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Although less commonly heard, the "mode 4" scale provides a little variety in your playing that allows you to create tunes with different moods. In Part 1 I suggested that you could play the notes of the "mode 1" scale in any order and they would sound good. The same basic rules apply to playing with the "mode 4" scale. Try it!

Now, let's add a new playing technique, something I call "rolling" a note transition. Up to now, we've been transitioning between various notes by just "plopping down" a finger over a hole, or lifting it straight up. This is the most common way of changing notes while playing, but you can add emphasis and "color" to some notes by doing a gradual change that sounds like one note "bending" or "sliding" into the other, such that you hear a continual transition in pitch between the two notes.

Flute players have several variations on their technique for achieving a "rolled" note transition, but the basic principle is the same for all of them. First, you can both "roll on" a transition to go between a note and a lower note, and "roll off" to transition between a note and a higher note. Let's first try the "roll off" because it is a little easier to explain.

When you normally transition between a note and the next higher note in the scale, you lift one finger up and out of the way of the hole. To "roll off" the transition, don't lift that finger abruptly off the hole. Instead rotate that finger so that it "rolls" like a wheel up the flute body, gradually opening the hole. As the finger first creates a crack over the hole, the pitch will begin to rise slightly. While the opening enlarges as the finger rolls away from the hole, the pitch will continue to rise until the hole is completely uncovered and the next higher note is sounding. You can vary the speed at which you roll your finger off the hole to suit the effect you desire. Due to the physical connection between your fingers, some holes will be harder to "roll off" (or "roll on") than others. Trial and error will show you which transitions work best for you.

To "roll on" a note, do the "roll off" in reverse. Place the finger that you will "roll on" against the flute body such that it is not over the hole and then roll the finger down to gradually cover the hole, so

that the pitch drops gradually to the lower note. Try various initial positions for your finger to see what works best for you.

Finally in this installment, let's talk a little about breathing and using your breath to add some "color" to your playing. You will normally play your flute with a constant, even breath. Flute makers tune their flutes so that all of the notes are on pitch if played with a constant breath pressure. If you increase your breath pressure (i.e., blow harder), the pitch will rise slightly and the volume will increase. You can use this in your playing to create emphasis on select notes in your song. In fact, you can alternately increase and decrease pressure while playing the same note. This technique, judiciously applied, can add life to your flute playing.

Be aware that increasing your breath pressure on the lower notes (usually the leftmost and maybe the second notes from the left in Figures 1 and 2) can cause the flute to "overblow" and jump an octave. The amount of force needed to achieve "overblow" varies from flute maker to maker and even from flute to flute by the same maker. I make my flutes so that you have to consciously try to create "overblow". Other makers make flutes that are more sensitive and need good breath control to avoid unintentionally going into "overblow". If your flute is sensitive to "overblow", it may be more difficult to use your breath pressure in this technique of emphasizing a note.

That should give you plenty to work with until our next installment. Happy flutin'...

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*(Utsadv Unole - "Many Winds")*