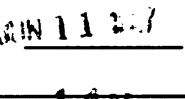
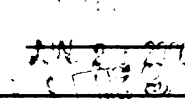






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SELECTED ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE PRACTICE IN THE FLUTE TUTORS  
OF CHARLES NICHOLSON

By

B. Eldred Spell

A DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

### SELECTED ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE PRACTICE IN THE FLUTE TUTORS OF CHARLES NICHOLSON

By

B. Eldred Spell

Charles Nicholson has been remembered as the flutist whose volume of sound inspired the invention of the modern Boehm-system flute. Much criticized in his own time, Nicholson has been associated with bravura display and questionable musical taste. Since he was a controversial figure, contemporary sources must be read with care. However, direct investigation of his tutors, with the appropriate flute in hand, reveals a complex performance practice based on control, contrast, and musical expression.

Nicholson's specialized techniques are intimately associated with his modified flute. Although difficult to play, it was ideally suited to his purposes, allowing incomparable flexibility in matters of pitch, timbre, and dynamic. In many respects it represents the ultimate development of the keyed flute. With this instrument Nicholson was able to exploit tone, vibration (a form of vibrato), the glide, ornamentation, and articulation for maximum musical effect. His use of these devices represents an extension of the expressive capabilities of the flute. Nicholson did not just play loudly, but emphasized the expressive use of tone. His pursuit of contrast also



included the use of varied tone colors, and his altered fingerings expanded both the tonal and technical possibilities of the instrument. Nicholson's vibration produces a remarkably subtle effect and he uses the glide not as an abstract device, but rather as a means of musical expression. Much of Nicholson's expressive musical language was eliminated with the adoption of the Boehm flute.

Nicholson lived during a period of change and transition. His vibration represents the continuation of a baroque practice side-by-side with innovations in sound production which foreshadow modern practice. Subtleties of articulation were being explored, as responsibility for articulation was moving from the performer to the composer. The nature of ornamentation was also changing. Nicholson's use of the shake reflects a melodic rather than harmonic conception and his flexible approach to rhythmic values of the appoggiatura emphasizes its expressive nature.

Nicholson emerges as an innovative musician, deeply concerned with musical sensitivity and expression.

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Thanks also to the staffs of the Music Divisions of the Library of Congress and of the British Library, and the Music Library of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

The interest and support of the music faculty, staff, and students at Western Carolina University is gratefully acknowledged. My sincere thanks to my advisor, Dr. Rosalie Schellhous, for her unswerving advocacy of both this writer and this project. Above all I wish to thank my parents and wife, whose infinite patience and unfailing support made completion of this study possible.

## PREFACE

Charles Nicholson was a seminal figure in the history of the performance practice of the flute. It is now common knowledge that Nicholson's playing inspired the development of the modern Boehm-system flute.<sup>1</sup> His conception of the flute as a powerful and noble instrument and his success in making it so changed the way in which the flute was and is perceived. Contemporary accounts present Nicholson's performances as extraordinary examples of both style and technique. Among a generation of celebrated virtuoso flutists, he dominated flute playing in England from about 1816 until his death in 1837.

Nicholson carried the development and performance of the keyed flute to an extreme. The "Nicholson's Improved" flute allows extraordinary flexibility in matters of pitch, dynamics, and tone color. But flexibility came at a cost, for Nicholson's altered instrument was so difficult to play that few could manage it.<sup>2</sup> Nicholson developed a specialized and subtle expressive language based on this instrument.

Unable to compete with Nicholson, another flutist was moved to transform his instrument:

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<sup>1</sup> Boehm, *The Flute and Flute Playing* (New York: Dover, 1964), 8

<sup>2</sup> Anon., "Flute," *The Harmonicon*, 5 (1827), 14.

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I did as well as any continental flutist could have done, in London, in 1831, but I could not match Nicholson in power of tone, wherefore I set to work to remodel my flute. Had I not heard him, probably the Boehm flute would never have been made.<sup>3</sup>

Nicholson provoked the development of the modern Boehm-system flute, the demise of his own, and with it the loss of his specialized musical language. Boehm's flute (developed after 1831) was better in tune and easier to play than either Nicholson's or the conventional keyed flutes. Because of its technical accessibility, the new flute supplanted the older and more difficult keyed flutes.<sup>4</sup> Boehm's mechanism achieved technical superiority by placing keys between the fingers and the flute. This new mechanism, which is basically that of today's flute, allowed greater facility but effectively prohibited most of Nicholson's expressive techniques. What remained of his influence were those characteristics which could easily be adapted to the Boehm flute, particularly the large sound and taste for virtuosity of technique still typical of

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<sup>3</sup> Boehm, 8.

<sup>4</sup> There is a common conception that the Boehm flute achieved early success because it was louder than conventional instruments. This writer has had the opportunity to play a number of early Boehm flutes as well as those by his licensees Claire Godfroy and Rudall & Rose. While the Boehm flute has many obvious advantages, few of these instruments proved to be dramatically louder than conventional flutes of the period and none approached the volume produced by a typical Nicholson model flute.

English flute playing. The special expressiveness available when the fingers directly govern the tone holes was lost.

Interest in the authentic performance of music has recently expanded beyond the eighteenth century, so that works from the early nineteenth century are now commonly performed on original instruments. Research into this period is at a comparatively early stage, and this study hopes to offer insight into the specialized performance practice of the flute.

Although the history of the flute has been researched extensively, Nicholson is often treated as little more than a curiosity. David Eagle's social history is exceptional in providing a detailed and lively account of the period.<sup>5</sup> His frequent citations of contemporary music reviews and articles provide a wealth of background information. Nicholson's tutors were treated pedagogically by Donald H. Hartman.<sup>6</sup> Catherine Smith and Nancy Toff have both addressed specific aspects of Nicholson's performance as isolated "devices" (harmonics, trills, and vibrato) in relation to general performance practice of the pre-Boehm flute.<sup>7</sup> David Jacobsen has addressed Nicholson directly,

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<sup>5</sup> David Eagle, *A Constant Passion and a Constant Pursuit: A Social History of Flute-Playing in England from 1800 to 1851*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota (1977).

<sup>6</sup> Hartman, Donald H., *Pedagogical Practices Relating to the German Flute in England from 1729 to 1847*, DMA Thesis, Eastman School of Music (1961).

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Smith, *Characteristics of Transverse Flute Performance in Selected Flute Methods from the*



discussing details of his life and works, but he largely ignores the performance implications of the original instrument and in fact edits several of Nicholson's compositions for the modern flute.<sup>8</sup> While much has been written on Nicholson in a general sense, no focused study of his performance practice has been undertaken to date.

My interest in this topic stems from a background as a performing flutist and as a flute maker with a fascination for the physical evidence presented by many historical instruments. The nature of past performance practice must be inferred from whatever evidence remains. In the case of Nicholson there is much to be learned from an examination of his tutors and the Nicholson flute. For the purposes of this investigation into selected performance practices of Charles Nicholson, the author selected first editions of his three tutors for primary study.

Research for this study has involved learning to play the Nicholson flute and the traditional keyed flutes from appropriate tutors. The Nicholson flute represents a highly evolved tool which was successfully modified for its purpose. A comparison of the characteristics of the Nicholson flute with the instructions for its use is more

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*Early 18th Century to 1828*, DMA Project, Stanford University, 1969 (unpublished); Nancy Toff, *The Development of the Modern Flute* (New York: Taplinger, 1979); Nancy Toff, *The Flute Book* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985).

<sup>8</sup> Jacobsen, David. *Charles Nicholson (1795-1837): His Influence on Flute Performance, Manufacture, Pedagogy and Literature*. DMA Thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982.

revealing than a study of either the tutors or the flute in isolation.

Realization of the examples from the Nicholson tutors has been essential to an understanding of his intent. Several historical instruments were purchased and a larger number borrowed from private collections. There are significant variations even among today's mass-produced instruments, so a number of flutes were required in order to make valid generalizations. These flutes are listed in Table 1 of Appendix A. Dates for these flutes are based on information found in Lyndesay Langwill's *Index*.<sup>9</sup> Two flutes from the collection of Glennis Stout were dated by Dr. Robert A. Lehman for an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>10</sup> These are Clementi & Co. (1822) and Thomas Prowse (1834, #3879).

## TUTORS

Nicholson wrote three tutors for a public that wished specifically to imitate him. These are the *Complete Preceptor* (1816),<sup>11</sup> the *Preceptive Lessons* (1821),<sup>12</sup> and the *School* (1836).<sup>13</sup> Nicholson had no successful imitators

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<sup>9</sup> Lyndesay Langwill, *An Index of Musical Wind Instrument Makers*, 6th ed. (London: Author, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> *Historic Flutes from Private Collections* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 26-27.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Nicholson, *Nicholson's Complete Preceptor for the German Flute* (London: Preston, 1816).

<sup>12</sup> Charles Nicholson, *Preceptive Lessons* (London: Clementi & Co., 1821).

<sup>13</sup> Charles Nicholson, *A School for the Flute* (New York: Wm. Hall & Son, 1836).

in the nineteenth century and it seems unlikely that anyone could truly reconstruct his sound or style today. However, through his tutors it is possible to gain an understanding of his methods and approach to the instrument.

In his tutors Nicholson describes a highly evolved performance practice and the technical means used to achieve it. They contain practical instructions. He did not concern himself with abstractions. All three volumes were reissued and reprinted in numerous editions, many of which are surveyed and discussed by David Jacobsen.<sup>14</sup> Although a detailed evaluation of Nicholson's influence on later generations is beyond the scope of this study, it should be noted his tutors were adapted by others for the Boehm and other system flutes, and they remained standard references in England long after Nicholson and his flute had passed from the scene.<sup>15</sup>

*Nicholson's Complete Preceptor*, published in 1816 by Preston, is specifically intended for beginners.<sup>16</sup> There are twenty-six pages of text with musical examples, forty pages of "Progressive Lessons" consisting of duets, three pages of "Preludes," and two pages of "Cadenzas." The fingering charts are for the one- and six-keyed flutes.

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<sup>14</sup> Jacobsen, 43-53.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Bell, "Flute Playing in Britain: Stylistic Origins and Developments," *Pan, The Journal of the British Flute Society*, 17 (Dec. 1989). 12-19.

<sup>16</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, introduction.

The *Preceptive Lessons* were issued in 1821 by Clementi and are intended for advanced players.<sup>17</sup> Each lesson was published individually. Nicholson offers these to those who, because of distance or "pecuniary disability," are unable to study with him. Stephen Preston has described the *Preceptive Lessons* as "a do it yourself Charles Nicholson kit."<sup>18</sup> The *Preceptive Lessons* are specifically geared to the Nicholson flute and emphasize matters of technique and expression as related to it. This is most apparent in the extensive notation of alternate fingerings, glides, and vibration. Because a basic level of knowledge and skill is assumed, many details common to other tutors, such as tone production and the interpretation of ornaments, receive little attention.

Each lesson introduces new key signatures with scales and fingerings, appropriate shakes, exercises and unaccompanied solos. In the last lesson Nicholson explains why the series ends with ten rather than twelve lessons as originally planned. He attributes this abbreviation to the increasing difficulty of the lessons and a lack of interest on the part of the public.<sup>19</sup>

*A School for the Flute* was issued in 1836 by Wm. Hall & Son of New York. There is no obvious reason for this American connection. Apparently Nicholson never left British soil, but he alludes to having had American

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<sup>17</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Personal conversation, June 23, 1985.

<sup>19</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 89.

pupils,<sup>20</sup> and the American publisher of the *School* inserts an advertisement for his own Nicholson style flutes.<sup>21</sup> The cover promotes it as a "Practical Instruction Book."

The *School* does not offer the detail or the carefully notated musical examples found in the *Preceptive Lessons* and so complements rather than supersedes them. It is comprehensive in scope and does not presume previous knowledge of the flute.

The *School* is printed in two volumes and, with a total of 132 pages, is the longest of Nicholson's tutors. Volume one contains basic instructions, exercises, musical examples, and instructions on syncopation, articulation, and double tonguing. Volume two includes instructions on the appoggiatura, glide, vibration, chromatic scale, turn, shake, and harmonics. It concludes with twelve exercises for double tonguing and "Twelve Impromptus to the Minor Scales."

Nicholson justifies the release of another tutor because

the experience in my profession which I have acquired during twenty years since the appearance of my former Instruction Book, has convinced me that a new one is requisite. I trust, therefore, that in the following pages it will be seen, that what ever I have gained in knowledge, I am desirous to impart in the fullest manner to all amateurs of the instrument.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *School*, 54.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, i.

In addition to these three primary sources, several other publications by Nicholson were examined. These works include a set of edited musical extracts titled *A Selection of Passages* (1817), and a set of pieces titled *Appendix to Nicholson's Preceptive Lessons* (1825), as well as selected compositions by Charles Nicholson.

The *Passages* are mentioned here because they are newly discovered. Stephen Preston, the preeminent British authority on eighteenth and early nineteenth century flutes, recently located this work and made it available for this study. The *Passages* consist of extracts from the works of a number of then-popular composers including Kreith, Schneider, Krazinsky, Hoffmeister, Berbiguier, Devienne, and Tulou. To these Nicholson adds marks of "Articulation, Expression & Fingering."<sup>23</sup> There is no text, and the fingerings are chiefly for facility rather than tone color or effect.

The *Appendix to Nicholson's Preceptive Lessons* appeared in 1825. This independent publication, which bears little resemblance to the original *Preceptive Lessons* (1821), consists of thirty-two short pieces for flute with piano accompaniment. Nicholson's fingerings are again featured and there is no text.

Selected compositions by Nicholson were examined to verify practices found in the tutors. Reference to these

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<sup>23</sup> *Passages*, cover.

is made where appropriate and a listing of compositions examined is included in the bibliography.

Nicholson published a quantity of accompanied and unaccompanied music for the flute, consisting largely of interpretations or variations on popular and national airs. No complete catalog of Nicholson's works exists and a survey of this material is beyond the scope of this study. In 1914 Fitzgibbon described Nicholson's once-popular output as "mostly rubbishy airs with well-nigh impossible variations, embellishments, cadences, cadenzas, and shakes of inordinate length."<sup>24</sup> Nicholson was not an educated musician,<sup>25</sup> and the piano accompaniments in these works are generally written by others. An advertisement for Clementi & Co. (dated 1821) lists six fantasias composed by Nicholson with accompaniments by five different composers. John F. Burrowes appears to have been Nicholson's usual partner. He is listed along with Nicholson as a composer of twelve "Select Melodies with Variations" published about 1821<sup>26</sup> by Goulding, D'Almaine, Potter & Co.

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<sup>24</sup> Fitzgibbon, 209.

<sup>25</sup> James, *A Word or Two*, 161.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Humphries and William C. Smith, *Music Publishing in the British Isles* (London: Cassell and Co., 1954), 101, 158. Chappell & Co. is listed in partnership 1819-1826 and Goulding 1811-23, leaving the period of 1819-23 for publication of the *Select Melodies*.

## COMPARATIVE SOURCES

Nicholson was a practical working musician without formal training. His instructions are direct but maddeningly incomplete. The author consulted a number of contemporary and earlier flute tutors in order to provide perspective on Nicholson's writings. Copies of flute tutors, including first editions of Nicholson's, and a variety of related publications were obtained from both public and private sources. To provide the reader with an overview of this material, a chronological list (divided by country) of the flute tutors consulted is given in Table 2 of Appendix A. Because the precise dating of these works is often problematical, many dates are approximate and some are only tentative. The dates in this table are generally based on Thomas E. Warner's bibliography.<sup>27</sup> Undated tutors not included by Warner are dated by publishers' addresses.

The most significant source in this category is Lindsay's *Elements of Flute Playing*, which was published in two parts in 1828 and 1830. In this substantial work Lindsay quotes freely from earlier sources (such as John Gunn) and continental contemporaries such as Drouet and Berbiguier. Lindsay's explanations are generally thorough and clear, in contrast to Nicholson's often cryptic and confusing statements.

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas E. Warner, *An Annotated Bibliography of Woodwind Instruction Books, 1600-1830* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, Inc., 1967).



Lindsay appears to have been well acquainted with Nicholson, both professionally and personally. Volumes 2-6 and 8-10 of the *Preceptive Lessons* were published by Clementi & Co., but "sold by T. Lindsay." The writer's copy of the *Complete Preceptor* bears Lindsay's stamp and was presumably sold through his shop as well. Nicholson's variations on Gramachree is "composed and dedicated to his friend Thos. Lindsay."<sup>28</sup>

Smith has described Lindsay as "a rather loquacious advocate of Nicholson's playing."<sup>29</sup> This seems unfair to both parties. Nicholson did not need an advocate and Lindsay is not his apologist. While crediting him with many developments in flutemaking, Lindsay also points out the difficulties created by enlarging the tone-holes and openly disagrees with Nicholson on the adoption of the long F key.<sup>30</sup> Neither matter was trivial at the time. Nicholson set the standard for English flute playing and therefore much of what Lindsay says must of necessity refer to Nicholson's playing.

The continental tutors were chosen principally because their authors had some interaction with Nicholson. Louis Drouet was familiar to English audiences and even published an English language *Method*. In this there is some thinly veiled criticism of Nicholson's tone, fingering, and

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<sup>28</sup> Charles Nicholson, "Introduction and Favorite Irish Air GRAMACHREE, with Variations and Coda. . . ." (London: Clementi & Co., 1821), cover.

<sup>29</sup> Smith, 12.

<sup>30</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 2.

articulation. Other well known French authors of the period include Tranquille Berbiguier and Jean Louis Tulou.

Contemporary criticism of Nicholson's performances has been discussed by both David Eagle and David Jacobsen. However, comments relative to Nicholson's performance practice from British music journals are included where relevant. William N. James, whose candid and biased opinions are nevertheless enlightening, is also drawn upon where appropriate.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

CHARLES NICHOLSON

In spite of his prominence as a performer, comparatively little is known of Charles Nicholson's (1795-1837) background and early life. What is mentioned in contemporary and later sources appears to be derived from the limited biographical information which Nicholson includes in the tutors. He states that his father was a prominent flutist and credits him with developing the concept of sound and the altered flute with which the younger Nicholson gained fame as a performer.<sup>1</sup> Around 1815, the aspiring young flutist moved from his native Liverpool to London. Success came relatively quickly. Richard Shepherd Rockstro notes that Nicholson, who was appointed a Professor of the Royal Academy of Music at its founding in 1822, had every playing opportunity he chose to accept and more students than he could teach.<sup>2</sup>

By 1823 an enthusiastic reviewer could say that Nicholson "now stands pre-eminent both as a composer for the instrument and as a player."<sup>3</sup> According to Rockstro, Nicholson achieved the highest position ever accorded a

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Nicholson, *Nicholson's Complete Preceptor for the German Flute* (London: Preston, 1816), 1; Charles Nicholson, *A School for the Flute* (New York: Wm. Hall & Son, 1836), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Shepherd Rockstro, *The Flute* 2nd ed. (London: Rudall, Carte and Co., 1928), 608-609.

<sup>3</sup> "Compositions for the Flute," *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, 5 (1823), 83.

flutist in England.<sup>4</sup> H. Macauley Fitzgibbon says that Nicholson's popularity was "absolutely unparalleled."<sup>5</sup> Figure 1-1 (p. 3) shows a portrait of Nicholson in 1827 at the height of his career.

Nicholson's approach to the flute was strikingly different from that of his predecessors and contemporaries. According to report, his flute playing was the loudest that anyone had ever heard. In an age of larger halls and increasing demands for volume of sound, Nicholson was singularly successful. William N. James compared Nicholson's low notes to the sound of an organ.<sup>6</sup>

His expressive techniques included gliding between intervals, fingered vibrato or vibration, and altered fingerings and harmonics which he used both for facility and for variety of tone color. To facilitate these techniques, he made numerous alterations to the instrument, producing a "Nicholson's Improved" flute which differed significantly in sound and capability from the typical flute of the day. These activities placed him at the center of controversy, and it is this for which he is chiefly and perhaps unfairly remembered.

Contemporary reviews describe a player of extraordinary musical accomplishment:

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<sup>4</sup> Rockstro, 608.

<sup>5</sup> H. Macauley Fitzgibbon, *Story of the Flute* (London: Walter Scott, 1914), 208.

<sup>6</sup> William N. James, *A Word or Two on the Flute* (Edinburgh: C. Smith, and London: Cocks, 1826), 90.



Figure 1-1, Charles Nicholson, *The Flutist's Magazine*, 40.

Nothing can more clearly show the mastery this artist has over the grand impediments of the instrument than his performance last year at Covent Garden, where he executed an *Adagio* (that test of tone, taste and expression), without the accompaniment of a single instrument, and such was his complete success, that an encore was demanded by the whole house with acclamation. In pathetic movements he has no rival.<sup>7</sup>

This appraisal is confirmed by others, including George Hogarth, the prominent music critic and father-in-law of Charles Dickens:

Among the present great performers on the flute, our own Nicholson has for many years held the highest place. He is absolutely unrivaled in the power, variety, and richness of his tone, and has never been surpassed in the fine taste and expression of his *adagio* playing.<sup>8</sup>

Even W. N. James had to concede that

however his style and execution may be censured, no arguments can withstand the fact that he is the most effective player who ever performed on the instrument.<sup>9</sup>

This statement by James is a concession because he and Nicholson were bitter enemies. Acrimony between the two was mentioned by Fitzgibbon in 1913 and more recently by David Eagle and Jacobsen<sup>10</sup>. As James's criticism is a primary source of information on flutists of the period, a

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<sup>7</sup> "Compositions for the Flute," 87.

<sup>8</sup> George Hogarth, "Musical Instruments. The Flute," *Musical World*, 3 (1836), 145-150.

<sup>9</sup> James, *A Word or Two*, 155.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzgibbon, 209; Eagle, 96-97; Jacobsen, *Nicholson*, 13-16.

few highlights of his relationship with Nicholson may prove useful in judging his veracity.

A little known text by William Annand reveals the seriousness of the matter:

. . . I must observe that I have been told by good authorities, that previous to the publication of *Two or Three Words on the Flute* [sic], the author had a violent quarrel with Mr. Nicholson, which had proceeded so far that arrangements were made for a hostile meeting; fortunately this never took place, or the lion might have perished by the puncture of an asp. In short, both parties were taken into custody, and bound over [sic] to keep the peace.<sup>11</sup>

In 1826 W. N. James published *A Word or Two On the Flute* in which he provides first hand descriptions and critiques of leading flutists of the day. The volume is dedicated to Nicholson by "his sincere friend and pupil." This must have been galling. James's article on Nicholson is at first complimentary, but amongst much praise James attacks Nicholson for his continual use of embellishment and his compositions: "it would have been better for his fame had they never been written." He then blames Nicholson's general lack of "taste and judgment" on a lack of education.<sup>12</sup>

In closing his essay on Nicholson, James speaks (perhaps wishfully):

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<sup>11</sup> William Annand, *A Few Words on the Flute* (London: Author, 1843), 16.

<sup>12</sup> James, *A Word or Two*, 159-161.

In taking leave of this gentleman, I am perfectly aware that he will be the first person to pardon the freedom and candour of any observations that I have made, seeing that they are grounded in complete impartiality.<sup>13</sup>

James did not stop with this criticism. The assault continues in *his Flutist's Magazine*, where Nicholson is first attacked for his lack of education<sup>14</sup> and then for his double tonguing:

But in the performance of Drouet's variations, there was an absolute defalcation. There was nothing of that chaste, dashing, and vivid execution--one note following another as distinctly as the magical notes of a snuff box--which used to characterise the composer's own unrivalled performance; but in this exhibition, we had a heavy, ill-defined, inexpressive, bustling articulation, which seemed to possess no other meaning than to get on as fast as possible to the end of the chapter.<sup>15</sup>

The comparison with his rival Drouet must have been too much for Nicholson to bear. His response came in the form of an article attached to the fourth of his *Social Pieces* (1829).<sup>16</sup> Titled *A Word or Two to Mr. W. N. James*, it explains the probable source of James's attitude. James had taken a single lesson from Nicholson for which payment was never made. Some years later Nicholson had ignored a

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 166.

<sup>14</sup> James, *Flutist's Magazine*, Vol. I, 1827, 43.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 77. The choice of syllables for double tonguing became a central feature of James and Nicholson's public rancor. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter on articulation.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Nicholson, *Social Pieces* (London: Clementi & Co., 1829).



request by James for a letter of recommendation as his pupil. After recounting the details of this story, Nicholson goes on to brand James as a bad flutist, ignorant composer, and plagiarist.<sup>17</sup> There is no apparent reason to doubt Nicholson's judgement; James appears to be a poseur.

#### NICHOLSON'S CONTEMPORARIES

Nicholson achieved and maintained his success in the face of intense competition from foreign-born artists. A vogue for the flute began in England as early as 1774 and probably peaked during the late 1820's or early 1830's.<sup>18</sup> After the turn of the century a generation of virtuoso flutists had appeared, including Anton B. Furstenau (1792-1852) and Theobald Boehm (1794-1881) in Germany, and Jean Louis Tulou (1786-1865) and Louis Drouet (1792-1873) in France. These performers toured Europe regularly and all toured England: Furstenau in 1826;<sup>19</sup> Boehm in 1831, 1834, 1837, 1845, 1851, and 1852;<sup>20</sup> Tulou in 1819 and 1829;<sup>21</sup> and Drouet in 1817-19, 1829-32 and 1841.<sup>22</sup>

Many of the leading London flutists were either foreigners or of foreign extraction, including Tebaldo Monzani (a native Italian, 1762-1839), Charles Weiss (of

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<sup>17</sup> The entire article is reproduced in Appendix B of Jacobsen, 118-124.

<sup>18</sup> Eagle, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Rockstro, 595.

<sup>20</sup> Karl Ventzke and Deitrich Hilkenbach, *Boehm Woodwinds* (Frankfurt: Verlag Das Musikinstrument, 1982), 19-24.

<sup>21</sup> Rockstro, 588-589.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 598-99.

German extraction, 1777-1845?), and Rafael Dressler (also German, 1784-1835). The leading British flutist in London from 1791 until 1822 was Andrew Ashe (1759-1841), an Irishman who had trained on the continent and returned to Britain in 1782.<sup>23</sup>

Before Nicholson, the English seemed unable to produce their own premier flutist. Nicholson became a national champion by besting the foreigners, at least to the satisfaction of London audiences. His philosophy was simple, "powerful expression depends on power of tone; for it is only its contrast that produces it."<sup>24</sup> English audiences became accustomed to hearing a flute sound fill a hall, and regardless of their skill or musical talent, none of the continental flutists could meet this standard.

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<sup>23</sup> Fitzgibbon, 206-207.

<sup>24</sup> *School*, 6.

## CHAPTER II

### PLAYING THE NICHOLSON FLUTE

#### THE INSTRUMENT

Nicholson's success may be attributed in part to the possibilities afforded him by his modified instrument. Because the techniques developed by Nicholson were tied specifically to the flute which evolved with them, any consideration of Nicholson's performance practice must take into account his modified flute. The Nicholson flute appeared at a time when innovation in flute design had become commonplace.<sup>1</sup>

The standard flute throughout most of the eighteenth century had a single key, a small embouchure, and small fingerholes. Additional keys began to be adopted around 1790, so that by the turn of the century an up-to-date flute would have had a total of six.<sup>2</sup> The eight-keyed flute was described in a tutor as early as 1806<sup>3</sup> and by 1828 was considered the flute of choice.<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that flutes with fewer keys vanished or that the eight-keyed flute represented more than a hypothetical standard. Original instruments from this period (roughly 1800-1850) have from one to more than a dozen keys, and fingering

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Carse, *Musical Wind Instruments* (London: Macmillan, 1939; reprinted New York: Da Capo Press, 1975), 92.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>3</sup> J. Wragg, *Wragg's Improved Flute Preceptor*, 2nd ed. (London: Author, 1806), 15.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Lindsay, *The Elements of Flute Playing* (London: Author, 1828-30), 2.

charts from period tutors suggest that flutes with one key were not uncommon and those with four to eight and more keys continued to be played for some time. Because of the variety of key configuration, this group of instruments will be referred to collectively as keyed flutes.

Parallel to the addition of keys there occurred a movement towards modest enlargements of embouchure and fingerholes. But since this enlargement is slight compared to that of the Nicholson flutes, these later traditional instruments are regarded here as keyed flutes.

The instruments associated with Charles Nicholson are distinguished by greatly enlarged embouchure and fingerholes. Flutes bearing his name are marked "Nicholson's Improved" and are referred to specifically as Nicholson flutes. The differences are so great as to be unmistakable, and the required alterations of playing technique effectively render this a different instrument. Nicholson flutes were widely imitated, and the genre of flutes with similar characteristics are generally referred to as large-hole flutes or Nicholson type flutes. The origin of Nicholson's flute is subject to speculation. In the *School* he recounts trying flutes by several different contemporary makers but reverting to a modified Astor which had belonged to his father. If the Nicholson flute had been derived from the Astor, there should be similarities in the dimensions of the two instruments, particularly regarding the spacing of the fingerholes and the bore of the flute.



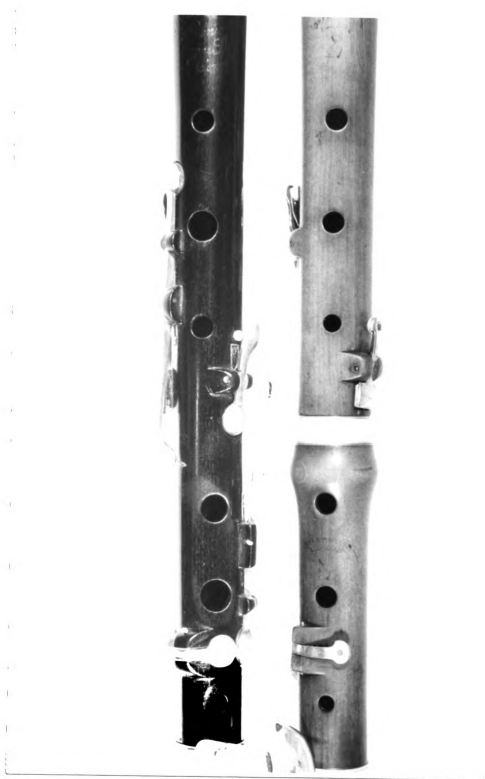


Figure 2-1. Fingerholes, Prowse and Astor flutes.

Figure 2-1 (p. 11) shows the fingerholes of a typical unaltered Astor flute from about 1800 (writer's collection, pitched at about A=430) compared to a Nicholson flute (#3784, writer's collection, pitched about A=440) made by Thomas Prowse ca. 1830. In spite of the difference in pitch, both flutes have a similar hole spacing. This suggests that the Nicholson flute could have been derived from the Astor. Enlarging an individual tone hole causes the pitch of notes sounding from it to rise. In starting with an older low-pitched instrument, Nicholson or his father may have found a way both to increase volume and save a favorite flute from obsolescence in the face of rising pitch. Figure 2-2 (p. 13) shows a closeup of the right-hand holes of the same Astor and Prowse flutes illustrating the dramatic difference in tone-hole size.

The bore of the flute has a strong influence on tone production and has been discussed at length by Rockstro, who uses the internal diameter of the headjoint as an indicator of overall dimensions.<sup>5</sup> Two Astor flutes were available for this study. One (ca. 1800, writer's collection) measures 18.77mm at the head and another (ca. 1804, collection of Douglas Worthen) measures 18.80mm. A Hill-late Monzani (#1832, writer's collection) measures 18.80mm as do two Prowse "Nicholson's Improved" flutes (#3784, ca. 1830, writer's collection; #3157, collection of Stephen Preston). These measurements confirm that the Astor and Prowse flutes

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<sup>5</sup> Rockstro, 158-164.



Figure 2-2. Detail, Prowse and Astor flute fingerholes.



are generally compatible. The bore of the body section of these flutes forms a sometimes complicated taper. A complete comparison of bore dimensions is beyond this study, but a cursory comparison of the diameters of the Astor and Prowse flutes in the writer's collection reveals no substantial incompatibilities. The diameter at the small end of the right hand joint is 12.22mm for the Astor and 12.44mm for the Prowse.

Nicholson flutes were and are notoriously difficult to play--James says by a factor of ten.<sup>6</sup> The large tone-holes allow for a louder sound at the expense of irregular intonation. Nicholson minimizes this difficulty in his tutors and describes several advantages: the tone is louder, although it may still be "subdued"; the upper octave fingerings are simplified; and both glide and vibration are more effective.<sup>7</sup> The prevailing opinion was that the large-hole flute was best suited for concerto playing and should only be used by superior players.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, there was "a positive craze in England for large-hole flutes."<sup>9</sup> "Nicholson's Improved" flutes were first sold by Clementi & Co. and were initially produced by an unknown maker. Figure 2-3 (p. 15) shows an advertisement

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<sup>6</sup> William N. James, review of William Bainbridge, *Observations on the Cause of Imperfections in Wind Instruments*, *The Flutist's Magazine*, 1 (1827), 187.

<sup>7</sup> *School*, 6.

<sup>8</sup> J. Arthur, *The Modern Art of Flute Playing* (London: Willis & Co., 1827) 3; as quoted in "Flute," *The Harmonicon*, 5 (1827), 14.

<sup>9</sup> Philip Bate, *The Flute* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1975), 112.

## NICHOLSON'S IMPROVED FLUTES.

### CLEMENTI and Co.

Have much pleasure to inform the Amateurs of this fashionable and admired Instrument that they are now making Flutes of Ebony and Cocoa, with their newly-invented ELASTIC PISTON and DOUBLE SPRINGS to the Keys, after the plan of Mr. NICHOLSON, under whose immediate inspection these Flutes are finished. Mr. Nicholson's favorite old Flute is too well known in all the Public Concert Rooms in London and most other parts of the Kingdom to require eulogium; and, as they have had this Instrument as a model (an exclusive advantage which no other Manufacturer has ever before possessed,) they have been enabled to apply such Improvements in regard to the Bore, &c. as have given to their Flutes a character of such decided Superiority as to render them worthy of the warmest Professional recommendation.

In all Wind Instruments one of the chief excellencies is a FREEDOM OF TONE; this quality it has been the particular care of the Manufacturers to preserve. In these Flutes it is combined with unusual sweetness and power; and, so perfect is the TOUCH and STOPPING, from the peculiar mechanism of the Keys, that they are recommended as perhaps the best Instruments of the kind ever offered to the public.

#### THE FOLLOWING ARE THEIR PRICES:

|                                                            | £. | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| Elegant Cocoa or Ebony (Nicholson's Improved) Flutes, with |    |    |    |
| Patent Tube Head, Silver Tip, Elastic Piston, and Double   |    |    |    |
| Spring to the Keys, &c. ....                               | 10 | 10 | 0  |
|                                                            | 7  | 0  | 0  |
|                                                            | 8  | 0  | 0  |

Elegant Ivory Flutes, as the above, at additional Prices.

*To prevent Imposition, observe that every Flute is stamped*

CLEMENTI & CO:  
LONDON.  
NICHOLSON'S  
IMPROVED.

Figure 2-3. Advertisement by Clementi & Co..

by Clementi & Co. for these instruments. It claims that Clementi's instruments are copied directly from "Mr. Nicholson's favorite old flute," presumably the Astor mentioned in the *School*. Nicholson flutes were later produced by Thomas Prowse (active from 1816 to 1830), who eventually came to sell them under his own name.<sup>10</sup> Figure 2-4 (p. 17) shows a detail of the stamp from a Thomas Prowse, "Nicholson's Improved" flute (#3784, writer's collection). Figure 2-5 (p. 18) shows a broadside for Prowse which describes the various configurations of flute produced. The advertisement offers that:

"These FLUTES are finished under the immediate inspection of Mr. NICHOLSON . . . where he attends daily for the express purpose of trying each flute, before it is sent out."

The Nicholson-style flute was widely copied by other flute makers, notably by Rudall & Rose,<sup>11</sup> whose flutes were very popular. Both Rockstro and Bate consider these superior to the flutes of T. Prowse in "intonation, tone and workmanship."<sup>12</sup> Rockstro's opinion is somewhat suspect because his book was published by Rudall & Rose's successor, Rudall, Carte & Company, with whom he had a long association. He disparagingly cites the Nicholson flute as being of smaller bore than the Rudall & Rose flutes, giving

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<sup>10</sup> Langwill, 141.

<sup>11</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 2. Lindsay notes that Nicholson was followed by "a whole race of imitators, with Mr. Rudall [of Rudall & Rose] at the head of the list."

<sup>12</sup> Rockstro, 288; Bate, *The Flute*, 112.



Figure 2-4. Stamp from "Nicholson's Improved" flute.

# LIST OF PRICES



## FOR C. Nicholson's LATEST IMPROVED PATENT FLUTES,

MANUFACTURED BY  
**THOMAS PROWSE,**  
**13,**  
**HANWAY-STREET, OXFORD-STREET,**  
(LATE MANUFACTURER FOR CLEMENTI, COLLARD, & Co.)

*Goon or Ebony,*  
With Enchased Silver Ring Tip, Silver Acorn Tip to the Bottom,  
Silver Keys for Keys, and round-headed Pins, for the  
convenience of taking out the Keys.

|                                          | £  | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| 6 Elastic Plug Keys, with double Springs | 13 | 13 | 0  |
| 7 Do                                     | 14 | 14 | 0  |
| 8 Do                                     | 15 | 15 | 0  |

*Goon or Ebony,*  
With very stout Silver Ring Tip, Brass to the Keys, and  
round-headed Pins.

|                                          | £  | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| 6 Elastic Plug Keys, with double Springs | 13 | 13 | 0  |
| 7 Do                                     | 14 | 14 | 0  |
| 8 Do                                     | 15 | 15 | 0  |

*Goon or Ebony,*  
With English-made brass Silver Tip, &c. &c.

|                                          | £  | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| 6 Elastic Plug Keys, with double Springs | 10 | 10 | 0  |
| 7 Do                                     | 11 | 11 | 0  |
| 8 Do                                     | 12 | 12 | 0  |

*Goon or Ebony,*  
With Chased Silver Ring Tip, Silver Acorn tip to the Bottom, and  
Silver Keys.

|                                          | £  | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| 6 Elastic Plug Keys, with double Springs | 10 | 10 | 0  |
| 7 Do                                     | 11 | 11 | 0  |
| 8 Do                                     | 12 | 12 | 0  |

*Goon or Ebony,*  
With Silver Tip and Socket.

|                                          | £  | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| 6 Elastic Plug Keys, with double Springs | 8  | 8  | 0  |
| 7 Do                                     | 9  | 9  | 0  |
| 8 Do                                     | 10 | 10 | 0  |
| 9 Do                                     | 11 | 11 | 0  |
| Extra for Silver Pins to the Enchased    | 0  | 10 | 6  |

|                                          | £ | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------|---|----|----|
| 6 Elastic Plug Keys, with double Springs | 7 | 7  | 0  |
| 7 Do                                     | 8 | 8  | 0  |
| 8 Do                                     | 9 | 9  | 0  |

|                                          | £ | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------|---|----|----|
| 6 Elastic Plug Keys, with double Springs | 7 | 7  | 0  |
| 7 Do                                     | 8 | 8  | 0  |
| 8 Do                                     | 9 | 9  | 0  |

|        | £ | s. | d. |
|--------|---|----|----|
| 6 Keys | 6 | 6  | 0  |
| 7 Do   | 7 | 7  | 0  |
| 8 Do   | 8 | 8  | 0  |

|                                                                                                                         | £ | s. | d. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|----|
| Improved Patent Leather Case, with set of Elastic<br>Plugs, cleaner for preserving the bore of the Instru-<br>ment, &c. | 1 | 1  | 0  |
| Case in Rosewood or Mahogany, with set of                                                                               | 0 | 14 | 0  |

These FLUTES are finished under the immediate inspection of Mr. NICHOLSON, at the only Manufactory of his improved Instruments,  
HANWAY-STREET, OXFORD-STREET, where he attends daily for the express purpose of trying each Flute,  
previously to its being sent out.

N. B. Each Flute is accompanied with a Certificate, bearing the Signature, "C. NICHOLSON."

W. FORD, Printer, &c. 68, Wood-street, London.

Figure 2-5. Advertisement by Thomas Prowse.

general measurements of .74-.75" for the Rudall and Rose headjoint bores and .73-.74" for the Nicholson flutes. The writer's measurements of four instruments (Rudall & Rose #2959, #3981, and Prowse #3157, collection of Stephen Preston; and Prowse #3784, writer's collection) reveal that both Prowse flutes and Rudall & Rose #2959 measure 18.80mm (.740") while Rudall & Rose #3981 measures 18.82mm (.741").

Furstenau may be a more neutral authority. He admires the Nicholson flutes for their low register, but worries that they no longer sound like flutes. He also considers the Rudall flutes only average.<sup>13</sup>

Examination of numerous examples of both makes, reveals that the Rudall & Rose flutes are easier to play and therefore better adapted to the amateur. In terms of sound production and intonation, the flutes by T. Prowse are difficult to control. However, if the flute is in good working order and the player is able to control it, the sound is much fuller and has more depth and carrying power. These flutes are undoubtedly closer in sound to Nicholson's intention.

The Nicholson flute differs substantially from contemporary European and English instruments. Monzani's flutes were quite popular, and Nicholson mentions having played one for an extended period.<sup>14</sup> Figure 2-6 (p. 20) shows the fingerholes of a Nicholson flute (Prowse #3784,

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<sup>13</sup> Anton B. Fürstenau, *Flöten-Schule* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Hartel, ca. 1826), 9, 10.

<sup>14</sup> *School*, 6.



Figure 2-6. Fingerholes, Prowse and Hill-late Monzani flutes.



Figure 2-7. Nine nineteenth-century flutes.



writer's collection) compared with those of a Hill-late Monzani from 1832 (#2332, writer's collection). Figure 2-7 (p. 21) shows nine flutes, five of which are traditional keyed flutes and four of which have the large holes (collection of Stephen Preston). All but flutes B and I are from the the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Flutes A (Claire Godfroy) and B (Jacques Nonon--this is an example of Tulou's *Flute Perfectionnee*<sup>15</sup> made sometime after 1853) are typical of French manufacture. The Godfroy demonstrates the French tendency towards simplicity, with only a D-foot joint. The Nonon is Tulou's answer to the Boehm flute. It incorporates technical improvements but retains many features of the older keyed flute. Both flutes have small holes and a characteristically light, clear sound. Flute C is made in Dresden by V. Liebel and flute D is Viennese and is attributed to Stephan Koch. These Germanic flutes are very heavy in construction, and the Koch has several extra keys. The sound is a bit louder and more penetrating than the French instruments, but still small compared to the Nicholson flutes. Flute E is made in London by Rudall & Rose but is not a large-hole flute. The moderate size oval embouchure hole is typical of progressive English flutes of the time; those by conservative makers such as Monzani & Hill tend to be smaller still.

Flutes F through H are typical "Nicholson's Improved" flutes as manufactured by Thomas Prowse. There is

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<sup>15</sup> Jean Louis Tulou, *Méthode de Flûte* (Mayence: B. Schott's Sohne, 1835), 63.

considerable variation in the details of these flutes, and only flute F incorporates all of Nicholson's innovations. These include an ivory-lined embouchure,<sup>16</sup> excavations for the left-hand index finger and right-hand thumb and a flattening of the body to facilitate the glide. Details of the excavations for the left-hand index finger and right-hand thumb are shown in Figures 2-8 and 2-9 (pp. 24 and 25). The latter is lined with sharkskin to improve the grip. This modification reflects Nicholson's penchant for having a firm grasp on the instrument.<sup>17</sup> The flattened fingerholes are visible in Figures 2-6 (Prowse flute) and 2-7 (flutes F and G). Flute F from Figure 2-7 displays a series of ornamental rings which often appear on the headjoint and barrel of "Nicholson's Improved" flutes.

The number of keys on the Nicholson flute is of some significance. He is said to have played on a six-keyed flute and to have opposed the additional long F and C keys.<sup>18</sup> If he did play on his father's Astor, this older flute would probably have had fewer keys. The *Preceptive Lessons* and the *School* contain fingerings for both the C and long F keys, showing that Nicholson fully understood their use. In the *School* he states that music of the present time (1836) requires a flute with seven keys (the seventh would be the C key) and admits that many will find the long F advantageous.<sup>19</sup> Playing the examples of the

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<sup>16</sup> *School*, 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 2.

<sup>19</sup> *School*, 6.



Figure 2-8. Detail, excavation for left hand.



Figure 2-9. Detail, excavation for right hand.

tutors suggests that Nicholson had evolved a technique of sliding onto the short F key, which rendered the long F unnecessary. He appears to have used the weaker-sounding forked fingering in very fast passages where a clear tone was not required,<sup>20</sup> but in one instance he indicates a trill using the short F key. This involves closing all the holes of the flute with the fingertips and somehow trilling the short F key with the side of the tip of the ring finger (the F key is located between the tips of the middle and ring fingers). Nicholson evidently could do this, but for others he "despairs of ever hearing it executed with brilliancy."<sup>21</sup> Such techniques must have seemed superhuman and still do. Of the Nicholson flutes in Figure 2-7, flutes E and H have eight keys, and flutes F and G have seven.

Not visible in Figure 2-7 is the weight of the flutes. Nicholson argues against extra keys because of their added weight, yet the Prowse flutes are made of very dense wood and the keywork is of unusually heavy silver. An eight-keyed "Nicholson's Improved" flute from the 1830's (Prowse #3879, writer's collection) weighs 486 grams while a similarly equipped traditional flute from 1832 (Hill-late Monzani #2332, writer's collection) weighs 353 grams. An earlier boxwood flute by Astor with five keys (ca. 1800, writer's collection) weighs just 280 grams. Only the

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<sup>20</sup> Charles Nicholson, *Preceptive Lessons* (London: Clementi & Co., 1821), 3; *School*, 47.

<sup>21</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 43.

Germanic flutes, with their extra keywork and extended foot joints, exceed the Nicholson flute in weight.

Flute I is a Rudall & Rose imitation of the Nicholson model. The embouchure hole is not quite as large as in the Prowse examples. This instrument represents a compromise, being easier to play but lacking the full sound of the Prowse flutes.

Lindsay credits Nicholson with popularizing several features which are common to the Nicholson flute as well as to many flutes of the period. These include *elastic plugs* (round leather pads) found on flutes E-I, pewter plugs for the low C and C# keys found on flutes D-I, a metal-lined headjoint and tuning slide found on flutes C-I, and double springs which improve the action of the keys<sup>22</sup> found on flutes E-I.

There was no clear standard of pitch in England during Nicholson's lifetime. Adam Carse documents wide variations in pitch among the various London orchestras from 1819 to 1838.<sup>23</sup> A comparison of a number of English flutes from the first half of the century suggests a general rise in pitch throughout the period. The five-keyed Astor (ca. 1800, writer's collection) plays at about A=430. It appears that the Prowse flutes were intended to play at about A=440. Boehm flutes made after mid-century by Rudall, Carte & Co. commonly play at or above A=450. Reginal Nettel confirms

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<sup>22</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 2.

<sup>23</sup> Adam Carse, *The Orchestra from Beethoven to Berlioz* (New York: Broude, 1949), 471.

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that the pitch adopted by the Philharmonic Society of London in 1813 was  $A=423.7$ , but by mid-century had risen to  $A=452.5$ .<sup>24</sup>

The tuning slide, described in Richard Potter's patent of 1785,<sup>25</sup> would have been a practical necessity. Nicholson attests to the lack of uniform pitch standards by recommending that the student learn transposition in case he has to play more than a half-step above or below the pitch of the instrument.<sup>26</sup> Figure 2-10 (p. 29) shows two headjoints made for the same Nicholson flute (Clementi & Co., "Nicholson's Improved," collection of Glennis Stout) and pitched almost a half-step apart.

It appears that the Prowse flutes were intended to be played with the tuning slide extended. This is illustrated in Figure 2-11, (p. 30) and confirmed by T. Prowse flute #3784 (writer's collection), which has a line marked at a distance of approximately one-quarter of an inch. Without this extension these flutes play well above  $A=445$ . The Nicholson flute requires the use of a number of altered fingerings. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries one key after another had been added to the simple one-keyed flute, and the application and use of the various keys was still being explored in Nicholson's time. The

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<sup>24</sup> Reginald Nettel, *The Orchestra in England* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946), 244.

<sup>25</sup> *Patents for Inventions. Abridgements of Specifications Relating to Music and Musical Instruments* (London: Office of the Commissioners of Patents for Inventions, 1871), 16.

<sup>26</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 81.





Figure 2-10. Two headjoints for the same Nicholson flute.



Figure 2 -11. Tuning slide extension of Nicholson flute.

transition from the one-keyed flute to the various keyed-flutes with small fingerholes presented few difficulties, because the old and often easier cross fingerings remained useable.<sup>27</sup> With their extra venting, Nicholson's large fingerholes render the cross fingerings ineffective except in fast passages. In addition, the Nicholson flute produces harmonics and notes of the upper register with comparative ease, making available a number of alternate fingerings which were previously ineffective or impossible. A new fingering system might have its advantages, but would require effort to learn. Nicholson vehemently denies that his flute requires altered fingerings,<sup>28</sup> yet his *system* of fingering is a featured part of the tutors.

A page explaining the nature and availability of harmonic fingerings is included in the *Complete Preceptor* and the *School*.<sup>29</sup> The musical examples of the *Preceptive Lessons* feature extensive use of harmonic fingerings.<sup>30</sup> For example, in the tutors Nicholson gives a total of six different fingerings for c<sup>3</sup>. These include harmonics of c<sup>1</sup>, and f<sup>1</sup>, as well as the more usual cross fingering, and the long C key.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "Compositions," 84. In this article Louis Drouet, one of Nicholson's greatest rivals, is criticized for using these easier fingerings in the pursuit of facility.

<sup>28</sup> *School*, 6.

<sup>29</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 76; *School*, 115.

<sup>30</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 11, 15, 16, 19, 24, etc.

<sup>31</sup> *School*, 45; *Complete Preceptor*, 69; *Ibid*, 10; *School*, 45.

The ease of overblowing may also have led Nicholson to exploit the use of octaves. This device (Figure 2-12) is not new, but it is easier to produce on the Nicholson flute and appears with frequency both in the tutors<sup>32</sup> and in Nicholson's compositions.<sup>33</sup> The link between Nicholson's flute and his tutors could hardly be more direct.



Figure 2-12. Nicholson's use of Octaves, *School*, 73.

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<sup>32</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 53. *Preceptive Lessons*, 12, 26, 35. *School*, 75.

<sup>33</sup> Charles Nicholson, *Twelve Airs with Variations* (London: Clementi & Co., 1821), "Portuguese Air," variation 3; "Oh Nanny Wilt Thou Gang with Me," variation 3; "French Air," variation 5.

## ALIGNMENT

A relevant bit of evidence appears in the Nicholson model flutes produced by Thomas Prowse. One example (Clementi-Prowse, ca. 1825, #3157, collection of Stephen Preston) exhibits alignment marks between the joints (Figure 2-13, p. 34). These indicate that, starting from the head, the top of each joint was to be turned progressively outwards (away from the performer). This relationship is displayed by flutes F and G in Figure 2-7 (p. 21).

Particularly clear evidence for this alignment appears in a flute which has the center section made in one piece instead of the usual two. Figure 2-14 (p. 35) shows the shift in alignment of the fingerholes between the left and right hands. Figure 2-15 (p. 36) from the *School* shows the right-hand fingerholes turned outward.

Nicholson fails to mention this joint alignment in the text of his tutors. With the exception of a singular mention in Lindsay's *Elements*, Nicholson's alignment of the body of the flute seems also to have gone without notice in the other flute tutors examined. As these tutors are all of a general nature and the Nicholson flute was something of a specialty item, the implication is that the usage of this particular alignment was confined to large-hole flutes. Drouet, who played a small-hole flute and opposed Nicholson on many issues, actually describes the opposite practice, with the right hand joint "being turned inwards a very little."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Louis Drouet, *Drouet's Method of Flute Playing* (London: R. Cocks & Co., 1830), 1.



Figure 2-13. Clementi-Prowse flute, alignment marks.



Figure 2-14. T. Prowse flute, hand alignment.



Figure 2-15. Flute alignment, Nicholson's *School*.



Lindsay offers an explanation and some veiled criticism of this alignment practice. Though he avoids direct conflict with Nicholson, Lindsay's comments here suggest that he did not favor the large-hole flute. He first explains that the recent trend towards large embouchure holes has led to turning the headjoint inwards,

this inclination being considered best adapted for receiving the whole column of air as it is passed from the Embouchure, and also in the most advantageous direction for a fine, full, and resonant tone.<sup>35</sup>

Along with turning the headjoint in came a trend towards turning the joints of the body outward. Lindsay explains the practical purpose of this practice and reveals his scepticism about the large finger-holes:

Again, it is not unusual to turn the holes of the third joint *outwards* in a similar degree, as seen in the sketch, [Figure 2-16, p. 38] but this the author considers useless; unless, indeed, the holes of the flute are of very large dimensions, in which latter case the precautions may be serviceable, inasmuch as they are thereby brought more immediately under the soft, fleshy part of the fingers, and consequently more likely to be closely stopped.<sup>36</sup>

Lindsay's explanation seems less than complete. As he suggests, Nicholson's joint alignment does allow the "soft, fleshy part of the fingers" to cover the holes, but only when other adjustments are made.

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<sup>35</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 14

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

Experiments with the Nicholson flute suggest a further explanation, having more to do with posture and sound production. In order for one to play comfortably, the right elbow and forearm must be considerably elevated, thus raising the ribcage and so facilitating breathing. This serves to match the angle of the right hand to the position of the flute body. While experimenting with this position and the Nicholson flute, this writer experienced a pronounced increase in focus, pungency, and volume of sound, all quite consistent with Nicholson's expressed ideal of tone. This arrangement is effective only in playing the large-hole flutes and does not appear applicable to other types of flute.



Figure 2-16. Flute alignment, Lindsay, *Elements*, 14.

While many tutors also recommend turning the headjoint inwards, Nicholson's alignment of the flute body is exceptional. It simultaneously aids in covering the large holes, prevents the "stooping" and "ungraceful" posture that Nicholson opposed, and favors the characteristics of sound with which he was associated.

## POSTURE

Charles Nicholson appears to be the first prominent flutist to establish a clear link between posture and projection of sound. Prior to the nineteenth century, the requirements for projection of sound were comparatively modest and efficiency of breathing hardly an issue. With the advent of public concerts, larger concert halls, and the popular taste for virtuoso display came a concern for volume and projection of sound. As Nicholson was uniquely successful in this respect, his approach to posture and breathing are both interesting and illuminating. Although he does not address breathing as a separate topic, much can be inferred from his tutors, from period engravings of flutists, and from examination of surviving instruments.

Nicholson's views on posture are the first topic of discussion in the *Complete Preceptor*. In an essay, "On Holding the Flute," He cautions that while some may deem the subject trivial, holding the flute deserves the student's immediate attention. The most visible feature of Nicholson's concept is that the flute should be held horizontally, not just for appearance but because

the Pupil will be enabled to preserve an equality of Tone, which must be necessarily lost by holding the Instrument in an oblique direction.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 3.

He goes on to recommend that the pupil stand while practicing so that

by keeping the chest a little extended, and avoiding an inclination to stoop, [the student's posture] will be more healthful, and at the same time render his practice less irksome and laborious than would otherwise be the case from the practice of sitting in an inclined position.<sup>38</sup>

Twenty years later Nicholson's reasoning remained much the same, but he gives greater emphasis to the mechanics of breathing and the direct connection of posture and breathing to sound production:

The position I recommend my pupils to adopt in their practice, is to keep the head and body as upright as possible; by which means the chest is rendered more capable of expansion, and the performer is enabled to produce a more full and free tone than would result from a stooping as well as an ungraceful posture.<sup>39</sup>

Nicholson's approach to posture represents a departure from previous practice in several respects, including body carriage, angle of the flute, and hand position. This was undoubtedly necessitated by the relative awkwardness of the Nicholson flute. Illustrations from the frontispiece of the *School* show the two contrasting approaches (Figures 2-17 and 2-18, pp. 41 and 42). These are later described in the text:

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> *School*, 1.



Figure 2-17. Bad posture, *School*, frontspiece.



Figure 2-18. Good posture, *School*, frontspiece.

The one showing the flute depressed, and a distorted countenance in the performer, is far from a caricature or exaggeration of the manner in which the instrument is frequently held. I shall therefore here make an observation, the truth of which may be relied on, that the most elegant position is invariably the best in the use of all instruments, and merits the earliest and most serious consideration of the pupil.<sup>40</sup>

That the first is not a caricature may be seen by a comparison with Figure 2-19 (p. 44, from Monzani's *Instructions*, 1813). Among Nicholson's immediate predecessors, the predominant posture seems to have been relaxed, with the ribcage lowered (causing the stomach to protrude) and shoulders held slightly forward. In contrast, Nicholson's posture has the ribcage raised and the shoulders held back. One has only to try a few deep breaths, first with the sternum lowered and then with it raised, to appreciate the effectiveness of Nicholson's approach.

It may be surmised from Figure 2-18 that Nicholson's use of the word "horizontal" is relative rather than absolute. Without mentioning Nicholson by name, Lindsay reconciles this seeming contradiction and sets precise limits as well,

. . . since a perfectly horizontal line of the Flute would be difficult to preserve for any length of time, because from too great an elevation of the right arm, it would be attended with considerable fatigue, this arm is generally suffered to fall, to such an extent, that the declination of the Flute may form an easy and graceful angle of about 10, but certainly not more than 15 degrees, from the horizon, as shown in the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.



Figure 2-19. Frontispiece, Monzani, *Instructions*, 1813.



diagram. A very slight inclination of the head will then counteract the effect of the angle, and restore the parallelism of the lips.<sup>41</sup>

Nicholson's general approach to posture appears to have been quite influential, at least in his own country. Popular English tutors before the Nicholson's *Complete Preceptor* (1816) make little or no mention of posture whatsoever. These include the early editions of the popular J. Wragg (from 1790) and Monzani (1801) tutors. Those published after the *Complete Preceptor* often paraphrase if not plagiarize some of Nicholson's ideas on posture. This distinctive horizontal position is advocated in the tutors of Wragg (ca. 1828), Dressler (1828), Weiss (1829), Lindsay (1828-30) and Alexander (1830).

Nicholson appears to have had little influence on the continent. Most earlier writers seem concerned primarily with matters of appearance or hand position. Discussions of posture appear more frequently among Nicholson's continental contemporaries, perhaps reflecting a general trend. Particularly notable is Tulou, who in his *Methode* (1835), does make a connection between posture and ease or difficulty of breathing. Still, his concern is more with avoiding the difficulties created by bad posture than with increasing efficiency beyond the norm. No direct connection is drawn between posture and production of sound. In his English-language *Method* (1830), Drouet addresses respiration

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<sup>41</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 14

(meaning musical phrasing) at length and posture only briefly, and he makes no explicit connection between posture and tone production. In Germany, A.B. Furstenau advocates a horizontal position for the flute, but Figure 2-20 (p. 47) from his *Floten-Schule* shows the chest and shoulders held rather low, in distinct contrast to Nicholson's posture in Figure 2-18. Again, no connection between posture and projection of sound is discussed.

The effect of Nicholson's alignment may also be seen in comparison of the position of the right elbow in Figure 2-18 with that in Figure 2-20. In Figure 2-18 the right-hand tone holes are clearly visible, with the joint turned out and away from the performer.

The connection of posture to breathing, and breathing to sound production is now well established and may seem obvious to today's flutists. However, in Nicholson's time the idea was new. It produced a profound change in the practice and aesthetics of flute playing.



Figure 2-20. Frontispiece, Fürstenau, *Flöten-Schule*.

### CHAPTER III

#### TONE QUALITY

In England, by the end of the eighteenth century, opinion on the ideal of flute tone had diverged into two camps, amateur and professional. The split reflects the disparate requirements faced by the two groups. Playing in intimate settings, the amateur could afford to use whatever sound he found pleasing. Larger halls, audiences, and ensembles demanded increased projection from the professional. This was accompanied by a rise in pitch and the acceptance of brighter color.

John Gunn comments on this state of affairs in his tutor of 1793, describing the two groups and their ideals. The amateurs are presented as "pupils of nature." Their model for tone is the female voice, with the ideal sound being characterized by "softness, grace, and tender expression." This viewpoint is reflected by Monzani, who in 1813 cautions the pupil to "avoid what is termed a reedy or oboe tone on the lower notes."<sup>1</sup> Gunn describes the professional's ideal as equality and fullness of tone, but warns against "bold and warlike tones."<sup>2</sup> He personally advocates taking the best of both extremes:

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<sup>1</sup> Tebaldo Monzani, *A New and Enlarged Edition of Monzani's Instructions for the German Flute* (London: Monzani & Hill, ca. 1813), 7.

<sup>2</sup> John Gunn, *The Art of Playing the German Flute* (London: author, 1793), 1.

I have often smiled at the conflict of these jarring opinions, when called upon to give mine, and have given little satisfaction to either party, by declaring that neither of them appeared to me to be right; that it was like asking a painter whether it were better for a picture to be all light, or all shadow.<sup>3</sup>

Nicholson's position in this controversy would seem obvious. As Bate puts it, his "brilliance and power of tone were the admiration of all and the despair of many."<sup>4</sup>

Nicholson does stress the ability to play loudly, particularly in the low register. He describes this in the *School*:

The tone ought to be as reedy as possible, as much like that of the hautboy as you can get it, but employing the round mellowness of the clarionet.<sup>5</sup>

This is not the only or even the usual approach but is in fact a special effect. Writing in 1892, Christopher Welch terms this the "*son plein*, a quality of tone resembling that of the clarionet."<sup>6</sup>

Quoted by Rockstro and repeated out of context by Bate, Toff,<sup>7</sup> and others, this one statement has given Nicholson a modern reputation as a player of great volume and questionable taste. This is misleading, because loudness is

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Bate, 8.

<sup>5</sup> *School*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Welch, *History of the Boehm Flute* second ed. (London: Rudall, Carte, and Co., 1892; reprinted New York: McGinnis & Marx, 1961), 6.

<sup>7</sup> Rockstro, 608; Bate, 111-112; Toff, *Modern Flute*, 38; Toff, *Flute Book*, 103.

only one feature of a complicated style. The reedy tone was not Nicholson's usual manner of playing but a special effect which is difficult to produce and which therefore requires some practice. Drawing from the remembrances of those who had actually heard him play, Rockstro describes Nicholson's tone as being "occasionally hard in quality, yet it was really noble in its general character."<sup>8</sup> He undoubtedly could and did play loudly *on occasion*, but this was only one facet of a complex and varied style. In fact, Rockstro offers a balanced image of Nicholson's approach to tone, commenting that

this popular artist had such a consummate mastery over his instrument, that the effects of light and shade which he was therefore able to produce were truly marvellous [sic].<sup>9</sup>

As if to refute possible criticism, Nicholson cautions in the *School* that the *quality* of sound should be of first concern. He specifically warns against playing too loudly, or "roaring," and also against the "hissing or whistling" of embouchure noise.<sup>10</sup> This suggests a degree of refinement in matters of tone.

Welch suggests that Nicholson's reputation as a blowhard may owe more to his successors than to himself:

Nicholson, who could elicit every variety of tone which the flute is capable of producing, is said to have forced it out in a way never before heard,

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<sup>8</sup> Rockstro, 613.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> *School*, 3.

and hence it was christened the "Nicholsonian" effect." It is much cultivated by English flute-players, and those who have strong lips are often proud of being able to "thrash" the flute, as they term it, and so make it heard.<sup>11</sup>

Boehm states in 1871 that, "All Nicholson's successors had, more or less, a powerful tone, but they made a trumpet of the flute."<sup>12</sup> The implication is that Nicholson *did not* make a trumpet of the flute. He appears to have followed John Gunn's suggestion and adopted the best of the two extremes of tonal concepts. Nicholson considers tone the most important feature of flute playing.<sup>13</sup> It is apparent that he refers not just to the acquisition of a good sound, but the controlled use of contrasting sounds. In the *Complete Preceptor* Nicholson laments that flute players give their attention to rapid execution, rather than

the varied modulation of Tone, so essentially requisite to give a corresponding feeling and effect, which a monotony of sound must ever fail to produce: this variation or management of Tone, it has been the Authors [sic] first and principal study to obtain. . . .<sup>14</sup>

Any notion of Charles Nicholson playing loudly all or perhaps even most of the time is simplistic and ultimately incorrect.

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<sup>11</sup> Welch, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 218-219.

<sup>13</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

## EMBOUCHURE

A discussion of the tone of the flute inevitably leads to the topic of "embouchure" and the related techniques of sound production. These include control of dynamics, pitch, and quality of sound (color).

In the *Complete Preceptor* Nicholson first describes a very firm embouchure, with the lips "braced as much as possible."<sup>15</sup> This would produce a hard, focused sound in the low register. The term *bracing* appears about the same time in Alexander (1818)<sup>16</sup> and later in Dressler (1828).<sup>17</sup>

Nicholson does not limit himself to the *reedy* tone, but also gives instructions for a contrasting soft tone. This requires a different embouchure and approach:

To produce a soft, mellow, and round Tone, the Lips should not be so well braced as in the former instance, but rather project, the orifice being formed from the soft or innermost part of the Lips, and the breath directed obliquely into the Flute as before, only much softer.<sup>18</sup>

The *Preceptive Lessons* offer surprisingly little comment on tone or embouchure. Citing "how very inferior all written precepts are to oral instruction," Nicholson offers a free lesson to anyone presenting himself with a complete copy of the *Preceptive Lessons*.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>16</sup> James Alexander, *Alexander's Complete Preceptor for the Flute* second edition (London: author, ca. 1818), 4.

<sup>17</sup> Raphael Dressler, *Dressler's New and Complete Instructions for the Flute* (London: R. Cocks & Co., 1828), 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 4.



The most complete treatment of embouchure occurs in the *School*. There is evidence that Nicholson's ideas developed and changed over time. In describing basic sound production, he suggests that "the lips must be first closed, and a little drawn back, preserving as much as possible their natural position free from distortion . . . the less exertion used the better."<sup>19</sup> This is a decided contrast to the *bracing* mentioned in the *Complete Preceptor* (quoted earlier). As Nicholson himself explains:

The old system of bracing the lips, producing an elongation of the mouth, is for many reasons, decidedly bad, as it renders the lips thin, increases the difficulty of confining the embouchure, and prevents an equal pressure.<sup>20</sup>

Nicholson's concern with flexibility of sound evidently led him to adopt a looser embouchure which resulted in a change in tone. In 1827 James commented on a general improvement in Nicholson's style and taste that had occurred during the two previous years. Describing the new style as "obviously remodeled," he says that Nicholson's tone has gained in richness and purity without losing volume or power.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *School*, 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>21</sup> William N. James, "Mr. Nicholson," *The Flutist's Magazine*, 1 (1827), 44-45.

## COVERAGE AND INTONATION

Details of the flute embouchure were and are difficult to describe. One important feature which lends itself to discussion is the coverage of the embouchure hole of the flute by the player's lower lip. This influences both tone and intonation dramatically.

Nicholson describes covering one-half of the embouchure hole<sup>22</sup> in the *Complete Preceptor*. This is intended for the traditional small-hole flute, as the Nicholson flute is not mentioned and would not have been widely known in 1816. This is also in conjunction with the *braced* embouchure, which would tend to pull the lips against the teeth and away from the embouchure hole, leaving it comparatively open.

There is great diversity among Nicholson's contemporaries on the issue of embouchure hole coverage. This is a good indicator of concept of tone. A covered approach suggests a focused sound and an uncovered embouchure suggests the reverse, akin to that of Gunn's pupils of nature. The *one-half* rule is typical but not universal. Some tutors recommend a much more open approach. In London Keith suggests one-sixth coverage,<sup>23</sup> and in Paris Tulou advocates that a maximum of one-fourth be covered.<sup>24</sup> This suggests a much lighter and less focused concept of tone than Nicholson's.

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<sup>22</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Robert William Keith, *A New Complete Preceptor for the Flute* (London: author, ca. 1818-21), 10.

<sup>24</sup> Tulou (1835), 4.

Covering one-half of a large Nicholson embouchure hole is an entirely different proposition than doing so on the traditional flute. In the *School* Nicholson is speaking about his own instrument when he suggests that the pupil cover "at least one-third or half the mouthhole."<sup>25</sup> Covering half of the large embouchure hole requires that the lips be somewhat relaxed and extended outward. This relatively relaxed embouchure would allow greater flexibility as regards intonation, dynamics, and ultimately tone color.

The angle of the air stream has a critical effect on tone color and is closely connected to embouchure coverage. In discussing embouchure noise in the *School*, Nicholson explains that harshness and noise result from blowing over the embouchure hole rather than into it.<sup>26</sup> He stresses the role of the upper lip in reference to production of a strong tone in the lower register. The upper lip is to be brought as close to the blowing edge of the embouchure as possible, so that "the breath may have as short a distance to pass from the lips to the flute as possible."<sup>27</sup> The air is not to pass across the embouchure hole, but "the breath ought to enter the mouth-hole in a vertical line."<sup>28</sup> The extension of the upper lip as Nicholson describes it would be impossible with the bracing mentioned earlier. Because the lips must advance over the embouchure hole, this vertical

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<sup>25</sup> *School*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

approach to the air stream suggests a relatively relaxed embouchure and a highly focused, pungent tone color.

The *School* includes engravings of the embouchures for both loud and soft sounds. Figure 3-1a (p. 57) represents the former,<sup>29</sup> and some tension is visible in the corners of the mouth. Figure 3-1b represents playing softly and shows a more natural formation of the lips. There can be little doubt that Nicholson's embouchure would have been firmer than that of his rival Drouet, who suggests blowing "without making any grimace, noise, or distressing exertion."<sup>30</sup>

Nicholson's attitude towards intonation confirms his flexibility of embouchure. Covering the hole produces a harder, more focused sound and lowers the pitch. Nicholson instructs that as one plays softer, the distance from the upper lip to the mouth-hole and the opening of the flute's mouth-hole must be increased.<sup>31</sup> He advocates practice of the swell from *pp* to *ff* and back on each note to acquire "a proper method of playing in tune."<sup>32</sup> Uncovering the embouchure hole favors a relatively soft and unfocused sound and higher level of pitch. This approach to intonation requires flexibility not only because the Nicholson flute is inherently out of tune, but because the large embouchure requires an exaggerated motion of the lips in order to correct the pitch. Nicholson places responsibility for intonation entirely on the player and not the instrument.

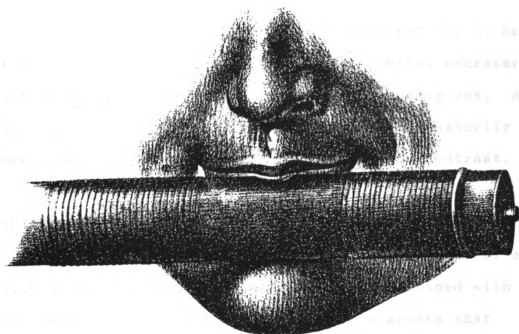
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<sup>29</sup> *School*, 4.

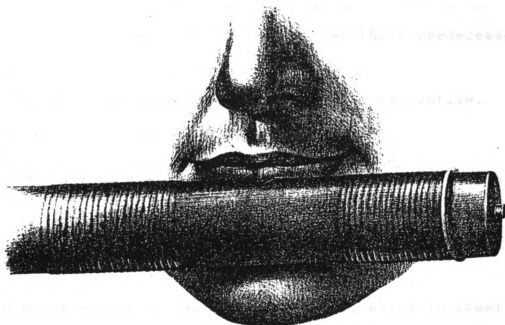
<sup>30</sup> Drouet, *Method* (1830), 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 5.



A.



B.

Figure 3-1. Embouchure, *School*, Plate 2.

Good intonation is not difficult, "provided the ears of the performer happen to be put on in the right place."<sup>33</sup>

Playing period instruments confirms that the Nicholson flutes are extremely out of tune. The control necessary just to produce acceptable intonation is prodigious. Anyone who could master the instrument would have necessarily developed a means of great tonal control and contrast.

#### VARIETY OF COLOR

Nicholson accords great importance to *variety* of sound, which takes the form of dynamic contrast combined with contrasts of tone color. The evidence suggests that Nicholson and some of his English contemporaries were aware of and exploited the possibilities of varied tone color to a degree which far exceeded that of either their predecessors or European contemporaries.

The European approach was much more conservative.

Drouet is direct and a bit defensive:

A fine tone does not depend on its loudness, or greatness of volume. A large tone might be offensive, and a weak tone agreeable. A tyro on any instrument produces more noise than a finished performer, but who will say that it is pleasant?<sup>34</sup>

Tulou never mentions tone color directly, which in itself is significant. He gives his opinion of such things with the statement, "In the arts, with the flute especially, it is

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 2.

better to say: it is charming, than to say: it is astonishing!"<sup>35</sup> Fürstenau simply states that one must not expect a clarinet or trumpet sound, which is alien to the flute.<sup>36</sup> That a real difference of concept existed is confirmed by a letter to the editor of *The Flutist's Magazine* (1827). The anonymous writer claims to have spoken with Fürstenau, who explained that "in Germany no flutist would be tolerated who had not a very soft tone."<sup>37</sup> In the editor's response to this letter, James claims that on Fürstenau's recent tour of England he was converted to the English ideal of tone and left the country with several English flutes. In fact, Fürstenau criticizes the various English flutes and states that the London maker Saust is copying his flutes from Fürstenau's Liebel flute (made in Dresden).<sup>38</sup> James's record of biased reporting remains intact. Fürstenau does seem to have been sincerely impressed with Nicholson, describing him as a genuine, substantial flutist [ein wirklich trefflicher Flötenspieller].<sup>39</sup>

Although Nicholson was well known for the loud, hard color, he gives a detailed description of the production and use of the soft sound in the *School*. This refers to more than a change in dynamic. His precise wording is of interest:

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<sup>35</sup> Tulou (1835), 1.

<sup>36</sup> Fürstenau (ca. 1826), 10.

<sup>37</sup> Flauto, "M. Fürstenau," *The Flutist's Magazine* 1 (1827), p. 29.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>39</sup> Fürstenau, (ca. 1826), 9.

There is a soft, mellow, and delicious quality of tone to be produced in the lower octave of the flute, by forming the embouchure of the soft internal portion of the lips: it is totally free from reediness, and in some degree resembles the most subdued tones of the clarionet. The muscles of the face and lips must be relaxed, and the mouth-hole about one-third covered, and brought exactly opposite the embouchure, to receive the column of air, which must be impelled into the flute with moderate force. There may be a considerable body of tone produced in this way, and so totally different in its quality from that treated in the early part of this article [the loud, hard sound], that when it is introduced in a slow movement, its effect is charming, and at once relieves [sic] the ear from monotony. The embouchure may here be larger than the mouth-hole, for as the lips are relaxed the breath will not be impelled with sufficient force to produce any unpleasant noise from passing over it.<sup>40</sup>

The flute naturally tends toward a hard tone when played loudly and a soft, diffuse tone when played quietly.

Nicholson's statement that the soft sound can produce a "considerable body of tone" implies the use of a tone color independent of its natural dynamic tendency. Overcoming the association of dynamic level with color represents a significant achievement.

Nicholson does not give guidelines for the application of different tone colors, but some specific inferences can be made based on his use of alternate fingerings. Figure 3-2 (p. 61) illustrates the notation and use of harmonics. The fundamental note is indicated in small type, and special cross-fingerings are indicated by the asterisk and by the crossed circle. Harmonics require greater airspeed, which

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<sup>40</sup> School, 4.



produces a more intense sound. Cross fingerings must be played softly and so are relatively subdued. The result is a very subtle control of color, dynamic, and intensity.



Figure 3-2. Harmonics, *Preceptive Lessons*, 65.

By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the use of contrasting tone colors had achieved a degree of currency in England. Nicholson's influence is uncertain in this respect, although a significant role may be assumed.

In 1826 James describes three types of tone color. The first is "similar to the tone of the hautbois, or clarionet" and the second is "the natural tone of the instrument, as beginners always produce it."<sup>41</sup> The third is "of a metallic and liquid character".<sup>42</sup> The first two are strongly reminiscent of Gunn descriptions of tone color, while the last is similar to Welch's "Nicholsonian effect."

Dressler also describes three types of sound. These include the "pure and natural *Flute tone*," which should be given the most attention, and the "sweet and mellow tone" produced by pushing the lips forward and blowing gently.<sup>43</sup> In describing a third variety, the conservative Dressler takes aim at Nicholson:

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<sup>41</sup> James (1826), 147.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Dressler (1828), 7.

There is a kind of tone resembling the *Horn*, produced on the lowest part of the instrument; but as it renders the tone hard, and prevents a flowing union of the notes, it would obviously present an impediment to the student's improvement.<sup>44</sup>

A similar criticism was voiced by Monzani in 1813, that the reedy low register caused an inequality in the high register.<sup>45</sup> An evaluation of Dressler's criticism is difficult today, because the precise nature and degree of the *Nicholsonian effect* is unknown.

This writer has not experienced the difficulties suggested by Dressler or Monzani and suspects these may have stemmed from the embouchure which Dressler advocates. This has the lips braced against the teeth<sup>46</sup> in a manner similar to Nicholson's early approach as described in the *Complete Preceptor*.<sup>47</sup> The hard, reedy sound requires a control of the lips which is difficult to achieve if they are tight. The more relaxed approach advocated by Nicholson allows for a very "reedy" sound while maintaining control and flexibility of the lips.

While never a prominent feature, the actual use of contrasting tone colors does appear in other English tutors. One of Nicholson's contemporaries, Charles Weiss, a German who had lived in Italy before moving to London,<sup>48</sup> merits attention because his examples are very specific. He first

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Monzani (ca. 1813), 7.

<sup>46</sup> Dressler (1828), 7.

<sup>47</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Rockstro, 572-573.

urges the pupil towards the "acquisition of the various qualities of tone, which resemble the Hautboy and the French Horn"<sup>49</sup> and then mentions something genuinely new:

There is one quality of tone, of which no one has hitherto [sic] made mention, in any method for the Flute. It is too valuable, especially in slow movements, to be passed over in silence. No other Instruments produce sounds which can be compared with these peculiar ones, and yet, they seem not to belong to the Flute. In several of my works I have introduced them under the name SONS CREUX [hollow sounds] and the only idea I can give of them without an instrument, is that of a round hollow ball, which is imagined to be in the mouth. This quality of mellow tones, when introduced in passages, forms delightful pianos, which fall upon the ear like echoes or music heard from some distance.<sup>50</sup>

Weiss is describing the use of a vowel to influence the tone color. The overall result is similar to Nicholson's use of the soft sound, but Nicholson never mentions the conscious use of the mouth cavity.

Although he is a German writing in English, Weiss gives specific indications for the application of effects such as "sons creux"<sup>51</sup>, "echo"<sup>52</sup>, "Sons aigus comme l'oboe"<sup>53</sup> [sharp or shrill like an oboe], and "sons pleins"<sup>54</sup> [full sound]. This is curious, because the French flutists Tulou and Drouet show no interest in variety of tone color.

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<sup>49</sup> Charles N. Weiss, *A New Methodical Instruction Book for the Flute* (London: Milhouse & Son, ca. 1821), 3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>52</sup> Charles N. Weiss, *Two Hundred Studies for the Flute* (London: Clementi & Co., ca. 1820), 27.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 29.

Weiss asks that a repeated E-flat<sup>1</sup> be "pronounced with such force & nerve as to give an idea of a French horn."<sup>55</sup> While Nicholson's use of tone color is subtle and musically related, Weiss advocates parody.

A similar example of tone color manipulation appears in Alexander's *Complete Preceptor* (ca. 1830). In successive variations on a waltz, the flutist is instructed to imitate a clarinet, a horn, and a trumpet.<sup>56</sup>

Although these writers do not represent a majority, by the 1820's there obviously existed an interest in varied tone color on the part of England's leading flutists.

#### ACOUSTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The mechanics of tone production are closely tied to the design of the instrument. The size and shape of the embouchure hole, the material of the flute and the lining of the headjoint all have a material effect on tone quality. All of Nicholson's acoustical modifications to the flute point towards greater clarity as well as volume of sound.

The sound of the flute is generated at the embouchure hole, and even the smallest alteration in size or shape will produce a noticeable change in sound. Nicholson advocated a much larger embouchure hole than had been customary in either England or on the continent.

English flutes made prior to the time of Nicholson have comparatively small embouchure holes. Figure 3-3 (p. 66)

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<sup>55</sup> Weiss, *Instruction* (ca. 1821), 73.

<sup>56</sup> Alexander (ca. 1818), 63.

shows the headjoints of six English flutes arranged from left to right in approximate chronological order (all are from the collection of Glennis Stout). Flute A is by Thomas Cahusac (ca. 1782) and flutes B-D are by Richard Potter (1782, ca. 1790, and ca. 1795). The Potter flutes have one, four, and six keys respectively. A general trend towards larger embouchure openings is apparent. The Cahusac has a very small (7.71 by 8.60 mm.) embouchure typical of eighteenth-century flutes and flute B has a slightly larger embouchure (8.54 by 9.42 mm.). Flutes E and F are Nicholson models, as may be discerned by the dramatically larger embouchure holes (11.24 by 12.90 mm. and 10.08 by 11.87 mm. respectively). Flute E is an early example of a Nicholson flute sold by Clementi. The turned rings are particularly associated with the Nicholson model.

Flutes A-E are made of boxwood, a comparatively light and soft wood. Flute F is a Nicholson model made by Thomas Prowse of cocoa wood. Nicholson prefers cocoa because "the grain is closer, and the tone consequently more resonant."<sup>57</sup> This flute also features an ivory-lined embouchure which Nicholson strongly recommends, reasoning that the harder substance retains a sharp edge better than wood.<sup>58</sup>

Except for flute A, all of these examples feature a metal-lined headjoint. Lindsay describes an "old fashioned prejudice" against the metal lining, because the metal tube

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<sup>57</sup> *School*, 6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

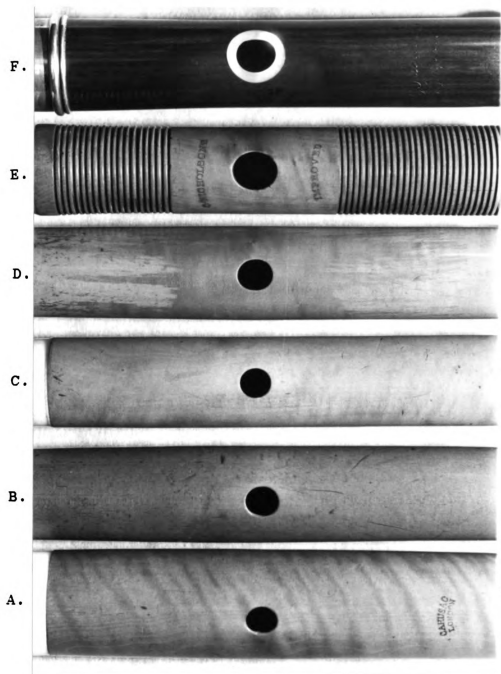


Figure 3-3. English headjoints leading to Nicholson's.

made the tone of the flute "hard" and metallic".<sup>59</sup>

Nicholson recommends the metal lining for just this property, citing "great freedom and clarity to the tone."<sup>60</sup>

The Nicholson flute also differs from its continental and traditional English counterparts. Figure 3-4 (p. 68) shows the headjoints of nine flutes, seven of which date from the second quarter of the nineteenth century. All except flute G (from the writer's collection) are from the collection of Stephen Preston. Flutes A and B are typical of French manufacture, with small and rather round embouchure holes. The makers are Claire Godfroy and Jacques Nonon. Flute B was designed by Tulou (his model *Perfectionnée*) and made sometime after 1853.<sup>61</sup> Flute C was made in Dresden by V. Liebel, and D is attributed to the Viennese maker Stephan Koch. The two German flutes show a tendency towards a square embouchure hole and they produce a harder, more focused sound than the French instruments. Flute E is English, by Rudall & Rose, but is *not* a large-hole flute. The moderately sized oval hole is typical of progressive English flutes of the time. Those by conservative makers such as Monzani & Hill tend to be much smaller. Flutes F through H are typical Nicholson models as manufactured by Thomas Prowse. Flutes F and H feature the ivory-lined embouchure hole. Flute F features a silver plate for the chin which serves to protect the skin of those

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<sup>59</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 2.

<sup>60</sup> *School*, 6.

<sup>61</sup> Tulou (1835), 63.



Figure 3-4. Headjoints, nine nineteenth-century flutes.



sensitive to the wood. Flutes G and H show the *waisting* which is a feature of many Nicholson model flutes.<sup>62</sup> This is a narrowing of the outside of the head near the embouchure which is reputed to aid in the production of low notes.<sup>63</sup> Flute I is Rudall & Rose's version of a Nicholson model. The embouchure hole is not quite as large as it is in the Prowse examples.

Nicholson has little comment about the embouchure hole other than to recommend the ivory lining.<sup>64</sup> James admits that the large embouchure hole allows for greater variety of tone and easier production of high notes and harmonics, but the difficulties are increased "tenfold".<sup>65</sup> A similar opinion is shared by Lindsay who cites the difficulties of intonation.<sup>66</sup> James also discounts the small embouchure hole as producing only one sound and so recommends a medium-size hole (as in Figure 3-4, flute E) for the average player.<sup>67</sup> With the exception of the French flutes, all the examples of Figure 3-4 have a metal tube lining the headjoint.

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<sup>62</sup> Bate, 112.

<sup>63</sup> James, Review of Bainbridge, *The Flutist's Magazine* (1827), 187.

<sup>64</sup> *School*, 6.

<sup>65</sup> James, Review of Bainbridge, *The Flutist's Magazine* (1827), 187.

<sup>66</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 2.

<sup>67</sup> James, Review of Bainbridge, *The Flutist's Magazine* (1827), 187.

## CHAPTER IV

### EXPRESSION

In the three tutors Nicholson mentions numerous effects or *graces*.<sup>1</sup> His usage implies a division into two broad categories, *embellishment* and *expression*. The category of embellishment clearly includes shakes (trills with various resolutions), turns, and appoggiaturas. These are treated in the following chapter. Expression includes what Nicholson calls *vibration* and the *glide*.

#### VIBRATION

Nicholson's vibration is a subtle shading of tone produced by the breath, the fingers, or by shaking the flute. It is first mentioned in the *Complete Preceptor* (1816). Nicholson describes two techniques for producing vibration, with the breath and with the fingers. The *Preceptive Lessons* mention only the finger technique, and the *School* describes three methods: breath, fingers, and shaking the flute. The *Complete Preceptor* and *School* each contain charts of vibration fingerings. Those from the *Preceptive Lessons* are presented in the course of the lessons.

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<sup>1</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, cover.

Briefly, breath vibration is produced

by a regular swell and modulation of the breath, bearing some similitude to a state of exhaustion or panting with a regular decrease or diminution of the Tone. . . .<sup>2</sup>

This bears a superficial similarity to the breath vibrato familiar to modern flutists. However, Nicholson's application of vibration suggests a very different musical intent.

Fingered vibration may be produced by

a tremulous motion of the finger immediately over the Hole, without coming in contact with the Flute by the same motion, and in some instances with the finger covering about one-half the Hole.<sup>3</sup>

The fingered vibration is the only form mentioned in the text<sup>4</sup> or illustrated in the musical examples of the *Preceptive Lessons*. Even airs like "Roslin Castle," which has embellishments marked "exactly as he performed them,"<sup>5</sup> contain only the fingered vibration. This suggests that Nicholson had a strong preference for this technique.

The fingered vibration offers a particular advantage for the purposes of this study. While the actual effect of the breath vibration is subject to the player's interpretation, the effect of the fingered vibration is in most cases dictated by the instrument and choice of

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<sup>2</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 65.

fingering. It is therefore possible to reconstruct the sound of Nicholson's fingered vibration with a high degree of confidence.

The third method of vibration as mentioned in the *School* is by "a tremulous motion of the Flute." Nicholson uses this to achieve higher speeds than are possible with the breath technique alone.<sup>6</sup>

Nicholson's vibration closely resembles an eighteenth-century technique called *flattement*. Jacques-Martin Hotteterre described this in his *Principes* of 1707. It was usually produced by a motion of the finger, either at the edge of the sounding tone hole or over an adjacent tone hole. If all the fingers were occupied the flute could be shaken to produce a similar effect.<sup>7</sup> Quantz includes the *flattement* among the essential graces in his *Versuch* of 1752,<sup>8</sup> suggesting that the *flattement* by then was in general use.

The *flattement* was used in England during the eighteenth century, but appears to have died out about a generation before Nicholson's time. Writing in 1793, John Gunn chronicles the waning popularity of the *flattement* in eighteenth-century England:

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<sup>6</sup> *School*, 71.

<sup>7</sup> Hotteterre, Jacques-Martin. *Principles of the Flute, Recorder and Oboe*, (Paris: Christophe Ballard. 1707; trans. David Lasocki. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 66-69.

<sup>8</sup> Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, (Berlin: Johann Friedrich Voss. 1752; trans. Edward R. Reilly, New York: Schirmer Books, 1966), 162.

There was formerly in use a numerous list of graces, some with, and others without characters to represent them, and now for the most part discontinued. Among these was the dumb shake, on stringed instruments, corresponding to what the French call *Flattement*, and in our language, I think, called *Sweetenings*, made by approaching the finger to the first or second open hole, below the proper note that is sounded, and moving it up and down over the hole, approaching it very near each time, but never entirely upon it; thus occasioning an alternate flattening and sharpening of the note, and like the dumb shake, producing a trembling palsied expression, inconsistent with just intonation, and not unlike that extravagant trembling of the voice which the French call *chevrotter*, to make the goat-like noise; for which the singers of the Opera at Paris have been so often ridiculed.<sup>9</sup>

For a twenty-year period after Gunn's tutor, no mention of vibrato-like effects appears in the English tutors examined. Hadidian has suggested a parallel decline of this technique in France based on the absence of the *flattement* in Devienne's *Nouvelle Methode* (ca. 1792).<sup>10</sup>

The immediate source of Nicholson's vibration is unclear. Fitzgibbon describes Nicholson as being "practically self taught," James criticized his lack of formal education, and according to Rockstro, he was "decidedly old fashioned."<sup>11</sup> Nicholson himself is clear that the *Complete Preceptor* owes a debt to the past, being partly based on materials that his father had arranged for a

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<sup>9</sup> Gunn (1793), 18

<sup>10</sup> Eileen Hadidian, *Johann George Tromlitz's Flute Treatise: Evidences of Late Eighteenth Century Performance Practice* DMA Project, Stanford University, 1979, 387.

<sup>11</sup> Fitzgibbon, 208; William N. James, "Mr. Nicholson" (1827), 43; Rockstro, *The Flute*, 610.

tutor.<sup>12</sup> He also describes his father's "peculiarity of Tone & Modulation."<sup>13</sup> Nicholson uses the term modulation generally throughout the tutors, but refers to vibration specifically as a form of *modulation* in the *School*.<sup>14</sup> Assuming consistency of terminology, it seems probable that Nicholson's vibration was simply inherited from his father.

Regardless of its immediate origins, vibration was new to Nicholson's audience. A notice in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine* of 1823 credits him with the introduction of both vibration and the glide.<sup>15</sup> It may be either that the flattement had been forgotten or that Nicholson's usage was somehow different. Vibration appears to be a timbral effect while flattement is based more on changes of pitch.

Vibration begins to appear regularly in English flute tutors after Nicholson's *Complete Preceptor*. Wragg's venerable *Flute Preceptor* provides an interesting case. Editions up to and including that of April of 1818 were published by the author and contain no mention of Nicholson's innovations. The publication of Wragg's 14th edition in August, 1818 was taken over by Clementi & Collard, who by then were marketing the "C. Nicholson's Improved" model flute.<sup>16</sup> Not surprisingly, this edition contains a new appendix describing vibration and the

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<sup>12</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, Introduction.

<sup>13</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, Introduction.

<sup>14</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 22

<sup>15</sup> "Compositions," *Quarterly Musical Magazine*, 5 (1823), 86.

<sup>16</sup> Langwill, 141.

glide<sup>17</sup>. Lindsay (1828-30), Weiss (1829), and Alexander (1830) all mention vibration in terms similar to Nicholson's.<sup>18</sup> A notable exception to this trend is found in Dressler's *Instructions*. He was a German living in London, "master of the band of the 10th hussars," and "seems indignantly to disdain every thing of frippery, or an artificial character."<sup>19</sup> Although he does address other Nicholson innovations, Dressler conspicuously avoids mention of vibration.<sup>20</sup>

Nicholson's influence in France seems to have been negligible. In his English language *Method* Drouet reluctantly concedes that "in trifling music . . . a vibration may be used."<sup>21</sup> There is no indication that he ever used vibration himself.

It seems unlikely that Nicholson would have had more influence in Germany. A.B. Fürstenau's *Flöten-Schule* (ca. 1826) contains no mention of vibrato-like effects, yet as discussed by Jochen Gärtner,<sup>22</sup> Fürstenau's *Die Kunst des Flötenspiels* (1834) contains a detailed description of *Bebung*. Gärtner suggests that Fürstenau was influenced by Spohr's violin techniques, but the similarities between Nicholson's vibration and A. B. Fürstenau's *Bebung* are

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<sup>17</sup> Wragg, J. *Improved Flute Preceptor* 14th ed. (London: Clementi, Collard, Davis & Collard, 1818), 67.

<sup>18</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 30; Weiss, *Instruction* (ca. 1821), 61; Alexander (ca. 1818), 22, 42.

<sup>19</sup> James, *A Word or Two*, 237; *Ibid*, 235.

<sup>20</sup> Dressler (1828)

<sup>21</sup> Drouet, *Method* (1830), 18.

<sup>22</sup> Jochen Gärtner, *The Vibrato* (Regensburg: Gustave Bosse Verlag, 1981), 32-34.

striking. Fürstenau describes *Bebung* produced by the breath, a trembling motion of the jaw or by tapping the fingers. The usage of such techniques outside of England warrants further investigation elsewhere.

In the *Preceptive Lessons* Nicholson compares vibration to the sound of a glass.<sup>23</sup> A similar description appears in the *School*:

[Vibration] ought to resemble the beats, or pulsations of a Bell, or Glass, which will be found to be slow at first, and as the sound gradually diminishes, so will the Vibrations increase in rapidity.<sup>24</sup>

The reference to a *glass* would have been obvious to a contemporary reader. An article in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine* compares Nicholson's vibration to "that species of vibration which is particularly observable in the musical glasses."<sup>25</sup>

Musical glasses possess two sorts of natural vibrato, one resulting from the movement of the fingers around the lip of the glass and the other from a prominence of

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<sup>23</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 5. Musical glasses were first introduced to the London public in 1744 by Richard Pockrich and later improved by Benjamin Franklin as the "armonica" or glass harmonica. Franklin's rotating design did not supersede the earlier type instrument, which remained popular in England well into the nineteenth century. This consists simply of a bank of glasses, tuned by partially filling with water. *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadie, ed. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 12, 823-825. A number of recordings of this instrument are currently available and experiments at the dinner table are also enlightening.

<sup>24</sup> *School*. 71.

<sup>25</sup> "Compositions" (1823), 86.



harmonics that are out of tune and beat irregularly. The latter "vibration" is heard at the end of a note, after the finger is removed or after the glass has been struck. The effect is exceedingly subtle and is obviously associated with a diminuendo.

The analogy of the bell provides a similar example, where the distuned harmonics produce a gentle beating that can be heard to accelerate as the sound dies away. This is usually a barely audible effect, just at the threshold of perception. With both the bell and the glasses the effect is timbral rather than pitch-related. This is entirely consistent with Nicholson's examples of fingered vibration. As he says in the *Complete Preceptor*:

The effect of this Expression in Adagios and other movements when the Pupil has become familiarized with it, is inconceivably delicate and sweet, and as such [is] worthy [of] every attention.<sup>26</sup>

Nicholson's vibration is intimately connected to the characteristics of the large-hole flute. Nicholson gives a clue to this connection when he cites the large-hole flute as as producing *clearer* vibration.<sup>27</sup> This is possible because the Nicholson flute has a brighter sound with greater harmonic content, which in turn makes changes of timbre more obvious. If vibration were pitch oriented, the extra venting of the large holes would make it less effective. By way of example, the vibration on  $c^2$  alters

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<sup>26</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 22.

<sup>27</sup> *School*, 6.

the pitch by less than a cent with a Nicholson flute. When the same fingering is played on a Hill-Monzani (1832) the pitch rise is about ten-cents and on an Astor (ca. 1800) almost twenty. Nicholson's vibration is a very subtle effect which can only be realized on his flute. Even playing it on a traditional keyed flute from the same period amounts to a parody.

The vibration fingerings from all three tutors are presented in Figure 4-1 (pp. 79-80). There is a high degree of consistency among fingerings from the *Complete Preceptor* and the *School*. The fingerings from the *Preceptive Lessons* occasionally differ and yield a more subtle effect. This is apparent for g sharp/a flat<sup>1</sup>, a sharp/b flat<sup>1</sup>, and e<sup>2</sup> where a more distant hole is used. Because the musical examples of the *Preceptive Lessons* are meticulously notated, these may be taken as representative of Nicholson's actual practice.

When they do affect pitch, vibration fingerings tend to flatten the pitch, although a few (notably those for c<sup>2</sup>) raise it slightly. The average range of pitch change is from one to two cents, with the maximum being about four cents on e<sup>1</sup>. Several fingerings, most notably those for b<sup>1</sup> and b flat<sup>2</sup>, have no discernible effect on pitch.

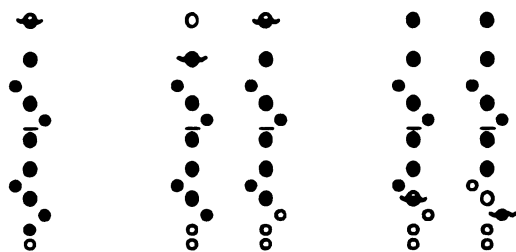
The speed of vibration varies with the dynamic level:

Vibration on the Flute ought to resemble that of a Bell or Glass, the beats or pulsations of which are never rapid at first, but are governed by the

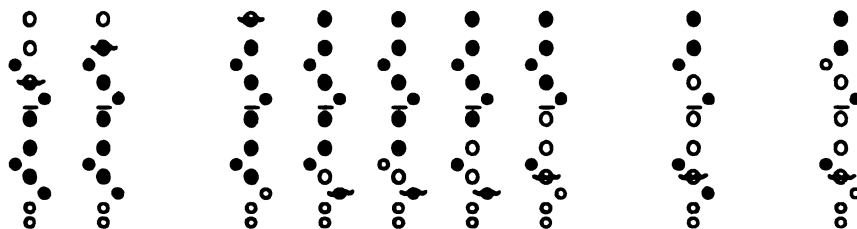




Complete Preceptor (1816):



Preceptive Lessons (1821):



School (1836):

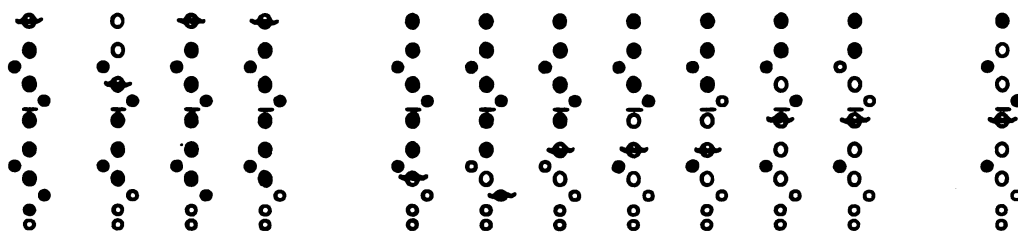


Figure 4-1 (cont'd).

strength of the Tone; for example, if your Tone is full and strong, the beat should be slow, but gradually increased in proportion as you diminish the Tone.<sup>28</sup>

The example that accompanies this statement (Figure 4-2) demonstrates the association of vibration with a simultaneous diminuendo and accelerando. A similar example appears in the *School* (Figure 4-3). The extremes of speed depicted are without precedent.

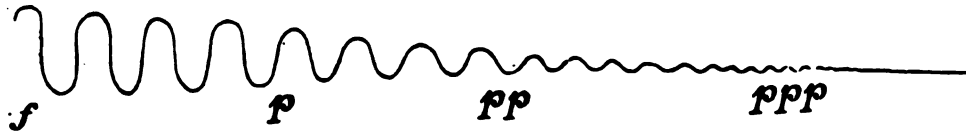


Figure 4-2. Vibration, *Preceptive Lessons*, 5..

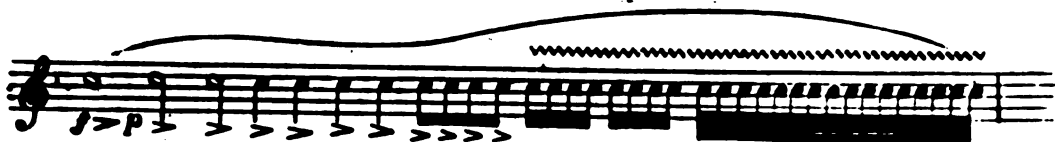


Figure 4-3. Vibration, *School*, 71.

Nicholson suggests that this example be started with the breath vibration and as the speed increases the player must begin to shake the flute.<sup>29</sup> In the current reconstruction of eighteenth-century practice, the flattement is treated as a graceful, comparatively slow and

<sup>28</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 5.

<sup>29</sup> *School*, 71.

gentle ornament. The image of a nineteenth-century virtuoso rapidly shaking his heavy wooden flute is remarkable. Experiments with the Nicholson flute suggest that the fingered vibration offers better control of speed and greater musical sensitivity, but is not available on every note.

The chart of vibration fingerings in the *School* is accompanied by the following statement:

The succeeding Scale of notes, is one in which Vibration is the most effective, although by the aid of the breath and tremulous motion of the Flute, almost every note of the Instrument may be similar[ly] influenced.<sup>30</sup>

From this it appears that Nicholson intended all three forms of vibration to sound alike. He seems to be saying that the fingered vibration is the most effective but the breath and "tremulous motion" may be employed when it is not available.

Nicholson gives no clear guidelines for the application of vibration. He does consistently notate vibration with a wavy line (~~~~~). The examples of the *Preceptive Lessons* suggest an association of vibration with "slow and pathetic airs" such as *The Groves of Blarney* (The Last Rose of Summer), *Auld Lang Syne*, and *Roslin Castle*.<sup>31</sup> Even so, there are few instances that would allow the full range of speeds described in the *School*.

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<sup>30</sup> *School*. 71.

<sup>31</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 32, 40, 65.

Vibration is found at all dynamics from *pp* to *ff*, occasionally in close proximity (Figure 4-4) but is most often associated with softer dynamics and the diminuendo.

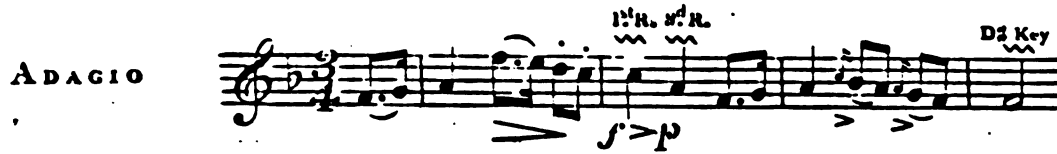


Figure 4-4. Vibration with varied dynamics, *Preceptive Lessons*, 32.

The execution of the diminuendo requires some time. Consequently, vibration often appears on points of relative repose and frequently on the penultimate note of a phrase ending on a weak beat, as in Figure 4-5). Vibration is

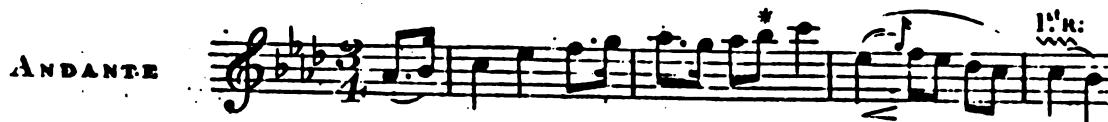


Figure 4-5. Vibration before a cadence, *Preceptive Lessons*, 60.

found on final cadences only when a prolonged diminuendo is appropriate (Figure 4-6, p. 84). The combination of vibration with the diminuendo serves to release musical tension within the phrase. This differs from the modern practice where the speed of vibrato reflects increased musical tension.



Figure 4-6. Vibration on a cadence, *Preceptive Lessons*, 10.

There are several examples of vibration in moderate tempi. Because of their limited duration, the diminuendo and particularly the accelerando would be less effective. The example of Figure 4-7 is unusual in that the vibration occurs in a rhythmic passage.



Figure 4-7. Vibration in a rhythmic context. *Preceptive Lessons*, 68.

Nicholson demonstrates a preference for individual pitches and vibration fingerings regardless of the key in which they occur. Foremost of these is  $c^1$ , which he employs throughout the examples of the *Preceptive Lessons*. This is demonstrated in a version of *Aileen Aroon* which Nicholson presents *without* embellishments, confirming the essential nature of both vibration and the glide (Figure 4-8). The



symbols over the vibration marks in this example refer to specific vibration fingerings.



Figure 4-8. Aileen Aroon, *Preceptive Lessons*, 10.

Twice in the *Preceptive Lessons* Nicholson uses a pattern of accents that may be viewed as a slow version of vibration. The first of these is coupled with a trill (Figure 4-9). Nicholson instructs that the trilled note be played as if it were three accented quarter notes. The



Figure 4-9. Trill with accent, *Preceptive Lessons*, 57.

notation of this breath accent is consistent with a later example of breath vibration from the *School* seen in Figure 4-3. As the speed increases, the symbol changes from a

series of accents to the usual wavy line. This suggests that the slow breath vibration might be considered a separate device. There is an obvious similarity between this technique and *aspiration* as described by Dressler<sup>32</sup> and discussed here in the chapter on articulation.

In the second example (Figure 4-10) Nicholson confirms the dichotomy between the slow breath accent and fingered vibration by superimposing both devices on the same note.



Figure 4-10. Vibration with accent, *Preceptive Lessons*, 65.

## GLIDES

The glide was evidently well established in late eighteenth-century Germany. In his 1791 *Unterricht* Tromlitz described it in detail and lamented its overuse.<sup>34</sup> In his *Flöten-Schule* (ca. 1826), Fürstenau offers a description of cultivation of tone [*Ziehen*] and issues the standard warning against overuse.<sup>35</sup> He also cautions against use where the flute is accompanied, suggesting that the device is best

<sup>32</sup> *School*, 71.

<sup>33</sup> Dressler (1828), 8.

<sup>34</sup> Hadidian, 141-143, 267-271.

<sup>35</sup> Fürstenau, *Flöten-Schule* (ca. 1826), 22.

used in unaccompanied introductions and cadenzas.<sup>36</sup> He does not notate the glide, but refers the pupil to his exercises and to specific places where the glide may be applied.

Smith has documented the absence of the glide in French tutors from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>37</sup> The glide does not appear to have ever been popular among the French. Drouet mentions it disparagingly in his *English Method* (1830).<sup>38</sup>

There is no mention of the glide in English sources prior to Nicholson, yet circumstantial evidence suggests that its practice was well established in early nineteenth-century England. In 1808 a London flutemaker, W.H. Potter (not to be confused with the better known Richard Potter) took out a patent for sliding keys,<sup>39</sup> which Rockstro presumes were to facilitate the glide.<sup>40</sup> That a flute maker designed a mechanism to produce glides and thought it valuable enough to patent suggests that the technique was very much alive. Simple tutors might omit an advanced technique, but omission of the glide in several substantial tutors, including Beale's *Complete Guide* (2nd edition ca. 1815 and 3rd ca. 1821), Keith's *Complete Preceptor* (ca 1818-21), and Wragg's *Improved Flute Preceptor* (editions prior to

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<sup>36</sup> Nicholson does use the glide with accompaniment. The highly embellished "Roslin Castle" appears with chordal accompaniment in Nicholson's "Fantasia No. 1" (London: Clementi, Collard & Collard, 1821).

<sup>37</sup> Smith, 71-79.

<sup>38</sup> Drouet, *Method* (1830), 18.

<sup>39</sup> *Abridgements*, 53.

<sup>40</sup> Rockstro, 272.

1818) is puzzling. It may well be that the glide was taken for granted until Nicholson's use made it an issue.

The first English mention of the glide appears in Nicholson's *Complete Preceptor* (1816) where he states that he has "long adopted" the glide and recommends it "as well worthy the pupil's practice and attention."<sup>41</sup> As with vibration, Nicholson is credited with having introduced the glide<sup>42</sup> and again appears to be responsible for popularizing the effect.

In the *Complete Preceptor* and the *Preceptive Lessons* Nicholson seems to be selling the idea of the glide, giving basic instructions and other details of execution while praising its effect.<sup>43</sup> In the *School* he cautions that the glide should be used *judiciously*.<sup>44</sup> This warning occurs with regularity in other tutors,<sup>45</sup> confirming that the glide was subject to abuse.

As described in the *Complete Preceptor*:

Gliding is produced by sliding the finger forwards gently and gradually from off the Hole, instead of suddenly lifting it, as generally practiced; by which the preceding note will have the effect of being imperceptably led into, or incorporated with its next or succeeding note. For example, suppose the note to be F#, with G Natural following, by gently sliding the first finger of the right hand forward from off the Hole, it will lead by a sweet swelling gradation into the note of G. The same

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<sup>41</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 21.

<sup>42</sup> "Compositions," 86.

<sup>43</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 21; *Preceptive Lessons*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> *School*, 70.

<sup>45</sup> Dressler(1828), 48; Lindsay (1828-30), 30; Furstenau, *Flotenschule* (1828), 22.

effect may be produced in various instances with equal delight.<sup>46</sup>

The "sweet swelling gradation" suggests that the glide is normally associated with a crescendo.

In the *Preceptive Lessons* Nicholson describes the glide as "one of the most pleasing expressions of which the Instrument is capable"<sup>47</sup> and adds a cautionary note about pitch:

The pupil should be careful to let the Note to which he glides be quite Sharp, as the Tone, in ascending so gradually, causes it to appear generally Flat.<sup>48</sup>

He further notes that the glide is

produced by *sliding* the Finger or Fingers gently off so as to gradually uncover the hole or holes, instead of lifting them up suddenly.<sup>49</sup>

This gives some idea of Nicholson's sensitivity and flexibility in matters of pitch. Being "in tune" was important, but precisely what that was is open to interpretation.

The discussion in the *School* (1836) offers additional details:

The fingers of the left hand ought to be drawn off towards the palm of the hand, and those of the

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<sup>46</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 21.

<sup>47</sup> *Preceptive Lessons* 5.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

right forced forward, or the hand raised so as to remove the fingers by slow degrees from the holes.<sup>50</sup>

Also:

When more fingers than one are employed to produce this charming effect, their movement must be simultaneous.<sup>51</sup>

Experiments with the Nicholson flute show that the obvious approach of moving one finger at a time does not work particularly well. It is better to move the hand as a unit, as Nicholson recommends. The holes may be opened in sequence by sliding the hand at an angle. This suggests that while the glide may have been executed without haste, it would not have been excessively protracted.

The "sweet swelling" effect of the crescendo described in the *Complete Preceptor* is reiterated in the *School* where Nicholson also allows for the glide to be combined with a decrescendo:

The highest note where the glide is marked should generally be forced; but should it be marked piano, by attending to the observations on playing piano or subduing the tone, the effect may be produced, and perfectly in tune.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> School, 70.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Nicholson's use of the term "forced" may be misleading.<sup>53</sup> He probably means a gentle breath accent, which is not inconsistent with the glide as *charming* and *exquisite*. This is virtuosity of musical expression, not a show of facility.

The glide appears in several English tutors published after Nicholson's *Complete Preceptor* (1816), including those by Alexander (ca. 1821),<sup>54</sup> Weiss (ca. 1821), Dressler (ca. 1828), and Lindsay (1828-30).<sup>55</sup> Dressler and Lindsay in particular provide additional information about the glide, shedding further light on Nicholson's practice.

Dressler (ca. 1828) gives a relatively original description of the glide, including a few new details:

*Gliding* is performed in, ascending, by sliding the finger gently off the hole; and in descending; by gradually covering it. The intervals most susceptible of this ornament are those between the middle F# and G, and between the upper C# & D.

These two half-steps represent a remarkably limited set of possibilities, yet Dressler cautiously states:

The effect of the *Glide* is excellent in places where it is suitable; communicating, if used with discretion, encreased [sic] feeling and passion to melodies of an expressive character.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> See discussion of Nicholson and Lindsay's use of this term under articulation, p. 163.

<sup>54</sup> Alexander (ca. 1818), 56.

<sup>55</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 30.

<sup>56</sup> Dressler (1828), 48.

He then warns:

But, some performers become so enamoured of it, that they can scarcely pass from one note to another without gliding; producing a mewling; monotonous effect, almost unsupportable.

The student cannot be too much cautioned against the acquisition of so vicious a habit.<sup>57</sup>

Lindsay (1828-30), as might be expected, gives the most complete summary. Several new details emerge:

If the lower note be firmly struck with the Tongue, the effect of the Glide will be improved by contrast.<sup>58</sup>

This does not seem compatible with the "soft and graceful" effect Nicholson describes. One would expect to find accents marked at the beginnings of glides and these are not present in Nicholson's tutors. Yet Lindsay clearly did take Nicholson as his model:

The GLIDE is often practised by Mr. Nicholson, in his Adagios, with remarkable effect; and, however much certain witlings have attempted to throw ridicule upon it, it is an expression certainly well worthy the cultivation of all who wish to give that true pathos to a performance, which never fails to reach the heart.<sup>59</sup>

Lindsay makes the usual suggestion of playing the upper note sharp and then describes what appears to be a glide with crescendo:

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 30.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.



Additional power and pathos may occasionally be thrown onto this Expression by a slight increase in the column of air which produces it.<sup>60</sup>

If this is an unusual approach for Lindsay, the examples discussed above demonstrate that the glide with crescendo is not unusual for Nicholson.

The Nicholson flute is peculiarly adapted to the performance of the glide. The large fingerholes are more tolerant of covering and uncovering,<sup>61</sup> making the glide easier to control.

Several of the Nicholson type flutes examined exhibit a flattening of the wood around the tone holes, most often those of the right hand. Figure 4-11 (p. 94) shows the fingerholes of T. Prowse, "C. Nicholson's Model" flute with large fingerholes and typical flattening of the right hand tone holes. This aids in sliding on and off the holes.

The origin of the flattened fingerholes is unclear. In describing a habit to be avoided, Nicholson gives a possible clue:

There is also an articulation of the fingers; these should be lifted and not drawn off the flute: the performances of those persons who have accustomed themselves to the latter mode are languid and unsatisfactory to the ear. It is easy to tell by the appearance of the flute (if it has been long in use), if this is the way the fingers are removed from the instrument, as the holes become quite round at the edges. The flute of a friend of mine, an old professor, was so much rubbed down, that it became quite out of tune; and from its appearance I could scarcely imagine it

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> *School*, 6.



Figure 4-11. Flattened finger-holes, Prowse flute #3784.

was possible that the fingers could have had such an effect on so hard a substance as cocoa wood: but such was the fact. The fingers should come as freely from the holes as the keys do. In concluding this article, let it be remembered that articulation depends greatly upon tone, for if the latter is not clear, it is quite impossible the former can be effective.<sup>62</sup>

The glide is consistently notated in all of Nicholson's works by a double slur (  ). Only seven of the musical examples of the *Complete Preceptor* contain the glide<sup>63</sup>. It occurs with greater frequency in the *Preceptive Lessons*, particularly in those examples like Roslin Castle which Nicholson notates "exactly as he performed them."<sup>64</sup> This suggests that Nicholson may have employed the glide more frequently than is generally indicated. No glides are found in the musical examples of the *School*. Even compositions like Nicholson's *Twelve Favorite Airs with Variations* (1821) and *Select Melodies, with Variations* (ca. 1819) demonstrate a modest use of the glide.

The selection of notes that may be incorporated into a glide is limited by the technique of the instrument. The holes uncovered must fall into a direct sequence, and the keys may only be used in certain combinations. The selection of usable intervals can be expanded somewhat by the use of harmonic fingerings:

If a glide be marked from C or C# on the 3rd space, it must always be fingered as the lowest C

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<sup>62</sup> *School*, 64.

<sup>63</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 35, 39, 40, 41, 44, 54, 66.

<sup>64</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 65.

or C#. If from the C 2nd ledger line above, it must be fingered as the Harmonic of F, with the second finger of the left hand down. If from D, or D# on the 4th line, the first finger must be down.<sup>65</sup>

Nicholson gives an example showing "some of the most effective Glides on the Flute."<sup>66</sup> This is reproduced as Figure 4-12.



Figure 4-12. Glides, *School*, 71.

An examination of the musical examples of the *Preceptive Lessons* reveals a variety of practices. The glide is found most frequently in slow, "pathetic" airs, like "Aileen Aroon," "Ar Hyd Y Nos," "Within A Mile Of Edinburgh Town," "Cease Your Funning," and "Roslin Castle."<sup>67</sup> Figure 4-13 from the *Preceptive Lessons* shows typical use of the glide in an Adagio movement. The glide

<sup>65</sup> *School*, 70.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 10, 25, 57, 63, 65.

generally leads from weak to strong beats, although this is not a rule. The glide upward is typically followed by downward motion.



Figure 4-13. Glide in an Adagio, *Preceptive Lessons*, 25

Glides occur in all dynamic ranges (Figure 4-14, p. 98) and are frequently associated with the crescendo, as seen in Figure 4-15a, b, and c (p. 98). Less common is the glide with decrescendo which moves from strong to weak beats (Figure 4-16, p. 98). This combination did not escape critical notice. With his usual generosity of spirit, W. N. James urges Nicholson to "leave his die away glides to love sick maidens."<sup>68</sup>

The glide is never directly combined with vibration, but the glide leading to vibration is relatively common, as seen in Figures 4-13 (above) and 4-17, p. 99). In this last instance, the glide seems to imply a slight ritardando

<sup>68</sup> William N. James, "Mr. Sedlatzek," *The Flutist's Magazine; and Musical Miscellany*, 1 (1827), 85.



Figure 4-14. Glide with varied dynamics, *Preceptive Lessons*, 57.

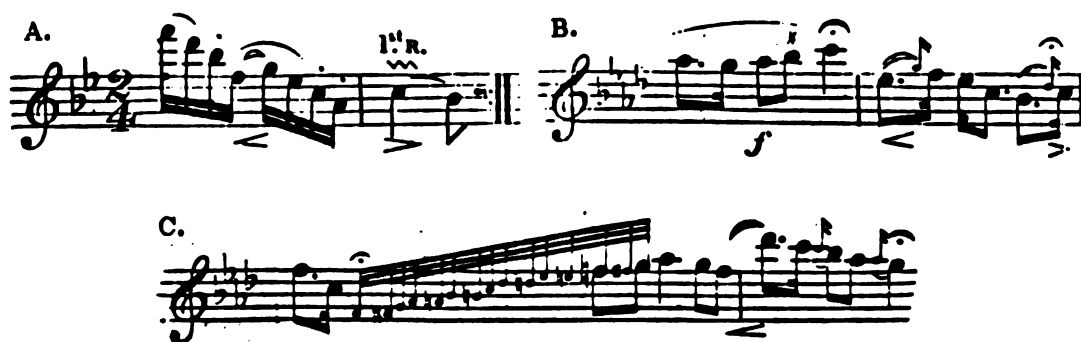


Figure 4-15. Glide with crescendo, *Preceptive Lessons*, 35, 60, and 65.



Figure 4-16. Glide with decrescendo, *Preceptive Lessons*, 62.

before the end of the phrase. It is possible that extra time was routinely taken with many glides.



Figure 4-17. Glide leading to vibration, *Preceptive Lessons*, 77.

The glide may encompass more than two notes. Figure 4-18 includes a glide of six notes spanning the interval of an octave.<sup>69</sup> It is possible to make the individual pitches heard by a pause on each note. Figure 4-15c contains a glide without intervening notes, spanning the interval of a minor sixth. This is an exceptional example, and the effect is dramatic.

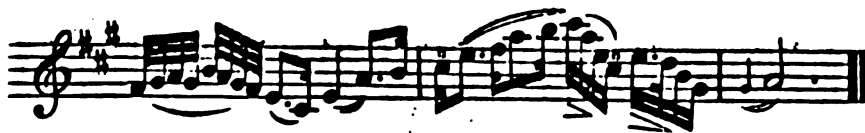


Figure 4-18. Glide, six notes spanning an octave, *Preceptive Lessons*, 57.

<sup>69</sup> The notation is ambiguous regarding the start of the glide on c sharp<sup>2</sup>. This can be executed if the first hole of the left hand is first closed. Figure 4-14 shows a glide from the c sharp<sup>2</sup> harmonic, suggesting that this would have been a normal part of Nicholson's practice.

There are several occurrences of the glide in moving lines. Figure 4-19 illustrates a quick glide occurring in a waltz. Assuming a slight delay for the glide, the effect is



Figure 4-19. Glide in a moving line, *Preceptive Lessons*, 41.

to interrupt an established tempo so as to prepare for the end of the phrase. Another example occurs at the end of a "Bollero" marked *Allegretto* (Figure 4-20).



Figure 4-20. Glide used to interrupt an established tempo, *Preceptive Lessons*, 33.

A striking device is the combination of a glide and grace note, shown in Figures 4-19 and 4-21 (p. 101). The effect is quite different from that of the slow glides, but still rather charming. The pattern of gliding up to a note and moving quickly down is quite common, as seen in many of



these examples. In many cases a slight hesitation in passing through the glide seems implicit.



Figure 4-21. Glide with grace note, *Preceptive Lessons*, 57.

Nicholson emphasizes the ascending glide. Since it is easier to draw the fingers off the flute to raise the pitch than to push them onto the holes to lower the pitch, a preponderance of ascending glides is to be expected. However, a descending glide is not impossible and a few examples occur in the *Preceptive Lessons*. The first of these (Figure 4-22) occurs in an Adagio and involves moving the first two fingers of the right hand onto the flute while opening the short F key with the third.



Figure 4-22. Descending glide, *Preceptive Lessons*, 10.

One may play this passage with relative ease by laying the fingers across the flute rather than sliding. A second example (Figure 4-23) is extraordinary. It shows a glide

that rises a minor sixth *and* descends a minor second in a single gesture. This example represents extremes of difficulty for the performer and the listener as well. The effect is not particularly pleasant, even to the most sympathetic ear.



Figure 4-23. Ascending and decending glide, *Preceptive Lessons*, 57.

As Nicholson uses it in the tutors, the glide is a delightful and effective means of expression. The writer has performed several of Nicholson's pieces for a variety of audiences, and the response to the glide is generally fascination rather than revulsion. Familiarity may breed contempt. The "sweet" effect is based on controlled deviation from a clearly established pitch. If the glide were added to an already out-of-tune performance, the audience response would be entirely predictable. In the hands of an enthusiastic amateur, the glide would have been fearsome indeed. From the available evidence, it appears that the glide may have fallen victim to its own popularity.

However, the final disappearance of the glide was due not to abuse by amateurs but to the inventive mind of a

German flutist. Boehm's flute covered the holes with keys which rendered the glide impractical. The man responsible did not mourn the loss:

Although the proper portamento di voce, namely the gliding over from one tone to another while speaking two different syllables, is adapted to the human voice alone, and consequently seldom seems good and appropriate on string instruments, yet it is sometimes desired to imitate it upon wind instruments with tone holes. On account of defective execution, however, the effect is often repulsive and suggests "cat music" on the house tops, rather than a beautifully sung cantilena.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Boehm, 157.

## CHAPTER V

### EMBELLISHMENT

As described by Nicholson, embellishment appears to differ from expression in musical intent. The category specifically includes the shake (with ornamented resolutions), the turn, and the appoggiatura. While Nicholson uses all of these devices in a sensitive and expressive manner, they are more the stuff of bravura display.

#### SHAKES

The general topic of trills or shakes has been subject to extensive research and debate, a review of which is well beyond the scope of this study. The special nature of the shake (or trill) as played on the pre-Boehm flutes has been described by Smith.<sup>1</sup> She notes that shakes played on the one-keyed flute are highly variable in both color and intonation, and that the widespread adoption of the keyed flute after the turn of the nineteenth century allowed for "easier, clearer, more in tune, and more brilliant" shakes.<sup>2</sup> The discussion here will be limited to those features that are unique to the flute and to the Nicholson tutors in particular.

While other English instruction books, from the many anonymous turn-of-the-century tutors to Lindsay's *Elements*,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, 64-71.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 89.

use the terms *shake* and *trill* interchangeably, Nicholson uses the term *shake* exclusively. He defines it as "an alternate reiteration of two notes comprehending an interval not greater than one whole tone, nor less than a semitone."<sup>4</sup> In spite of this straightforward definition, Nicholson treats the shake expressively, exploiting it in combination with both the swell and *accelerando*.

Nicholson's discussion of the shake is limited. He describes it briefly in the *Complete Preceptor* and at greater length in the *School*. In addition to the textual commentary, each of these tutors contains examples showing how various shakes are to be realized. In the *Preceptive Lessons* there is no direct discussion of the shake, and only examples of specialized fingerings appear.

In the tutors Nicholson emphasizes the cadential shake, and mentions the passing or transient shake only briefly. Much may be inferred about treatment of the shakes from the musical examples in Nicholson's tutors and by comparison with contemporary tutors by other English authors. Information from these sources suggests that Nicholson treated the shake as an expressive device and took considerable liberties with ornamental resolutions.

For the purposes of this study, the shake may be divided into three component parts: approach, body, and resolution. Nicholson generally approaches the shake from the upper note. This first appears in the charts of the

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<sup>4</sup> *Complete Preceptor* , 21

*Complete Preceptor*, where all shakes are shown starting on the upper note. The *plain shake* is illustrated as written and as played (Figure 5-1). It is indicated here by the *tr* abbreviation and is approached from the upper note.



Figure 5-1. Plain shake, *Complete Preceptor*, 20.

The *Preceptive Lessons* do mention specific shake fingerings, but their performance is not discussed. The notation does not specify that the shakes begin with the upper note; such basic knowledge could have been assumed on the part of the reader.

The *School* contains a considerable amount of detailed information on cadential shakes. Nicholson still approaches the shake from the upper note, but mentions that "a difference of opinion has long existed whether the shake should commence with the lower or upper note."<sup>5</sup> There is no discussion of the merits of either side and Nicholson does not defend his position. When compared to Nicholson's discussions of articulation, fingerings, and tone quality, whether to begin the shake on the upper or lower note does not appear to be a pressing issue. In 1828 Lindsay states that

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<sup>5</sup> *School*, 81.

the shake is played both ways with equal frequency.<sup>6</sup> Drouet comments that it is *necessary* to mention that the shake begins with the upper note.<sup>7</sup> This ambivalence suggests that the English were not sensitive to the shake as a dissonance.

One might expect the first note of a shake to be stressed in a way similar to that of the *appoggiatura*. Nicholson never addresses this topic directly, but inferences may be drawn from descriptions of two exceptional examples. In one instance Nicholson warns that if the shake is interrupted for a breath, the accent should be avoided upon restarting the shake.<sup>8</sup> In another case he describes a shake preceded by a series of the same two notes, saying he would still start the shake with the upper note but would not accent it.<sup>9</sup> All this suggests that a shake is normally accented.

The specific length of the upper note is problematical:

The preparation of a shake and its resolution may vary, as will be seen by my arrangement of the general scale of shakes . . . .<sup>10</sup>

In the *School*, Nicholson's "general scale of shakes" shows the preparation as a grace note (always of eighth note value), giving no indication of its actual length. He does state that:

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<sup>6</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 90.  
<sup>7</sup> Drouet, *Method* (1830), 23.  
<sup>8</sup> *School*, 80-81.  
<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 81.  
<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 82.

If the shake is difficult, it is better to sustain the note, and only commence the shake when there is certainty of its completion.<sup>11</sup>

This confirms that the upper note could be prolonged at the discretion of the performer. Nicholson offers little to confirm or disaffirm the sort of precise rhythmic values (one-half or two-thirds the value of the main note) typically associated with eighteenth-century practice.

He is clear that after the approach, the shake is to continue uninterrupted into the resolution:

A worse effect can scarcely be conceived than making a shake too short, and then having to dwell upon the note to sustain the time.<sup>12</sup>

The speed of the shake is not always constant. Figure 5-2 shows a shake that accelerates. This may also be combined with a diminuendo:

In adagios I frequently commence the shake very slow, and as I decrease in tone I increase in rapidity.<sup>13</sup>

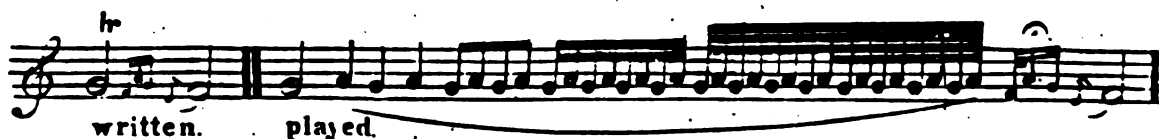


Figure 5-2. Shake with accelerando, *Complete Preceptor*, 21

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>12</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



There is an obvious similarity between this practice and the performance of vibration as described in the *School*.<sup>14</sup> A modern flutist would probably associate an accelerating shake with a crescendo. Nicholson's usage suggests a very different and more delicate handling of the shake.

Examples of a swell combined with a shake occur in the *Preceptive Lessons*: in bar 30 of "Roslin Castle"<sup>15</sup> and bar 36 of "Peaceful Slumb'ring"<sup>16</sup>. Lindsay describes the practice of combining shake, accelerando, and swell at a cadence.<sup>17</sup> The shake was clearly viewed as an expressive device.

Two broad types of resolution occur in the Nicholson tutors, simple and ornamented. The most usual of these is the simple two-note turn, as seen in the fingering charts from the *Complete Preceptor*. There is a curious discrepancy which is dependent on the specific instrument played. The fingering charts for the one-keyed flute show shakes without resolution, while those charts for the six-keyed flute are shown to resolve with a turn. Exceptions to the latter are shakes on C1 and C#1 for which the notes of resolution are not available. There is no obvious reason for this inconsistency, although less may have been expected from owners of the old-fashioned flutes.

One assumes that all shakes of any length would normally have been given at least a simple two-note

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>15</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 65.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>17</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 90.

termination. Dressler states that the resolution is understood<sup>18</sup> and Alexander suggests that the shake is generally resolved, at the performer's discretion, and that the resolution is omitted when a shake occurs on short notes.<sup>19</sup>

The second type of shake resolution is typically more involved. The subject of ornamental resolutions is exhaustively illustrated in the *School*:

When a shake is marked at the termination of a solo, adagio, or plaintive air, various resolutions, such as turns and cadenzas, are occasionally introduced. I have therefore supplied the amateur with abundance of these, and their selection, adoption or rejection, must depend upon his own judgement.<sup>20</sup>

The accompanying "general scale of shakes" contains no less than 205 examples of shakes with ornamental resolutions of varying complexity.

While a detailed discussion of ornamental resolutions is well beyond the scope of this study, a few observations are merited. Nicholson suggests transposing the examples for practice,<sup>21</sup> and it appears that he intended these examples as formulas to be learned and applied to other works. There is some redundancy, particularly with the simpler examples that are merely transposed. The

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<sup>18</sup> Dressler (1828), 27.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander (ca. 1818), 19

<sup>20</sup> *School*, 82.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

construction is generally based on simple scales (chromatic or diatonic) and arpeggios.

Nicholson briefly mentions the character of shakes executed in rapid passages (in contrast to cadential shakes):

In a spirited and brilliant composition the shake should be as rapid and the tone as clear and penetrating as possible, and the turn or resolution equally as rapid as the shake.<sup>22</sup>

The emphasis on "clear and penetrating" tone acknowledges the general adoption of the keyed flute. Such a statement could not be made about the one-keyed flute with its uneven and out-of-tune shakes.

Nicholson never mentions by name what other English writers (including Gunn, Alexander, Dressler, and Lindsay)<sup>23</sup> call either the *passing* or *transient shake*. This is simply a shake played quickly in a moving line. Nicholson offers a single example of this type of shake and its realization (Figure 5-3, p. 112). He indicates that although it was usually played as a triplet figure, it could be played as a group of five notes "if the performer has flexibility of finger equal to the execution."<sup>24</sup> This hints at Nicholson's technical prowess; only the triplet realization appears in the tutors of Dressler, Drouet, Lindsay, and Tulou.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Gunn (1793), part 2, 5; Alexander (ca. 1818), 47; Dressler (1828), 27; Lindsay (1828-30), 94.

<sup>24</sup> *School*, 82.

<sup>25</sup> Dressler (1828), 27; Drouet, *Method* (1830), 24; Lindsay (1828-30), 94; Tulou (1835), 38-39.

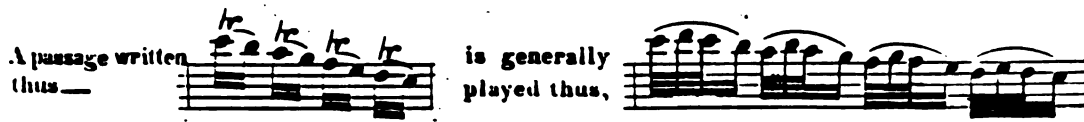


Figure 5-3. Passing shake, *School*, 82.

The passing shake is exceptional because it starts directly on the principal note, and as Dressler points out, it is the only shake that does not require a resolution.<sup>26</sup> This figure generally (though not always)<sup>27</sup> occurs in a descending line,<sup>28</sup> preceded by the upper note. By starting on the principal note one avoids repeating the upper note and also simplifies the finger technique. Weiss considers the effect the same as the turn, except that the shake "requires to be attacked with nerve."<sup>29</sup> In contrast, Alexander shows the passing shake beginning on either the upper or the lower note.<sup>30</sup>

Nicholson illustrates a *prepared shake* (Figure 5-4, p. 113), which begins with written grace notes and starts *below* the principal note. Taken alone, the first four notes of this example constitute an *inverted turn*,<sup>31</sup> suggesting that the prepared shake is a composite of the inverted turn and the shake. The prepared shake is not mentioned by name in

<sup>26</sup> Dressler (1828), 27.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 94.

<sup>29</sup> Weiss, *Instruction* (ca. 1821), 46.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander (ca. 1818), 47.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

the other Nicholson tutors, but a similar example using the same terminology does occur in Alexander (ca. 1818).<sup>32</sup>



Figure 5-4. Prepared shake, *Complete Preceptor*, 20.

According to Drouet, the specific notes preceding the shake do not matter. He considers any of these to be preparatory.<sup>33</sup> By this logic, any shake preceded by grace notes could be called a *prepared shake*.

Nicholson addresses the realization of these groups of grace notes in the *School*:

When a principal note is preceded by two or more small notes, they are generally slurred, and played with rapidity, this however is not an invariable rule.<sup>34</sup>

Nicholson's rhythmic notation of grace notes makes his intentions clear. Although he does not discuss the issue, one presumes that these figures are played on the beat. Alexander gives an example which supports this interpretation (Figure 5-5, p. 114).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 50.

<sup>33</sup> Drouet, *Method* (1830), 22.

<sup>34</sup> *School*, 70.

The two small notes thus,  are played quick thus, 

Figure 5-5. Grace notes played on the beat, Alexander, *Complete Preceptor*, 54.

The *Complete Preceptor* includes one example of a *three note shake* which alternates above and below the principal note, producing alternating seconds and thirds (Figure 5-6). This shake is also unusual because it starts on the principal note. Nicholson, Alexander, and Weiss mention this shake favorably.<sup>35</sup>



Figure 5-6. Shake above and below principal note, *Complete Preceptor*, 21.

The symbol used in the *Complete Preceptor* to indicate this shake does not appear for the same purpose in any of the tutors examined. The symbol does reappear in the *School* where it indicates an unrelated type of turn.<sup>36</sup> Alexander,

<sup>35</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 21; Alexander (ca. 1818), 76; Weiss, *Instruction* (ca. 1821), 47.

<sup>36</sup> *School*, 79.

Lindsay, and Weiss<sup>37</sup> give examples of this shake that are marked only *tr.* With no special notation, one presumes that this shake would be applied at the performer's discretion. A fully notated example of this shake does occur in the *Preceptive Lessons*.<sup>38</sup>

Lindsay describes this shake in some detail. He suggests that it is only appropriate on a tonic that descends to the leading tone and therefore produces the interval of a minor third between the upper and lower notes. This gives the shake a subdued character. The keys of C, F, G, D, A, E, and E flat major are specifically recommended. Lindsay considers the major third "too harsh to be endured by even the most uncultivated ear."<sup>39</sup> Nicholson's example in the *Complete Preceptor* starts and ends on the same note. An example in the *Preceptive Lessons* starts and ends on the same note, but does eventually resolve a half-step downward.<sup>40</sup> None of the sources consulted gives this shake a name.

Another example from the *Complete Preceptor* illustrates a melodic figure combined with a shake (Figure 5-7, p. 116) in a form of bariolage. This "is produced by Shaking the G, and at the same time articulating the four notes clear and distinct."<sup>41</sup> Nicholson recommends it "because of its

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<sup>37</sup> Alexander (ca. 1818), 76; Lindsay, 91; Weiss, *Instruction* (ca. 1821), 47.

<sup>38</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 65.

<sup>39</sup> Lindsay, 91.

<sup>40</sup> *Preceptive Lessons* 65.

<sup>41</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 21.



Figure 5-7. The shake combined with a melodic figure,  
*Complete Preceptor*, 21.

impressive and delicate effect,"<sup>42</sup> revealing that he seldom omits this particular device where the shake is sustained.<sup>43</sup>

Nicholson does not discuss the *beat*, but since it appears in several contemporary English tutors, it is mentioned here in relation to the shake. Beale describes it as "the reverse of the Shake, but without the turn."<sup>44</sup> He gives one example that combines the beat with a shake and swell.<sup>45</sup> The beat is also mentioned by Wragg,<sup>46</sup> and Keith.<sup>47</sup> The absence of the beat in more substantial tutors after 1821 including those of Lindsay, Alexander, and Nicholson suggests that the beat was going out of fashion in England. The beat had appeared in anonymous tutors including *Thompson's New Instructions*, London (ca. 1810) and the *New Instructions* published by Preston (ca. 1801).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> John Beale, *A Complete Guide to the Art of Playing the German Flute* third ed. (London: D'Almaine & Co., ca. 1821), 14.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Wragg (ca. 1818), 9.

<sup>47</sup> Keith (ca. 1818-21), 8.

<sup>48</sup> *New Instructions for the German Flute* (London: Preston and Son, ca. 1801), 10; *Thompson's New*



These basic tutors were copied freely, and the beat continues to appear well into the nineteenth century in versions such as *A New and Complete Flute Preceptor* (ca. 1840).<sup>49</sup> Fürstenau mentions the device by its now common name, the *mordent*.<sup>50</sup>

Since the use of conventional fingerings often produces awkward or impossible motion, special trill fingerings have been employed at least since Hotteterre (1728).<sup>51</sup> These fingerings are often simpler in execution but function at the expense of intonation and tone quality. By the nineteenth century, uneven and out-of-tune shakes were considered the greatest weakness of the one-keyed flute. The added keys improved both the tone and intonation of shakes.<sup>52</sup>

Nicholson's use of the shake is of interest because he appears to fully exploit the capabilities of the keys. As James says of Nicholson:

His shakes are, in general, regular, brilliant, and effective, and possess the rare quality (which is not the least of their beauties) of being perfectly in tune.<sup>53</sup>

A progression among the different types of flute may be seen in the fingering charts for shakes in the three tutors.

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*Instructions for the German Flute* (London: Thompson, ca. 1810), 8.

<sup>49</sup> *A New and Complete Flute Preceptor* (New York: Firth and Hall, ca. 1840), 11.

<sup>50</sup> Fürstenau (ca. 1826), 21.

<sup>51</sup> Hotteterre (1729), plate 2.

<sup>52</sup> Fürstenau (ca. 1826), 9.

<sup>53</sup> James, *A Word or Two* (1826), 157.

The *Complete Preceptor* includes a "Scale of Shakes" for the one-keyed flute and another for the six-keyed flute<sup>54</sup>. By 1816 the one-keyed flute would have been old fashioned, particularly for a serious student or professional. Nicholson probably included the information on this instrument to broaden his potential audience. The fingering chart for the one-keyed flute is simplified, with only a limited range of notes and few enharmonics included. The chart for the six-keyed flute shows an extended range and includes more enharmonics. The flutes illustrated both have the traditional small finger and embouchure holes.

The *Preceptive Lessons* include an annotated scale for the six-keyed flute<sup>55</sup> and discuss various fingerings as successive key signatures appear. The C and long F<sup>56</sup> keys are specifically mentioned. Although considered an opponent of these keys,<sup>57</sup> Nicholson took account of their usage. Special fingerings for the large-hole flute are included in the *Preceptive Lessons*.<sup>58</sup>

In the *School*, the subject of the shake occupies a complete chapter. Here the fingerings from the *School* include the use of C and long F keys,<sup>59</sup> indicating the eight-keyed flute and presumably the large-hole Nicholson model.

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<sup>54</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 23-24; 25-27.

<sup>55</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 6-7.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 7, 34, 43.

<sup>57</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 2.

<sup>58</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 34, 51, 66, 78.

<sup>59</sup> *School*, 86.

Some of Nicholson's fingerings create shakes in which the upper note is quite sharp. A glaring example appears in the shake from e<sup>2</sup> to f-sharp<sup>2</sup>. The regular fingering for this interval requires that only the middle finger of the right hand move, and the intonation is good. No special fingering would seem necessary or even desirable in this case. Surprisingly, in all of his tutors Nicholson indicates that this shake should be performed by moving the index finger of the right hand.<sup>60</sup> On the Nicholson flute, this produces an f-sharp<sup>2</sup> that is forty cents sharp. Charles Weiss specifically mentions this fingering as an "old incongruous principle" requiring "merely a well-tuned ear to discover the error."<sup>61</sup>

While individual notes may be humored, the *interval* of a shake is difficult for the player to alter. Although the example cited is an extreme case, Nicholson does seem generally to prefer sharp fingerings for the shakes. Because his playing was celebrated for its accuracy of intonation, it must be assumed that Nicholson's approach to fingering produced results that were acceptable to both general audiences and leading critics of the day. It is difficult to ascertain whether this was due to Nicholson's extraordinary control or a to very different ideal of intonation on the part of his listeners.

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<sup>60</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 24; *Preceptive Lessons*, 66; *School*, 88.

<sup>61</sup> Weiss, *Instruction* (ca. 1821), 14.

## TURNS

In the *Complete Preceptor* and the *Preceptive Lessons*, Nicholson includes examples of the turn but does not explain them. His only discussion of the turn is a brief mention found in the *School*. In the absence of any terminology in Nicholson's tutors, Lindsay's nomenclature will be used here. Lindsay first divides turns into two broad categories, *plain* and *inverted*.

Lindsay describes the character of the plain turn in some detail. Since a modern reader may conceive of the turn as a quick and accented figure, Lindsay's description is of interest. He explains that the plain turn serves to "connect, enliven, or give smoothness to intervals." It is generally played with a subdued tone, and "requires to be lightly, neatly, and distinctly executed."<sup>62</sup> Ascending passages constitute an exception. In this instance the turn may be played forcefully, serving to add energy and excitement. There is an obvious similarity between this figure and the passing shake. In quoting examples from Berbiguier, Lindsay suggests that whether indicated as turns or shakes, such passages would be realized identically.

The *plain* turn may begin on either the upper note, which produces a four-note figure, or on the principal note which requires five notes. When the turn begins on the upper note it is played quickly and on the downbeat. In Lindsay's terminology this is a plain turn, *before* the

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<sup>62</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 95.

note<sup>63</sup> (Figure 5-8). His use of the term *before* does not appear to be literal; the turn still begins *on* the downbeat. The musical effect is accentual, as the turn does not lead to another note. When it begins on the principal note the turn may be delayed. In this case it is termed a plain turn *after* the note<sup>64</sup> (Figure 5-9). Plain turns that begin after the principal note serve a connective function. A range of small variations in the basic patterns is possible, but these few forms will serve to describe the turns found in Nicholson's tutors.



Figure 5-8. Plain turn before the note, Lindsay, 95.



Figure 5-9. Plain turn after the note, Lindsay, 95.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

The first type of turn illustrated by Nicholson is (in Lindsay's terminology), a *plain turn before the note*. This is indicated by the standard turn symbol placed directly over the principal note (Figure 5-10). A second example demonstrates the convention of placing a sharp beneath the symbol to indicate a raised lower auxiliary (Figure 5-11). The *School* contains one example showing this plain turn, both as abbreviated and realized (Figure 5-12, p. 123).



Figure 5-10. Plain turn, *Complete Preceptor*, 20.



Figure 5-11. Turn with accidental, *Complete Preceptor*, 20.

Both the *Complete Preceptor* and the *School* show the symbol directly above the principal note. The placement probably indicates that the turn is to start immediately.



Figure 5-12. Plain turn, *School*, 79.

Nicholson does not explain this and it is not clearly indicated in any of the musical examples from his tutors. However, the convention is supported by Beale (ca. 1815 and ca. 1821), Wragg (ca. 1818), Keith (ca. 1818-21), Weiss (ca. 1821), and Lindsay (1828-30).<sup>65</sup> Neither Gunn (1793), Alexander, (ca. 1818), nor Dressler (1828)<sup>66</sup> make mention of it.

Tulou (1835) states that formerly the turn began on the upper note and that some still play it that way.<sup>67</sup> It would appear from this and from its infrequent appearance in Nicholson's examples that the use of this particular form of turn was declining.

The type of turn appearing most frequently in all of the tutors from this period is the *plain turn after the note*. The significant feature of the notation in Nicholson, Lindsay, and the others is the placement of the symbol *after*

<sup>65</sup> Beale (ca. 1815), 14; Beale (ca. 1821), 14; Wragg (ca. 1818), 9; Keith (ca. 1818-21), 8; Weiss, *Instruction* (ca. 1821), 46; Lindsay (1828-30), 95.

<sup>66</sup> Gunn (1793), part 2, 5; Alexander (ca. 1818), 17; Dressler (1828), 23.

<sup>67</sup> Tulou (1835), 36.

the principal note. There are two examples in the *Complete Preceptor* (Figure 5-13) which show this turn realized in two rhythmic contexts. In the first example the turn occurs between notes of equal rhythmic value and is realized as a four-note group. The second example shows the turn played on a dotted note. Here it is realized as a triplet followed by a longer note taking the last third of the principal note's value. This approach to dotted notes is confirmed by Lindsay who describes the turn as "a little *Triplet*".<sup>69</sup>



Figure 5-13. The plain turn after the note, *Complete Preceptor*, 20.

Nicholson's use of the slash with the turn symbol in Figure 5-13 and elsewhere is problematical. In the *Complete Preceptor*, the horizontal figure with a slash appears frequently, as do fully notated examples of the plain turn after the note. The ordinary turn symbol without a slash appears only rarely. In the *Preceptive Lessons* both symbols appear regularly. Figure 5-14 (p. 126) shows the two symbols used together in the same piece. Some distinction is clearly intended, but there is little evidence in

<sup>68</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 112.

<sup>70</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), , 112.



Nicholson's tutors to support any particular interpretation. The notation of turns in the *School* is entirely inconsistent with that in both the *Complete Preceptor* and *Preceptive Lessons*. Figures 5-15 (p. 126), from the *Complete Preceptor*, and 5-16 (p. 126), from the *School*, show similar examples but use very different symbols. Because the *School* was published in New York rather than London, it seems reasonable to attribute these inconsistencies to the engraver rather than Nicholson.

Lindsay<sup>70</sup> and Keith<sup>71</sup> describe a convention whereby the slash replaces the sharp, indicating that the lowest note of the turn should be raised a semitone. Figure 5-17 (p. 127) illustrates the use of both this and the ordinary turn symbol. Lindsay notes that this convention is not widely understood. He suggests that the "best construction" of the turn requires this raised note and without it the turn "would often be harsh and disagreeable."<sup>72</sup> One suspects that the lowest note of a turn might have been adjusted regardless of the notation.

If Nicholson were aware of this convention, his application of the two turn symbols is at best erratic. Figure 5-18 (p. 127) shows a turn from the *Complete Preceptor* with the slash, and yet the lower note is already a half-step below the main note and cannot be raised.

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<sup>70</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), , 112.

<sup>71</sup> Keith (ca. 1818-21), 7.

<sup>72</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 95.

Figure 5-19 (p. 127), from the *Preceptive Lessons*, shows a similar example.



Figure 5-14. Turn symbols, *Preceptive Lessons*, 64.



Figure 5-15. Turn symbols, *Complete Preceptor*, 20



Figure 5-16. Turn symbols, *School*, 79.



Figure 5-17. Turn symbols, *Lindsay*, 112.



Figure 5-18. Turn with slash, *Complete Preceptor*, 49.



Figure 5-19. Turn with slash, *Preceptive Lessons*, 28.

If Nicholson's slash does not indicate a raised note, one other alternative emerges. There is a commonality of rhythm between the realized examples of the *Complete Preceptor* and the one example from the *Preceptive Lessons*. The turns of Figure 5-18 show the four-note grouping as seen in the first example of Figure 5-13 rather than the three-note group that Lindsay suggests is usual for the turn with dotted note. Nicholson indicates this turn without the slash in the second example of Figure 5-13. It may be that the slash indicates that the turn is to be played evenly, in a four-note grouping, and the absence of the slash indicates a three-note grouping. However, an examination of the musical examples from the *Complete Preceptor* and *Preceptive Lessons* does not reveal any obvious or consistent patterns of application. With so few realized examples, any conclusions about Nicholson's use of the slash must be tentative.

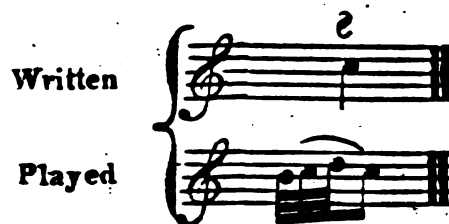


Figure 5-20. Inverted turn, *Complete Preceptor*, 20.

The turn may begin below the principal note. Lindsay calls this the *inverted turn*. Nicholson illustrates this

device without identifying it (Figure 5-20). His symbol here, like Lindsay's, is vertical. Lindsay notes that this turn is associated with sad or tender emotions, is generally played *piano*, and that it is seldom abbreviated.<sup>73</sup> Monzani, Wragg, Shade, Lindsay, and Keith<sup>74</sup> all indicate the inverted turn with some type of vertical symbol.

The vertical symbol does not appear in the musical examples of either the *Complete Preceptor* or the *Preceptive Lessons*, although the pattern of the inverted turn is incorporated into one cadential resolution from the former (Figure 5-21, p. 130). The inverted turn notated with grace notes appears with regularity in the *Preceptive Lessons* and the *School*. Ornamented versions of this turn also appear with some frequency in both tutors. Two variants are shown in the four examples from the *Preceptive Lessons* (Figure 5-22, p. 130). This configuration is found most frequently at cadences.

Nicholson's use of turn symbols is erratic in the *School*. In Figure 5-23a and b (p. 131) he employs the same symbol to illustrate both the direct turn on the beat and the inverted turn. However, reference to the placement of the symbol can provide some guidelines. As established earlier, the location of the symbol over or after the principal note determines whether the turn is to be played on or after the beat. Nicholson explains in the *School*

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Monzani (ca. 1801), 8; Wragg (ca. 1818), 14; Shade, 12; Lindsay (1828-30), 95; Keith (ca 1818-21), 7.

that, among those turns that start directly, the choice of a plain or inverted turn is determined by context.



Figure 5-21. Inverted turn incorporated into a cadence, *Complete Preceptor*, 74.

A.

B.

C.

D.

Figure 5-22. Inverted turn with ornamentation, *Preceptive Lessons*, 60, 62, 65, and 77.



Figure 5-23. Use of turn symbols, *School*, 79.

When the principal note is followed by a higher note, a plain turn is appropriate. If the principal note is followed by a lower note, an inverted turn is in order.<sup>75</sup>

This system reduces several possibilities to just three and would appear to cover many situations reasonably well. Although Nicholson makes no note of this, a similar system had been described by Dressler (1828).<sup>76</sup> Such a simplified approach might have been convenient for both amateur or professional flutists. This system is rendered unnecessary in the exercises and pieces of Nicholson's tutors. Although inconsistent in form, the turn symbol always appears after the principal note, indicating the plain turn after the beat. The inverted turn is consistently notated with grace notes.

<sup>75</sup> *School*, 79.

<sup>76</sup> Dressler (1828), 24.

## THE APPOGGIATURA

Nicholson mentions the appoggiatura only briefly in the *Complete Preceptor*. It is introduced under "GRACES or ORNAMENTS of EXPRESSION," and is simply said to take one-half the length of the principal note.<sup>77</sup> This statement is accompanied by the examples shown in Figure 5-24 (p. 133). These are instructive because Nicholson notates the grace note with the correct rhythmic value and realizes it accordingly. This literal rhythmic notation appears to be consistent throughout Nicholson's tutors and those compositions examined. The fifth bar of the first line shows the realization of octaves notated both as grace notes and as double stops. This is a standard technique in the works of Nicholson and other flutist-composers of the period.

Appoggiaturas generally appear without comment in the *Preceptive Lessons*. Many of the appoggiaturas in the musical examples are marked with an accent (Figure 5-25, p. 133) suggesting that some emphasis on the dissonance was expected. In conjunction with an unusual example, Nicholson cautions the reader to play the appoggiaturas "with great delicacy,"<sup>78</sup> suggesting that an accent might be expected.

The *School* includes a brief essay in which Nicholson defines the appoggiatura simply as "a small note preceding

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<sup>77</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 20.

<sup>78</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 25



one of ordinary size" and acknowledges the dissonant nature of the appoggiatura by calling it a "note of suspension."<sup>79</sup>



Figure 5-24. Appoggiatura, *Complete Preceptor*, 20.



Figure 5-25. Accented appoggiatura, *Preceptive Lessons*, 32.

<sup>79</sup> *School*, 69.

He describes two species of appoggiatura: superior and inferior. The former occurs either a whole- or half-step above the principal note, and the latter occurs a half-step below. Nicholson reiterates in the *School* the one-half rule for note length and adds that the appoggiatura takes two-thirds the value of a dotted note.

There follows a set of examples (Figure 5-26) that generally support the rules for note length, but several are atypical. The first appoggiatura in the Adagio takes one-half the value of the principal note, which is then cut short by a rest. This is a only one illustration, but it implies that Nicholson's phrasing may have been more distinct than the notation would otherwise suggest. The appoggiaturas in the second, sixth, and eighth bars of the Allegretto receive three-fourths the value of the principal note. These long appoggiaturas exceed the one-half rule, but are consistent with the musical effect of creating suspense.

The image displays musical notation for three examples of appoggiatura. The first section, labeled 'EXAMPLES.', shows a 'Written' staff with a treble clef and a 'Played' staff with a bass clef. The 'Written' staff contains a single note with an appoggiatura above it, while the 'Played' staff shows the corresponding performance with a longer note and a rest. The second section, labeled 'ADAGIO.', features a single staff with a treble clef, showing a note with an appoggiatura. The third section, labeled 'ALLEGRETTO.', consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs) showing a more complex musical passage with multiple appoggiaturas and rapid note values.

Figure 5-26. Appoggiatura, *School*, 69.

Nicholson indicates that the rules are not to be applied strictly:

As the ear is gratified by being kept in suspense, the Appoggiatura (particularly in slow plaintive Melodies) should seldom be hurried.<sup>80</sup>

The suggestion that the appoggiatura "should seldom be hurried" indicates a flexible approach to rhythmic value. Nicholson's concern appears to be more with creating musical suspense than observing pedantries. The one-half and two-thirds rules appear to involve minimum lengths rather than precise values, and the appoggiatura could be held longer at the performer's discretion.

The appoggiatura might be combined with other devices. Nicholson mentions that an appoggiatura leading to the last note of a phrase or melody should be prolonged and combined with a glide, while the tone is subdued to a whisper.<sup>81</sup> This suggests a particularly expressive treatment.

Nicholson stresses accuracy of rhythm in fast movements and warns against playing the appoggiatura before the beat.<sup>82</sup> The three examples from the *School* in Figure 5-27 indicate that a rounding of the rhythm of the appoggiatura into triplets is particularly to be avoided.

Nicholson does not draw a clear distinction between appoggiaturas in different tempi, but Alexander gives examples showing the appoggiatura played long in slow

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

Written.

Played correctly.

Incorrectly.

ALLEGRO.

ANDANTE.

Figure 5-27. Appoggiatura, varied tempi, *School*, 69.

movements and short in fast movements.<sup>83</sup> This principle is not inconsistent with Nicholson's examples.

Considering that his compositions and exercises consist largely of embellished melodies, it is surprising that Nicholson warns in the *Preceptive Lessons* against the overuse of embellishment, suggesting that in slow movements the "unadorned melody" is most pleasing and "affords the greatest latitude for the most refined *Expression*."<sup>84</sup> *Embellishment* is optional while *expression* is not.

Nicholson's conservative attitude may well have been a reaction to criticism. As one reviewer lamented:

Mr. Nicholson does as much with his flute, in point of execution, as we suppose can possibly be done; and a great deal more than ought ever to be attempted, beyond the precincts of the school, by a man of judgement and good taste.<sup>85</sup>

In his English-language *Method* (1830) Drouet warns against "embellishments, vibrations, glidings, &c."<sup>86</sup> He admits their effectiveness in "trifling music," but considers them injurious to "good music" as composed by Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven.<sup>87</sup>

Whatever the cause, Nicholson appears to have modified his performance style between 1825 and 1827. Lindsay describes a radical change in style, commenting that:

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<sup>83</sup> Alexander (ca. 1818), 49.

<sup>84</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 11.

<sup>85</sup> Senex, "The Concerts," *The Harmonicon*, 1 (1823), 73.

<sup>86</sup> Drouet, *Method* (1830), 18.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

To him we now look without fear, for a classical and correct taste. That blameable superfluity of notes, and propensity to flourish, of which we before spoke as having discredited his performances, he has wisely abolished; and we now see in him, the model of first rate excellence.<sup>88</sup>

In reference to symphonic works of the "German masters," an obituary cites Nicholson's "manly simplicity of style, and just conception of the author's meaning, an effect which we do not expect ever to meet with again."<sup>89</sup> Nicholson appears to have answered his critics successfully.

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<sup>88</sup> James, "Mr. Nicholson," (1827), 44.

<sup>89</sup> "Concerts," *The Musical World*, 6 (1837), 58.

## CHAPTER VI

### ARTICULATION

Articulation practices as they relate to the flute in early nineteenth-century England have not been extensively studied. Nicholson describes four distinct types of single tonguing and associated notation: staccato (notated by dashes), single tonguing (round dots), "legato staccato" (slur over round dots), and legato (slur). In addition there is double tonguing, triple tonguing, and aspiration.

An examination of English flute tutors from just after the turn of the century reveals that decisions relating to articulation were largely in the province of the performer.

Nicholson demonstrates an increased respect for the composer's intent and a considerably more detailed approach to the notation of articulation than his immediate predecessors or contemporaries. By the time of the *School* (1836), the role of the composer in indicating articulation was becoming established, with Nicholson as an advocate. In order to understand his place in this transition, an examination of those English tutors immediately preceding and contemporary to Nicholson is essential.

#### PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

Flute tutors from the turn of the century onward contain tables demonstrating various patterns of articulation. The intended function of these tables appears to change between the turn of the century and the time of

Nicholson's *School* (1836). In early tutors the tables are guides for interpretation. The patterns are intended to be applied by the performer to works of music. In Nicholson's tutors the patterns are for practice purposes, in order to acquire facility. As applied to pieces, articulation is to be performed as written by the composer.

Monzani's *Instructions* of 1801 include a table showing thirty-six combinations of tongued and slurred notes.<sup>1</sup> This table is

not for amusement, it will teach how to tip properly passages of every description without attending to the usual marks: Slurs, dots &c. which is [sic] introduced in music without meaning or effect.<sup>2</sup>

Monzani means that the performer should apply these patterns of articulation and ignore any printed articulation. A similar table appears in his *New and Enlarged Edition* (1813). Here he defends the performer's prerogative, "composers not being always aware of the Peculiar Articulation belonging to the flute<sup>3</sup>."

Beale's second edition (ca. 1815) reproduces essentially the same table but with a more tactful rationale, saying that the modes are "necessary in certain passages and often left out in the Engraving."<sup>4</sup> Whatever

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<sup>1</sup> Monzani (1801), 10-13.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>4</sup> Beale (ca. 1815), 45.



their reasons, flutists seem to have little regard for the composer's indication of articulation early in the century.

The most complete example of this approach to articulation was published in English about 1827 by Berbiguier as *A Complete System of Articulation for the Flute*. Part one contains 60 patterns of single tonguing with suggestions for their use (part two contains 28 examples of double tonguing). These suggestions presume that the performer will decide where to apply each pattern.

In his *Instructions* of 1828, Dressler alludes to a new variety of articulation practice and the decline of systematic articulation:

In this work I have not given any fix'd rules for Tipping and Slurring, as authors will very frequently Tip and Slur similar passages quite different in order to vary the expression of the Music, and the Learner will find by his paying attention to the Tips and Slurs in this work or other music of superior composition, that he will be able to obtain a more tasteful mode of articulation, than by binding himself to any fixed rules.<sup>5</sup>

In Nicholson's tutors, the articulation tables appear to serve a different purpose. The *Complete Preceptor* includes an abbreviated table with nine *modes* of articulation.<sup>6</sup> The brevity of these examples suggests a reduction in importance. The *Preceptive Lessons* include another table with eleven modes. The reader is specifically instructed to apply these articulation patterns to several

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<sup>5</sup> Dressler (1828), 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 17.

of the exercises,<sup>7</sup> but there is no hint that the performer should depart from the careful notation found in the various airs and melodies. Instead, Nicholson occasionally cautions the student to play these pieces exactly as written.<sup>8</sup>

The *School* contains a table of thirteen *modes of articulation*, each given a name. (All three tables are reproduced in the Appendix.) Nicholson instructs that these modes of articulation be "practiced daily" and applied to a series of exercises.<sup>9</sup> Again, there is no mention of applying the patterns to musical examples.

In all of Nicholson's tutors the articulation tables are meant for practice and application to specific studies. They do not appear to be intended for application as *rules* to works of music. The notated articulation in the musical examples is quite specific and contains more variety than the simple application of articulation tables would allow. Nicholson uses varied articulation for musical purposes. He frequently disrupts an established pattern before starting a new phrase or just before a cadence. In Figure 6-1 shows a pattern of slurs broken by three separate notes in the fourth and fifth bars.

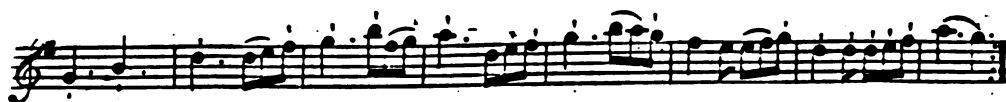


Figure 6-1. Varied articulation, *Complete Preceptor*, 31.

<sup>7</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 17, 23, 36, 37, 39, etc..

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

<sup>9</sup> *School*, 64.

Figure 6-2 shows two patterns of articulation separated by a slur in bar two. In both examples the altered articulation appears to imply a slight ritardando. In reference to a *Capriccio*, Nicholson warns that the marks of articulation "must be strictly adhered to, or the desired effect will be lost."<sup>10</sup> This detailed and discriminating approach suggests that articulation had become a means of musical expression rather than a mechanical device to be applied arbitrarily.



Figure 6-2. Slur separating patterns of articulation, *Preceptive Lessons*, 70.

In the *School* Nicholson describes and endorses a general movement towards notated articulation

so essential is it [articulation] in the estimation of all modern composers, that little is now left to the discretion of the performer, various marks being placed over the notes and passages by which the intended expression is indicated; and unless strict attention be paid to them by the performer, the most simple but beautiful compositions may be destroyed. This becomes very conspicuous in trio, quartet, or orchestral playing, where the same passage is frequently given successively to the various performers; and if the accent and notes of marked articulation are not the same, the beauty of imitation, and the intention of the composer, are lost.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 68.

<sup>12</sup> *School*, 13.

<sup>12</sup> *School*, 13.

Nicholson's concern for the intent of the composer is a significant departure from the near disdain of Monzani twenty-three years earlier. Nicholson appears to be relatively unique in his concern for the accurate notation of articulation. In 1828 Lindsay is still able to say that "the great art consists in knowing when properly to apply the various articulations."<sup>13</sup>

#### NOTATION

The common marks of articulation encountered in the Nicholson tutors are dots and slurs. The interpretation of slurs is self-evident. This is referred to as *legato* in most of the English tutors examined. The use and meaning of dots in early nineteenth century English tutors is inconsistent and occasionally contradictory. Two types appear, the vertical line or *dash* and the round dot or *point*.<sup>14</sup> These can appear either alone or in combination with the slur. A distinction between the two forms of dot is not drawn in English flute tutors until the 1820's, although circumstantial evidence suggests a distinction was intended earlier.

The use of the dash and point is not new to nineteenth-century England. Quantz described the interpretation of *dots* and *strokes* in 1752:

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<sup>13</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 39. The author cites Berbiguier's *Method* (1827) as the original source for this statement.

<sup>14</sup> N. Swaine, *The Young Musician or the Science of Music Familiarly Explained* (Stourport: G. Nicholson, 1818), 25.

. . . those notes with strokes must be played with completely detached strokes, and those with dots simply with short strokes and in a sustained manner, so a similar distinction is required when there are slurs above the notes.<sup>15</sup>

English tutors from just after the turn of the century are particularly erratic in their notation of articulation. Monzani (1803) allows only two extremes of notation, legato (slurred) and staccato (tongued),<sup>17</sup> which are notated as the slur and dash. Some musical examples are fully notated<sup>18</sup> while others are completely unmarked.<sup>19</sup> The second edition of Wragg's *Preceptor* (1806) carries notation similar to Monzani's, but round dots occur in a set of preludes at the end of the tutor.<sup>20</sup> No comment or explanation is given. The round dots appear simply to represent a different typography.<sup>21</sup> In Monzani's *Instructions* of 1813, both the dot and the dash appear regularly, though only once on the same page.<sup>22</sup> No distinction is suggested in the text. The equivalence of the two markings is confirmed by Swaine (ca. 1818), who asserts that both markings mean staccato, are

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<sup>15</sup> Quantz, 223.

<sup>16</sup> Hadidian, 21.

<sup>17</sup> Monzani (ca. 1813), 24-25. The author gives circular definitions, defining legato as the opposite of staccato and vice versa.

<sup>18</sup> Monzani (1801), 7, Example XIV, "Bugle Horn Quick March". The musical examples are numbered separately from the text.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 9 (Example XVII, "March").

<sup>20</sup> Wragg (1806), 62.

<sup>21</sup> These preludes follow an "Appendix" and presumably represent an addition to the first edition. As such the inconsistent typography is not surprising.

<sup>22</sup> Monzani (1813), 65.

equivalent, and are to "have a smart articulate effect, detached one from another distinctly."<sup>23</sup>

Beale's second edition (1815) is similar to Monzani's in employing the dash for most examples, but a few dots occur. In one instance an *Andantino* with round dots appears on the same page as a *Moderato* with dashes.<sup>24</sup> An *Allemand* has the dash for the first stanza and the dot for the second. Beale's third edition (ca. 1821) has new engraving and new musical examples. While the dash still predominates, the dot occurs sporadically.<sup>25</sup> All this suggests two possibilities: either the engraver was sloppy or some distinction was intended.

Both marks occur in Alexander (1818), even in the same example.<sup>26</sup> While no explanation is given, Alexander's examples derive from other composers' works and one suspects the notation was copied along with the various musical examples. Dressler (1828) uses the round dot exclusively, but again without explanation.

The first clear explanation of the two markings is given by Lindsay (1828). He considers that both dash and point indicate staccato, but "the upright marks are to be played more decidedly *Staccato* than the round dots."<sup>27</sup> Lindsay defines the round dots as representing normal staccato. The dash therefore represents something more

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<sup>23</sup> Swaine (1818), 25.

<sup>24</sup> Beale (ca. 1815), 23.

<sup>25</sup> Beale (ca. 1821), 42, 44, 48.

<sup>26</sup> Alexander (ca. 1818), 72.

<sup>27</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 31.

separated. Alexander considers both marks as staccato and like Lindsay suggests that the dash is to be played shorter than the dot.<sup>28</sup>

Nicholson's interpretation of the dots does not entirely agree with that of his contemporaries. In the *Complete Preceptor*, Nicholson cites only two degrees of articulation, "slurred" and "tipt."<sup>29</sup> The latter is indicated only by a dash (as seen in the first table of Appendix A). Most examples in the *Complete Preceptor* are fully marked. Both dots and dashes occur in the *Preceptive Lessons*, again without explanation. This articulation table (also reproduced in Appendix A) shows slurs or round dots in all but the last example, which combines slurs and dashes.

Under this table Nicholson cautions the student to give notes full value, "particularly in Staccato Passages". His example shows eighth notes with *round dots* and warns against "falsely" playing them as sixteenths separated by sixteenth rests.<sup>30</sup> This is inconsistent with instructions by Wragg, Riley, Dressler, and Lindsay, which specifically state that staccato should be played one-half the written note value.<sup>31</sup> Nicholson seems to be ignoring convention.

Figure 6-3 (p. 148), from the *Preceptive Lessons*, contains round dots and dashes together, confirming that Nicholson does intend some distinction. The *Preceptive*

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<sup>28</sup> Alexander (ca. 1818), 15.

<sup>29</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 17.

<sup>30</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Wragg (1806), iii; Riley (ca. 1811), 12; Dressler (1828), 16; Lindsay (1828-30), 31.



Figure 6-3. Points and dashes, *Preceptive Lessons*, 83.

*Lessons* were meant for advanced players and Nicholson evidently felt an explanation unnecessary.

A clear, if slightly contradictory rationale finally emerges in the *School*. The discrepancy appears to stem from Nicholson's interpretation of the dot. He describes this not as a form of staccato, but as an indication of *normal single tonguing*, in which "the tone is to be sustained." He further explains that staccato is indicated by the dash. An accompanying example shows that Nicholson's staccato is given one-half the written value<sup>32</sup> just as the other sources cited above. The articulation table that follows (see Appendix C) confirms that round dots represent *normal* single tonguing and dashes represent staccato.

There is no clear consensus on the interpretation of staccato marks among Nicholson's best known European contemporaries. Fürstenau gives an example which shows the

<sup>32</sup> *School*, 62.



dash [*Strich*] and round dot [*Punkt*] as interchangeable.<sup>33</sup> Only the round dot [*point*]<sup>34</sup> appears in Tulou's *Méthode*. Surprisingly, Drouet states, "The notes that are marked with [a] round dot ought to be attempted with less dryness than in the first example [the dash]."<sup>35</sup> This is at least compatible with Nicholson's approach. In his *Articulation for the Flute*, Berbiguier illustrates both forms of dot and suggests a distinction similar to Nicholson's.<sup>36</sup>

The early flute specialist Stephen Preston has suggested, based on eighteenth and early nineteenth-century sources, that the dot may indicate that the notes are to be played equally, without agogic accents.<sup>37</sup> If this is true, then Nicholson's use of the dot to represent normal articulation represents a transition from the eighteenth-century practice of baroque swing and *inegale* to modern equality of articulation. Confirmation of this trend will be found under the discussion of syllable usage in double tonguing, where it will be seen that John Gunn rejects Quantz's syllables precisely because they promote inequality.

From 1803 to 1818 only the slur (or *legato*) and dots (*staccato*) appear in English flute tutors. An intermediate or "mezzo" *staccato* is mentioned by Keith (ca. 1818-21).

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<sup>33</sup> Fürstenau, *Flöten-Schule* (ca. 1826), 8.

<sup>34</sup> Tulou (1835), 9.

<sup>35</sup> Drouet, *Method* (1830), 24.

<sup>36</sup> Tranquille Berbiguier, *A Complete System of Articulation for the Flute* (London: Wheatstone & Co., ca. 1827), 1.

<sup>37</sup> Stephen Preston, telephone conversation, January 28, 1990.

This is to be notated as a slur over dots and "differs only from the Legato by the note being a little more distinct."<sup>38</sup>

Alexander (ca. 1818) presents an "Andante Amoroso" by A. Ireland which contains the slur over round dots. In a footnote, he explains that this notation is called "Mezzo Staccato" and that "the notes should be played in one breath a little short and distinct."<sup>39</sup>

Dressler (1828) also mentions the slur over dots, which is to be "articulated very gently and smoothly with *doo*."<sup>40</sup>

None of these writers makes a claim to invention. Indeed, Quantz described the identical notation in 1752.<sup>41</sup> It seems likely that previous authors simply neglected to mention this "fine distinction".

The same effect appears as item 12 in the articulation table from the *School*. Nicholson terms it "The Legato Staccato". The technique involves playing "as legato as possible." There is a tongue stroke, but "without a cessation of tone." He suggests that this articulation is found "in the compositions of all modern classic writers."<sup>42</sup> The implication is that a neglected technique had been revived.

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<sup>38</sup> Keith (ca 1818-21), *New & Complete Preceptor*, 15. This author has a connection to Nicholson. In 1829 he joined in partnership with Prowse, the manufacturer of "C. Nicholson's Patent Flute". Langwill, *Index*, 89.

<sup>39</sup> Alexander (ca. 1818), 55.

<sup>40</sup> Dressler (1828), 16.

<sup>41</sup> Quantz, 75.

<sup>42</sup> *School*, 64.

## TECHNIQUES

The techniques of staccato and legato staccato are performed by a stroke of the tongue. Nicholson's essay on "Articulation" in the *School* is revealing in several aspects. He considers the subject second in importance only to tone, because "brilliancy and accent depend on its application."<sup>43</sup> His description of tongue motion and placement is cogent:

The first articulation to acquire is Single Tonguing; it is produced by placing the point of the tongue against the roof of the mouth near the gum, and then pronouncing the syllable too; in doing this, the tongue will be instantly released from that position, and, by its action, the breath will be impelled with considerable force in the flute. This requires a vigorous action of the tongue, consequently the pressure of it to the roof of the mouth must be as firm as possible. This articulation should be practised on one note, until the pupil can strike the breath into the flute and produce a tone instantly. Care must be taken that the tongue does not touch the teeth.<sup>44</sup>

Nicholson's description of tongue placement is similar to Gunn's, but the emphasis on force and pressure is new. The last sentence is clearly meant to distinguish Nicholson's traditional English approach from the French. Here and elsewhere, he loses no opportunity to distance himself from their practice. The French pronunciation of *teu* (as advocated by Drouet)<sup>45</sup> positions the tongue further forward in the mouth than the English *too*. Of *teu*, Drouet

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<sup>43</sup> *School*, 62

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Drouet, *Method* (1830), 2

makes clear, "When I speak of this syllable I always mean its French pronunciation."<sup>46</sup> By this approach the tip of the tongue touches between the teeth or even between the lips. Walkiers states that, "The blow of the tongue is made against the teeth and at the opening of the lips."<sup>47</sup> Berbigieur is slightly more conservative, saying, "It is here necessary to remark, that the syllable *tu* as well as the syllable *du* should be pronounced with the tongue behind the teeth; strongly touching the palate for the *tu*, and slightly for the *du*."<sup>48</sup> In reference to *detache*, Tulou states that, "one strikes the tongue on the edge of the lips without going out . . . ."<sup>49</sup> Furstenau advocates a similar approach,<sup>50</sup> although with the syllable *Ti*.<sup>51</sup> Nicholson criticizes this European approach first on practical grounds:

Moisture on the lips is generally produced by the habit of protruding the tongue between them. There is no necessity for the tongue coming in contact with the lips at all; on the contrary it ought to be particularly avoided; for I have met with many pupils who have given false support to the under lip with the tongue, the instant it has been withdrawn for the purpose of articulation,

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Eugène Walkiers, *Méthode de Flûte* (Paris: author, ca. 1829), 13. *Le bout de la langue étant pose contre les dents et a l'ouverture des lèvres.*

<sup>48</sup> Berbiguier, *Articulation* (ca. 1827); Tulou (1835), 8.

<sup>49</sup> Tulou (1835), 8. . . . *on frappera la langue sur le bord des lèvres sans la faire sortir. . . .*

<sup>50</sup> Fürstenau, *Flöten-Schule* (ca. 1826), 13. "The tongue must be brought so near the lips that by this the exit of the air is obstructed".

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 19.

tone has either entirely ceased or become very feeble.<sup>52</sup>

As if technical considerations were not enough, Nicholson attacks the musical result as well:

The greater number of pupils who come to me have either been taught or have acquired the bad habit of placing the tongue between the teeth and withdrawing it to produce an articulation, this is merely allowing the breath to escape, the effect of which in articulation is feeble and inefficient; indeed, so far from the tongue protruding between the teeth, its action ought not to have the slightest influence on the lips or the embouchure.<sup>53</sup>

Nicholson's objection to the European approach as "feeble and inefficient" suggests that his own articulation may have been rather heavy-handed. Nicholson obviously brought a strong degree of personal bias to the issue. One might expect him to exaggerate differences between himself and his rival. While strongly recommending the *practicing* of hard articulation, Nicholson does not advocate its invariable use:

I am a great advocate for the acquirement of the utmost force in tone and articulation, knowing how easy it is at all times to subdue both; those who practise otherwise will want vigour and brilliancy in their execution, and in the attempt to obtain either will be almost certain of playing too sharp.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *School*, 4

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 64

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

Nicholson was evidently trying to achieve the widest possible range of effect.

Also, a modern reader's interpretation of *force* or *forcing* is likely to be quite different from Nicholson's intent. Clues to this can be found in Lindsay's and Alexander's tutors.<sup>55</sup> Both authors use the term to describe a gentle breath accent, not a hard or explosive articulation with the tongue.

Experiments with early nineteenth-century flutes and both tongue placements suggest several observations. The forward placement of the tongue does preclude the most explosive of attacks, in accordance with the French opinion. The traditional flute of the period (with its small embouchure hole) lends itself to a gentle and precise articulation. The larger embouchure hole of the Nicholson flute requires higher airspeeds to operate than the small hole found on French and conservative English flutes. As a result it is possible to strike a note with "utmost force" on a Nicholson flute without producing quite the distorted sound one might expect. A soft, clear attack is correspondingly difficult to produce on the Nicholson flute, and comparatively muddy articulation is difficult to avoid. Anyone learning the Nicholson flute would need to invest considerable time and effort to achieve a clear articulation. Nicholson recommends an ivory-lined

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<sup>55</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 97; Alexander (ca. 1818), 65.

embouchure,<sup>56</sup> which does seem to mitigate some of the difficulties brought on by the large embouchure hole. Overall, Nicholson's choice of syllable and tongue placement appears to be as much an adaptation to his instrument as an expression of musical taste.

In his first two tutors Nicholson has remarkably little to say on the subject of syllable usage in single tonguing. In the *Complete Preceptor* he suggests *too* or *tee*,<sup>57</sup> and the subject is not even broached in the *Preceptive Lessons*. The *School* contains detailed remarks and also recommends *too*.<sup>58</sup> There is an air of controversy about this, and Nicholson seems defensive of what appears to be an ordinary practice. In order to gain perspective, it is necessary to examine syllable usage in England leading up to and contemporary with Nicholson's *School*.

Prior to Nicholson's time, the choice of syllable seems to have aroused little interest among English writers. John Gunn describes syllable usage and tongue placement in England as of 1793:

The usual and best method of tonguing in general, is by that action of the tongue against the palate, which pronounces the letters t and d; the former is more strong and spirited, and the latter more soft and precise.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *School*, 171.

<sup>57</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 4.

<sup>58</sup> *School*, 62.

<sup>59</sup> Gunn, *Art* (1793), 13.

Very little appears in subsequent English tutors regarding choice of syllable and specific techniques of single tonguing. Those silent on the subject include the popular and much copied "Florio and Tacet" (1801),<sup>60</sup> as well as Wragg (1806), Monzani (1801 and 1813), and Kuffner (ca. 1820).

When an English tutor does specify a syllable it is usually *too*. This is found in the many editions of *Wragg's Improved*, and Beale's *Complete Guide*,<sup>61</sup> which in this respect is patterned after *Wragg's Improved*. It appears that in early nineteenth-century England, the choice of syllable for single tonguing was simply not an issue.

When Nicholson approaches the subject in the *School*, he advocates only the syllable *Too*.<sup>62</sup> The use of Gunn's softer "d" syllable is not forgotten:

I must here observe that I have heard and read of various syllables being used to soften the effect produced by the syllable too, but I know the articulation produced by it can be rendered as soft and mellow as by any other; and this is affected by merely relaxing the action of the tongue and subduing the tone.<sup>63</sup>

Nicholson recommends variation of a single technique rather than application of different techniques. He does not proscribe the use of soft articulation. Gunn was still

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<sup>60</sup> *New Instructions for the German Flute* (London: Preston and Son, ca. 1801).

<sup>61</sup> Wragg (1806), 2; Wragg (1818), 2; Beale (ca. 1815), 3; Beale (ca. 1821), 3.

<sup>62</sup> *School*, 62

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 64



influential during Nicholson's time--he was heavily quoted by Swaine (1818) and Lindsay (1828)<sup>64</sup>--but the stimulus for Nicholson's stance almost certainly came from across the English channel.

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century English flutists felt the influence of the French in general and of Louis Drouet in particular. As described by Lindsay, Drouet's celebrity in England was based largely on his extraordinary articulation.<sup>65</sup> Drouet advocates *teu* for staccato and *deu* for "notes marked decidedly less *Staccato*."<sup>66</sup> Berbiguier's *Articulation* offers the Anglicized *tu* and *du*.<sup>67</sup> Nicholson's friend Thomas Lindsay sums up diplomatically: The syllable *too* is best, but "the syllable *doo*, which is softer, is considered preferable, by those writers who are nice in such distinctions."<sup>68</sup> By the second quarter of the century Nicholson is clearly in the minority, and the implication has been made that he may not have been *nice in such distinctions*.

During the period of Nicholson's tutors, double tonguing appears to have come into vogue as a means of bravura display. Double tonguing is something of a special

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<sup>64</sup> Swaine (ca. 1818), 39-45; Lindsay (1828-30), 5-7.

<sup>65</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 96.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Some measure of the immediacy of this issue may be seen in the spread of information. Drouet first describes the *teu* and *deu* articulations in his French language *Méthode* of 1827, p. 78. Lindsay translated some of it for part two of his *Elements* (1830). In the same year Drouet issued his own English language *Method*, with the same information, pp. 24-25.

<sup>67</sup> Berbiguier, *Articulation* (ca. 1827), 1.

<sup>68</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 38

effect, closely related to *single* tonguing, and particularly associated with the flute. The technique relies on the alternation of two different syllables, one produced with the tip and the other with the back of the tongue. This results in a rolling motion, allowing two notes to be articulated with each cycle of the tongue. Smith gives an excellent overview of this practice in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>69</sup>

The technique of double tonguing was established in England well before Nicholson's time. Gunn recommends it for practical reasons: the usual articulation (single tonguing) is inadequate and double tonguing allows for greater speed. This gives "brilliancy and articulation to rapid divisions."<sup>70</sup> Riley (ca. 1811) commends double tonguing to "every one who wishes to play with spirit and execution in the Allegros."<sup>71</sup> The reason is that difficult or impossible passages are made easy.

Double tonguing was not universally accepted. In 1813 Monzani, who was first flute at the Italian opera, bluntly warns that "in whatever way it is done, the Effect is equally bad, as it Produces nothing but a disagreeable [sic] confusion, which precludes the Performer from giving either neatness or expression to the Passages."<sup>72</sup>

Nicholson was severely and perhaps unfairly criticized for his technique of double tonguing. He first addresses

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<sup>69</sup> Smith, 44-47.

<sup>70</sup> Gunn, *Art* (1793), 14.

<sup>71</sup> Riley (ca. 1811), 16.

<sup>72</sup> Monzani (1813), 19.

this in the *Complete Preceptor*, where he defends it for its utility and musical effect. He alludes to criticism, saying that "some Professors on this Instrument, have not recommended this Embellishment as necessary,"<sup>73</sup> but he expresses confidence "that a more general exercise of it alone is wanting, to insure its universal adoption." This prediction would soon come true.

In 1821 Charles Weiss gives a candid depiction of the double tonguing in use:

I have often had an opportunity of playing in public before a numerous audience, that I am perfectly aware of what pleases the generality of amateurs. I have very often been agreeably surprised at the sudden change and attentive contenance [sic] of the auditors, when, after a soft and expressive slow movement I have introduced an Allegro passage or a Variation in double tonguing. The rapidity and neatness with which those passages can be executed in using the above articulation produce a sort of astonishment even in Professors.<sup>74</sup>

The real value of double tonguing is its ability to amaze and astound. That this technique could astound even professors suggests that, if the method was old, the application was new. Nicholson confirms this and describes the acceptance of double tonguing which he had predicted in the *Complete Preceptor*:

Double tonguing is an articulation which has had its full share of abuse and condemnation, but like other innovations on the "good old style of flute playing," it has carried conviction by its utility: its advantages are now freely admitted,

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<sup>73</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 19.

<sup>74</sup> Weiss, *Instruction* (ca. 1821), 86.

and clearly developed by the vast improvement which has taken place in flute playing within the last few years; for certainly our predecessors were totally unacquainted with the "railroad speed" displayed in the performances of the present generation.<sup>75</sup>

The apparent growth in the popularity of double tonguing seems linked both to a rise in technical ability and to a trend towards the bravura among Nicholson and his contemporaries.

Nicholson is also responsible for a standardization of the notation of double tonguing. In discussing intermediate articulation (*mezzo-staccato*), which he notates by a slur over dots, Lindsay endorses a new convention:

Mr. Nicholson and others, in their recent Compositions, have employed this latter mode of marking the articulation [the slur over dots], in quick movements, when they intend the Double Tonguing to be used;--we shall do the same.<sup>76</sup>

The notation of double tonguing prior to this convention is quite inconsistent. The musical examples of Wragg's 14th edition (1818) provide an interesting example. The engraver uses the dash for all the original musical examples. At the end of the tutor there are a few musical quotations from Drouet, Nicholson, and others. One of these, an excerpt from Drouet's variations on "God Save the King,"<sup>77</sup> contains an obvious example of double tonguing,

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<sup>75</sup> *School*, 63.

<sup>76</sup> Lindsay (1828), 31.

<sup>77</sup> Wragg (1818), 72.

notated by the *point* over thirty-second notes. Examination of Drouet's original edition<sup>78</sup> reveals this to be a faithful copy of the fifth variation. A few of Nicholson's Variations on "The Blue Bells of Scotland"<sup>79</sup> are also reproduced, complete with original (and in this case) inconsistent notation.<sup>80</sup> Here Nicholson notates double tonguing by a slur over dashes. The engraver appears to have copied the notation literally, without regard for consistency between examples.

It should be mentioned that Nicholson generally distinguishes between *legato-staccato* and double tonguing by the type of dot used. The round dot and slur are associated with *legato-staccato* while the dash and slur are generally associated with double tonguing. This is consistent in the *Preceptive Lessons*, the *Appendix*, and the *School* (double tonguing in the *Complete Preceptor* is marked simply "DT").<sup>81</sup> There is usually little difficulty in identifying double tonguing from context, even without specific notation. Double tonguing is associated only with fast tempi and the *legato-staccato* is not. In reference to an unmarked example in the *Preceptive Lessons*, Nicholson confirms: "The author would generally *Double Tongue* such passages."<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Drouet, "God Save the King" (Vienna: Diabelli, n.d.).

<sup>79</sup> Nicholson, "The Blue Bells of Scotland" (London: Clementi & Co., 1821).

<sup>80</sup> Wragg (1818), 70.

<sup>81</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 64.

<sup>82</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 17.

Charles Nicholson's choice of syllables for double tonguing is perfectly ordinary. He simply acknowledges common practice when he advocates *too-tle* in the *Complete Preceptor, Preceptive Lessons, and School*.<sup>83</sup> Surprisingly, Nicholson's choice of syllables became the center of a controversy. It is therefore useful to examine the practices of Nicholson's predecessors and contemporaries.

Gunn describes a transition at the turn of the century. An eighteenth-century practice of "common double tonguing" employed the syllables *diddle*, which had been described by Quantz and recommended because the result is unequal.<sup>84</sup> Gunn now rejects these syllables because the action and reaction of the tongue are not equal and instead suggests *teddy* or *tiddy*.<sup>85</sup> This movement towards more equal articulation represents a significant stylistic development leading into the nineteenth century.

The syllables *too-tle* appear in several late eighteenth century anonymous tutors, including those published by Longman & Broderip and Thompson.<sup>86</sup> Those early nineteenth century English writers who endorse *too-tle* include Wragg, Beale, Keith, Riley, Kuffner, Alexander, Weiss, and Lindsay.<sup>87</sup> Dressler advocates *too-tle* for slow double

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<sup>83</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 18; *Preceptive Lessons*, 5; *School*, 63.

<sup>84</sup> Quantz, 74.

<sup>85</sup> Gunn (1793), 14.

<sup>86</sup> *New Instructions* (London: Longman & Broderip, ca. 1780), 13; *Thompson's New Instructions for the German Flute* (London: Thompson, ca. 1780-1810?), 8.

<sup>87</sup> Wragg (1806), 14; Wragg (1818), 14; Beale (ca. 1815), 16; Beale (ca. 1821), 16; Riley (ca. 1811), 16; Francesco Kuffner, *New Instructions for the German*

tonguing, but *loo-dle* and *doo-dle* for higher speeds.<sup>88</sup> In the *Complete Preceptor* Nicholson mentions *te-tle tee te* for a "distinct expression"<sup>89</sup> and in the *Preceptive Lessons* he suggests *dig-ga*, *tuc-ca*, and *tit-tle* as possible alternatives.<sup>90</sup> These are neither recommended nor mentioned subsequently.<sup>91</sup> Nicholson's use of *too-tle* could hardly have been more in the mainstream of English flute playing.

When Nicholson comments on double tonguing having "had its full share of abuse and condemnation"<sup>92</sup> he may have referred to criticism aimed at his own technique. Nicholson was severely criticized by W. N. James in *A Word or Two* for his choice of syllables. James's offensive begins on a general note, claiming that the "too-tle" syllables are used by "some masters" and the result is "Babylonish gabble."<sup>93</sup> The attack eventually becomes direct, with James accusing Nicholson of always using double tonguing for rapid staccato and asserting that Nicholson's choice of syllables is incorrect.<sup>94</sup>

Drouet had earlier created a sensation in England with the rapidity of his double tonguing<sup>95</sup> and James claimed to have a special knowledge of Drouet's technique. In the

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*Flute* third ed. London: author (ca. 1820), 9; Alexander (ca. 1818), 87; Weiss, *Instruction* (ca. 1821), 86-87; Lindsay (1828-30), 98.

<sup>88</sup> Dressler (1828), 48-49.

<sup>89</sup> *Complete Preceptor*, 19.

<sup>90</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 5.

<sup>91</sup> *Di-ga* may be of interest in that it anticipates the modern usage of *d* and *g* syllables.

<sup>92</sup> *School*, 64.

<sup>93</sup> James, *A Word or Two* (1826), 123.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 158.

<sup>95</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 96.

collection of Tony Bingham there is a copy of *A Word or Two* bearing an anonymous and undated margin note on page 165, where James confidently proposes *territory* as the secret of Drouet's facility:

All this is incorrect--Minasi (the most celebrated of Drouet's Pupils) states that when he studied under Drouet D. never interfered or made any suggestions as to his tonguing--the passage was to be done & if done neatly it mattered not to Drouet what syllables were used--M. says the syllables Drouet himself used were teu-tu, teu tu--this method some can readily adopt but others will find it difficult--much depends on the tongue.

At least one anonymous Englishman was wise to James. Four years after *A Word or Two*, Drouet published his *English Method*. In it he discusses several syllables, finally advocating *deu reu*<sup>96</sup> and thereby publicly exposing James as a fraud. The discrepancy between James and Drouet is politely mentioned by Lindsay, who ascribes it to *speculation* on the part of James.<sup>97</sup> Annand calls it an "*ignis fatuus* of Mr. James's imagination" and an "error, or a barefaced attempt at imposition."<sup>98</sup> Whatever the truth of the matter, James's vitriolic criticism of Nicholson cannot be taken at face value. Evidence from the tutors suggests that despite the criticism, Nicholson's technique of double tonguing is conventional.

Double tonguing is only effective for groups of notes which are multiples of two; groups of three notes require

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<sup>96</sup> Drouet, *Method* (ca. 1830), 15.

<sup>97</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 100.

<sup>98</sup> Annand, 16, 17.



an alteration of the basic technique. Nicholson suggests "too-tle too" in the *Preceptive Lessons*, and *School*.<sup>99</sup> The *Complete Preceptor* contains only *too-tle*.<sup>100</sup> There is no special explanation, and the technique is not given a name in any of Nicholson's tutors. Other contemporary English tutors which mention *too-tle too* include Keith (ca 1818-21),<sup>101</sup> Beale (ca. 1815 and ca. 1821), and Alexander (ca. 1818). Dressler (1828) gives this the name still recognizable to modern flutists: *triple tonguing*.<sup>102</sup>

Another technique that received little attention from Nicholson is aspiration. This refers simply to starting a note with a vowel so that there is no tongue stroke. Smith has documented that the technique was well established in the eighteenth century.<sup>103</sup> Aspiration is not widely mentioned in early nineteenth-century English sources. Direct reference occurs in Dressler's *Instructions* (1828) under, "On Tonguing and Aspiration." He describes its production

by means of the syllable *hoo*, in place of the action of the tongue; its effect resembles that of the [glass] harmonica, and gives a beautiful delicacy of expression in smooth and plaintive melodies, where the gentlest action of the tongue would injure the effect.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 19; *School*, 67.

<sup>100</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 4.

<sup>101</sup> Keith (ca. 1818-21), 16.

<sup>102</sup> Dressler (1828), 87.

<sup>103</sup> Smith, 41-42.

<sup>104</sup> Dressler (1828), 8.

Dressler claims precedence only in having described aspiration, not in its invention. In 1830 Lindsay comments:

Another mode of articulating we had almost forgotten: it consists in a mere forcing of the note, by means of the syllable "hoo," instead of the usual action of the tongue, and in some slurred passages, where marks of emphasis are attached to the notes, may be advantageously applied. Mr. DRESSLER, who claims the merit of having first explained this, calls it 'articulating by ASPIRATION,' and observes that 'its effect resembles that of the Harmonica, and gives a beautiful delicacy of Expression in smooth and plaintive melodies, where the gentlest action of the tongue would injure the effect.<sup>105</sup>

Lindsay speaks here about something common enough to be overlooked, not a new or controversial technique.

Nicholson never mentions aspiration, but a footnote in the *Preceptive Lessons* suggests he used it matter-of-factly. In reference to a "Bollero" with rapid triplets, Nicholson suggests that he would play them by "blowing the *first* and articulating the following two." This is an extraordinary technique which requires a clear attack be produced entirely by the breath. There is nothing comparable to this in any of the sources examined.

A less dramatic but related technique for re-articulating a single note appears twice in the *Preceptive Lessons*<sup>106</sup> and appears to be related to Nicholson's vibration. This is indicated by multiple accents over a single note, as shown in Figure 6-4 (p. 167).

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<sup>105</sup> Lindsay (1828-30), 97.

<sup>106</sup> *Preceptive Lessons*, 57, 65.



Figure 6-4. Breath accent, *Preceptive Lessons*, 57.

In the *School*, Nicholson mentions a curious articulation practice which is not recommended:

There is also an articulation of the fingers; these should be lifted and not drawn off the flute: the performances of those persons who have accustomed themselves to the latter mode are languid and unsatisfactory to the ear.<sup>107</sup>

There is an obvious similarity between this articulation and the glide. The difference between the two techniques must have to do with duration and frequency of use. The glide is presumably slower and used with restraint.

#### APPLICATION TO NICHOLSON'S COMPOSITIONS AND EDITIONS

A detailed examination of the notation in Nicholson's compositions is well beyond the limits of this study, but the *Twelve Favorite Airs* published by Clementi in 1821 and the *Select Melodies* of Goulding, D'Almaine, Potter & Co. (ca. 1819-23) are consistent with the notation described in the *School*. The earlier *National Airs* (ca. 1815) are

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<sup>107</sup> *School*, 64.

generally consistent, although double tonguing appears to be indicated with dots. Examples of staccato are infrequent. Many works, such as the *Beauties* (ca. 1784-1835) are difficult to date. This particular example contains only the dashes, suggesting either an early date or perhaps a stodgy engraver. The notation described in Nicholson's tutors does seem generally applicable to his other works.

In spite of statements supporting the composer's notation of articulation, Nicholson freely edits other composers's articulations in the *Passages*. This is a collection of excerpts from flute concerti, duets, and trios by composers including Kreith, Schneider, Krazinsky, Hoffmeister, Vern, De Call, Berbiguier, Devienne, Muller, Burrowes, and Tulou. These are intended as "Studies for the Flute, Arranged with Marks of Articulation, Expression & Fingering."<sup>108</sup>

Nicholson's articulation is the featured selling point of the *Passages*. Works by eighteenth-century composers (such as Hoffmeister) may have originally lacked articulation markings. This is not the case with Nicholson's contemporaries. Figure 6-5(p. 170)<sup>109</sup> represents the original notation from Schneider's *Three Duets*. This has detailed marks of articulation. Figure 6-6 (p. 170) is Nicholson's version from the *Passages*. Here Schneider's articulations are freely altered. The variety

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<sup>108</sup> *Passages*, cover.

<sup>109</sup> George Abraham Schneider, *Three Duets for Two Flutes*, op. 32 (London: Clementi, Banger, Collard, Davis & Collard, ca. 1810-1818).

of articulation used by Nicholson is remarkable. Where Schneider uses only two patterns (either all tongued or slurred in groups of four), Nicholson uses three different patterns in just three bars.

Both forms of dot appear throughout the *Passages*, and articulation markings are detailed to the point of confusion. Figure 6-7 (p. 171) shows another example from Schneider's original edition and Figure 6-8 (p. 171) presents the corresponding measures from Nicholson's *Passages*. The lower markings appear to be Nicholson's while the upper markings are faithful to Schneider's original. This suggests an almost scholarly approach on Nicholson's part.



Figure 6-5. Marks of articulation, Schneider, *Three Duets*,  
Duetto One, 2.



Figure 6-6. Nicholson's editing of Schneider, Duetto One,  
*Passages*, 11.



Figure 6-7. Marks of articulation, Schneider, *Three Duets*, Duetto Two, 6.



Figure 6-8. Nicholson's editing of Schneider, Duetto Two, *Passages*, 12.

## CONCLUSION

Charles Nicholson has been remembered as a loud flute player of questionable musical taste. Since he was a controversial figure, contemporary sources must be read with care. Based on direct investigation of the tutors with the appropriate flute in hand, this study has revealed a complex performance practice based on control and contrast.

Nicholson's specialized techniques are intimately associated with his modified flute. Although difficult to play, it was ideally suited to his purposes, allowing incomparable flexibility in matters of pitch, timbre, and dynamic. In many respects it represents the ultimate development of the keyed flute. With this instrument Nicholson was able to exploit tone, vibration, the glide, ornamentation, and articulation for maximum musical effect. His use of these devices represents an extension of the expressive capabilities of the flute. Nicholson did not just play loudly but emphasized the expressive use of tone. His pursuit of contrast also included the use of varied tone colors, and his altered fingerings expanded both the tonal and technical possibilities of the instrument. Nicholson's vibration produces a remarkably subtle effect, and he uses the glide not as an abstract ornament, but rather as a means of musical expression. Much of Nicholson's expressive musical language was eliminated with the adoption of the Boehm flute.



Nicholson lived during a period of change and transition. His vibration represents the continuation of a baroque practice side-by-side with innovations in sound production which foreshadow modern practice. Subtleties of articulation were being explored as responsibility for articulation was moving from the performer to the composer. The nature of ornamentation was also changing. Nicholson's use of the shake reflects a melodic rather than harmonic conception, and his flexible approach to rhythmic values of the appoggiatura emphasizes its expressive nature.

Nicholson was criticized for excesses in his performances and responded with a dramatic revision of his style. In this study he emerges as an innovative and resourceful musician, deeply concerned with the pursuit of musical expression.

## APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

## Flutes referred to in this study.

| Date:    | Maker:                                     | Origin: | Description:                                              | Collection: |
|----------|--------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| ca. 1780 | [Thomas] Cahusac                           | London  | 1 key, boxwood                                            | Stout       |
| 1782     | [Richard] Potter                           | London  | 1 key, boxwood                                            | Stout       |
| ca. 1790 | [Richard] Potter                           | London  | 4 keys, boxwood                                           | Stout       |
| ca. 1795 | [Richard] Potter                           | London  | 6 keys, boxwood                                           | Stout       |
| ca. 1800 | G[eorge] Astor & Co.                       | London  | 5 keys, boxwood                                           | Spell       |
| 1804     | G[eorge] Astor & Co.                       | London  | 8 keys, boxwood                                           | Worthen     |
| 1822     | Clementi & Co                              | London  | 8 keys, boxwood<br>Nicholson's Improved<br>two headjoints | Stout       |
| ca. 1825 | V. Leibel                                  | Dresden | nine keys, cocus                                          | Preston     |
| ca. 1825 | Clementi & Co.<br>(Thomas Prowse)<br>#3157 | London  | seven keys, cocus<br>Nicholson's Improved                 | Preston     |
| pre-1827 | Rudall & Rose #3981                        | London  | 8 keys, cocus                                             | Preston     |
| ca. 183? | Stephan Koch (attr)                        | Vienna  | 14 keys, cocus                                            | Preston     |
| ca. 183? | [Claire] Godfroy                           | Paris   | 4 keys, cocus                                             | Preston     |
| ca. 1830 | Rudall & Rose #2969                        | London  | 8 keys, cocus                                             | Preston     |
| ca. 1830 | Rudall & Rose #??8                         | London  | 8 keys, cocus                                             | Preston     |
| 1832     | Hill-late Monzani<br>#2332                 | London  | 8 keys, cocus                                             | Spell       |
| ca. 1832 | T[homas] Prowse<br>#3784                   | London  | 8 keys, cocus<br>Nicholson's Improved                     | Spell       |

## APPENDIX A (cont'd.)

|          |                                     |        |                                       |         |
|----------|-------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| ca. 1832 | T[homas] Prowse<br>#3785            | London | 8 keys, cocus<br>Nicholson's Improved | Preston |
| 1834     | T[homas] Prowse<br>#3879            | London | cocus, 6 keys<br>Nicholson's Improved | Stout   |
| ca. 1855 | [Jacques] Nonon                     | Paris  | Tulou's <i>Flute<br/>Perfectionée</i> | Preston |
| ca. 1875 | Rudall, Rose, Carte,<br>& Co. #6738 | London | 8 keys, cocus<br>Nicholson style      | Preston |

Locations: Stephen Preston, London; Eldred Spell,  
Cullowhee, NC; Glennis Stout, Ann Arbor, MI; Douglas  
Worthen, Boston.

## APPENDIX B

### Chronological list of flute tutors

Dates are often approximate.

#### British:

- 1731 Anon. *The Modern Mus. Master*. London: Schott  
(reprint).
- 1756 Anon. *The Compleat Tutor for the Fife* [and flute].  
Leicester Fields: David Rutherford.
- 1787 Arnold, Dr. *New Instructions*. London: Harrison & Co.
- 1793 Gunn, *The Art of Playing*. London: Author.
- 1793 Wragg, *The Flute Precept*. Opus III, 9th ed. with  
additions. London: Author.
- 1801 Monzani, T. *Instructions for the German Flute*. London:  
Monzani & Cimador.
- 1806 Wragg, J. *Improved Flute Preceptor*. London: Author.
- 1809 Wragg, J. *Improved Flute Preceptor*. London: Author.
- 1810 Anon. *New Instructions for the German Flute*. London:  
Preston and Son.
- 1810 Anon. *The Complete Tutor for the German Flute*. Dublin:  
J. Delany.
- 1810 Anon. *Thompson's New Instructions for the German  
Flute*. London: Thompson.
- 1813 Anon. *New and Complete Instructions for the German  
Flute*. London: Preston.

## APPENDIX B (cont'd.)

- 1813 Monzani, T. *A New and Enlarged Edition of Monzani's Instructions for the German Flute*. London: Monzani & Cimador.
- 1815 Beale, John. *A Complete Guide to the Art of Playing the Ger. Flute*. 3rd ed. London: Goulding, D'Almaine, Potter & Co.
- 1815 Keith, Robert Wm. *A New and Complete Preceptor for the German Flute* London: Keith.
- 1816 Nicholson, Charles. *Nicholson's Complete Preceptor*. London: Preston.
- 1817 Nicholson, Charles. *Passages*. London: J. Power.
- 1818 Swaine, N. *The Young Musician*. Stourport: G. Nicholson.
- 1818 Wragg, J. *Improved Flute Preceptor*. London: Author, 1818 (August).
- 1820 Kuffner, Francisco. *New Instructions for the German Flute*. 3rd ed. London: Author.
- 1820 Weiss, Charles N. *Two Hundred Studies for the Flute*. London: Clementi & Co.
- 1821 Alexander, James. *Complete Preceptor for the Flute*. 2nd ed. London: J. Alexander & Mr. Townsend.
- 1821 Anon. *A New Preceptor*. London: Clementi & Co.
- 1821 Beale, John. *A Complete Guide to the Art of Playing the German Flute*. (3rd ed) London: Goulding, D'Almaine, Potter & Co.

## APPENDIX B (cont'd.)

- 1821 Nicholson, Charles. *Preceptive Lessons for the Flute*  
London: Clementi & Co.
- 1821 Weiss, Charles N. *A new Methodical Instruction Book  
for the Flute*. London: Author.
- 1825 Nicholson. *Appendix to Nicholson's Preceptive Lessons*.  
London: Wessel & Co. .
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## APPENDIX B (cont'd.)

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## APPENDIX C

### ARTICULATION TABLES FROM NICHOLSON'S TUTOR

*Complete Preceptor, 17-18.*

#### DIFFERENT MODES OF ARTICULATION,

The following are *Tip*.



The *Slur* of two and two.



Slur two and tip two.



This last Articulation will be found most generally adopted in modern Music, and when executed with precision, has a neat and distinct effect; and as it materially promotes a facility of Execution, I strongly recommend the Pupil to devote a sufficient time to make himself perfect master of it.

Slur the first 3 and tip the fourth



Tip the first and Slur the three last.



This Articulation is useful in many cases.

## Appendix C (cont'd.)

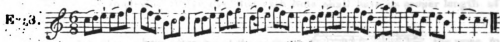
The following Articulation is beautiful and much in modern use.



The Contrary Articulation or counter tip.



The ordinary mode of Articulation.



The following is also often used.

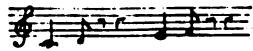
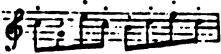
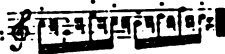


In the following Passage I should recommend the Pupil to introduce the Double Tonguing, not only on account of the facility afforded in its execution, but from the brilliant and spirited effect uniformly produced by its introduction in passages of a similar nature, which no other mode of Articulation is capable of.



## Appendix C (cont'd.)

*Preceptive Lessons, 4.*

Be careful, in playing the Scales, that each Note shall have its proper length of time, and not played as I have often heard them, thus,  the same to be observed throughout the whole Scales, particularly in Staccato Passages, such as the following  which are often falsely played thus: 

## Appendix C (cont'd.)

School, 63-64.

## ARTICULATION.

## 1. Single-tonguing.



## 2. Staccato.



## 3. Legato, slurred in fours.



## 4. Legato.



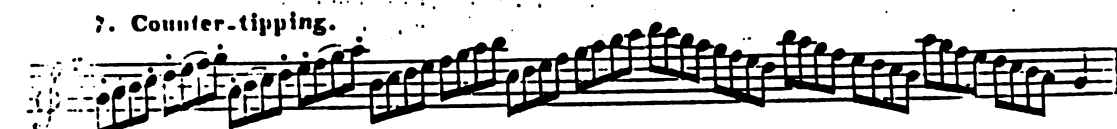
## 5. Slurred in twos.



## 6. Counter-tonguing.



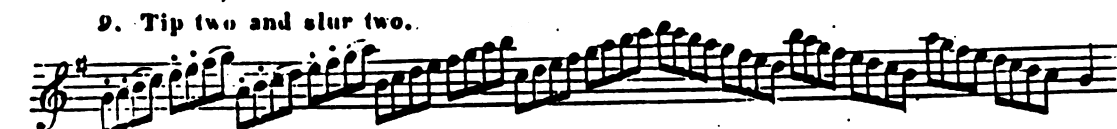
## 7. Counter-tipping.



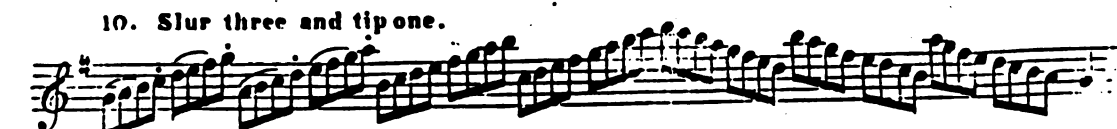
## 8. Slur two and tip two.



## 9. Tip two and slur two.



## 10. Slur three and tip one.



## Appendix C (cont'd.)

## ARTICULATION.

11. Tip one and slur three.



12. The Legato Staccato.



13. Double Tongueing.



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