

JEFF ZOOK, Piccolo Lesson

- When you apply your approach from the flute in terms of blowing, the piccolo can't take it.
- Experiment with changing the balance of blowing/supporting, even more so you're supporting a lot more, and blowing a little bit less.
- The clarity in the low register, comes not from the lips, not from the blowing, but from the support.
- If you back off on the air, the clarity actually comes in. (Trevor Wye exercises on piccolo)
- Apply everything we talked about: the "e" , position a bit higher on the lip, brushing up,
- FIRST, focus on more support, less blowing.
- USE TUNER
- When it gets sharp, think "Aw" a little bit and it will come right down.

- Singing & playing exercise: this is a real check, if you're not supporting, this exercise will not work.
- When you're support is in sync with not blocking and not controlling, this exercise is amazing for that.
- Keep that air column really long, tone up here, generator down here,
- Move to double octaves.
- As you go up, you are slightly changing from "ee" to "uu"
- Back of mouth has to stay "way open"
- Then move to exercise _____, keep what you learned from doing the singing, keep it intact as you are just playing.
- Experiment with 2-3-1 fingering for high C# (or 2-3-2-3-1)
- Be careful about bearing down, I really like to control. I'm going to get in trouble when we get to the 3rd octave.
- Magic resonator spot- not where you're blowing, but just right above the embouchure. Fake yourself out and think you are going to blow to this part of your lip. If you don't, you start clamping down, and then you get embarrassing sounds,
- Just think of blowing to that spot.
- Wide, open the molars, big space behind the lips
- I'm compressing the air so much, the D is about a quarter tone flat.
- Recreate what it felt like "behind the lips" when you go from singing to not singing.
- Brush up and out; it's easier to bring the pitch down then up
- Gluck on piccolo- After playing, it started to sound a little strident, and he can tell that I'm really working hard to make the tone. — let go and play from the magic resonator spot. I clamp it down, force it out, then you get the marching band piccolo tone quality
- Gluck scale- don't feel pressing down, just feel the air is riding that upper lip, instead of in between the lips.
- Remember: the air is the source of the sound, not your lips
- What's happening with your tongue during the scale? Is your tongue getting out of the way of the air stream, or is it interfering? Put a tongue depressor in the middle of your tongue. Keep it low as you go high. As I go higher, it likes to buckle up. Gets in the way of the tone when it starts interfering.
- Mechanism for the air speed in the 3rd octave: Now that I am not bearing down, speed up the vibrato, instead of blowing more air or squeezing
- The vibrato speed actually gets the air going faster for you
- "Think" fast vibrato when you get in the 3rd octave (so you don't revert to tongue, bearing down, forcing problems).

- Right arm down just a little bit
- Keys sticking a lot
- Hair pins- vibrato (you don't actually have to get louder)
- Piccolo position- look straight ahead, look at your pinky, go until you can see it out to the corner of your eye. Where it appears is where it needs to be.
- Piccolo looked like it was pressing into my face too much (flattens the sound if you do this)
- I was playing with the piccolo VERY forward, it felt a bit uncomfortable. You are straightening out the emb. (piccolo placement on face is DIFFERENT from flute).
- Concentrating on NOT pressing, and keeping the right arm forward, let's try this d minor one and then we're going to try the B flat, going a little higher. (Maquarre)
- While doing Maquarre: Try to feel the next note in the note before; he feels like I'm going "pounce, pounce, pounce, pounce" (same idea as the bow stuff). So using the air more rather than the lips.
- Don't play the "g" until you feel it in the "d"
- Use your air to make the legato
- The energy has to be in the "c" in order for the "a" to come out effortlessly
- Otherwise it will start to sound like a marching band piccolo
- That is how to play the piccolo. Otherwise we start fixating on our embouchure, and using our lips to create the sound. It is the air that makes the sound. Now I sound like a singer! First time I did it each note was punched. That makes playing very difficult and it leads to bad things.

SEMIRAMIDE

- In auditions, you have to do what's on the stand (tongued vs. slurred)
- What syllable are you using for you tongue? Probably Tah-Kah. It sounded pretty percussive. The piccolo is like everything on the flute, except less is more.
- Jeff does Doo-Goo exclusively on the piccolo, because Tah-Kah is too percussive,
- Sounded instantly a lot better, when I simply changed the articulation.
- WAY easier to play with that articulation
- SING a drone while you play this excerpt; it will help.
- How-much-I-love-you (emphasis on the love, that is where the accent is). This is where the opera needs to come in; it can't sound like a xylophone concerto. It sounds a little punchy. They are singing to each other.
- Isolate the appoggiatura, I'm not paying attention to it (yet).
- For a good appoggiatura, there can't be an accent on the second note, i.e. how-much-i-love-YOU.
- No bump, and no more vibrato than in the first note. I'm wacking it with my finger.
- Be an opera singer on those two notes. If I slam that second note, it doesn't show anything.
- It will be easier to play faster if I can get that gesture correct. Will probably tend to slow down if I am getting bogged down on each second-note.
- There must be a real ebb and flow to the whole thing (how-much-i-love-you) Crescendo/dim. on each one.
- Too much micro managing going on with me on this excerpt.
- Just find the gesture.
- Then you can FLY with this excerpt.
- I have to take the steps to get there (to play it fast).

- Last thing= **Rhythmical propulsion forward**: If you can think 2341, which is hard to do quickly (rather than 1234, 1234, etc.) it will be light, but it will move forward (and it will give a slight crescendo).
- 1234 sounds like a train.
- That was like "bing" according to Jeff (when I tried 2341) and I exclaimed, that felt so good!
- C#— experiment with 2-3-1 (I'm currently cracking the 2-3-2-3 fingering).
- At first the 2-3-2-3 was like yes! it's finally in tune (as I get better at the piccolo) but now that I am getting better and not pressing as much, allowing the air with my throat and stuff like that, it might be a little sharp for me...now 2-3-1 would be a better fingering for C#.
- Figure that out on my own. Jeff thinks that currently it's going to crack and that it sounds sharp.
- Practice the 2-3-4-1 way, and then forget about it (no need to freak out even more in auditions).

SEMIRAMIDE 2

- Number 1= articulation. It is very percussive.
- Blow on your hand; feel the difference between Doo and Tuu or Tah.
- Doo also helps your embouchure (forms it for you a little bit).
- isolate the triplets (short long, short short long)
- Piccolo position has reverted (back and up). Bring it forward and down!
- Above: two EQUAL notes, and it is about clarity.
- GET to the second note clearly, and have equality of dynamic and character, and intensity on the second note.
- That will help make it secure. When you practice it like that, it plays itself.
- Half note with an accent on it, but it's Rossini; so it's not a percussion accent. It is a vocal accent.
- Lis-ten-to-me! Be the soprano making your entrance. Show a little shoulder, something, but it's not accented in a typical way (do it with your vibrato).
- Propel from the third note to the first note: (mm. 190-191). Use the third note to get to the first note. He feels like it's just all going away; he doesn't hear diction. I'm mumbling.
- I'm trying to create the sound, and that's where I'm getting into a bit of trouble. Do it again, but now lighter. Just allow it to happen now. Your tongue is in exactly the right place, the air is making the sound, you don't need to work at it now.
- Last thing- feel the high E in the low E. (m. 192). Right now he feels like that high E is popping out of the texture, coming seemingly out of nowhere.
- Put the energy in the low note, and then you don't have to work at the high note very much.

SEMIRAMIDE 3

- Apply everything from the second excerpt to this; light, easy, power in the low notes, diction in the tongued notes.
- Doesn't sound exactly even to my ears.

BOLERO

- This excerpt is where you really have to feel the brushing up and out of the piccolo.
- NOT starting with the lips; starting with the diaphragm.
- I'm manufacturing a sound with my lips.

- Just do E, and then the harmonic B, and see if you can do it without crunching the embouchure. (Then go up Chromatically).
- So now, when I start this, think that I'm playing that A. Play the A; change the fingering; use the same embouchure for the E. NO different from the A. We see E and I go CKKKKAAAAAA.
- Just "play an A"
- Keep brushing up
- Right arm forward.
- NO louder.
- Keep the embouchure in the same spot as you breathe to play the high F#
- NO LOUDER!!!

SWITCHING BETWEEN FLUTE AND PICCOLO

- Focus behind the lips.
- Le-roux(?) flute piece— gorgeous!!