



**Texas Bandmasters Association
Convention/Clinic July 21-23, 2022**

**No Sweat Clarinet! - Teaching Clarinet
Beginners**

**CLINICIANS:
Kim Garza, Ryan Gaughan,
Lauren Jones**



HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



NO SWEAT CLARINET!

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Friday, July 22, 2022 8:00 am - 9:00 am

CC Room 217 CD

SELECTING STUDENTS FOR CLARINET

Jones

- Be sure to check hand and finger size/shape - small fingers can't cover the holes
- Chin shape - prevents the correct angle
- Overbites work great - underbites do not
- Orthodontics - braces, tongue trainers, etc.

BEFORE THE FIRST SOUNDS ARE MADE

Gaughan

- Have instruments delivered to campus over the summer so you can sand corks and prepare the case correctly ahead of time - use 220 grit sandpaper (prevents damage when students assemble)
- Clarinet students should learn the correct terminology for each part of the clarinet
- Students should place the case on the floor in front of their chair, not on their lap

EQUIPMENT

Garza	Gaughan	Jones
Instrument: Buffet E11 (R13 for step-up) Mouthpiece: Vandoren 5RV Lyre Ligature: Inverted Bonade Ligature Reeds: Vandoren Classic 2.5 reeds Other Supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35mm Mouthpiece cushion • Silk Swab • Thumb-EEZ or similar • Cork grease • Reed Guard (4 reeds) • Korg TM-60 Met/Tuner Combo with clip cord • Wire Music Stand 	Instrument: Buffet E11 (R13 or Selmer Presence for step-up) Mouthpiece: D'addario X5 Ligature: Inverted Bonade Ligature Reeds: D'addario Reserve Classic 3.0 reeds Other Supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .35mm Mouthpiece cushion • Silk Swab • Thumb-EEZ or similar • Cork Grease • Reed Guard • Korg TM-60 Met/Tuner Combo with clip • Wire Music Stand • Clarinet Pack-a-stand 	Instrument: Buffet E11 (R13 for step-up) Mouthpiece: Vandoren 5RV Lyre Ligature: Inverted Bonade Ligature or Rovner Dark Reeds: Vandoren Classic 3.0 reeds Other Supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .35mm Mouthpiece cushion • Silk Swab • Thumb-EEZ or similar • Cork Grease • Rico Reed Guard • Korg TM-60 Met/Tuner Combo • Wire Music Stand

INSTRUMENT ASSEMBLY

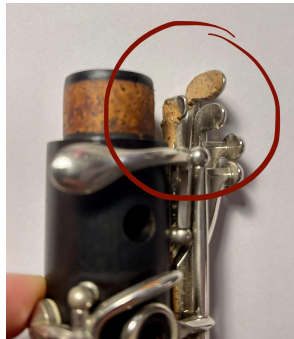
Garza & Gaughan

Mouthpiece & Barrel

- Steps
 1. Place reed in mouth when assembling
 2. Place ligature on mouthpiece
 3. Slide heel of reed downward under ligature, lining up the top of the reed with the top of the mouthpiece. Reed should be slightly lower than the mouthpiece when at eye level - "Sliver of black," "hairline," or "shadow"
- Practice mouthpiece assembly MULTIPLE times prior to even making a first sound
- Be SUPER picky
- Ligature Considerations
 - Students can wear their ligature on their finger when assembling so it's out of the way and doesn't scratch the mouthpiece.
 - Ligature screw should always be on the right
 - Ligature chant
 - Be sure to check tightness of the ligature screw

Full Clarinet

- After the mouthpiece and barrel, we assemble from the bottom up
- Teach students to assemble vertically so they avoid damage
- Start on the floor
- Super similar to all woodwinds in how you handle (avoiding rods, keys, etc.)
- Take extra care when assembling lower tenon joints to upper tenon joints. There is a small spacer cork under the upper joint's bridge key and it is easily knocked off by careless assembly
- Clarinet is either in the clarinet stand or in the player's hands



Damaged Instrument pictured above.

EMBOUCHURE & PRODUCING THE FIRST SOUND

Garza & Jones

- Posture/Position
 - *"Teach body balance as opposed to posture. Posture tends to imply a fixed position whereas body balance suggests that a musician may move any part of the body comfortably and freely while playing"* - Lynne Jackson
 - Teach from day one with no instrument
 - The feet are flat and shoulder width apart, the spine is neutral, the rib cage is lifted, shoulders are sloped, and the neck is relaxed
- Mouthpiece and barrel only
 - Concert F# on the tuner (ok if it's sharp, not ok if it's flat)
 - Do this for a LONG time!
- Chin & Bottom Lip
 - Pink part of the lip still showing
 - "Long chin" - flat and against bottom teeth

- Corners are not pulled far back - not 'smiley' - corners are forward and in an "ooh" position
- Teeth
 - Firm grip on top of the mouthpiece (mouthpiece patch)
 - Push up from thumb rest toward top teeth
- Tongue
 - Tongue should be high, forward, and close to the reed thinking "E" from the beginning
 - We don't discuss the tongue much until we get to articulation (unless necessary)
- Build the embouchure separately from the clarinet, using a mirror
- You can also use drinking straws as a tool to train the embouchure before transitioning to the mouthpiece and barrel
- A 45 degree angle is a good starting point for positioning. This will depend on the student's bite.
- *"The lips should be so firm around the mouthpiece, that if anyone wanted to pull the clarinet out of your mouth while you were playing, they wouldn't be able to do so."* - Daniel Bonade
- Consider using the "wobble test" when checking a student's muscle engagement

ARTICULATION

Garza & Jones

- Use the word/syllable 'too' "tee" or "dee"
- Tip of the tongue to the tip of the reed
- Have them find where the reed and mouthpiece meet, move tongue just under
- Air/whisper first before producing sound
- Tonal Energy
 - Use the Sound Analysis feature on phone or iPad

HAND POSITION

Gaughan

- Right Hand Position
 - Relax right hand and let it drop to the side
 - Curved flat "C" position
 - Right thumb under the thumb rests at the base of the thumbnail.
 - Push up with your right thumb into teeth
 - Right hand fingers should be straight and perpendicular to the clarinet body
- Left Hand Position
 - Fingers are sloped downward and must remain in contact with the G# and A key
 - Left Thumb at 45 degree angle
 - Critical to the success of clarinet players, so do not be in a hurry and be picky!
- Pinky Fingers
 - Pinky controls the hands
 - Teach home keys right away - "home position"
 - Pinky Power chant
- Neck Straps
 - Case by case
 - Use it as a tool to help students super small students or ones who are double jointed
 - Do not use ones that are 100% elastic - provide little stability and no benefit to the player
- Common Hand Position Problems
 - Have students press fingers down on home keys, then remove and check the circular indentations left from the open holes - if they are not seeing a complete circle on their fingers, they are not sealing that hole
 - Spread out fingers on mouthpiece and barrel when playing as to avoid curling, stacking, or waving. Watch especially on the notes "E" and "F"



Curling

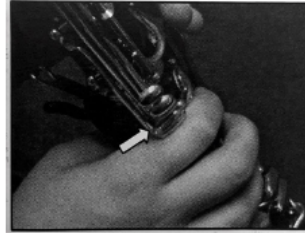


Stacking



Waving

- “Hook of death”. Right hand index finger holding up the instrument by the side keys



- Even exercises - I will have students do these daily to focus on correct finger placement and pressure one at a time. These are also done slurred, so air movement and embouchure are still being focused on without giving them too many things to think about at once:

CLARINET EVEN EXERCISE PATTERNS

1. E F E F E F E
“I must do this ex-er-cise.”
2. D E D E D E D
3. C D C D C D C
4. Bb C Bb C Bb C Bb
5. A Bb A Bb A Bb A
6. G A G A G A G
7. F G F G F G F

CLARINET TIPS AND TRICKS

Gaughan & Jones

- “A Key” Exercises
 - DO NOT attempt to go over the break unless students have a firm grasp on the “A key”
This must be done for MANY weeks while the teacher constantly monitors hand position
 - The motion of pressing the “A key” is very unnatural and should be practiced without the clarinet before applying to the instrument
 - The following exercises are studied for weeks during class prior to moving onto register slurs or crossing the break



- Register Exercises
 - After students have mastered the “A-key” they should move to register slurs
 - Students should be playing above the break before they try crossing/going over the break
 - B and C: The B and C keys are usually the first keys on a clarinet to develop leaks and can create much difficulty. If students are doing everything right, check for leaks
- Crossing the break
 - Consider teaching the throat tones (A, G#/Ab, A#/Bb) with the right hand or left hand down (Can help in crossing the break, and help with tuning on Buffets)
 - Once the class is consistent with register slurs you should approach crossing the break in reverse. See example below:



- 7 Magic Notes
 - Helpful for students and non-clarinet playing teachers to understand the correlation between registers. See example from Musical Mastery below



- Line 2 you add the register key
- Line 3 you left the index finger, add the pinky
- Scale levels (1 octave, 2 octaves, 3 octaves)
- Solos cross the break (prepares for 7th grade)
- Advanced technique to be developed into 7th/8th grade
 - Arpeggios
 - Thirds
 - Etudes
 - Technique books/handouts

RECOMMENDED METHOD BOOKS AND PRINT MATERIALS

Remarks: *Essential Elements*, *Standard of Excellence*, *Tradition of Excellence*, and *Accent of Achievement* are all examples of good beginning band method books. The list below are additional resources that help develop your clarinet teacher toolbox and allow for more specific clarinet information.

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| • <i>For Clarinets Only</i> by Marilyn Mattei | • <i>Embouchure Building for Clarinetists</i> by Larry Guy |
| • <i>So you Want to Play the Clarinet</i> by Paula Corley | • <i>Classic Festival Solos</i> |
| • <i>Rubank Elementary Method, Clarinet Lesson 1 Whole Notes - Whole Rests</i> (fantastic for building embouchures) | • <i>Chrysalis and Donkey Ride</i> by Gustave Langenus |
| • “Gaughan Clarinet Basics” | • Klose |
| | • <i>Johnbenzer.com supplemental exercise</i> |