



Applying the flute techniques of James Galway to improve flute academic performance

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Abstract 

This paper takes the first-year students majoring in flute in Jilin University as the research object, and applies the guide “James Galway’s Flute Technique” created by the researcher to improve the students’ flute learning performance.

The researcher adopted a mixture of literature research, qualitative research and quantitative research. The researcher is a flute teacher at Jilin University in China. The researchers found that the weakness of basic skills in teaching is a common problem for flute students. Most students fail to grasp the crux of the problem in their practice. When practicing flute skills, many students choose to practice again because of mistakes in performance caused by missing the point. However, these wrong exercises not only fail to correct some error-prone phrases in time, but also waste a lot of time, causing students to make mistakes again and again. Not only that, the way of practice is too simple, lack of diversity, cannot effectively improve their flute technical level, thus falling behind other students.

In this research, by studying the flute techniques of James Galway, the master flute player, the author creates a guidebook called “James Galway’s Flute Skill Training Guide to help the students who have problems in flute skills and performance. So that their flute playing skills have been improved.

Keywords:

James Galway flute technique, Guidebook, Improve flute learning results

● Background and Research Questions

As an important part of the professional system of art and music performance, 285 comprehensive universities in China offer flute courses. With the increase of communication opportunities between Chinese and foreign music, the number of students learning flute is also increasing year by year. The teaching content of flute is becoming more and more rich, but behind it, the teaching problem is becoming more and more obvious. In order to take the exam or enter higher education institutions, many art candidates in China will deliberately improve their professional level in the months leading up to the exam, practicing songs higher than their actual professional level. Although their performance levels improved for a short time, once the art exam was over, the shortcomings it brought were obvious. The researcher is a flute teacher from Jilin University, China. Summarizing years of teaching experience, it can be found that the basic skills of flute students are weak is a common problem. In order to increase enrollment, students often play songs above the professional level. These students lack systematic and professional training. They practiced a few pieces of music in the span of just a few months of exams. Even if they pass the entrance exam, their weak basic game skills will be exposed when they get to college. Such as breathing, mouth shape, flute skills and other problems: some students do not have solid theoretical knowledge, no deep understanding of the flute pronunciation and technical principles. When playing, the effect is often not ideal.

Foreign famous musicologist James Galway is known as “the

Magic flute”. His tone is gorgeous, rich and colorful, exquisite changes, deep and full breathing, superb finger skills dazzling. All this comes from the liberal nature of Northern Ireland, the orthodox playing style of England and the rigorous academic training of France. His repertoire ranges from rigorous classical pieces to bizarre twentieth century music, from jazz rhythms to traditional Irish melodies. He not only composed excellent flute music, but also made great contributions to the innovation and development of this ancient instrument with a long history. In 2001, he was awarded an honorary knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II for his achievements. James Galway has been working on the flute. He attached great importance to the popularization of the flute and the application and dissemination of the flute art, which effectively promoted the flute as a solo instrument. His unique musical charm and playing skills gradually penetrated into every corner of the music field, making him a world-famous performing artist and classical music master.

In China, the country where the researcher is located, there are some problems in flute teaching in colleges and universities, such as weak basic skills, lack of playing skills, poor comprehensive quality of music, backward and unitary teaching concepts. Therefore, the researcher hopes to summarize the new theory and apply it to teaching by analyzing the playing skills of flute master James Galway, so as to improve the existing teaching system.

● Research Objectives

- 2.1 James Galway's flute skills and knowledge with experts
- 2.2 Create a guidebook of James Galway's Flute Technique.
- 2.3 Teaching Chinese flute students with the guide of James Galway's Flute Technique.
- 2.4 Measure and evaluate the teaching effect with the guidebook "James Galway's Flute Technique"

● Conceptual Framework

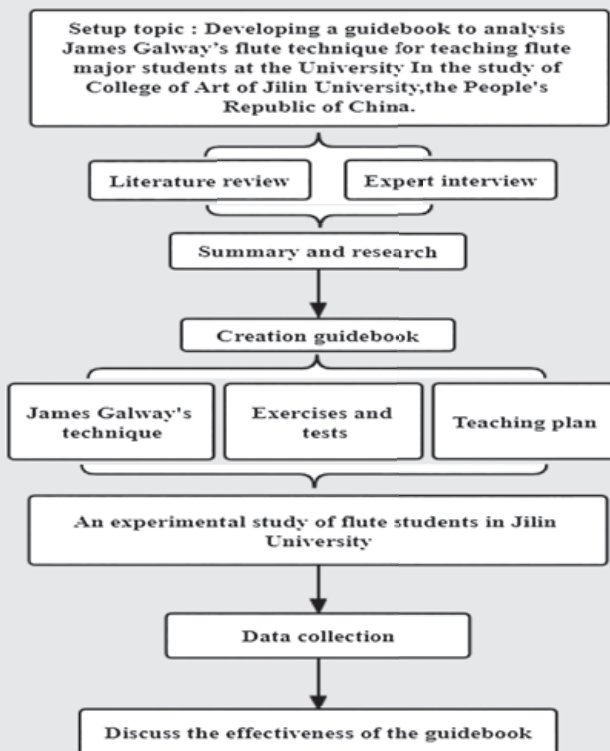


Diagram1.1: Research Conceptual Framework

● Research Method

In this paper, qualitative and quantitative methods are used. In the research phase, the interview method is used. Through interviews with key informants, the researchers understand and document the application and teaching knowledge of Galway's flute technique. James Galway's flute skills Training Guide for flute major students of Jilin University was compiled according to the actual situation.

At the developmental stage, quantitative methods are developed through experimental courses and conclusions from statistical descriptions. The students in the first year of flute major in Jilin University were taken as the experimental objects to carry out experimental teaching. The effectiveness of the technical guide is analyzed through the stage test and the final test.

Criteria for selecting experts:

1. Be an expert in flute performance teaching and theoretical teaching, and have more than 10 years of flute teaching experience.
2. More than 10 years of flute teaching experience and high academic ability are required.
3. Experience in compiling textbooks and publishing books is required.

Professor JianFuzeng, Professor Zhao Dandan and Professor Jin Xinduo were selected.

● Research process

1. Learn more about how to create the James Galway Flute Technique Guide through literature research and interviews with experts.

1.1 What are the advantages and characteristics of James Galway's techniques worth learning and applying?

After discussion and collation, it is found that experts all believe that the technical advantages of James Galway are worth applying in our study in the following aspects: James Galway's playing advantages are his full timbre, abundant breath, legato staccato skills, musical performance, his handling of details in music, his love for flute, and his ability to maintain good physical strength and skills to play each work as he grows older as an advanced performer. James Galway excelled in a wide variety of styles. He is good at playing large-scale flute works in the classical and romantic periods, and his treatment of legato staccato in the classical period reflects the impeccable coordination of his mouth and hand

James Galway's tone is bright and gorgeous, deep and full of breath, and fully demonstrates the charm of flute. In the teaching process, we should attach importance to the guidance of students' timbre, pay attention to abdominal pronunciation and oral opening degree, and pursue a rounded and beautiful timbre.

Breath is the primary standard to determine the quality of timbre, but in addition, mouth style, playing posture, playing state also plays a decisive impact on breath. James Galway's timbre is not only beautiful, but also very characteristic, high notes strong but not sharp,

weak but not low, low bass strong but rich, weak but not scattered. This is not only the embodiment of Galway's full breath, but also a testament to his performance is very relaxed and natural.

The first impression of James is his superb finger technique. His fingers are consistent and flowing, giving the audience a great aural shock. Fluent fingering is the basis of playing the flute. In the learning and teaching of the flute, we should pay attention to the practice of students' finger flexibility, which is very important for students' performance or visual reading.

1.2 What's difficult about the technique for the previous question?

According to the characteristics of breath and timbre in Galway's performance, the difficulty lies in ensuring the stability of timbre and breath in the process of flute playing. Therefore, in the process of flute playing, there is a close relationship between breath and timbre. Through timbre, it can ensure that the flute will sound beautiful and stable. On the other hand, training breath can ensure the flute timbre to keep a longer time. If mastered properly, it can improve the level of playing, which is the most important part of flute training.

The difficulty with James Galway's staccato technique lies in articulation and fluency, or articulation and fingering. Most is even vomit interspersed with each other, can be seen everywhere in the music is what we call even vomit intersect, and tongue play this note should be let your tongue to giving up, speed up the speed of the tongue, many of us play with breath method, and it would be very

difficult, and Galway adopted the smell and the sound of the tongue. If you simply use breath or pure pronunciation, when the speed is accelerated, you will find that you are powerless at this time. In such a situation, you often go to the phonetic color, rhythm, speed and other factors respectively to get the ideal effect, but the result is counterproductive, often only hear the cloudy pronunciation with the sound of splitting and tapping keys, or the pronunciation tongue moves quickly. It makes people sound vague, or when they play a phrase in tandem, the fingers are always faster than the tongue. The main reason is the neglect of the strict training of fingering skills.

As for Galway's treatment of grace note, the difficulty lies in the control of its sound and timbre, as well as the performer's psychological state during performance. Since grace note is relatively simple to identify music, players tend to find it simple and easy to learn, and lose their original intention, so they are prone to be impetuous, self-righteous and eager to achieve.

For the vibrato technique of Galway, it is not only necessary to see whether the rules of playing are correct, but also to see whether the vibrato is smooth, whether the original note and the auxiliary note are alternating evenly, whether the grace notes before and after can be naturally integrated into the melody and whether the processing of special notes vibrato is in line with the logic and characteristics of the music. All these are what a good performer should do.

As far as the appoggiatura technique of James Galway is concerned, specific problems should be analyzed. As for the works of Mozart period, due to the reason of notation, these grace notes seem to be the same in notation, but there are great differences in actual performance. Every grace note is worth thinking about.

1.3 Are there any special exercises for the difficult points?

1. James Galway timbre and breath in the actual training process, the breath of the performer should be trained by improving the mouth shape and inhaling and spitting.

2. The practice of James Galway staccato fingers requires scale practice, and experts have found that many young players never practice scales. They are exposed to a lot of work, but rarely spend enough time on the basics.

3. The practice of James Galway's grace note technique needs to be analyzed specifically in the music score. In order to master the playing skills of grace notes, players must have the basic quality of focus, tenacious character and strong heart. Some of the techniques of grace notes played by James Galway are as clear and sweet as mountain springs, and as nimble and light as small animals. When the performer grasps the characteristics of James Galway playing grace notes and understands the value and significance of grace notes, he can better play the desired sound.

4. For the practice of vibrato skills, the first thing to do is to make it clear how many times each vibrato is played. Generally, it depends on the speed of the music and the length of the time value of the sound.

2. Create the James Galway Flute Technique Guidebook. The content of the guidebook and the test of experimental teaching are examined by experts.

2.1 Create a training guide based on James Galway's flute skills. The guide is divided into five technical sections, as well as Mozart Flute Concerto in G Major K313. The introduction and score of the music there are five practice tests for each technique.

According to the arrangement and study of James Galway's expert interviews on flute technique, as well as the study of relevant materials and literature, the researchers create a flute technique guide based on James Galway. The guidelines are as follows:

Lesson 1: Timbre and breath of James Galway

Lesson 2: James Galway's legato technique

Lesson 3: James Galway's staccato technique

Lesson 4: James Galway's vibrato technique

Lesson 5: James Galway's appoggiatura technique

Lesson 6: Mozart Flute Concerto in G Major, K313. First movement

The guidebook created by the researchers has been reviewed by experts.

2.2 Develop teaching plans and have them reviewed by experts. The teaching plan includes the teaching contents of 12 classes, teaching methods and assessment methods, and the contents of periodic tests and final tests.

1) lesson plan and Schedule:

Lesson Plan 1: Timbre and breath of James Galway : Tone, breath and practice, two weeks of study, one hour per week, a total of two hours.

Lesson Plan 2: James Galway's legato technique. Legato skills and practice, two weeks of learning, one hour per week, a total of two hours.

Lesson Plan 3: James Galway's staccato technique. Staccato skills and practice, two weeks of study, one hour a week, a total of two hours.

Lesson Plan 4: James Galway's vibrato technique. Vibrato skills and practice, 2 weeks of learning, one hour a week, a total of 2 hours.

Lesson Plan 5: James Galway's appoggiatura technique. Two weeks of appoggiatura skills and practice, one hour a week, a total of two hours.

Lesson Plan 6: 1-5 Application of techniques in the First movement of Mozart's Concerto in G Major 2 weeks of study, one hour per week, and total of 2 hours.

3. After practicing each skill in the guide and being deemed to have mastered it, the students were given a test in which the researchers and three experts rated their skills using a skill scale.

The final test required the application of the James Galway Technique 1-5 to the first movement of Mozart's Flute Concerto in G Major. The researchers and three experts rated the students' skills using a skills scale.

Tests can determine how well students will have mastered James Galway's skills at the end of the course. Testing is more helpful to evaluate the teaching effect. The researchers graded the students' musical skill ability into five levels: A, B, C, D and E, with each level corresponding to a score of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and 0. The total is 20 points. The best one is A, which corresponds to five points and goes down in order. Skill scores are the average scores of the three experts and researchers. Collect test data to analyze the **effectiveness of the guide.**

It is not recommended for students to use the guide for self-study, because without the guidance of professional teachers and students' lack of professional knowledge foundation, some techniques will be difficult for students to understand properly. When using the guidelines created by the researchers for teaching, the teachers themselves must fully read and understand the contents of the guidelines, including being able to play and guide the exercises and tests therein, before giving guidance to the students.

4. Measure and evaluate the teaching effect with the guidebook “James Galway’s Flute Technique”.

4.1 Evaluate form after learning James Galway five skills.

Sample	Timbre and breath of James Galway	James Galway’s legato technique	James Galway’s staccato technique	James Galway’s vibrato technique	James Galway’s appoggiatura technique
1	4.5	4.75	4.75	4.25	4.75
2	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.5
3	4.25	4.25	4	4	4.25
4	4.75	4.25	4.25	4	4.75
5	4.5	4.75	4.25	4.5	4.25
6	4.75	4.5	4.5	4.5	4
7	4.25	4.25	4	4.5	4.5
8	4.25	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.5
9	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.75	4.25
10	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.5
Mean Score	4.45	4.425	4.325	4.35	4.425

Table 1.1: The mean score per student on the test after mastery of each skill.

4.2 Evaluate form for the concert after learning James Galway flute skills, played Mozart “Flute Concerto in G Major” K313. The first movement

Sample	Timbre and breath of James Galway Mean Score	James Galway’s legato technique Mean Score	James Galway’s staccato technique Mean Score	James Galway’s vibrato technique Mean Score	James Galway’s appoggiatura technique Mean Score	Overall Mean Score
1	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.75	4.75	4.55
2	4.75	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.75	4.55
3	5	4.5	4.25	4.75	4.5	4.6
4	4.75	5	4.5	4.5	4.75	4.7
5	4.75	4.75	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6
6	5	4.75	4.5	4.75	4.75	4.75
7	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.45
8	5	4.75	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.65
9	4.75	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.6
10	5	4.75	4.5	4.5	4.75	4.7

Table 1.2: Mean final test scores per student.

4.3 Teacher and student course photos.



Figure 1.1: Teacher and student course photos.



Figure 1.2: Teacher and student course photos.



Figure 1.3: Teacher and student course photos.

● The Research Found

According to the research purpose, the research results are as follows:

1. Through literature research and interviews with experts, James Galway's playing skills are summarized in the following aspects: the characteristics of timbre and breath skills and how to practice them. These include embouchure, posture, performance and breathing exercises. The characteristics and application of James Galway's legato technique, it includes the relationship between scales and legato, and how to practice. The characteristics and application of James Galway's staccato technique, It includes single vomiting technique and double vomiting technique, and how to perform mixed exercises. The characteristics and application of James Galway's vibrato technique, the characteristics, and application of James Galway's Appoggiatura technique

2. Through literature research and interviews with experts, the James Galway flute skills Guide created and teaching plan written by James Galway's playing skills are summarized, which is conducive to the improvement of students' flute skills and grades.

3. Ten students were taught using the James Galway Flute Technique Guidebook created by the researcher.

4. The researchers test and evaluate the learning effect of Chinese students by using the James Galway Flute Technique Guidebook, and find that the guidebook is more effective for Chinese students and are an effective teaching tool for Chinese students.

● Discussion

In the Evaluate form after learning James Galway five skills, We we can see that

Exercise one: The mean score on the Timbre and breath of James Galway test is 4.45. Exercise Two: James Galway's legato technique test has an mean score of 4.425. James Galway's staccato technique test has a mean score of 4.325. Exercise 4: James Galway's vibrato technique test has a mean score of 4.35. Exercise 5: James Galway's appoggiatura technique test means score 4.425.

In the first movement of Mozart's Flute Concerto in G Major, the best students were 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10. The average grade is between 4.5 and 4.85. The students with good grades are 1, 2, 3, 7, and 9. The average is between 4.0 and 4.45. Corresponds to the average score of the exercise

It can be seen from the experimental teaching data that the elaboration of playing skills from the aspects of timbre and breath,

finger movement, linking and articulation, grace note, etc. can enable students to have a more accurate grasp of flute works, at the same time, they can have a deeper understanding of the style of music and explain the musicality and playing difficulties contained in the works, so as to further improve their playing skills and level.

● **Suggestions**

The research on Developing a Guide book to analysis James Galway's flute technique for teaching flute major students at the College of Art of Jilin University, PRC China. The researchers make the following recommendations:

1. General advice:

1.1 When using the guide prepared by the researcher for teaching, the teacher must fully read and understand the content of the guide, including playing and instructing the exercises and tests, before giving guidance to the students.

1.2. The techniques in this guide can also be applied to other pieces of music for example, the first movement of Mozart Flute Concerto in D Major.

2. Suggestions for future research:

2.1. Researchers should spend more time on research; because it can help students better master the skills of playing Musical Instruments.

2.2 Instrumental music teachers should do such research for other instruments.

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