

DYNAMICS AND PITCH – HOW TO FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT CONTROLLING THESE ON THE FLUTE

VOLUME = AMOUNT

PITCH = AIR SPEED

HOW TO PLAY LOUDLY WITHOUT GOING SHARP

First thing to remember, loud means MORE air (not faster air). Now, think of ways to allow more air to go into the flute.

1. Bigger embouchure hole – OH (not eee or ooh)

2. Bigger inside your mouth – DROP JAW

3. More support – to keep the air speed the same as you make a bigger air channel – ABS!!

4. Aim down into the flute – DOWN

The sound of the air stream should be deep and low. Imagine a huge river of air flowing constantly. As you play, your mouth and lips are like the banks of the river as they widen and narrow.

LOUD = LOTS OF AIR

Your tuner is a speedometer: it tells you whether your air is going too fast (sharp) or too slow (flat). As you change volume (amount), your air speed should stay the SAME. I make up numbers for each note; something like, “B loves the air to be 50 miles per hour.” That helps me adjust the air channel to maintain a steady speed, just like you adjust the gas when you’re driving.

HOW TO PLAY QUIETLY WITHOUT GOING FLAT

Quiet mean LESS air, but it has to stay just as fast! Think of a quiet note as being small but very high energy, like a hummingbird, a mouse, or a laser beam. I try to use the word “quiet” instead of “soft,” just so I don’t trick myself into using a too-slow airstream.

1. Smaller embouchure hole – OOH (lips forward)

2. Smaller inside the mouth – tongue high, cheeks in

3. Lots of support still – keep the air FAST

4. Aim up and roll the flute out – UP

The sound of the airstream should be high-pitched. Think small and highly-concentrated, lots of energy to your airstream.

QUIET = VERY LITTLE AIR BUT HIGH ENERGY

Practice the Moyse dynamics exercise: USE TUNER

B → Bb
p cresc to ff diminuendo to pp

The tuner should never leave the “in-tune” mark.
Repeat 6 or more times, get more control.

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPTS ON OUR INSTRUMENT. DAILY PRACTICE = CONFIDENCE!!