Don Lefevre

# THE FRONT OF A NOTE

## How to Start a Sound

| Step | Action |
|---|---|
| #1 | Finger the note. |
| #2 | Inhale |
| #3 | Form the embouchure. |
| #4 | For all reed instruments, place the tongue on the reed.<br>For the brass and flute players, place the tongue in the position where you would normally articulate. |
| #5 | Direct the air pressure to this point (the air is pressurized prior to #6). |
| #6 | Remove the tongue (the quantity of air pressure will determine the volume). |
| #7 | The tone begins. |

This type of release is void of an accent on the front of the note, and allows the wind player to have greater command over the sound that is preferred for the musical situation. The start of the sound is a **release**, and not an **attack.** Be mindful of the fact that air creates the tone, and the tongue is merely used as a tool to define the placement of the front of the note. We have a variety of syllables and vowels that create a vast palette of sounds. Each wind instrument has its own unique characteristics of tone production, and unfortunately there is not one common syllable/vowel combination that will work ideally for the entire ensemble. Explore what works best for you and your instrument.

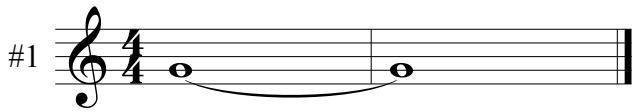
In addition, wind players need to consider the following:

1. A feel for the timing of the breathing procedure.
2. The inhalation should be a quick, composite, and a complete action.
3. The upper chest should be kept high, but relatively motionless.
4. Your muscles should be flexible, relaxed, and always controlled.
5. Your shoulders should remain relatively stationary, not exceedingly raised on the intake.
6. Breathing is a horizontal motion, not a vertical one.
7. Philip Farkas stated, “the inhalation is a sort of huge, silent, rapid gasp—the kind of gasp caused by the reaction of stepping suddenly into an ice-cold shower on a hot day.” The operative word is “**RAPID**.”

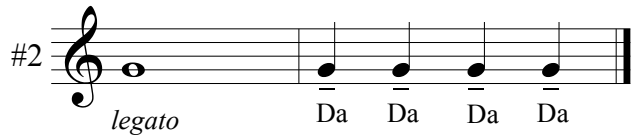
Contemplate the fundamentals of performance. Don’t fall into the common trap of teaching techniques that are new or in vogue. Record yourself and consider using a program such as TonalEnergy. Conduct detailed examinations of the elements involved in your music making. Be curious and constantly question and analyze everything that you do on your instrument!

Paul Worosello

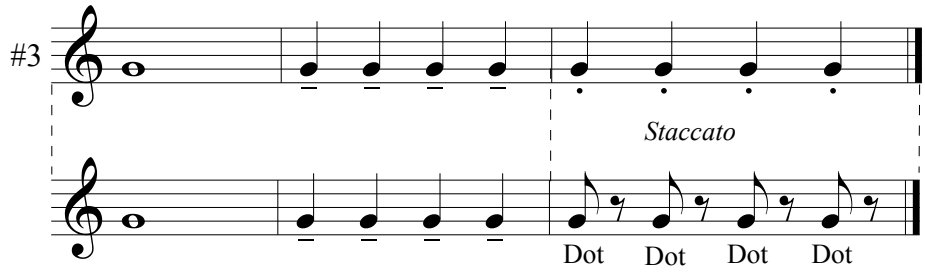
# Using Tongue and Air to Create Style

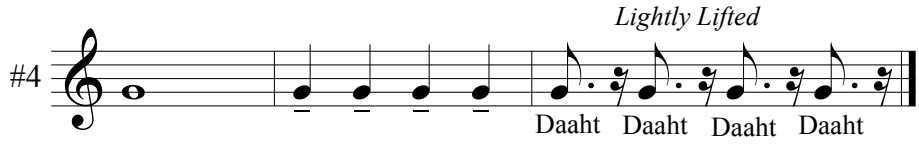


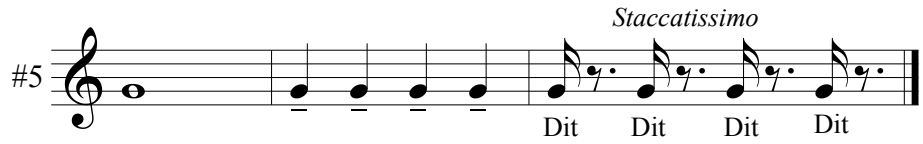

FOCUS: CALM, STEADY AIR

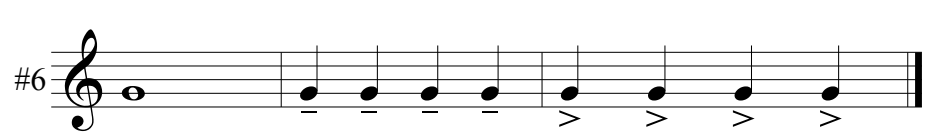



For #2 - #6
CONSTANT: Internal air pressure
VARIABLE: Movement of tongue
Length of note determined by how long the tongue is forward

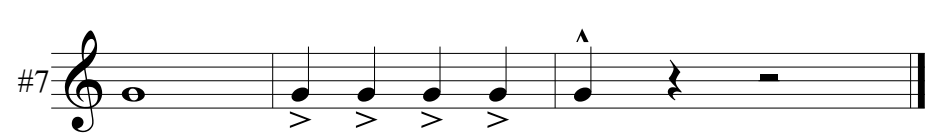


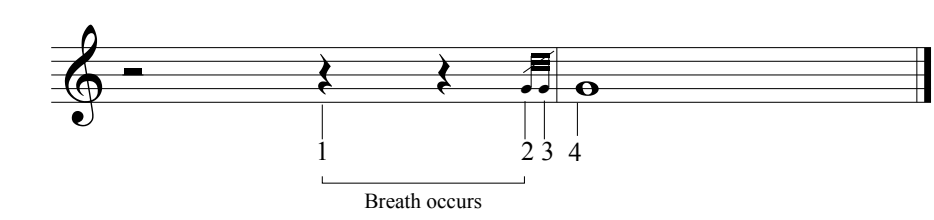




CONSTANT: Motion of Tongue
VARIABLE: Internal Air Pressure
One must physically push more air to the front of the note
FOCUS: Work to minimize tenson.
Immediately revert to CALM, STEADY AIR




CONSTANT: Nothing
VARIABLES: Internal Air Pressure
Tongue from "Da" to "Ta"

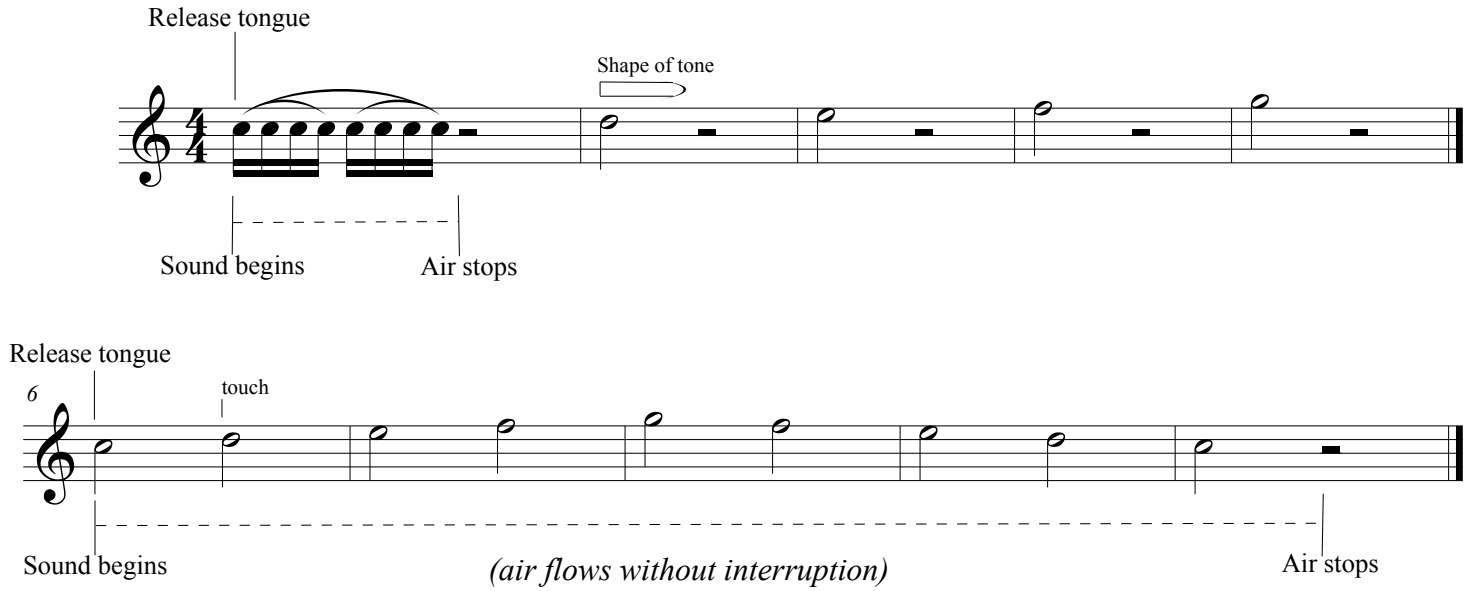



1. Breath Begins
2. Set Tongue and Corners
3. Pressurize
4. Release Tongue
   (2 & 3 Occur in sequence as close to the release as possible)

Don Lefevre

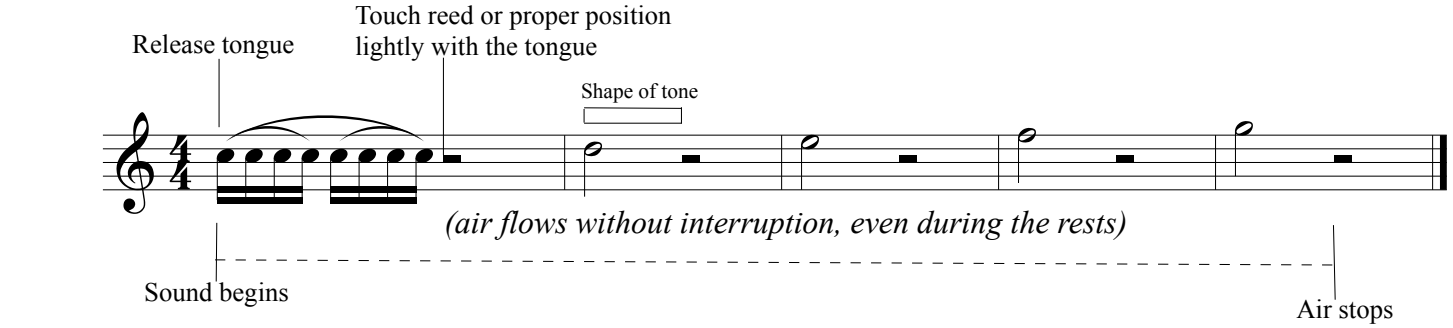
I have found that the most neglected part of a tone is the end (stop). The word "style," refers to what we do with the end of a note. Larry Teal wrote, "The air stop is controlled by the diaphragm and throat, usually in combination. It creates the effect of rounding off the tone at end of the note, and has real value since the shape of the tone is important to the character of the musical phrase." The air stop is preferable when the tone is followed by a rest, or if the sound needs a tapering off near the end. This style of tonguing is also referred to as *With the Wind*. In legato style, the air must remain constant, and the tongue merely dents the air stream. The end of one note must become the beginning of the next. When playing with expression, what happens between the notes is important.

# Air Stop

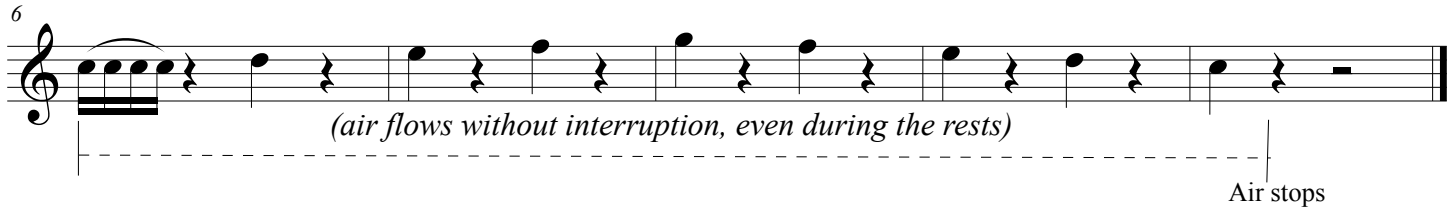


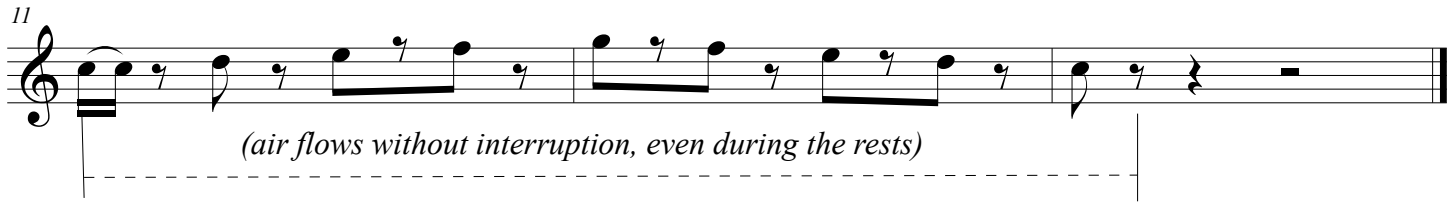
The tongue stop gives the impression of a block-style sound, for the termination is as abrupt as the start. There are many degrees of variance of tone stoppage, some of which include the use of both tongue and air. Choice of the particular style or combination must always be determined by its suitability to the musical situation. Mastery of all forms and degrees of stoppage is a prerequisite for outstanding musicianship. This technique may be refered to as Bonade style, or *On the Wind.*

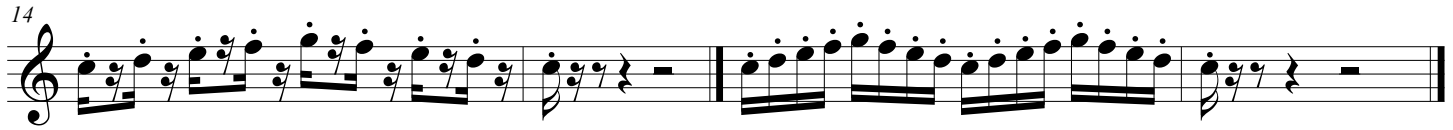
# Tongue Stop

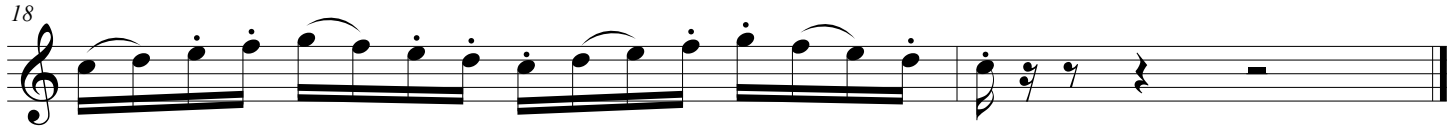



Continue the above technique

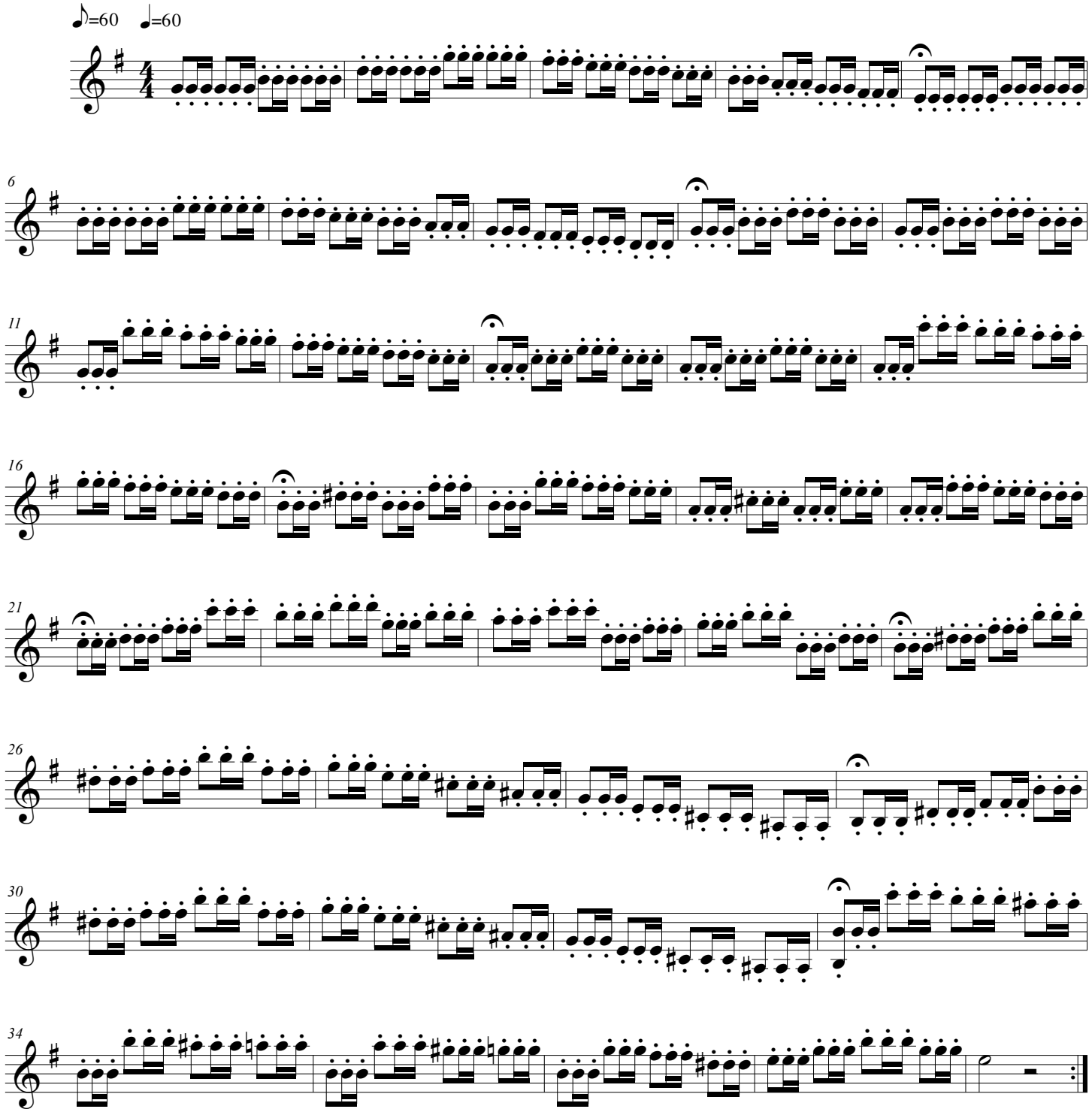


# Articulation Exercise

1. Begin the first phrase with a legato aritculation at a tempo of eighth note=60. Then repeat the first phrase with a tongue-stopped articulation at the same tempo.
2. Keep the air constant throughout, and increase by increments of 10 beats with each new phrase (legato then tongue-stopped).
3. The front of the note is identical in legato and tongue-stop articulation.
4. The end of the note determines the style (shape and space between notes).
4. Repeat the etude, and continue to increase the tempo.
5. Once the tongue-stopped articulation is mastered, begin the exercise at quarter note=60 (legato then tongue-stopped).

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