

I created this plan for my students at the Junior Academy. I hope that you find this informative and inspiring

Maquarre Daily Exercises

This is a scale pattern in all 24 keys- 12 Major and 12 minor

I think of these as extensions to tone studies but of course knowing that they are incredible finger exercises!

Before I start with these exercises I aim to relax my body and mind to help my concentration and focus my mind and discover things.

Take some slow breaths and notice any tension in the body. I think through different parts of my body starting with either my feet or my head. If I start with my feet I think about softening and warming the following areas: feet, knees, hips, bottom, lower back, belly, chest, shoulders, neck, jaw, and eyes. I take a slow breath in and release slowly thinking of the body part and then take another slow breath thinking about the next body part until I complete the full cycle. I have a list on my music stand that looks like this”

Feet - remember to spread my toes
Knees - bend gentle as i think of these
Hips- circle around with hips
Bottom - wiggle it!
Lower back - move forward and backwards
Belly - place hand and rub
Chest - slow gently move
Shoulders - slow gentle circles
Neck - slow gentle circles
Jaw - gentle open and close
Eyes - gentle close and open

Your list of course can be different - what ever you decide and of course it can change over time. Nothing is written in stone here!

Also, if I'm feeling particularly unfocused I go backwards and repeat going down to my feet and toes always breathing slowly.

Back to Maquarre...

These exercises are very useful, powerful and I try to think about 3 major things:

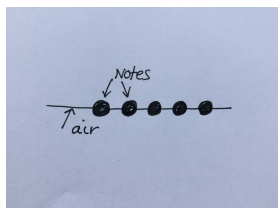
1) Security- *keeping the flute securely on my bottom lip so it doesn't jiggle*. This doesn't mean forcing it to stay in place- rather finding the security and gentleness. Security of finger and hand position too! This can take time and sometimes isn't always successful- it is what to aim for!

2) *smooth and organized fingers*. Always keep your fingers as relaxed as possible, curved and hovering over the keys. Again, as much as you can- never force. Think in your mind that they are relaxed - send them good vibes! Also - look in a mirror. This mirror can be your best friend! Try not

to “bang” your fingers down on the keys - gentle is always better! Think about how you lift your fingers off the keys and what fingers are not being used- this provides many things to think about.

3) *Air connection*. This is what it is all about. I like to sing a bit of the passage and notice what my air is doing. The exercise goes up 5 notes - sing the 5 notes and sing the tonic- 5th too. Also try to sing into the flute as you play the notes. This allows you to hear it but also feel what the air is doing. I find it allows the mouth and throat to be ready for a relaxed and open flowing sound. I also like to think about my mouth and throat to be as open as possible when I play. “AH” is the feeling I aim for.

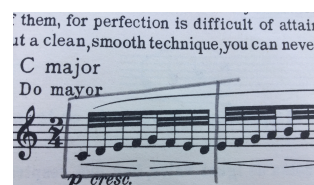
A wonderful teacher once told me that she would think of a pearl necklace - the pearls are the notes and the thread connecting the pearls is the air connecting all the notes! The air is what connects the notes - much like the bow of a string instrument passing over the strings.



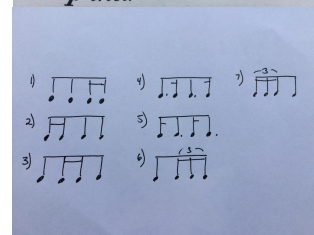
How to practise these exercises...

1) Play the exercise through first very slowly always conscious of your throat being relaxed and open. At this point breathe wherever feels comfortable - the idea is to be relaxed as possible, throat, fingers and body!

2) Then I brake it up into small groups concentrating on each full crotchet beat. I play the notes CDEF GFED and repeat. Repeat this many times without pausing remembering to keep fingers relaxed. Imagine the air is blowing the fingers off the keys -

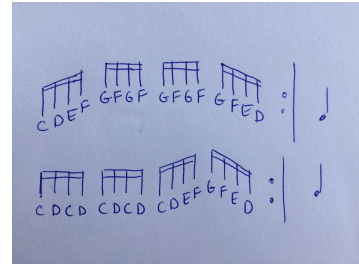


3) practise with the following rhythms. Remember to keep fingers and throat relaxed. Monitor and scan where there might be tension and send warm and softening messages/vibes to that area



4) This is another way to get those fingers moving. Again always aim for relaxed fingers, throat and body!

5) When you have done all this then play them through. Use metronome and play them steady thinking about air flow, relaxed fingers and no jiggling on the lip! Make a note of the metronome speed.



I realise that this can work on all levels of playing. An advanced student might want to tackle everything that I have mentioned on all keys whereas a less advanced player might want to do just a few keys and a few rhythms. What ever works for you to help with your journey!

Remember...

Take breaks!
Have a positive mindset
Go at your own pace
Be mindful of relaxing
Enjoy the journey