiful study is very good for developing your finger technique. Bar 3, for example, is right over the break and is very helpful for the interpretation of the last movement of the Poulenc sonata. Play it using the right index finger for the B flat.

The whole study can benefit from playing groups with different rhythms. Use the same articulations as in Study number 2. I would recommend using these articulations right at the beginning of studying some of these études. By using these articulations a little under tempo to begin with, you will find you can learn the notes more quickly.

In bars 25-26 you might like to spend more time on this important difficulty, same as in bars 45-46~

Articulation patterns:

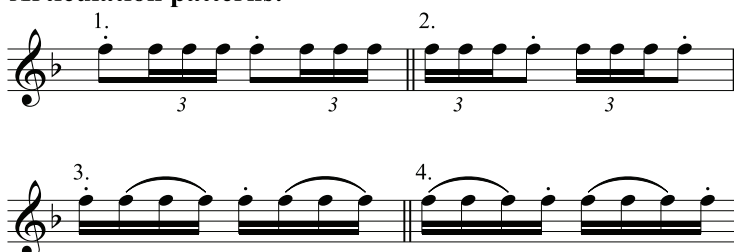


Also:



No. 4 in D minor, p. 14: This is another study in which Boehm demonstrates the superiority of his flute over that of the simple system flute. When you begin to study this étude, you should try at all times to use the correct fingering. Don't be lured into playing it too fast, because of the ease in which the first four bars can be played. Boehm has indicated you should play *forte*. That means with a full tone and not forced. In bars 5 and 6, use the correct fingering and do not be tempted to play these bars with the trill keys. Bar 9 is particularly difficult and you might want to pay attention to your hand position. Bars 13,14 and 15, again, need to be played with the correct fingering.

Articulation patterns:



THEOBALD BOEHM was a goldsmith and inventor of the Boehm flute (1847). He was also an engineer, composer, industrialist, and the director of the Bavarian steel works. In addition, he was the solo flutist of the Bavarian state Opera, and a well-known soloist and teacher. He played many of his own compositions on the numerous tours he undertook in his lifetime.

This publication, Boehm's *24 Caprices Études*, edited by flute legend Sir James Galway, includes all of the original expression markings, augmented by Galway's own indications for breathing, dynamics and articulation as he performs them. At the heart of the edition is Sir James' detailed notes for each étude, including practice techniques, playing tips, interpretive advice and more, enabling a depth of mastery on the flute to be found in no other place.

“In writing these short pieces, (Boehm) gave us 24 miniature gems incorporating the difficulties we face daily while playing the flute. These études require a great deal of work, but using the method of practice I have outlined, you will learn to play in all the major and minor keys with an unimaginable fluency.”

Sir James Galway



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The living legend of the flute, Sir James Galway is regarded as the supreme interpreter of the classical flute repertoire. Through his extensive touring, over 30 million albums sold, Sir James has endeared himself to millions worldwide. Belfast born, Sir James studied in London and Paris before embarking on his prestigious orchestral career with Sadlers Wells and Royal Covent Garden, the BBC, Royal Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestra, and then solo flautist with the Berlin Philharmonic under Herbert von Karajan.

Since launching his successful career as a soloist in 1975, he has performed with the world's leading orchestras and most prestigious conductors and has shared the stage with an amazing array of entertainers. Alongside his busy performing schedule, he makes time to share his wisdom and experience with the young through the Galway Flute Academy; encompassing his educational programs and online flute series, *First Flute*.

Among the many honors and awards for his musical achievements are the Recording Academy's President's Merit Award, Classic Brits & Gramophone Lifetime Achievement Award, and induction into the Hollywood Bowl Hall of Fame. Sir James received an Order of the British Empire (OBE) award in 1979, and Knighthood in 2001 from Queen Elizabeth II.

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