

Belgium, his primary research area is the sacred music tradition of Brussels.

ADDITIONAL WORDS BY:
Piers Adams

I'm so shocked and saddened to hear the news of the sudden death of Adriana Breukink, decades-long friend and inventor of the incomparable Eagle recorders. Adri was a true genius, who relentlessly and passionately pursued a dream of bringing to Earth the unique sound she had received from some other realm, creating the most marvelous instruments for those of us who shared her vision. She was constantly working to refine and improve her instruments, experimenting boldly with innovative, almost reckless designs—and then painstakingly refining every tiny detail until the seemingly impossible suddenly became manifest, and her Eagles soared out of their nest and into the wind.

I shared many long and happy hours with Adri over the years, discussing recorders, music and life. I'll always consider her my closest ally in the recorder world, the person who really understood what it means to stick your neck out and follow your unique calling. Although her life and work was cut tragically short (I think she had barely got started in her quest to transform our perception of the instrument!), I truly believe she will be remembered as one of the greatest innovators in the recorder's history—as well as one of the loveliest, kindest and most deep-thinking souls in our world.

Rest in peace, dear Adri, and may you be bathed in the music of the gods. 🌸

British professional recorder player Piers Adams is a member of Baroque group Red Priest. <https://piersadams.com>, www.youtube.com/channel/UCplGEm5TW-_J_0ohYO_7-SA

Technique Tip: How to apply articulations to music—basic rules, and when to break them



WRITTEN BY
**LOBKE
SPRENKELING**

Lobke Sprenkeling obtained her Bachelor's and

Master's degrees as a recorder player and theatrical performer at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and Utrecht Conservatory, Netherlands. She continued her studies at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, Spain, with a national scholarship from the *Dutch Prince Bernhard Culture Fund*. In 2016 she earned her music Ph.D. *cum laude* at the Universidad Politècnica de València. She also studied multidisciplinary theater from a musical perspective (Carlos III University, Madrid, and the Yale University Summer Program); her specific interest in the relationship between musician and body has led to her performing in and creating multidisciplinary works. She taught recorder at the pre-conservatory program (ages 8-18) of Conservatorio Profesional de Valencia (2007-16), and has taught in Europe, Mexico and the U.S. (sessions with the recorder societies in Phoenix, AZ, and Seattle, WA, and for Amherst Early Music). She currently teaches recorder at the Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid. Info: <https://lobke.world>.

This piece follows Sprenkeling's ongoing series.

PART 1: "Use of Air and Breath Control: The Respiratory System" / [AR Spring 2021](#)

Use of air in everyday breathing and for good musical tone, with exercises for correct breathing.

PART 2: "More on Breathing plus Posture and Hands" / [AR Summer 2021](#) Additional breathing exercises, posture, embouchure and hand position.

PART 3: "Articulation" / [AR Fall 2021](#) added articulation to previous skills.

PART 4: "A Toolbox for Coordination of Air, Fingers and Articulation" / [AR Winter 2021](#) covered all skills learned so far.

PART 5: "Daily study habits & how to work on a new piece of music." / [AR Spring 2022](#) applied skills in daily practice.

PART 6: "How to play air and finger vibrato." / [AR Fall 2022](#) added an expressive element.

You've learned how to articulate a clear yet light *T* and a gentle *D* (see part 3 of this series). Now what? Sitting in front of your music, you're thinking: How am I going to articulate this piece? Where am I going to play *T*? Where does *D* go?

In this article we will look at single tonguing and how to apply *T* and *D* to music pieces, so that they enhance the expression of the composition as well as your own musical ideas: the key is to let your music "speak."

We can compare playing the recorder (or any musical instrument, and especially wind instruments) to telling a story with our speaking voice. In order to have well-functioning vocal cords that stay healthy and make our voice sound clear, stable and resonant, we need proper breath support and correct use of air. Otherwise, we may become hoarse or lose our voice, or we may sound too high or wobbly.

The same is true for the recorder. The air is the foundation of our musical narrative: without air, we have no support for the "words" we will pronounce. Without air, we cannot make our instrument sing as it does best—and it needs to sing before it speaks. We need to produce sound before we pronounce. Air enables the creation of the vowel; articulation is thus the pronunciation of the consonants.

Just as in the spoken word, there are hard consonants and soft consonants. And just as in a spoken story, there are words and phrases and sections where we speak gently, and others where we become agitated, moments of suspense and moments of humor. Here lies the magic of making music: we can tell a story, and depending on how we feel, that story will be a little different every day.

This is no monologue: it is a dialogue with the composer. The music's composer has written down a story, and we are the ones telling it, with our

own intonation and pronunciation, and probably with our own embellishments.

The rules: telling the musical story with articulation

Coming back to your own practice: you have learned the difference between *T* (or *Dud* in low notes) and *D*. How do you apply these articulations to written music, so that you can tell the composer's story in a way that enhances the narrative of the music, while expressing your own musical experiences in telling that story?

Here is a brief guide to get you started. It consists of a basic list of rules—which you can break for musical reasons, plus some guidelines for those musical reasons.

When starting a new piece, it is a good idea to analyze it. It's nothing too complicated: you can see how the melody goes, and what it means when it goes up or down, or when it repeats (a repetition can mean many things—insistence, doubt, an echo, a joke, etc.). You can identify the musical phrases: where do they begin, is there a comma in the middle, and where do they end? How do they begin, and how do they end? If you are playing together with another instrument, you can try to identify the intervals and harmonies. Where are the dissonances?

Keep all of that in mind (or better yet: write it down in the score). Let's look at the basic rules. Those are:

- *T* (or *Dud* on lower notes) for larger intervals or jumps (thirds/fourths and larger); on repeated notes
- *D* for seconds: scale-like movement (See examples 1, 2 and 3 on the next page.)

Scale-like melodies will generally want to "flow," and if no special effect is desired, they sound best with a *D*. Remember that the air is the motor for the tongue, and the *D* is only a

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1: Jumps. Use T (or Dud on lower notes) to articulate.

2: Repeated notes.
Use T (or Dud on lower notes).

3: Scalelike movement.
Use D for the articulation.

4: Notes in a dotted rhythm.
Use T-D, with D on the long note,
Ti Ti-Di Ti-Di.

5: The Pink Panther theme.
Dotted rhythms in a familiar melody.

6: Canary dance. A Renaissance dance inspired by an indigenous dance and song of the Canary Islands, popular in Europe in the late 16th and early 17th century; use Ti Ti-Di as the articulation.

Two examples from Jacques Hotteterre, *Principes de la flute traversiere, de la Flute a Bec, et du Haut-bois*:

7: Inégalité (Ti ti-Di ti-Di) in French Baroque music.

8: Hotteterre shows that inégalité is used in the “running notes,” whereas the “walking notes” are articulated separately.

9: The Complete Articulator by Kees Boeke. Shifting articulation that requires the air to create a subtle direction of the musical flow to each strong beat.

Deuxième Exemple.

Autre Mesure à Deux-temps.



Autre Exemple



DTDD



slight interruption of that air, without stopping it altogether.

For larger intervals, you will generally want to use a *T*—not a heavy one; in principle the *T* is light. What happens here is that the air is interrupted by the tongue. Don't drop your air support, though. The air just waits momentarily "behind the gate" of the tongue.

The interval of a third, in a way, is something intermediate. It sometimes prefers to be articulated with a *D*—for example, in pairs of thirds (as in C-E, D-F, E-G, etc.).

Repeated notes usually require *T*; otherwise they become just too indistinct on the recorder. Again, we are talking of a *T* that is light and only serves to separate the notes.

A dotted rhythm will normally require *T-D*—the *T* on the short note and the *D* on the long note. In example 4, we will play *Ti Ti-Di Ti-Di*.

A great way to think of this is the melody of the Pink Panther theme (example 5), which definitely calls for *Ti-Di Ti-Di*.

Likewise, we apply *Ti Ti-Di* to each measure of the Canary dance (try this yourself on example 6).

An important exception is in French Baroque music, where the scale-like movement must be played *inégalement*, or "unequal." Jacques Hotteterre states in his *Principes de la flute traversiere, de la Flute a Bec, et du Haut-bois* (1707): "When [the notes] ascend or descend stepwise, Tu is also used, but it is alternated with Ru.... Ru should be used on the note following the eighth note when it ascends or descends stepwise."

His *Ru* can be interpreted as a *Di*: soft enough not to interrupt the airflow and present enough to be audible. (Sometimes, when we think of an *R* while playing, it can become almost an *L*—but the *L* is not audible enough for the listener to distinguish the notes.)



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Detail from a manuscript by Guillaume Machaut

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In *Deuxième Exemple* (example 7), we play *T* on the even-numbered notes (the weaker beats), and *D* on the stronger beats. The first measure would be: *Ti-ti-di-ti-di-ti-ti*.

Once you've tried example 7, play example 8, *Autre Exemple*.

As you may have noticed, the fast, “running” notes are played *inégalement*, whereas the note value that “walks” (in this case, the eighth note), is articulated regularly (*Ti Ti Ti Ti*). If you have a French Baroque piece, write in where you would use *T* and *D* until you get used to the way *inégalité* is applied.

An important observation in music in general is that the first note of a measure, or the note on an important beat, does *not* necessarily have to be articulated with a *T*. In other words, the *T* is not tied to the location of the note in the measure.

My favorite articulation study book, *The Complete Articulator* by Kees Boeke, demonstrates this quite well. In his studies, it is not about the tongue, since the *T* shifts along the groups of four. Instead, we have to develop a subtle direction in the airstream towards the first note of each group—that is, the strong beat (very subtle, please, since anything that is not subtle will affect the tuning!). This is shown in example 9.

In the classic example of a group of fast notes, include the next note in your *D* articulation, even if it falls on a downbeat.

When to break the rules

Once you really understand these rules, you can make a conscious decision to break them! As long as you can substantiate your musical decision, there is a cohesive musical narrative. This is where analysis comes in, both melodic (how does the melody develop, when does it change and when does it repeat, what is being told with the melody?) and harmonic (tonalities, modulations, intervals in arpeggios, intervals with the accompanying voice).

Sometimes it is just a personal decision, like when we give a personal touch to a story we're telling. However, a sad story is unlikely to be told cheerfully, and a sentence full of suspense is likely to be told in a low voice using some dramatic pauses. Just so, the written music gives you the words and the basic story, and your analysis of those words will help you decide how to express them.

In French Baroque music, we have to adhere more strictly to the rules of *inégalité*. Hotteterre gives some examples where not to use *inégalité*. If you play French Baroque pieces, take the time to read his treatise: it is quite compact and straightforward.

In your decision to break the rules, you can focus on the following situations, where:

- the melody surprises the listener, because it changes direction, makes a larger jump, or modulates



The *T* is not tied to the location of the note in the measure.

- the melody moves in a dissonant interval, such as an augmented fourth or a seventh
- the melody moves to a harmonic dissonance with another voice, if you're playing music accompanied by another instrument
- the melody is *cantabile*, or you personally really want to make it sing, even though there are large intervals
- there is a melodic pattern repeated at different pitches, as if there were a dialogue or conversation among several people
- there is repetition, either on the same pitch or in a sequence, and you want it to become wider or smaller, or form a real contrast.

We could look at hundreds of examples and they would all lead to different solutions, depending on their musical context. Often there is no “right answer”—but rather a matter of making musically cohesive, yet creative, personal choices. Over time, you will find that they become more spontaneous, as part of your dialogue with the music, which can vary from day to day. Some experimentation with different possibilities is a great way to get to know your music and your own expressive possibilities on the recorder! ✨

LINKS OF INTEREST:

- Lobke Sprengeling's web site: <https://lobke.world>
- Previous articles in her series on recorder technique: https://americanrecorder.org/american_recorder_magazine_ex.php
- Videos for this entire series of articles: www.youtube.com/americanrecordermag
- Jacques Hotteterre, *Principes de la flute traversiere, de la Flute a Bec, et du Haut-bois* (1707):

[https://imslp.org/wiki/Principes_de_la_flute_traversiere,_de_la_Flute_a_Bec,_et_du_Haut-bois,_Op.1_\(Hotteterre,_Jacques\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Principes_de_la_flute_traversiere,_de_la_Flute_a_Bec,_et_du_Haut-bois,_Op.1_(Hotteterre,_Jacques))

- More ideas and historical references about articulation, “Giving Voice to Music: The Art of Articulation” by Beverly R. Lomer and María Esther Jiménez Capriles, with additional material by Wendy Powers, AR Fall 2020: https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR_Fall2020_body.pdf