

SOME THOUGHTS ON MUSICIANSHIP  
(Quotes from Blum, David. Casals and the Art of Interpretation)  
Musings by Katherine Borst Jones

Our first step as flutists is to learn complete control over our instrument. We must understand the innate, natural problems of the flute. Keep in mind that the natural instincts of our instrument:

Each octave is progressively louder,  
Slurred notes sound louder than articulated notes,  
Long notes sound louder than short notes.

In order to have a homogenous sound, a palate from which we can make musical choices, we must bring out low, articulated and short notes. Once our palate is equal, we have the choice to make musical judgments regarding phrasing shapes.

Making sense of a piece requires a theoretical understanding of the music. We start by identifying cadences and high points. We work to shape sentences, paragraphs and chapters while using punctuation to bring out phrasing and expression.

Basic rules to consider:

In 4/4 time the first beat of the measure is the strongest, followed by beats 3, 2 and 4;  
In 3/4 time, the first beat, then the third and the second.  
Upbeats lead forward, are springboards to downbeats.

FROM BLUM/CASALS:

"THE FIRST PRINCIPLE; Technique, wonderful sound...all of this is sometimes astonishing-but it is not enough."

"To play frankly is not to eschew subtlety and refinement. It is to play, where the music so demands, forthrightly, without sentimentality; to state what we feel unashamedly and unhesitatingly."

"It is better to have character in what you play than to have a beautiful sound."

"The artist will not be able to express the First Principal until he/she has mastered each of the requisite skills. Form remains lifeless when not animated by spirit; yet, lacking knowledge and method, the energy of spirit will not be transmitted to the work of art."

FINDING THE DESIGN: "Remember that all music, in general, is a succession of rainbows."                      Soft to loud-----Light to shade                      VARIETY

C.P.E. Bach: "Play from the soul, not like a trained bird!"

J. J. Quantz: "Good execution must be diversified. Light and shadow must be continuously interchanged. For in truth you will never move the listener if you render all the notes at the same strength or the same weakness; if you perform, so to speak, always in the same colour, or do not know how to raise or moderate the tone at the proper time."

"We must give t a melody its natural life. When the simple things and natural rules that are forgotten are put in the music-then the music comes out. Nature never stays at one level; there is a constant ebb and flow. Our thoughts, fantasies, emotions, dreams flow in waves, expanding to varying points of culmination before subsiding."

"Each note is a link in a chain-important in itself and also as a connection between what has been and what will be. We must come to recognize the expressive implication of each phrase and how to bring that expression to full realization by the use of dynamic variety, rhythmic inflexibility, tone colour and intonation."

FOUR NATURAL RULES, according to Pablo Casals, author of *Joys and Sorrows*

1. IF the design goes up, we must give a little more tone; if it goes down, a little less tone. This does not mean that there are not exceptions. But this is the general rule. Don't be afraid; let us be natural.

2. Generally, a long note will mean crescendo or diminuendo...we must know how much to give, depending on what the music does. The notes have to say something; one must give form, expression, and interest.

3. An immediate repetition should provide contrast- a little more forte or piano; a change of colour. Otherwise it is not music. Variety-the art consists in that!

4. When we see piano, the composer means in the range of piano. The range of piano extends all the way to forte and the range of forte extends all the way to piano. One has to follow the line of the music. If it goes up you have give more, despite the piano. Otherwise it is something that is not free- not what the music intends.

"The rainbow arcs are imbued with the secret of proportion. The diminuendo gives economy to the crescendo that follows. Never forget that a phrase must always have a main word and with it a musical high point." Like a slow gesture in dance, a long note must preserve the continuity of line: otherwise it will arrest the sense of motion. Give the note colour."

"It is a general rule that repeated notes or a repeated design music not be equal. When considering repetitions of repeated notes, we must first determine whether they are moving towards a point of rhythmic strength of receding from it."

"Regarding sequences, they should be delicate modifications of colour and intensity between them."

"Where an appoggiatura is built into the melodic line, the note of resolution must maintain its natural connection to the appoggiatura even if not joined to it in a legato slur."

"Diminuendo is the life of music."

"An accented note will stand out and keep its value, not so much because of its special intensity but principally because of the shade which succeeds it. Shout "HEY" We give all, and a diminuendo comes."

## Thoughts on Musicianship-Casals 9/1/06

"A strong accent must have a diminuendo: then it is more powerful and natural."

"Where clear articulation is required, the diminuendo fulfills a dual function: it gives definition to the note on which it occurs and enables us to bring the following note into relief."

"A diminuendo gives interest to what follows; an accent more importance by contrast. The inflection on one notes gives value to the next."

"When a note is repeated, it is important that the beginning of the second notes should be clearly heard."

"Clarity!" "The big notes come of themselves; it is the little notes that require attention."

"A prime function of the diminuendo is to bring the attention of the ear to the little notes."

"The first note of an ornament must receive an accent; otherwise it is lost."

"Diminuendos help articulate syncopations and lighten the texture of long notes in accompaniment figures."

"Ornaments are exaltations of the notes."

"To bring clarity to the concluding notes of a phrase, do not get soft too soon."

"Enunciate the first note of a phrase clearly and carefully."