

JAZZ ARTICULATION

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Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of learning to improvise convincingly is the area articulation (especially on the flute). Most classically trained flutists are taught to use the syllable of "ta" or "tah" to start notes. This occurs when there is either: 1. No articulation 2. Accent or 3. Staccato (dot). To achieve softer attacks the "da" or "duh" sound is used. This occurs when the indication is 1. A tenuto line over a note 2. Dot under a slur 3. Line under a slur. For faster passages often the double tongue is used, either "ta-ka" or "tu-ku". For softer more connected articulations "da-gu" or "du-gu" are used. In jazz improvisation the style of articulation comes closer to the "du-gu" than "ta-ka". This is a good starting place for the novice improviser. The first exercises are designed to practice the softer attack.

The complicating factor for the classical flutist is the question of rhythm or swing. A quick method of playing in a "swing" or "jazz" style is simply to play triplets or 12/8 using a soft "du" attack. The most common mistake for classical players is to sound corny by TOUGUING EVERY NOTE IN A REPETITIVE "ta-----ta ta-----ta ta-----ta" style. The quick fix for this is to employ the "du--du" and attempt to shorten the gap between syllables: "du--du du--du" rather than the exaggerated over triplet ta-----ta ta-----ta. In reality the vocal sound that come closer to simulating the articulation/rhythm interpretation a very soft "du" or "duh" attack keeping the tougue close to the attack point and attempting to from moving the tongue too much. Finally this articulation has its own name, that being "DOODLE TOUGUE". In fact by saying the the word "doodle" we come very close to the tougue stroke which sounds "cool". If you have ever tried to "scat" sing you have a good idea about the proper kinds of articulation. Some of the scat sounds and phrases might be something like: "bah doodlely be-ba du-ba dee-dat". For anyone who wants to sound "cool" and NOT "corny", it is highly recommended to practice "scatting" quietly (or not so quietly) in the privacy or the shower, car or practice room. Vocalizing and creating simple "swing" lines will lead to a faster path to sounding less corny and more cool.

Flute

"TAH" (classical or corny) "DUH" (cool softer attacks)

T T T T T T T T T T T T D D D D D D D D D D

5 "TAH" (classical or corny) "DUH" (cool softer attacks)

T T T T T T T T T T T T D D D D D D D D D D

9 Play bar 9 & 10 to sound like 11 & 12.

D D