

THE CHALLENGES OF CUTS ARE ALSO THE CHALLENGES OF SHORT ROLLS

Another way to look at the difference between long and short rolls is that the long roll starts with a “plain” note that gives you one eighth-note beat to prepare for doing a cut on the second note. The cut in the long roll is the easiest of all cuts, one that separates two notes of the same pitch.

The short roll doesn't allow you any preparation time. It starts with its cut right off the bat. That's one reason why the short roll is more challenging to play than the long roll. Since the short roll begins with a cut, most of the issues raised in the chapter on cuts, Chapter 7, apply equally to the short roll. For example, the challenges of cutting notes, when ascending or descending to them, apply to short rolls as well.

You will often find that you will want or need to tongue or throat the start of a short roll. In that case, you will be cutting and tonguing or throating at the same time. This is tricky until you've had a lot of practice. If you need clarification on this, see the section *Cutting and Tonguing (or Throating) at the Same Time* in Chapter 7, p. 134.

Remember that when you cut and tongue or throat at the same time, your cutting finger needs to be in the air, not still on the instrument, at the instant that you tongue or throat. If you cut slightly after you tongue or throat you will hear the cut an instant late and the result will be a kind of jumbled double articulation.

NOW THAT THE FOG HAS CLEARED

By now you are thoroughly familiar with my opinion that cuts and strikes are articulations, not notes or grace notes of any kind. Thus you understand that the short roll is a two-note ornament, and not a four-note ornament as it has been almost universally described in published whistle and flute tutors. Figure 11-4 below shows some examples of unfortunate, ill-conceived short-roll notation taken from such books.



Figure 11-4. Examples of ill-conceived short-roll notation taken from published flute and whistle tutors.

All of these examples are incorrect and misleading. None of them look like what a short roll sounds like. None of them accurately convey the rhythm of the short roll. They all imply that the pitch of the cut and strike are perceivable and significant. If anyone, not already knowing what a short roll sounds like, tried to reproduce what is notated in these examples, they would not get anything that sounds like a short roll.

Why not notate them the way they sound when played *well*, especially when that notation is much simpler to read and write?

THE RHYTHM OF THE SHORT ROLL

This bears repeating: **it is critically important to learn to play your short rolls absolutely dead even, each eighth note articulated right on its beat.** You will not always want to play them so evenly, but you will need to be able to, especially when playing tunes at very fast tempos.

TRY SOME SHORT ROLLS

Try playing the short roll on low G that is shown on p. 182 in Figure 11-1. You're simply going to play two eighth notes, cutting and tonguing or throating the first one, then slurring into and striking the second one.