



**Texas Bandmasters Association
Convention/Clinic July 22-24, 2021**

**How to Get Your Double Reed Class
off to a Successful Start**

CLINICIANS:

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HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

How to Get Your Double Reed Class off to a Successful Start
TBA Clinic 2021

Sally Bohls & Jennifer Auerbach

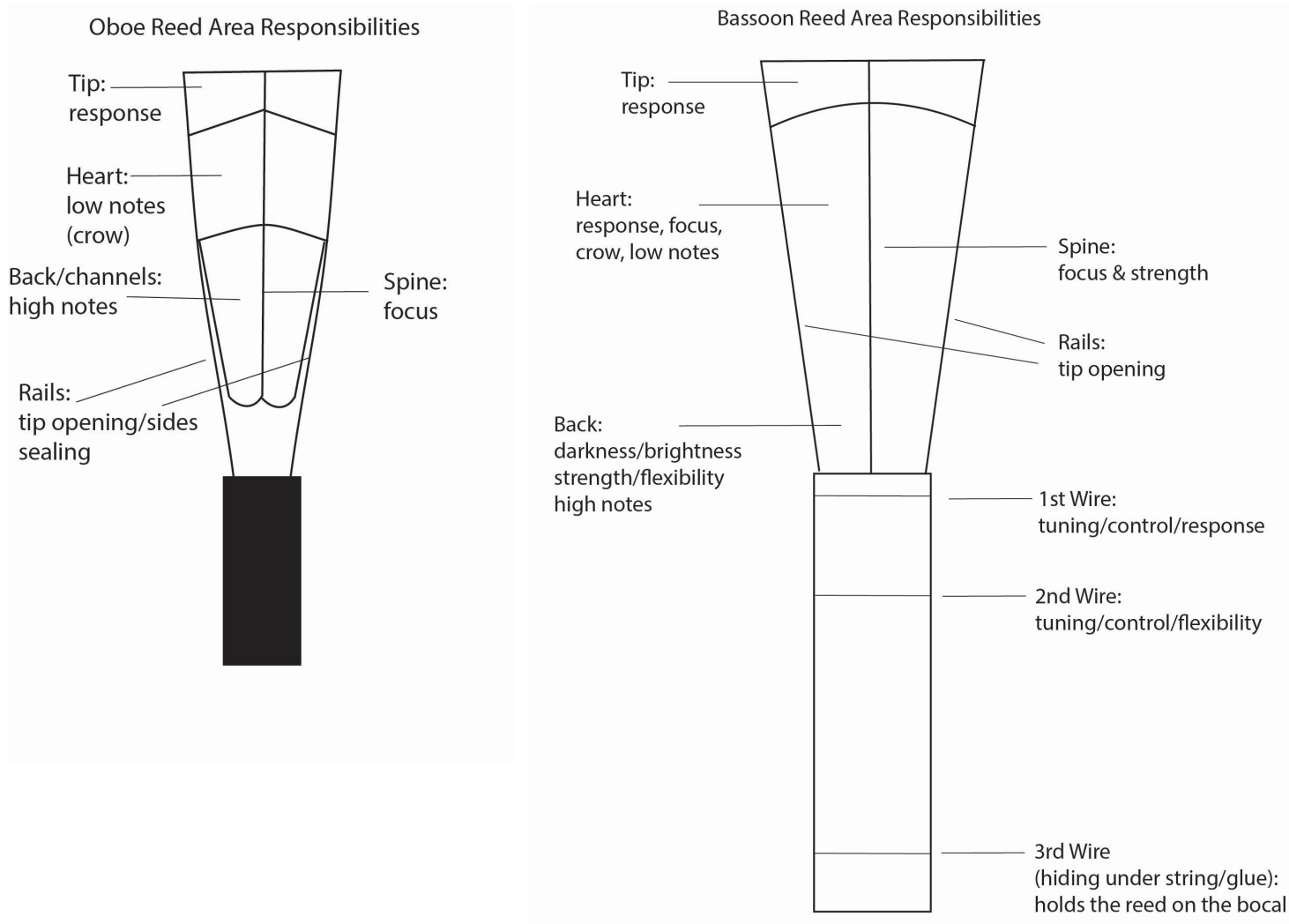
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“The foundation of playing oboe and bassoon is what we do physically and mentally.”

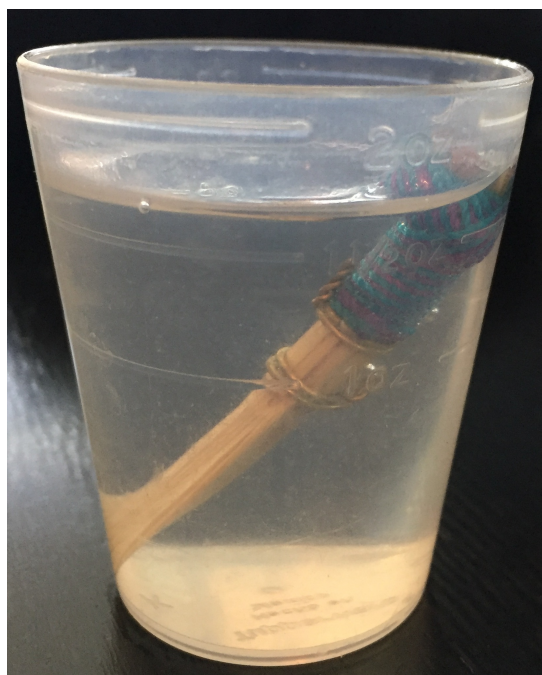
- Selecting students for oboe and bassoon
 - Physical characteristics of double reed players
 - Oboe
 - Individuals with a typical bite or slight overbite is okay for students wishing to play bassoon, however, a student with an under-bite may struggle to make an effective embouchure for oboe.
 - Double-jointed fingers/thumbs can make playing the oboe challenging. They can do it, but would need to be coached to keep their hand position curved and not bent.
 - Bassoon
 - Individuals with a typical bite or slight overbite is okay for students wishing to play bassoon, however, a student with an under-bite may struggle to make an effective embouchure for bassoon.
 - Fingers should be long enough so that they can make the stretch around from the left thumb on the whisper key to all the fingers of the left hand on the front of the wing joint. The plateau key on the left-hand 3rd finger helps with this. Check the ratio of the palm to finger length (tall palms with short fingers sometimes struggle, but it's ok if their overall hand length makes up for this).
 - Personality traits of double reed players
 - Intelligent
 - Strong work ethic
 - Good attention span
 - Creative
 - Problem solver
 - Independent
 - Pays attention to detail
 - Enjoys being unique
 - Extrovert/introvert
- Equipment
 - Instrument is in adjustment and good working order and have the necessary key work.
 - Oboe
 - Required: Left F
 - Required: Low B-flat
 - Preferred: Articulated C#
 - Nice to have: 3rd octave key, but not necessary
 - Bassoon
 - Consider an instrument with a plateau key for the left-hand third finger for beginners to make the stretch more attainable.
 - It is helpful to have a high D key (5th thumb key for left-hand thumb) for extended playing eventually (not required for just starting out).

- Reeds

- Characteristics of good reeds
 - TUNING: Play in tune
 - TONE: Make a characteristic sound
 - TONGUING: Be able to articulate easily
 - RANGES: Play in all the ranges needed (for their level)
 - FEEL: Feel appropriate to blow into
- What effect this has on playing
 - A reed must allow vibration in order to make a sound.
 - A reed should have control in order to make an in-tune and characteristic sound.
 - A reed should have controlled vibration.
 - The balance between control (strength) and vibration (flexibility) on the blade of a reed allows the player to make a sound and control that sound.
 - Reeds have to be able to do what the students need them do



- Soaking the Reed – double reeds must be soaked in a container of water before use.
 - Room temperature water preferred (as opposed to cold, water fountain water). Soaking in the mouth or running it under a stream of water is not sufficient since double reeds have an inside and an outside (as opposed to a top and a bottom)
 - Oboe reeds need about 1 minute, only the wood/cane part needs to be soaked, not the cork/staple.
 - Bassoon reeds need about 3-5 minutes to soak. We soak the whole reed (all the way to the circular edge of the reed, past the string or glue).
 - When finished playing, double reeds need to dry out. Reeds should be stored in a reed case (not the shipping tubes or small plastic containers/coffins) to avoid molding. Ideally the reed case should not be airtight, and it would be nice if the reed case has holes or edges that allow air in. Humidity packets work against this goal, and we recommend against using them for double reeds.



- Teaching materials / books. Ideally teaching materials should:
 - Present note introductions in a logical order (like any instrument). You should start with the easiest thing and get progressively more challenging, rather than start with very complex concepts that may be frustrating to try to master when first getting started).
 - Expand the range in a way that makes sense (from simplest to hardest).
 - Contain quality fingerings.
 - Help students build increasingly complex finger patterns and develop an understanding of mapping (when to use which fingerings).
 - Below is a chart that shows a suggested order of note introduction for ease and utility.

Suggested Order of Note Introduction
Oboe and Bassoon

Oboe	Bassoon
G A B C (left hand)	C D E F (left hand)
F# F E D C (right hand) Add C scale	F G A B B-flat (right hand) Add F scale
Left F, B-flat	E-flat
Half hole D, low E-flat (right) and low half hole Forked F	Half hole G
High E, F, left F, forked F, G Add F scale	Tenor range A, B, B-flat C Add B-flat scale
A-flats – high and low	A-flats – high and low
C# both octaves, left E-flat both octaves Add A-flat scale	C# both octaves Add A-flat scale
F# higher Add G scale	F# both octaves Add G scale
Chromatic C to C, 1 octave	Chromatic F to F, 1 octave
Low notes: B, B-flat Add scales: B-flat, E-flat, D-flat, D	Low notes: pancake E down to low B-flat Add scales: B-flat, E-flat, D-flat, D
High notes: high A through C, side octave key notes Add scales: second octaves of – B-flat, C	High notes: high D through F Add scales: second octaves of – C, F, E-flat, D- flat
High C-sharp, D, E-flat Add scales: second octave of D-flat, D, E-flat	High F-sharp, G, A-flat Add scales: second octaves of – G, D, A-flat

Oboe Embouchure

7 easy steps

1) Center heart of reed on bottom lip.
Reed stays anchored on bottom lip.



2) Roll top and bottom lips in to cover teeth.



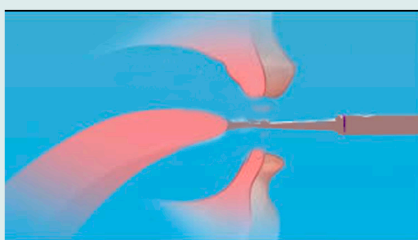
3) Take breath. Use core.



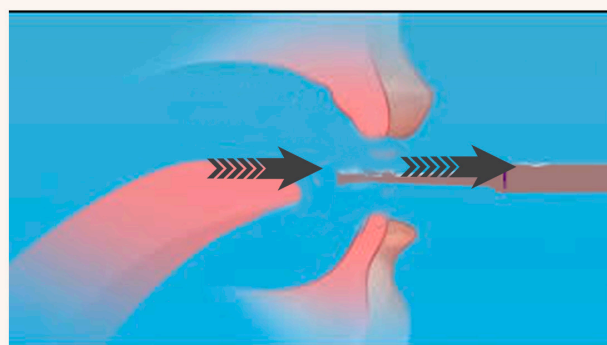
4) Push corners forward (leave lips wrapped in over teeth).



5) Touch tip of tongue to tip of reed.



7) Pull tongue back and release pressurized air.



6) Add air pressure before starting sound.



Bassoon Embouchure

in 6 easy steps

STEP 1



1) Pinky at the wire

STEP 2



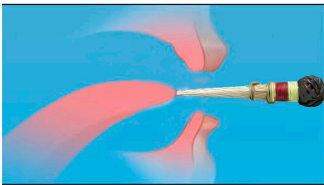
2) Say "how" & breathe in

STEP 3



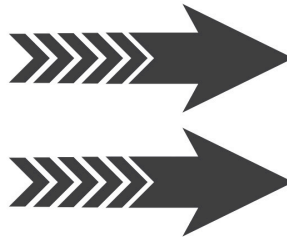
3) Corners forward - lips stay wrapped over teeth

STEP 4



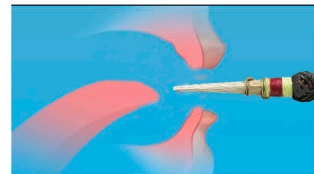
4) Touch tip of tongue to tip of reed

STEP 5



5) Add air pressure before starting sound

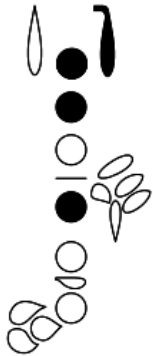
STEP 6



6) Pull tongue back and release pressurized air

Source: Bocal Majority Double Reeds: JenniferAuerbach 2021

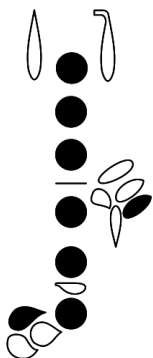
Trouble-shooting Notes Oboe



If this note is flat (also for B-natural and C in this range) either the lip is rolled too far out or the teeth are too far apart inside the mouth. It is also possible that the air is not fast enough.



If this note has trouble speaking (also other low notes with the right hand), make sure the right index finger is not bumping the side A-flat key. Also make sure that the right index finger is pressing the key all the way down. Make sure that the right middle finger is not bumping the trill key right above it. Check that the right ring finger is covering the hole (if the key has a hole in it). Make sure all fingers stay curved and right over the keys.



If this note is having trouble speaking, make sure the left ring finger is still covering the hole and hasn't slid off (also for low B). Make sure to press more to the outside half of the key in order to make it close all the way.



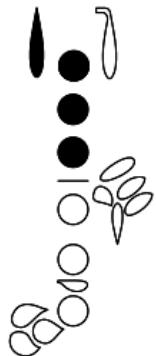
(Also for the higher C-sharp)

If this note does not speak, the right ring finger may have come off of the hole.

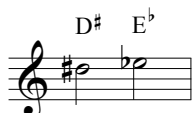


(Also for high G-sharp, A, B, B-flat and high C)

If these notes play flat or drop an octave (even though the octave key is down) use faster air, higher voicing (hee), and roll SLIGHTLY to the back of the reed (towards the string).



If this note is sharp and airy sounding, check to make sure the side octave key is not depressed.



If this note is sharp and airy sounding, check to make sure the octave key is not depressed and that only the half hole is being used.

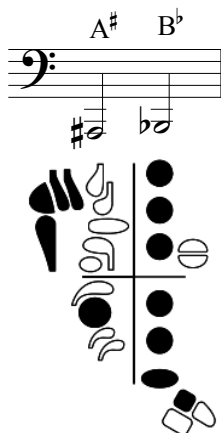


(also with the high left E-flat)

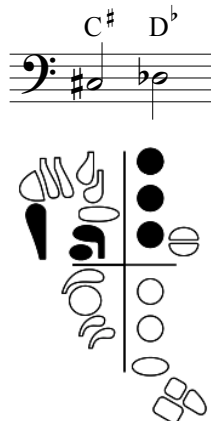
If this note does not speak, check to see if the ring finger has slid forward off the hole.



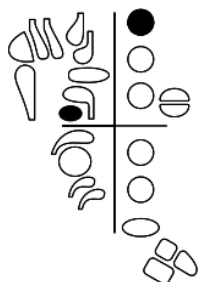
Trouble-shooting Notes Bassoon



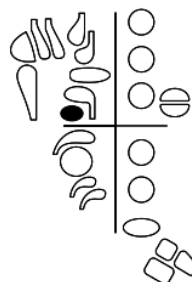
For the low notes in general and specifically this note, make sure all the left hand thumb keys are depressing the keys enough to press pads down all the way. Also, play closer to the tip of the reed, relax the lips and use more relaxed air.



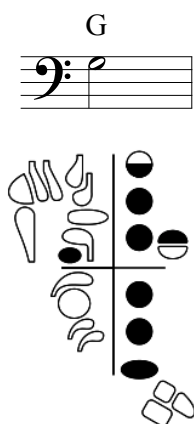
If this note comes out flat, use firm, fast air and slightly firmer lips.



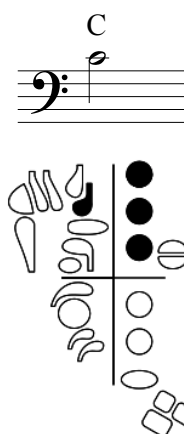
If this note is flat (very common) at first, use firm, fast air, slightly firmer air. It is also very important to have a reed that is strong enough to play this note in tune. With a very soft reed, regardless of what the player does, it may not be possible for the note to come out correctly.



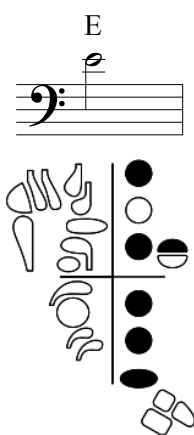
Similar to the issue with E



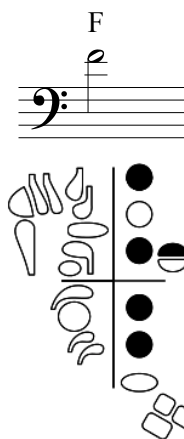
If this note has trouble speaking (also G-flat and G-sharp), check to make sure the correct amount of half-hole is being used and use more air.



If this note is flat (also for A, B-flat, and B in this range), use faster, more intense air, and think higher voicing in the throat (more closed throat).



If this note has trouble speaking or is very flat (also the F and E-flat near it), use much faster air and slightly firmer lips.



If this note has trouble speaking or is very flat (also the E and E-flat near it), use much faster air and slightly firmer lips.