

## INTRODUCTION

Intervallic Studies on Symmetrical Scales was written primarily because I wanted a complete practice system for myself. I have practiced all of the chromatic ascending exercises, as they appear in this book, without needing any written reference, but I kept getting confused when I tried to play the intervals descending and especially when I tried to play the chromatic intervals off of the octatonic scale. I've worked and talked with many fine improvisers over the years and wanted to share the exercises that have helped me develop my improvisational musical language.

I've always loved exercise books. I am a flutist that could never start a practice session with tone work. I needed to get moving before I could slow down enough and listen. So I've played through all of the great flute exercise tomes: M. A. Reichert, *Seven Daily Exercises, Op. 5*; Georges Barrère, *The Flutist's Formulae*; Marcel Moyse, *Daily Exercises for the Flute*; Marcel Moyse, *Enseignement Complet de la Flûte*; André Maquarre, *Daily Exercises for the Flute*; and Taffanel & Gaubert, *Méthode Complète de Flûte*. Barrere was my favorite, as it built my stamina.

All of these scale books are written in the major and minor modalities. In more complicated 20<sup>th</sup> century musical idioms, chromaticism occurs that is not represented in traditional exercise books. The exercises in this book are based on the 11 intervals of the diatonic scale (unisons and octaves are not included) and juxtaposed against the chromatic, whole tone and octatonic scales. Practicing these exercises will enable classical players to read highly chromatic, atonal and 12-tone music fluently.

Having worked with dancers for so many years, I've noticed that they take 15-20 minutes just to warm-up. During this time, they are not concerned with the perfection of their technique, but instead concentrate on just getting their minds centered and their blood flowing. I present this exercise book as a way for instrumentalists, like dancers, to warm-up by just getting their brain and fingers moving.

As you read through this book, you'll notice that I've notated the intervals both by the number of half-steps and the more commonly used major and minor diatonic naming of intervals. For example, a minor 2<sup>nd</sup> will be notated by 1/m2, up to a major 7<sup>th</sup> being 11/M7. This is to help you think of the 1/2 steps between the notes and to also compensate for the fact that the intervals are not always written as the theoretical diatonic distance. (ex. C#-F is theoretically a diminished 4<sup>th</sup> but sounds a major 3<sup>rd</sup>. Either way, it is 4-1/2 steps.). I feel that if we continue to think of our intervals as major or minor we are continuing to tie ourselves into a diatonic way of

thinking. I use the common diatonic nomenclature as a bridge into a more atonal/chromatic idiom.

In addition to expanding symmetrical scalar understanding, I see this as a chromatic sight-reading tome. I've included some Cb, B#, Fb and E# to help us get used to reading without stumbling over those seldom seen accidentals. How I chose to notate the accidentals depends on how it makes more sense in context of the surrounding notes, how common the accidental combinations are and the common default to sharps ascending and flats descending. Within the same interval you may find that I'll call a note a flat one way and a sharp the other way. For example, when it's coming after a G#, I'll call the note A#, but when it's leading into a C, I'll call it a Bb. Theoretically this sounds really confusing, but as you're sight-reading I hope you find that it actually facilitates the flow. Sometimes the accidentals are written as if two melody lines are being played at once, as the # or b may relate to the lower (or higher) line and not to the next note\*. Other times I write the accidental for the diatonic intervallic unit of which it is a part. When I am sight-reading, I find myself reading ahead and relating the pitch I'm on to the following pitches, rather than to the preceding ones. Ultimately, the decision just has to do with my own personal sight-reading preferences.

This is a practice book, not a theoretical one. I've written this from my perspective as a performer. I use the extended range from low B<sup>3</sup> through high E<sup>7</sup>. Nowadays, flute range has been commonly accepted to go to D<sup>7</sup> and many people play to the F and higher. I've decided to write these exercises to high E, using ledger lines. After playing through these books, reading six ledger lines for high D will become as easy as reading three for high F.\*\*

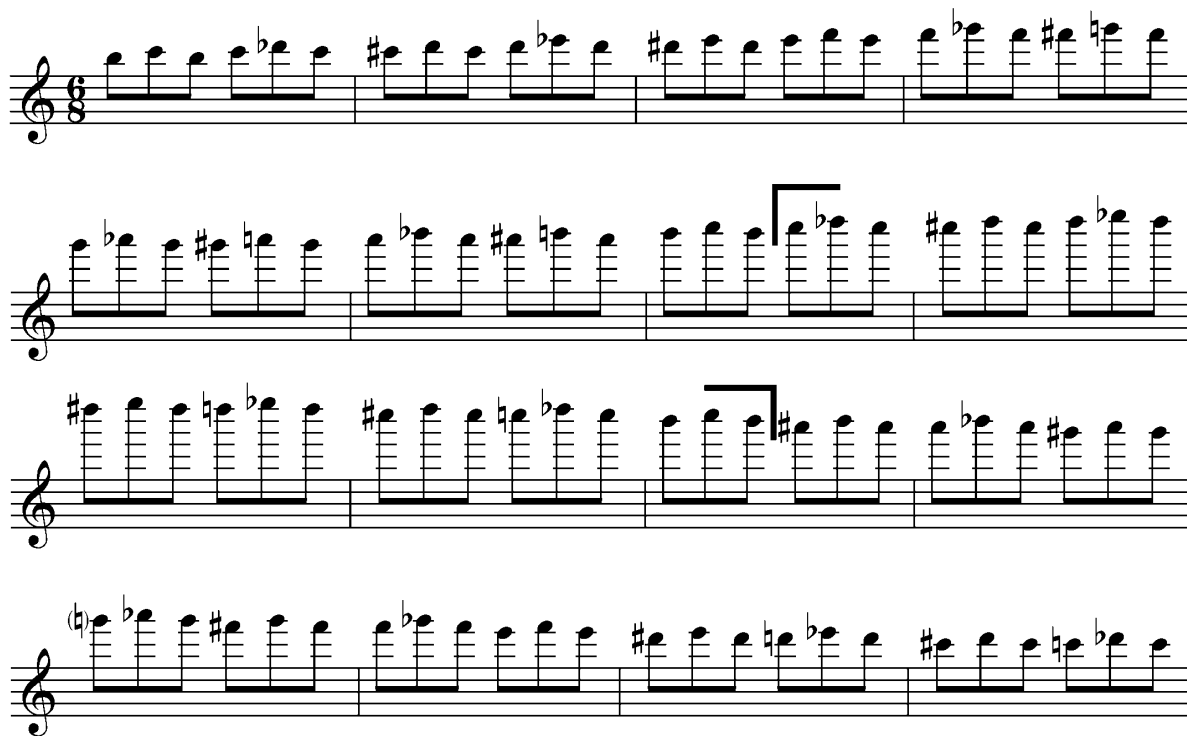
I would like to suggest two ways of using this book: 1) to practice reading ledger lines, and 2) to go through without stopping, like a morning jog. In the second case, I would suggest putting brackets between the notes of the high octave that needs extra work so you can omit the section that slows you down and visually see how to jump from one measure in the pattern to another without stalling or slowing down at the top (like Barrere.) The bracket also marks the high note area that needs more wood-shedding.

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\* Accidentals do NOT carry through the octave.

\*\*If you play another instrument and you want to use this book, feel free to bracket the range of your specific instrument.

**EX:**



I've written these exercises without any slur patterns to leave open the possibility that many slur patterns are possible. Once you learn the intervals, you may like to add your own slurs. You will find that the intervals actually speak and sound differently depending on how you articulate them. It is also interesting to use cross rhythms (hemiola figures) to play the 2/4 exercises as triplets and the 6/8 exercises as eighths.

**6/8 EXAMPLES:**

Slurring in groups of three. (These fit perfectly with 6/8 meter.)

A



B



C



Slurring in groups of two. This is like a measure of 3/4.



This same pattern written in 6/8 is a great way to get used to juxtaposing a melodic pattern of three notes over an articulation pattern of two notes; or put another way, a great way to start hearing two over three. Set the metronome on dotted quarters, but tap every quarter note (2 eighths), or vice versa: tap the dotted quarters and have the metronome click every quarter note.

D



Slurring in groups of two offset by one.

E



Slurring in groups of four. The following patterns repeat every two bars (12 eighth notes). As you use the metronome/articulation to practice the 2 against 3 polyrhythm in example D, use the same concept to practice 3 over 4. Set the metronome on dotted quarter but tap every half note (4 eighths), or vice versa: tap the dotted quarters and have the metronome click every half note.

F



G



H



**2/4 EXAMPLES:**

Slurring in groups of two or four. (These fit perfectly with 2/4 meter.)

A



B



C



D



E



F is different than "I" because there are two staccato notes in a row: the "and of two" and on "the downbeat of one."

F



Slurring in groups of two offset by one.

G



Slurring in groups of three. (Patterns H, I, J) These three articulation patterns work great for the Chromatic exercises M2 and larger and for the Octatonic exercises, using scale tones 4-5/M3-P4 and larger and the Octatonic exercises, using chromatic intervals 3/m3 and larger. For the seconds, the slur patterns create ties. These patterns repeat every three bars (12 eighth notes), and are like four measures of 3/8 until the pattern repeats again.



These same patterns written in 2/4 are a great way to get used to juxtaposing a melodic pattern of two notes over an articulation pattern of three notes; or put another way a great way to start hearing three over two. Set the metronome on quarters, but tap every dotted quarter note (3 eighths), or vice versa: tap the quarters and have the metronome click the dotted quarter notes.

H



I



J



It is in the tradition of the classic flute exercise books that I am offering this study. It is my hope that this book will obtain a place in the practice session of many flutists and improvisers in the years to come. I hope you not only enjoy playing these as much as I do, but will see your skill and freedom of expression soar.

Ellen Burr  
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 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2009