

# Writing for Woodwinds

Music 525

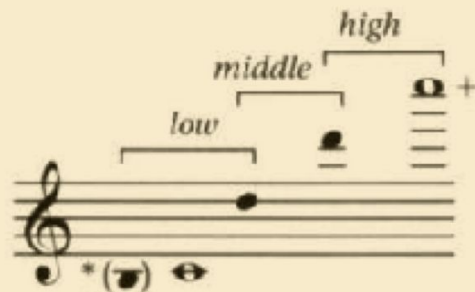
# Keep in mind....

- Keep in mind each instrument's individual sound quality and strengths/weaknesses in each register
- Roles can be : Melodic, Supportive, Color
- When doubling, think about how different instruments match up with each other. How do the registers compare? Do they combine to create an Identity?
- How can you write to give players a chance at technical/intonation success?

# Flute

- Agility, Sensitivity, big character change from low register to high register.
- Commonly carries or doubles melody in the upper register.
- Useful on runs and other embellished figures
- Low register can be wonderful in a lightly scored passage.
- High register - prefer parts written with ledger lines

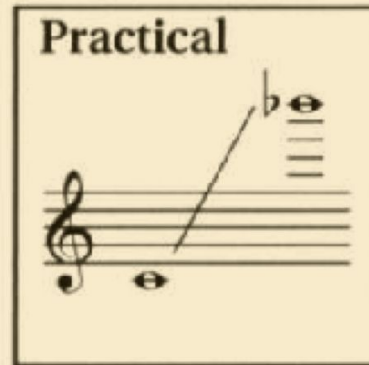
## Sounds as written



*\*Optional on some flutes.*



*dynamic contour*



# Flute Range Considerations

- Low Register - Breathy, warm, dark, full tone when played correctly. Projection is poor so use sparse scoring when writing the flute below D.
- Middle Register - increasingly brighter and stronger on ascent. Tone quality is pure, clear and vibrant.
- High Register - Brilliant ranging to piercing and shrill. Loses some unique tone quality the higher you go.

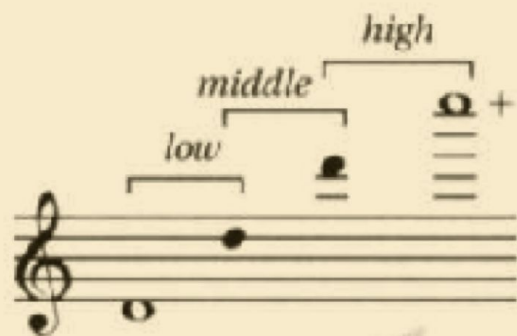
# Flute - Other considerations

- Ability to Multiple Tongue - Double or Triple
- Capable of Wide Leaps, Scales, Arpeggios
- Avoid Low Register Trills
- Requires a great deal of air support to play so think about extended lines
- Descending leaps respond slower than Ascending leaps.

# Piccolo

- Used primarily in tutti passages to double the melody.
- Avoid in lyrical passages, unless going for a unique color or strange doubling.
- Sounds one octave higher than written

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*dynamic contour*

**Practical**  
(Written)

A musical staff in treble clef showing a written melodic line. The notes are on the first, second, and third lines. A diagonal line connects the first and second notes, and a horizontal line connects the second and third notes. The final note is marked with a plus sign (+).



# Piccolo Range Characteristics

- Low Register - Breathier quality and colder tone than the flute. Haunting and Hollow. Projects better than the flute in this register.
- Middle Register - Becomes more clear, bright and strong.
- High Register - Penetrates. Brilliant and Crisp. Can soar above the ensemble.

# Piccolo - Other Considerations

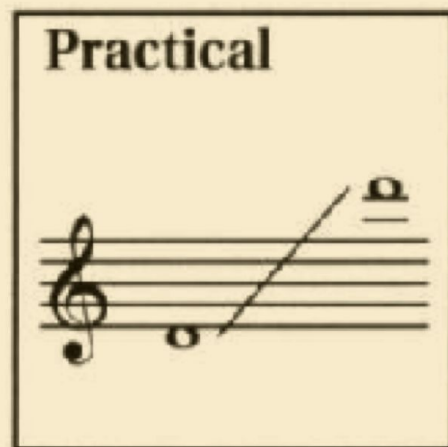
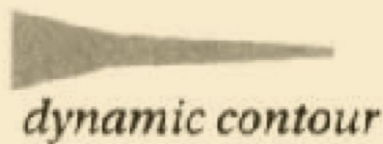
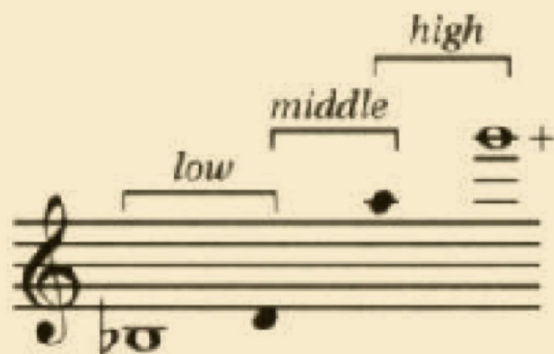
- Technical equal to the flute
- Impossible to hide in the upper range
- rapid playing, multiple tonguing, wide leaps, arpeggios, ornamental passages
- Notes above High A are difficult to produce so use these notes sparingly
- Can add brilliance to a melodic line but don't use it all the time.

# Oboe

- Primarily Melodic - effective on solo lines
- Can even add bite to rhythmic passages
- Low range is powerful but sometimes 'honky' in the hands of an immature player or difficult to control
- Ability to sustain for a long time

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# Sounds as written



# Oboe Range Considerations

- Low Register - Thick, coarse, Honky. Projects well but is difficult to control.
- Middle Register - Best register for characteristic melodic tone. A sweet, singing, nasal quality.
- High Register - Less rich - takes on a more tone neutral quality. Sound can be thin and pinched.

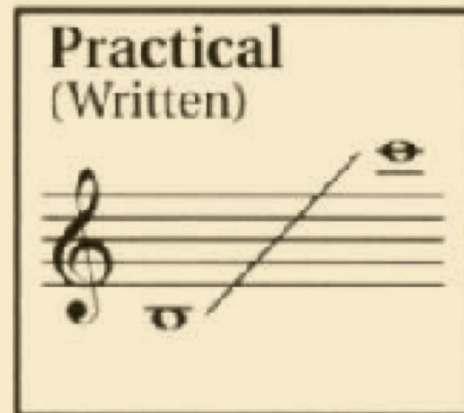
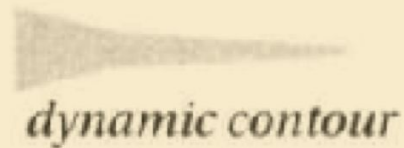
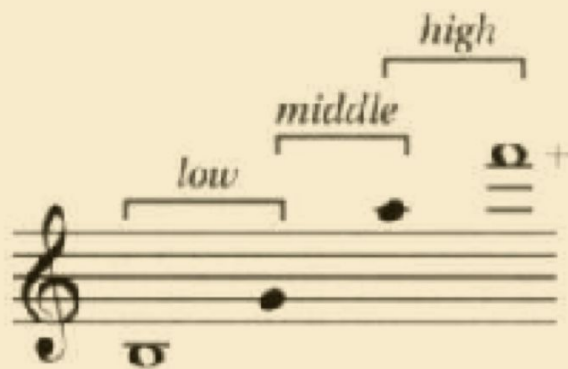
# Oboe - Other Considerations

- The Dynamic curve of the instrument is opposite most of the other woodwinds!
- Middle Register is versatile - can either blend well or come out as a solo. The high register does not come out well and can be covered up in doubling.
- Oboe is not as technically flexible as the flute or clarinet. Can still produce nice staccatos, sharp attacks, wide leaps, scales and ornaments.
- Single tonguing is the norm
- NO trills from low Bb to B natural (not possible) or trills on high F or high G
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# English Horn

- Sounds down a perfect fifth. Add one sharp or subtract one flat from the concert key signature.
- Common use as a solo instrument on lyrical melodies
- Lower register is still strong, yet less volatile than the oboe.

# WRITTEN RANGE





# English Horn - Range Characteristics

- Low Register - Deep, Rich, Intense
- Middle Register - Mellow, Reedy, Sonorous
- High Register - Thin, Pinched

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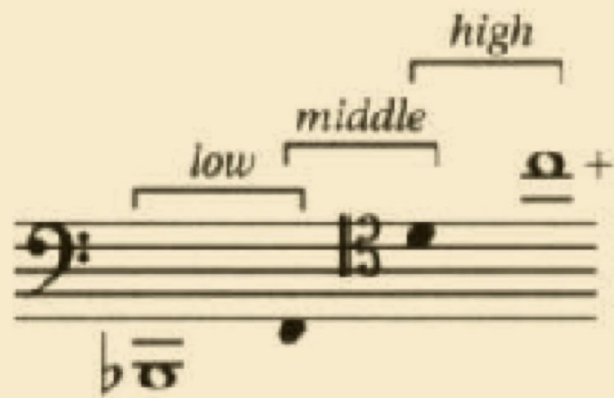
# English Horn - Other Considerations

- Not just a big oboe - the EH has its own tone, sound, and personality
- Round and rich tone quality. The entire range is dynamically smoother.
- Neutral tone quality in the high register.
- Same technical considerations as the oboe.

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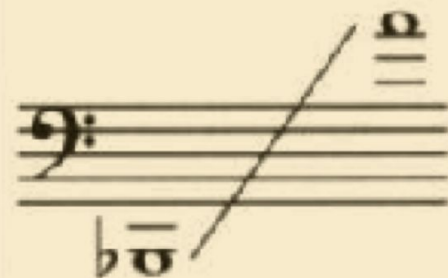
# Bassoon

- Can be used as a solo instrument or in combination with other double reeds within the ensemble.
- Forceful range is in the low register, Thin in the upper register
- Passages in the high register can be written in the tenor clef.



*dynamic contour*

## Practical



# Bassoon - Range Characteristics

- Low Register - Sound can be robust and resonant yet also dry and brittle at the same time.
- Middle Register - Texture becomes less thick - tone becomes more clear and transparent
- High Register - The higher the bassoon goes, the more focused and nasal the sound. The high register is very unique but can be overpowered in thick textures.

# Bassoon - Other Characteristics

- Range between low F and ledger line A is the most practical.
- Not as agile as the other woodwinds. Still can execute scales and arpeggios with a crisp and clean articulation
- Avoid rapid notes in the lowest 5th of the range and above high G - can get awkward.
- Low A is possible with insertion of a tube! (That's right, a tube!)
- Standard Bass Voice in the Woodwind Family and excellent for doubling due to its blending abilities.

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