



Adding Speed and Variety to your Articulation

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Common Articulation Problems and Requests

- Tonguing is not fast enough
- Tonguing is too "heavy"
- Tongued notes sound different than slurred notes (different tone)
- Short notes are not short enough
- Articulated long notes lack clarity or definition
- Articulations do not match those of the other instruments with whom you are playing
- You need more accent on a note, but you must not affect the pitch

The importance of sound fundamentals

- Embouchure: provides stability, *allows* the reed to vibrate
- Air Support: *causes* the reed to vibrate, provides stability
- Tongue position: directs the air, focuses or unfocuses the sound, dictates speed and character of a particular articulation (more later)
- Even finger coordination: provides consistent and PREDICTABLE patterns that the tongue may easily follow

Articulation and Speech

- When thinking about articulation, remember the amazingly complicated things you do with your tongue every day when you talk. How did you get so good at this?
- Answer: practice
- Fast articulation requires maintenance
- Analogues to speech in clarinet articulation

Common Approaches to Articulation

- Tip of the tongue (top edge of the tip) touches the tip of the reed: almost always a good idea
- Anchor tonguing and variants: a common problem, but useful for slap tonguing
- Breath articulation: not actually tonguing

Does the tongue ever finish a note?

- Yes! It must, for fast articulations.
- Nevertheless, do not finish notes with the tongue when articulated notes are: slow, at ends of phrases, in need of tapering or lift.
- For more info on this topic, see Michael Webster's Fall 2010 article in *The Clarinet* and Michele Gingras's articulation exercises in *Clarinet Secrets*.

The Interruption

- Promotes control
- Encourages lightness and minimal motion
- Creates "bloom"
- Keeps the reed vibrating during articulation for faster rebound

Explore the Reed Tip

- Center: more immediate stoppage
- Corner: more "interrupted" sound

Imitating Speech

- Consonant sounds: t, d, l
- Good vowel sounds: tee, too, ut (as in the inversion of "too")
- Vowel sounds to avoid: toe, tuh, tah
- These good vowel sounds assume a high tongue position

Five Note Lengths

- Be able to produce at least five distinct note lengths on command.
- Music often demands more gradations, but the ability to produce the five will develop your adaptability.

The importance of warming up the tongue

- Like any muscle, the tongue requires a warm-up in order to optimize its effectiveness.
- I like to push the maximum speed in my warm-up after having warmed up my fingers.
- Peter Hadcock recommends not over-doing it, but I believe you can do a fairly rigorous articulation warm-up if you do it consistently.

The Bounce Exercise

- Creates speed by relaxing the tongue
- Assumes an extremely light interrupted articulation
- Accent the first note in each group, then let the rest rebound
- Use your wind like a springboard
- Michele Gingras: pencil bounce, flag flapping in wind

Multiple Articulation

- Even if you don't intend to use multiple articulation in performance, it can be useful for training minimal motion in the tongue.
- Tee-kee, dee-gee, etc
- Practice at fairly fast tempi

Slap Tongue!

- A very confusing technique that incorporates anchor tonguing
- Practice first with reed only
- Move to reed/mpc, but no embouchure
- Form the embouchure around the mpc, producing just the slap
- Finally, add a puff of air to get the distinctive "thunk"