French composer, Jacques Ibert (1890-1962) is best known for his orchestral works, but most flutists know him as the composer of *Jeux* for flute and piano, *Aria* for flute and piano, *Entr'acte* for flute and harp or guitar, the Concerto, *Pièce* for flute solo, and *Trois Pièces* for woodwind quintet. Ibert grew up playing violin and piano, and after attending the Paris Conservatory he led an active life in music that included performing, conducting, music administration, and composing. *Trois Pièces* is the most popular of Ibert's music, although the three-movement work is one of the shorter standards for woodwind quintet.

Because the first movement begins with *ff* syncopation in all parts, good blend, balance, and accurate rhythms are important. The measure five after the downbeat is often out of tune as the flute and oboe play a *ff* chromatic scale in octaves, but the alternate F♯ fingering will lower the flute pitch, as would a lower air direction. The downbeat of the following measure has to be released on time for the oboe and clarinet to continue a smooth scale. Ibert marks the theme at 1, introduced by the oboe at 2, in a lilting triplet rhythm. It helps to practice tonguing two 16th notes on each eighth note to establish the rhythm. The high E is generally sharp on the unison flute-clarinet passage, but the alternate E fingering will lower the pitch. This continuous passage has no place to breathe, which creates phrasing problems.

Ibert notates an echo between 5 and 6, but many flutists incorrectly imitate the oboe instead of answering at a *pp* level. Ten measures later the quarter-note downbeat in the top four voices should release together and on time so that the ascending bassoon line can emerge from the harmonic texture. Breathe two bars before 7 to avoid a late entrance in the next measure. The last flute note three bars after 7 is a high E and the oboe plays the same pitch one octave lower, arriving an eighth-note later. If the E is too high, the oboist will sound flat. Ibert wrote a lovely four-bar melody five bars after 7 that flutists should play with a smooth, legato singing quality. The 16th notes five measures after 8 should match in the upper woodwinds, and while some quintets accent beats to stay together, note-grouping over the barline is more musically exciting.

*En pressant jusqu'à la fin* means accelerando to the end. Some quintets get faster gradually in each bar, and others increase the tempo in larger segments.
Flutists often use alternate fingerings three bars after [2] by fingering the pitches an octave lower and playing harmonics at the octave.

A beautiful flute and clarinet duet opens the second movement and continues until the last six bars. The entire movement is linear, and horizontal phrasing through eighth-note groups moves the melody forward. The clarinet enters in canon in measure 2 at a softer dynamic than the flute. Flutists usually breathe after the first note in measure 4, but breathing places are scarce after that because the music is so seamless. Alternate breath spots include after the Eb two measures before [4] and after the downbeat of [6]. Many also breathe after the B after [6], but a breath there breaks the sequential pattern in the melody. If a breath is necessary after the downbeat six measures after [6], time the entrance on beat two to match the moving eighth notes in the clarinet.

Because the third movement begins with a silent downbeat, the flutist conducts beat one so all players can breathe together on the second half of the first quarter rest. Flute, oboe, and clarinet should match articulation style and 16ths in the first measure; at this slow tempo, the 16ths are often played quite regally.

Flutists who match the horn's articulation style and dynamic create a perfect accompaniment for the clarinet, but because the notes are low they respond sluggishly unless the beat is anticipated and the articulation is crisp.

The slurred line at [3] should sing expressively, and the grace note leaps that follow should not be late.

All five instruments create massive sound, and perfect rhythm is necessary at [4]. Don't be late leaving the ties. A gradual ritard leads into [5], and Ibert indicates that an eighth note in the vivo is slightly faster than an eighth note in the allegro scherzando. The flute answers the clarinet with bravado after [6], but flutists should avoid playing sharp on the crescendo.

Sneak a breath on the barline at [14] to store air for the crescendo in the last three bars, and emphasize the upper line five bars before the end.

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Use the right-hand second finger on the lower trill key instead of the third finger on the high B in the last bar to avoid a finger leap.

Many recordings of early 20th-century wind literature demonstrate the brisk, melodic writing characteristic of Ibert.