

DOUBLE REEDS

SENIOR CLINIC

➤ Scales

- Major, Minor (natural, harmonic?), Chromatic
- Arpeggios (1st, 3rd, 5th, 8ve), scales in thirds

➤ What are our instruments' ranges?

- Low Bb - approx. high G*
 - Oboe: 2+ octaves, Basson: 3+ octaves

➤ How to Practice

- **On your stand:** tuner (if you train your ear to be in tune at the beginning of all your practice sessions, you'll have to do less tuning work later on!), metronome, mirror (keep an eye on your embouchure and fingers), pencil
- **Warm-Up:**
 - Breath exercises, Long tones (with tuner/drone, different ranges), Scale/arpeggio(s) of the day, articulation exercises, etc.
 - "SHH!:" $p > f < p$ over 9 beats, then 5, then 3
 - "SHH!:" $f > p < f$ over 9 beats, then 5, then 3
 - Feel free to use written out exercises or scales if you find the visual aspect helps you stay focused!
- **Etudes:** help teach us phrasing and bring together our warm up exercises; the point is to make music out of them!
- **'Spot' practicing:**
 - Choose a 'short' section (anywhere from part of a phrase to 2 phrases) that you can **comfortably** and **accurately** play at a slow tempo (with a metronome).
 - Play the section correctly with the metronome 10 times in a row before* increasing the tempo in small increments until you reach the actual tempo (or even a bit above so it feels easy).
 - *If you make a mistake in one of your ten correct play throughs at any tempo, you have to start back at 1 and work back up to 10. If you keep getting stuck, try going back to a slower tempo, try playing the passage in different/opposing rhythms (short-long, long-short), and/or focus on smaller sections at a time
 - Don't forget to also practice moving from one spot practiced chunk to the next/connecting the sections as you increase your tempo!
- **Approaching a new piece:**
 - FIRST, find a recording you like (or several) and listen to the whole thing while following along with your part (or score)!
 - Identify what will be the most difficult sections for you and break it down into more manageable chunks you can 'spot' practice.
 - Don't do full playthroughs of a piece/movement until you can play things at consistent tempos, and always play with a metronome where/when possible.
 - Plan your breaths (inhales AND exhales, esp. on oboe)!

➤ Intonation

- **Individual intonation:** *being in tune with yourself/the tuner.*
 - Learn the 'tendencies' of your instrument (do certain pitches consistently play noticeably sharp or flat?)
 - Learn the tendencies of your reed (every reed is a little different) and the effect of physical changes you can make on your intonation (dropping your jaw, loosening your embouchure, increasing air support, etc.)
 - Pay attention to the weather - temperature and humidity can have very big effects on reeds and wooden instruments; in the summer, we tend to sound sharper while we trend more flat in the winter.
- **Section/ensemble tuning:** *being in tune with others.*
 - Listen to those around you - you may or may not be playing the same notes, but can you hear instability (waves) in the harmonies?
 - If you can tell whether you are higher/lower, you can adjust.
 - If you can't tell, try raising your pitch, if it starts sounding better, keep it up; if it sounds worse, lower your pitch instead.

➤ Phrasing

- **Time signature:** *each time signature has a stronger/weaker beats.*
 - In 4/4, the beats, in order of strength/importance are 1, 3, 4, 2
 - In 3/4, the beats, in order of strength/importance are 1, 3, 2
- **Listen:** phrases are like sentences in music, and, as we can hear where one sentence ends and another begins when listening to people speak, we can learn how to discern musical phrases.
- **Look:** often phrasing will be outlined for us in our parts; indicated by the composer by long slurs or dynamic shifts
- Phrasing generally follows similar dynamic, tonal, and harmonic 'shapes,' usually increasing in volume, intensity, and often pitch to a climax then lessening towards the end/resolution
- Don't phrase to/within bar lines (it gets boring!)

➤ Tone

- **Reed:** you need (not old) comfortable reeds to establish good tone, it might be worth learning how to adjust your own reeds
- **Instrument:** the instrument (and bocal) itself can have a big impact, wooden instruments tend to have fuller sounds than plastic ones
- **Listen, Play, Practice:** Listen to professionals with tones you like, play along with people with good tones, be conscious of your tone when you practice, not just when you perform!



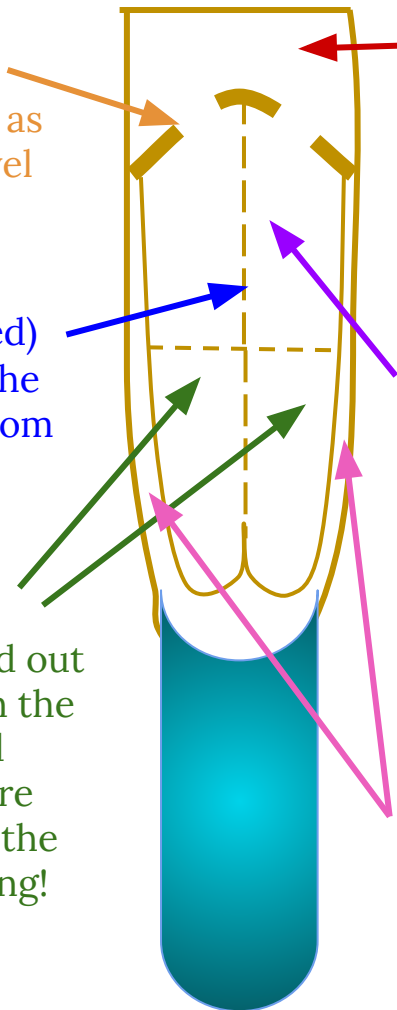
OBOE REEDS -

There are almost as many styles of making oboe reeds as there are reed-makers, so your reeds will probably look different from other oboists, but as long as they work for the person playing on them, that's totally fine!

Transition: the slope between the tip and the heart. It is very important as it allows vibrations to travel further down the reed.

Spine: the thickest (scraped) part of the reed. This gives the reed Stability and keeps it from collapsing.

Back/Windows: the thinner channels scraped out below the heart between the spine and rails. They add Tone and Vibrancy but are usually only added once the reed is already functioning!



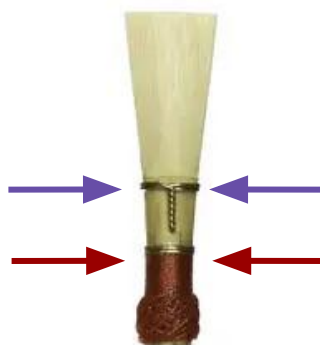
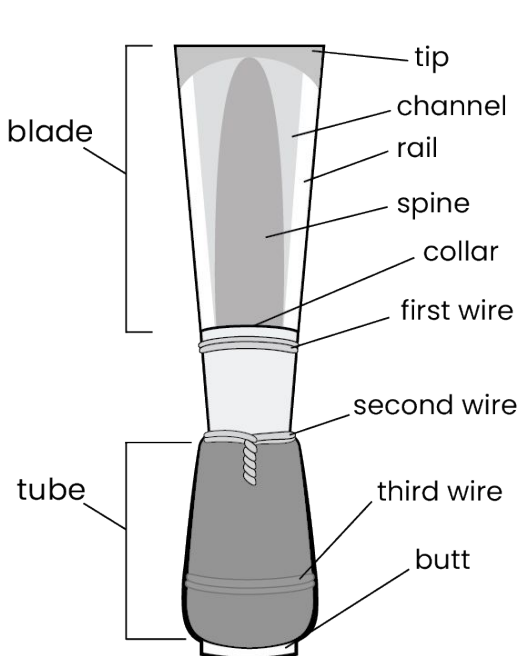
Tip: the thinnest and most vibrant part of the reed. This is where Response comes from and it should be thinnest at the corners/edges.

Heart/Plateau: the thick, evenly scraped section in the upper-middle of the reed. This is where good Tone and Intonation (primarily) come from.

Rails: the thin strips of shiny bark left on the very edges of the reed that end below the tip. They can add extra structural Support and help prevent reeds from collapsing, though some people choose to remove them.

BASSOON REEDS -

You can adjust your bassoon reeds by changing the shape of the tube by (slightly) squeezing the first and second wires using pliers. Generally, what you do to one wire, you do to both.



Squeezing from the sides:
Opens tip, raises pitch, improves high reg., increases resist., decreases response.

Closes tip, raises pitch, improves high reg., increases resist., decreases response.

Squeezing the front/back:
Closes tip, lowers pitch, improves low reg., decreases resist., increases response.
Opens tip, lowers pitch, improves low reg., decreases resist., increases response.

