Music by Black Composers Flute Volume 1:
Repertoire for Student Flutists and More!

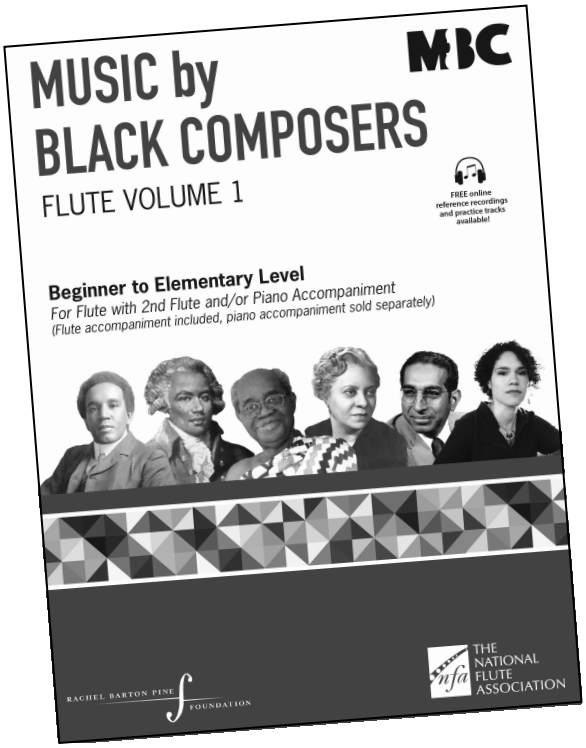
THE NATIONAL FLUTE ASSOCIATION

MBC
MUSIC BY BLACK COMPOSERS

A collaboration between the NFA's Special Publications Committee
and the Music by Black Composers project of the Rachel Barton Pine Foundation

Wednesday, December 17, 2025, 11:30 AM
The Midwest Clinic
W178 McCormick Place West, Chicago, IL

Dr. Jennifer Kennard and Rachel Barton Pine, presenters
names of performers



MBC volumes contain:

- Music exclusively by Black composers from around the world
  - *MBC Flute Volume 1* contains 15 pieces, each with a 2nd flute accompaniment
  - Piano accompaniment folio sold separately
- Biographies of every composer
- Feature articles on Black classical music making throughout history
- Profiles of Black role models in classical music, past and present

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Free resources for this volume may be found at musicbyblackcomposers.org/digital-resources

- Flute and piano audio reference recordings
- Piano only audio recordings
- Links with further information about each Feature Article
- Links with further information about each Role Model
- Bullet point biographies for each composer to facilitate spoken presentations
- PDF world maps showing each composer's location(s) and image to facilitate visual presentation
- Video recordings coming soon!

Feature Article Sample

"Black American Concert Wind Ensembles, Past and Present"

One of the earliest and very important Black bandleaders in U.S. history was Francis "Frank" Johnson (1792–1844). Johnson led several military-style and dance bands in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania starting around 1815. His earliest band consisted mainly of woodwinds, with a French horn or two along with percussion. As **keyed and valved brass instruments** were introduced to the U.S. in the 1820s, he began to introduce more brass instruments, and by the mid-1830s his ensemble had become a brass band.

When Johnson visited London, England in 1837 along with four of his best band musicians, it is said that they performed for Queen Victoria, who gave Johnson a silver bugle (though there is no documented proof of this event). While in London, Johnson also attended **promenade concerts**, which greatly impressed him. When he returned to the United States, he staged the first American performances of this style in Philadelphia, which became incredibly popular and successful.

Johnson had a fantastic reputation, but several other Black American wind bands also had wide recognition during the same period. In fact, Black bands were standard in providing dance music for higher class white urban society during most of the 1800s. These ensembles played for balls and assemblies, dancing schools, and concerts throughout the South, in northern cities such as Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Detroit, and elsewhere.

Before the late 1700s and early 1800s, **brass instruments** did not look like the trumpets and horns you see in bands today. Instead, they were simply coiled metal tubes that could only produce some of the notes of a scale over their full range. Adding the **keys or valves** (the "buttons" that trumpet and horn players press on their instruments today) let them play every note in every scale in every key throughout their range, making them much more versatile and useful.

In London in the 1700s and 1800s, **promenade concerts** were performed in large public pleasure gardens. The program was light classical music, and audiences would stroll about while listening to the music.

Johnson was the first Black American musician to publish his own compositions as sheet music (1818), the first to develop a "school" of Black musicians, the first to give formal band concerts, the first to widely tour the U.S., and the first to appear in **integrated** concerts with white musicians. He was also the first *American*, Black or white, to take a musical ensemble abroad to perform in Europe.

To **integrate** is to mix people of different races. An integrated concert is one that includes musicians of more than one race.

Other MBC materials currently available

- Online directories for Unaccompanied Solo Flute, Flute and Keyboard, Multiple Flutes, Unaccompanied Solo Clarinet, and Woodwind Quintet (at musicbyblackcomposers.org)
- Online directories for Historic Black Composers and Living Black Composers (at musicbyblackcomposers.org)
- *MBC Coloring Book of Black Composers* (at sharmusic.com)

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NFA Guide to Levels for Pedagogy Publications, Levels A-D

Level	Pitch and Key Range	Rhythm and Meter	Articulations	Musical Symbols	Pedagogical Focus
A	G1- A2 Occasionally extended to D1 – D3. Major and minor key signatures using up to 1# (occasionally 2#) & 2b. Limited use of accidentals beyond key signature. Possible use of accidentals within composition to establish key en lieu of key signature.	Basic rhythms using whole, dotted half, half, quarter, eighths in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4. No syncopation, dotted rhythms, or partial beat pick-ups. Restricted use of 2/2 and cut time. Cut time may be treated as 4/4 .	Basic single tonguing techniques. Simple slurred, legato, and staccato articulations.	Treble clef pitch notation; accidentals; symbols for repeat, D.C., D.S, and dynamics.	Basics of position and posture, tone production, fingering, articulation, and notation reading (where applicable). Rudiments of playing softer and louder (p and f). Performance of short phrases and successful handling of predominantly conjunct melodies with occasional leaps of up to one octave.
B	D1-D3 Occasionally extended to Eb3. Major and minor key signatures using up to 2# and 3b . Limited use of accidentals beyond key signature. Possible use of accidentals within composition to establish key en lieu of key signature.	Basic rhythms using whole, dotted half, half, quarter, eighths in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4. Isolated appearances of rhythms designated for higher levels, such as triplets and dotted notes. No syncopation. Basic rhythms using dotted half, dotted quarter, quarter, eighth in 6/8 and 3/8. Limited use of 2/2 and cut time.	Basic single tonguing techniques. Slurred, legato, and staccato articulations.	Treble clef pitch notation; accidentals; symbols for repeat, D.C., D. S., and dynamics. Limited used of ritardando, accelerando, and fermatas. Symbols for simple ornaments including grace notes, trills, mordents; small cadenza-figures.	Basics of position and posture, tone production, fingering, articulation, and notation reading (where applicable). Rudiments of playing softer and louder (p and f). Performance of short phrases and successful handling of predominantly conjunct melodies with occasional leaps of up to one octave.
C	C1-F3; occasionally extended to G3. Major and minor key signatures using up to 3# and 3b . Moderate use of accidentals. Short chromatic passages. Change of key signature within a piece.	Basic combinations of whole, dotted half, half, dotted quarter, dotted eighth, eighth, sixteenth, and eighth-note triplets in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, and 6/4. Basic combinations of dotted half, dotted quarter, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth in 6/8 and 3/8. Basic combinations of whole, half, quarter, and eighth in 2/2/ and 3/2. Use of cut time. Possible changes between meters in which the beat note remains constant. Isolated appearances of rhythms designated for later grades. Possible use of simple syncopation, use of ties and rests resulting in syncopated rhythms and dotted figures, and thirty-second note pairs designating terminations of Baroque-type trills.	A variety of single tongue articulation patterns (legato, staccato, and detaché). Possible use of articulated eighth-note slurs.	Symbols for standard rhythm, meter, treble clef pitch notation, dynamics, articulation, repeats, D.C., D.S etc. Symbols for simple ornamentation including grace notes, mordents, and trills: small cadenza-figures.	Basics of position and posture, tone production and dynamics, fingering, articulation, and notation reading (where applicable). Extension of rhythmical and metrical understanding. Control of dynamic spectrum p and f and crescendo/ diminuendo over short phrases of two bars. Performance of phrases approximately four measures long incorporating leaps of up to one octave.

Level	Pitch and Key Range	Rhythm and Meter	Articulations	Musical Symbols	Pedagogical Focus
D	C1-G3; occasionally extended to A3. Major and minor key signatures using up to 4# and 4b. Free use of accidentals and enharmonics, accidentals signaling temporary modulation, and forms of the minor scale or chromatic scale.	Basic combinations of whole, dotted half, half, dotted quarter, dotted eighth, eighth, sixteenth, eighth-note triplets, sixteenth-note triplets, 32nd notes, quarter-note triplets and note groupings up to quintuplet in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, and 6/4. Basic combinations of dotted half, dotted quarter, quarter, eighth, dotted eighth, and sixteenth in 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 9/8, and 12/8 time in both slow and fast counting systems. Basic combinations of whole, dotted half, half, quarter, and eighth in 2/2 and 3/2. Use of cut time. Possible changes between meters in which the beat note remains constant. Possible extended syncopations & hemiola.	A variety of articulations, including flutter-tongue, and exploration of multiple tonguing	Symbols for standard rhythm, meter, treble clef pitch notation, dynamics, articulation, repeats, D.C., D.S. etc. Symbols for simple ornamentation including grace notes, mordents and trills; small cadenza figures; notation of simple harmonics, multiphonics, and flutter tonguing.	Tone development. Ease with the lower 2½ octaves of the flute range. Extension of rhythmical understanding. Control of dynamic spectrum and p and f crescendo/ diminuendo over short phrases of 2 bars. Increased stamina and breath control in phrases of four measures and more. Introduction to harmonics, multiphonics, and flutter tonguing.

ADAPTATIONS FOR BAND DIRECTORS

Subject	Transposition	Piece Number	Notes
piccolo	as is	1-12, 14, 15	change the beginning order order to allow for gradual range increase and embouchure development (1, 3, 4, 5, 2, 6-12, 14-15)
	up an octave	1-9, 13, 14	a few measures need to be played as written
advanced flute	up an octave	1-10, 14	also 15 if the flute has a low B
oboe	as is	1-10, 13, 14	some would be easier with spotty octave transposition
clarinet	as is	1-10, 14	the break may be problematic in some of these
	down an octave	11, 12	15 is also possible if you want to challenge a student
bassoon	none	none	
sax	as is	all	11-15 may be too high for middle schoolers
trumpet	as is	1-8, 10, 14	some will require occasional octave displacement
	down an octave	9, 11, 12, 13, 15	
horn	none	none	Older students could use the book to gain experience with transposition
trombone	none	none	
Bb baritone / euphonium	as is	1-6, 8	some will require occasional octave displacement
tuba	none	none	
mallets	as is	all	