TONE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EXTENDED TECHNIQUES

ROBERT DICK

As a composer and performer, Robert Dick is a leading proponent of contemporary music and is known worldwide for his command of extended techniques for flute. His compositions, primarily for solo flute and solo bass flute, convey the musical language he has created through his invention and development of new sounds and techniques. Mr. Dick is the author of *THE OTHER FLUTE: A Performance Manual of Contemporary Techniques, TONE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EXTENDED TECHNIQUES, FLYING LESSONS: Six Contemporary Concert Etudes (Volumes I and II),* and *CIRCULAR BREATHING FOR THE FLUTIST.* All of Robert Dick's books are published by Multiple Breath Music Company.

Mr. Dick has performed as a solo recitalist throughout the United States, Scandinavia and Europe, and has given masterclasses at universities and conservatories on both continents. These include the Curtis Institute, Manhattan School of Music, Yale University, the Paris Conservatory, the Royal Dutch Conservatory and the Royal Academy of Music in London. As a teacher, he has been widely praised for the effectiveness and originality of his methods, his ability to relate extended techniques to traditional playing, and his capacity to inspire.

Robert Dick's recordings include *The Other Flute,* (GM 2013 Digital) and *Whispers and Landings* (Lumina 003). He has also recorded on CRI and 1750 Arch Records. Mr. Dick has received a National Endowment for the Arts Solo Recitalist Grant, a Pro Musicis Foundation Sponsorship and a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship.

Robert Dick was born in New York City and studied the flute with Henry Zlotnik, James Pappoutsakis, Julius Baker and Thomas Nyfenger. After graduation from the High School of Music and Art in New York, he attended Yale University, receiving a B.A. in 1971 and a Masters degree in composition in 1973. He studied composition and electronic music with Robert Morris, Bulant Arel and Jacob Druckman.

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INTRODUCTION

At the present time, many composers and instrumentalists worldwide are becoming increasingly interested in the discovery and development of new instrumental sonorities, and all indications are that this trend is growing into a major branch of composition and performance. This is especially true for music for the flute. Even in relatively conservative compositions written today, it is a rare piece that is not influenced by new sonorities and techniques, including microtones, percussive sounds, whisper and residual tones, glissandi, and a broad range of new tonal colors and articulations. These influences are also heard in the expanding role the flute is playing in improvised music: the classical avant-garde, traditional and new jazz, and popular styles.

Another important—and not well enough known—reason for flutists to work with new sonorities is that this will greatly benefit traditional playing. This work develops the strength, flexibility and sensitivity of the embouchure and breath support, increasing the player's range of color, dynamics and projection. The ear is strengthened, too: one must hear the desired pitch clearly before playing it when familiar fingerings are not used, and quarter-tones and smaller microtones sharpen the sense of pitch as well. There is only one technique that has come into several compositions that has a negative effect on both embouchure and instrument, and this is brass-style buzzing into the embouchure hole. There is some controversy over the use of this technique, but I have always found it desensitizing to the lips and bad for the flute due to the large amounts of moisture that shorten the life of the pads. Buzzing is not recommended, and I ask composers not to use it.

Anyone who can play, for example, the Hindemith "Sonata" is ready to begin this work. For contemporary music, the preferred model of flute is the open-hole flute with a low B footjoint. This model has a large advantage over other types in that the number of possible fingerings is greatly increased by half-holing the open-hole keys and by the longer tube length. This results in an expanded array of multiphonics and extended timbres, and makes glissandi possible. But having a student model instrument should not be a discouragement. Every flute is capable of hundreds of multiphonics, microtones and the like, and students introduced early to these techniques often progress faster in their traditional playing than might usually be expected. Professionals may find themselves choosing different models for different repertoire, a course I recommend for those who prefer the closed-hole flute and/or the low C footjoint for traditional repertoire. It is important to note that composers internationally have assumed the open-hole, low B flute for decades.

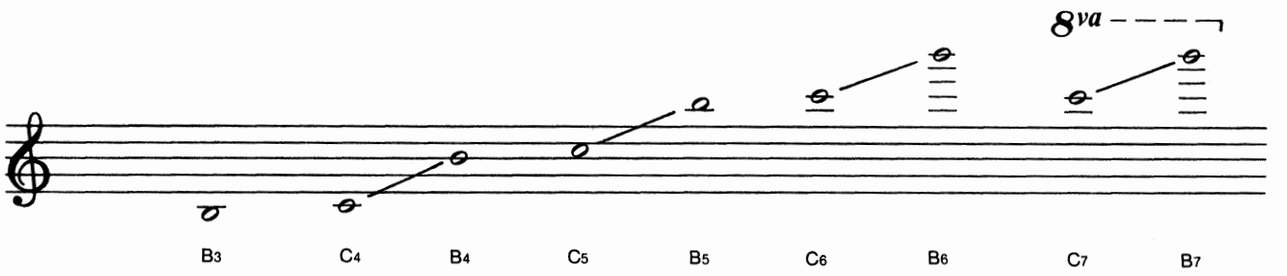
To prepare for effective learning of multiphonics, which require an extended range of embouchure positions, blowing angles, and a more complex use of body resonances than do single pitches, the flutist must begin to simultaneously develop the "silent singing" behind the tone, and to strengthen and increase the suppleness of the lips. Thus, the first chapter is devoted to exercises designed to aid the player in producing optimum resonance. These exercises focus first on the role of vocal resonances and "throat tuning", followed by exercises in natural harmonics, bending and whispertones. The second chapter presents exercises in producing single pitches, both diatonic and microtonal, with widely varying timbres and mouth use. Included are timbral trills and several scales that take the flutist to the very extremes of embouchure motion. The third chapter delves into the sonic world of multiphonics. These exercises cover the basic types of intervals available to both open and closed-hole flutes, which range from twelfths to less than the minor second.

It is stressed that this work should be used in a balanced practice regimen covering four main areas — traditional daily studies, (for these can be supplemented but never replaced), new sonorities, etudes, and repertoire. The flutist may either work through this book in order or begin each of the three chapters simultaneously.

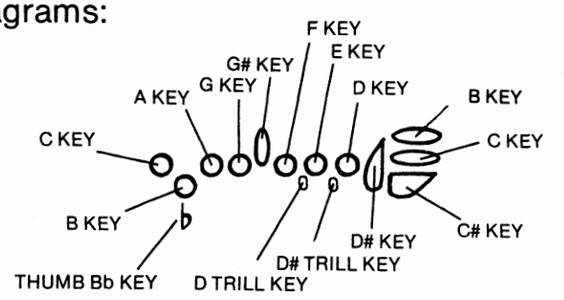
We are in a time of growth and change for the flute, a time when limitations, both technical and conceptual, are being left behind. The flute is taking on roles never before imagined, that of a polyphonic instrument, for instance, or that of a quickly changing voice capable of being drum-like one instant, ephemeral the next, then showing surprising power. All aspects of flute playing are therefore effected, and an important goal is for the player to integrate the immense capacities of the instrument into a coherent whole in which all parts support and strengthen one another. New flute playing is the continuation of the life and tradition of the flute and flutists. There is more for us to say than ever before, and the concept of the flute that will never be outmoded is that it is an instrument of expression and beauty.

SIGNS & SYMBOLS

Names of notes:



Fingering diagrams:



— KEY UP

— KEY DEPRESSED

— OPEN-HOLE KEY WITH RIM DEPRESSED AND CENTER-HOLE OPEN

Intonation:

— QUARTER SHARP

— SLIGHTLY SHARP

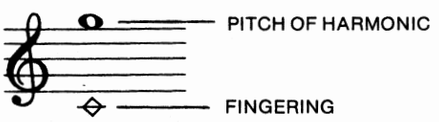
— ALMOST ¼ TONE SHARP

— QUARTER FLAT

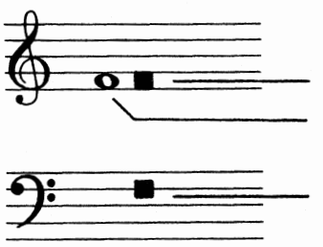
— SLIGHTLY FLAT

— ALMOST ¼ TONE FLAT

Natural harmonics:



Singing and Playing:



Angle of the flute:

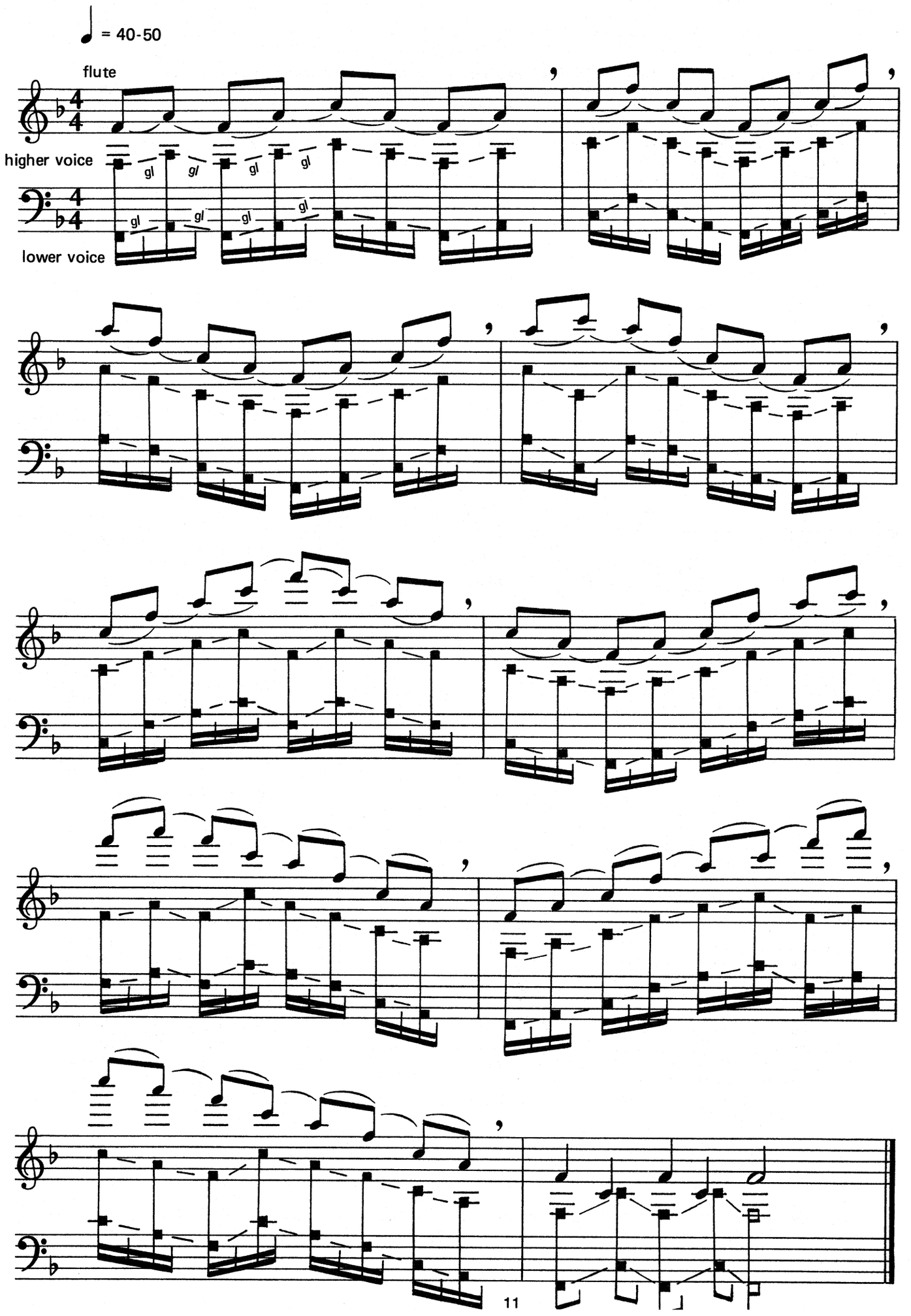
— NORMAL PLAYING ANGLE

— SLIGHTLY TURNED OUT

— SLIGHTLY TURNED IN

— TURNED OUT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE

— TURNED IN AS FAR AS POSSIBLE


♩ = 40-50
flute
higher voice
lower voice
gl
gl
gl
gl
gl
gl
gl
gl