Bandworld
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Canadian Brass at the 2014 American Band College

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The Future of the Bandworld

MusiClips

by Ira Novoselsky Bio

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Sinfonia Hungarica mvmt. 3 "Istvan"

by Jan Van der Roost

Album Title: JAN VAN DER ROOST: SINFONIA HUNGARICA
Recording: Philharmonic Winds OSAKAN
Conductor: Jan Van der Roost
Publisher: Naxos 8.573206

During my long association with Max McKee, BandWorld , WIBC and ABC I had the pleasure of being introduced to Jan Van der Roost. Van der Roost is a true master composer with an incredible catalog of quality works for winds. I have reviewed a recording of Sinfonia Hungarica in the past and it is an outstanding 21st century symphony. The three movements Atilla!, Arapad and Istvan are vivid musical portraits of early historic Hungary before their first king Istvan was crowned in 1001. Also included on this recording is From Ancient Times, a work Van der Roost also composed for brass band. The music of the Renaissance Franco-Flemish School serves as inspiration for this substantial composition. In addition, the 2014 bicentennial birth of Adolphe Sax(responsible for the development of saxophones and saxhorns) is given homage within the slow movement. This is a fine recording to introduce yourself to the musical world of Jan Van der Roost. If you are already familiar with this composer I need not say more than sit back and savor the audio experience.

Stylus Phantasticus

By Kathryn Salfelder

Album Title: SHADOWCATCHER
Recording: University of Western Michigan Symphonic Band
Conductor: Robert L. Spradling
Guest Artists: Western Winds and Western Brass Quintet
Publisher: Klavier K-11197

Shadowcatcher by Eric Ewazen is a magnificent concerto for brass quintet and wind ensemble with its inspiration coming from Native American photographer Edward Curtis. Four of his photographs are exquisitely illustrated in music, the listener can almost visualize the photos through Ewazen's descriptive writing. Concerto 2010 (Anthony Plog) is a four movement work in two large sections. This concerto uses a good deal of interplay between the soloists and single voices from the wind ensemble in addition to the more conventional role of soloists with accompaniment. Icarus (Richard Danielpour) is a powerful essay for brass, two pianos and percussion based on the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus. The remaining work is Stylus Phantasticus by Kathryn Salfelder. The title comes from the style of organ music from the early Baroque period and the Toccata in D minor BuxWV155 of Dieterich Buxtehude is a source used in this composition. While not necessarily indicated in the title as featured performers there is some significant usage of antiphonal brass in this work. Shadowcatcher is a very impressive recording you will enjoy, the entire musical forces from the University of Western Michigan are superb.

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Their Finest Hour

by Nigel Clarke

Album Title: EARTHRISE
Recording: Middle Tennessee State University Wind Ensemble
Conductor: Reed Thomas
Trombone Soloist: David Loucky
Publisher: Naxos 8.573184

The title work is by Nigel Clarke, a composer I was introduced to via an earlier Naxos recording of Black Fire, Samurai, and other works. Earthrise was originally written for brass band and gets its title from NASA photograph ASB-14-2383 during the 1968 moon expedition. For some reason one musical theme bears a very strong resemblance to On the Waterfront by Leonard Bernstein. Two other works by Clarke appear on this recording; Heritage Suite (What Hope Saw) is inspired by a famous bronze sculpture by Sarah Cunnington and a related poem by Martin Westlake while Their Finest Hour (title taken from the Winston Churchill speech) portrays the Battle of Britain. Westlake also commissioned a corresponding poem and the familiar Royal Air Force March Past (Davies & Dyson) is heard within this composition. Two other composers are represented on EARTHRISE; Kit Turnbull and Jesus Santandreu. Griot by Turnbull features a trombone soloist in the role of a West African troubadour involving his audience via oration. song, dance and drumming. Sortes Diabolorum by Santandreu is about the days of the Inquisition when sorcery and predicting the future gradually gave way to common sense. I applaud the Middle Tennessee State University Wind Ensemble for their solid performance of this challenging repertoire.

Voice of the Guns

By Kenneth Alford

Album Title:THE MUSIC OF KENNETH ALFORD
Recording: The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Naval Home Command
Conductor: Captain J.R. Mason
Publisher: Chandos Collect: CHAN6584 Old Comrades: A Classic CD Revisited

I am very happy to see this wonderful recording reissued. While Sousa marches can be easily found it takes a bit more effort to locate one for Kenneth J. Alford. I'm sure everyone knows Alford's most famous march, Colonel Bogey, but it is NOT the River Kwai March; Sir Malcolm Arnold composed this movie march which borrows themes from Colonel Bogey. Another Alford march that is featured in the movies is The Voice of the Guns which Maurice Jarre used in Lawrence of Arabia. Of special interest is The Vanished Army; this classic march is called a Poetic march by the composer and bears the subtitle They Never Die. In addition to these and other marches the recording features The Lightning Switch and A Musical Switch. Both fantasias are imaginative and humorous conglomerations of many familiar pieces (think Harold Walters' Instant Concert for a modern example). I highly recommend this recording.

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Director as C.E.O. (part 2)

by David Willson

Vol.20 , #1, p.28 (July - September 2004) Bio

The next step is to go to the board and write in large block letters the following statement: "The Most Important Job of the Year Is to Enjoy What We Do"

At that time you must explain the definition of the word "enjoy". Most everyone has "enjoyed" fleeting moments of fun in a party0oriented atmosphere. This is not the true definition of the word,which is "1: to have for one's use, benefit, or lot: EXPERIENCE < enjoyed great success>. In other words, the true meaning of enjoyment is accomplishing worthwhile goals in short increments over a long period of time and at the same time feeling good about the process. This is the definition you should try to convey to your students.

The next step in your communication process with your students is to list the obstacles which must be overcome in order to enjoy the year. The first obstacle is absenteeisms and tardiness. No team, whether it is a Forbes 500 business or a Mom-and -Pop storefront, can maintain excellence and build morale with habitual offenders in regards to absences and tardies. If absenteeism and tardiness are not addressed, you can rest assured you will have morale problems. Outline your policy and paint vivid pictures in a light-hearted manner as to your expectations by saying something to this effect: " Pleas call in advance and let me know if you will not be here. This will allow me to change our daily plan accordingly."

Often, work and other school activities are the biggest sources of absenteeism and tardiness. Try to paint vivid pictures, such as the student having to confront the assistant manager at the local fast food restaurant requiring a student on a moment's notice to work the Friday night of a football game. Let's say this student had an obligation to pay for his car insurance and felt that if he did not go he would lose his car. Write them a "script" on how to approach this and similar situations so that if one comes they have tools to handle it and some options to have at the ready if the situation is beyond their control. By doing this, the director saves himself or herself a lot of useless expended energy and time.

The second obstacle to overcome is a lack of honesty and integrity on the part of the students. One simply cannot operate team of thieves and liars. These are people who are not going to follow through on what they say they will do. Stress to the students that the number one negative emotion in life is guilt, as follows:
"Guilt is an extremely powerful emotion and is impossible to hide. At some point, a lie will eventually come out. you can try to disguise it any way you want, but guilt stays with you. Don't lie. Don't steal. There are instruments, purses and other belongings that simply aren't yours and you shouldn't touch them. It is your responsibility to put everything you own away properly and not leave it out. Please don't abuse public equipment and help me keep the band hall in order, and whatever you do, DON'T LIE TO ME!"

The third obstacle to overcome is lack of intensity in rehearsals. The only way a band can perform up to its full potential is to utilize the time and work as efficiently as possible in rehearsal. everybody gets "down"

from time to time, and/or is not feeling well physically. Most of the time, the negative feelings and lack of energy can be overcome with positive self-talk such as,"I don't feel great, but I 'm going to do the best I can right now." Tell them if they make a mistake not to condemn themselves, but rather to say to themselves, "I'll make it better, I'll learn from that mistake and make it a stepping stone and not a stumbling block." How students approach rehearsals mentally and physically is extremely important. They have got to be on time, in the right place with all their materials ready to go, and most of all, maintain a positive and cooperative attitude.

Before students can achieve quality in performance, they must first achieve quality in everything they do, whether it be marching. memorizing music. or being a part of a work detail. Stress to the students the importance of doing any and all jobs as professionally as possible and not to settle for "just getting by." By doing this, they help themselves to achieve their goals, contribute towards the overall band atmosphere and growth, and help everyone stay positive. Tell the students that if everyone strove to be as good as they could be, the rehearsal environment would be such that everyone would look forward to being in.

The fourth obstacle to overcome is lack of responsibility and dependability. No individual has to advertise whether they are responsible and dependable or not. These qualities are written over everything an individual does. Reinforce this concept to the students with a statement to this effect:
"Please, keep up with your music and bring it with your field charts to each and every practice. Put your horns in its case and proper storage place each day. Take care of you uniform and have it cleaned regularly. Please turn in anything we ask on time and do you rest to achieve your goals with fund raising,m band jobs, and other items pertinent to being a responsible band member."

The fifth obstacle to overcome is a disorganized physical plant. A band room has to accommodate much larger numbers than a typical school classroom. By the time student comes in and gets an instrument, goes back out to the field, comes back in to put it up and goes back out, assuming a band size of 125, the band hall doors will have opened and shut approximately five-hundred times in one hour. Even assuming the band students are the most disciplined in the world, a certain amount of tracking in dirt is inevitable. When the students contribute to helping the band hall stays orderly, they feel as if they are contributing to the overall welfare of the ensemble. In this sense, their contribution is similar to the profit-sharing in the corporate world. Be specific and help them learn how to do this with the following phrases:

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The Future of the Bandworld

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Director as C.E.O (part 2) conclusion

by David Willson

"If you see a piece of trash, please pick it up and throw it away. A person with a negative mentality would say, "I didn't put it here and I'm not going to pick it up." A person with a positive mentality would say, " I'll do anything to help the positive environment of the band." Please do not bring drinks, gum or candy into the band hall."

"Take care of our restrooms and our equipment. When you abuse equipment, it's like stealing from yourself because it's either equipment purchased from your own taxpayer dollars or equipment you helped purchase by fund raising with your own blood, sweat and tears."

When students learn to contribute and care for facilities, it gains respect from the administration, parents, and the community. This respect translates into the willingness to support your program both verbally and financially.

The sixth obstacle to overcome is a negative band image. The main reason people get out of teaching is not the long hours or low pay, it's a negative working environment. The reason most students are hesitant to join band generally deals with the perception of the band program. The goal is to make everyone who comes into contact with the band program glad that they did, whether it is in the process of leaving a restaurant on a band trip, attending a band festival, or talking with a band parent. This can be achieved by telling the students the following:

"Band, let's have a standard of conduct that makes people say, "There goes a classy organization." To do that, we need to speak positively about band in the home and in the community. If your parents ask you how band was today and you say, "it was awful." change it to "It was hot and we worked hard, but we are getting a lot done." If the neighbor says, "My child wants to join band." an appropriate response would be, "Great! Being in band allows you to set goals and work as a team and it's a worthwhile organization." Speak softly and be considerate of other. In a large organization, respect for each other is paramount. Develop good manners. Thank band parents when they come to work for us. Be sure to thank bus drivers and people at hotels and restaurants, and most of all, be pleasant and respectful of each other. Act responsibly going to and from band rehearsals, especially if you drive. You are not being judged as a citizen in this situation,m you are being judged as a band student. Accept constructive criticism and correction. It is part of the band staff's job to look for musical errors and inappropriate behavior and to offer correction from the Director's standpoint, correction can be helped by preceding it with some type of encouragement and by ending with a thank-you. It creates an environment that is non-confrontational. For example,"Johnny, you're a great student, but you are going two steps too far. This time come down to the hash mark and only go out one step. Thanks for trying that." This is in sharp contrast to the following,"I can't believe that you are making the same mistake! What's it going to take? Do you want this band to be bad?" tell the students that any time they feel cheated or think they have been dealt with in an inappropriate manner to come and see you and talk professionally.

The seventh obstacle to overcome is the lack of leadership by example. Tell the students that their friends pay more attention to what they do than to what they say. It is not healthy for high school students to point fingers and yell and scream at each other or students at any level for that matter. The true leaders are the ones who lead by example. Consider the story of the band director who was about to dismiss his band and quipped, "I need to get this field mowed," Upon dismissing the band, the director went into the band hall to prepare for a band boosters meeting that evening. Upon completing his notes, he prepared to leave to go home and locked the door to the band hall. As he drove away, he saw a young freshman moving the field with a push mower. The director promptly stopped his car and got out and told the student whenever meant for one person to do it but was grateful for his initiative and would get the school tractor and have it mowed in fifteen minutes and told him to go home. The director went home, showered and came back for the booster meting. To his surprise there were seven other students on the practice field mowing. The one student's actions motivated other students to act in a civic manner. That same student never pointed his finger or raised his voice, but was always the first one back to his place,the first one to pass off his music and the first to turn in his fund raising money. His level of enthusiasm and citizenship set an example so high that he literally led the band without saying one word.

The eighth obstacle to overcome is negativity. By the time a student gets into high school band, they know it takes a certain amount of effort in all types of weather, from blistering heat, to drenching rain, to freezing cold. Students can either do it positively or negatively. whining about circumstances beyond their control brings others down. Stress to your students not to get caught up in any form of cynicism. Stress to students that by tackling adverse situations positively, they will get the most out of them.

In short,if the director stresses all of the above and makes the band motto " *Be All-Superior Every Day, in Every Way,*" the students will enjoy an environment which is positive to work in and will be non-confrontational. Having a well-organized plan at the beginning of the year and getting band personnel on the same page will result in a better year for the director and the students. It will provide a much more pleasant working environment. *Challenge yourself and your students to be All-Superior, Every Day in Every Way.*

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The Future of the Bandworld

25 Years ago in Bandworld

At the Crossroads

by Frank Bencriscutto Bio

Vol.5 , #1, p.35 (August -October 1989)

The following article contains excerpts from a presentation given to the National Association of Secondary Principals in 1989. Many of these points are more dramatically true today than at the time of the speech. we probably need to hear more of these in each state today. BW Editor.

I have done clinics in some 25 different states over the past two years and it is very clear that our American School Band Programs are at the crossroads. Many are on the verge of collapse and in general quality is declining. This is a national concern! The American School Band Program: Focus on the Future, a position statement, was recently adopted by the American Bandmasters Association, one of the most prestigious of such groups in the world.

The school band program is an American phenomenon and one of the most important mediums of musical expression in 20th century America. How tragic it will be if we allow music in our schools to deteriorate to ineffectiveness.

To rectify the dilemma, we must first accept the fact that we have a serious problem. Consider the many facets of a band program, it's understandable that directional emphasis may become imbalanced. The concert band must be the core of the program. That is where significant teaching takes place; however, in too many schools this is no longer the case.

The listing entitled the "Decline of the School Band Program" outlines some of the more salient causes for our declining band programs. Incidentally, under A , to understand the phrase "non-artistic academics", you need to know that I consider a band program with curriculum accountability to be an artistic–academic component, dealing with the whole person, in contrast to the other academic subjects, the non-artistic academics which deal primarily with cognitive dimensions.

To allow for a worthy program, we must have enough periods in the school day. I'm sure you have heard that statement often, but, clearly, the opportunities I have had to guest conduct around the nation reveal that the best performing arts programs are in 8-period days. Six-period days squeeze out opportunity for many students to participate in performing groups.

Counselors are often urging students to take a foreign language instead of performance, which is sadly ironic since music is the universal language. Without desiring to generate conflict here with regard to language requirements, let me say first that, in my state of Minnesota, students can take language in college for one year rather than two years in high school, and secondly, concertizing around the world including two months in the USSR and several weeks in China has reinforced the fact that there simply is no question that music is a language that speaks to all people in a more humanistically effective manner than any verbal language.

Eight-period days would eliminate conflict. We should question whether our needs must comply with the number of periods or whether, in fact, the number of periods must comply with our needs. I'm sure, at least ideally, you agree that the periods should comply with our needs and not the reverse. I hope you can overcome the problems preventing an

increase to eight, or at least seven, periods in the school day.

We need the arts now more than ever! We need the arts to warm our hearts, to lift our spirits, and to keep us together! Throughout the Soviet Union I could't help but say, "Though our language, creed, and system of government are different, music makes us aware that our hearts are filled with the same feelings and aspirations. We do care about each other and we need each other".

Music can teach us to care, and when students care, they become much more receptive listeners!

The key to opening the door to these kinds of humanistic values is a quality program. Earlier I said that in too many schools the concert band is no longer the core of the band program. Generally what has happened is the artistic-academic characteristics of our band programs have given way to the extra-curricular entertainment characteristics. We all enjoy marching band, for example, but it must not be the core of the program (though it is in many senior high schools) and should not take artistic–academic class time from concert band—and, incidentally, our marching bands will be musically better where that rule is followed. We also need to be extremely careful not to overemphasize contests. That also can be a superficial quick fix, but destructive over the long haul. Music is not an athletic event. With music everyone can be a winner!

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The Future of the Bandworld

25 Years ago in Bandworld

At the Crossroads (continued)

by Frank Bencriscutto

The listing entitled "The Quality Artistic–Academic Program" provides detail, but the three most critical characteristics for a worthy program are:

1. **The music studied and performed must include some of the great compositions from Western history along with a variety of American music—otherwise it is like planting in soil that doesn't allow for good growth.**
2. **A comprehensive testable curriculum is essential. Regarding that, I asked university instrumentalists and their comment was that systematic learning stops in the band program around grade 8 or 9.**
3. **Artistic expression is what music is about and there must be a degree of focus in our programs on expression and humanistic values.**

I truly believe we must get back to the feelings that help us as individuals and unite us as a society—not superficial feelings or competitive feelings but our sense of appreciation and love for all life.

The literature we present to the student is critical to a quality program, but the need for an accountable, testable, and progressive curriculum is fundamental to an artistic–academic program. Fundamentals can be fun when students begin to sense progress. Achievement charts coordinated with comprehensive skills plans keep everyone aware of that progress. Achievement charts are very important since the natural tendency of the human being is to lose interest if there is no tangible evidence of progress. Since the idea of curriculum is relatively new to the upper four grades in concert band, support and encouragement is necessary.

In a quality band program there needs to be an awareness of the humanistic value of music. It is an awareness that should be absorbed gradually through both the intellectual thought process and the feelings generated with sincere musical expression. Posting quotations about music and its nature will allow students to read and absorb whenever they are receptive. The use of humanistic comments by the director as occasional podium vocabulary is helpful. Periodically, students could be asked to turn in a few sentences as to what the music is saying to them in terms of feelings. These efforts will give greater purpose and value to the musical experience.

I think our students, their parents, and everyone else, need to see music as something more precious. Marshall McLuhan compared the average person's understanding of music to natives on some island who wear precious diamonds and pearls around their necks, but don't realize the value of those pearls or diamonds. If students better realized the value of music, I think they would be less superficial, more serious, and more dedicated.

Within the curriculum there should be materials to nurture and cultivate the creative capacity of students. Traditional American jazz, in my estimation, is the most accessible way to excite the creative imagination, and, incidentally, in December of 1987 Congress officially declared American jazz a National Treasure that must be studied and maintained. Fortunately, basic theory for classical music or jazz is basically identical, and jazz is a fun way to learn theory while also learning what has become a classic American art form. I must emphasize teaching of classical jazz, that is, jazz with classical tone quality and articulation. Chords and scales within a formal structure are equivalent to vocabulary and paragraph structure in verbal language. There can be no creativity without musical vocabulary. When the vocabulary is learned, we can encourage the students to express their own ideas using that vocabulary.

To demonstrate creativity, have students improvise. This serves to motivate the young students and demonstrates that cultivating vocabulary is necessary to reach the advanced level of the professional.

Confucius stated, "If you wish to know the nature of love within a society, whether that love be selfish or unselfish, study its music". Obviously, there was misuse of music even in the time of Confucius! Anything that is powerful can be used for good or bad. A fire can warm the house or burn it down. I believe music is like that.

I hope you will support music as an important academic component. The results can be a major asset to the character of our society as well as a force for world peace.

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The Future of the Bandworld

25 Years ago in Bandworld
At the Crossroads (concluded)

by Frank Bencriscutto

Decline of the School Band Program Some Causes

1. **Non-artistic academic demands and the limited number of periods in the school day have, in many schools, squeezed out participation.**
2. **Misconception as to what constitutes a quality program is common.The multi-dimensional nature of the school band has created confusion as to where the central focus belongs.**
3. **The Concert Band component of the American School Band Program has, in the majority of school nationwide, lost its central position to the Marching/Pep component which, in fact, is the extra-curricular ingredient of the total band program.**
4. **The study and performance of quality literature has generally lost its central place in repertoire consideration.**
5. **The nurturing of creativity is lacking.**
6. **The absence of an accountable and testable curriculum to develop performance skills and teach the language of music has denied a tangible measuring tool needed by students, parents, and administrators alike.**
7. **A superficial image and diminished respect created by the non-artistic role dominating the artistic–academic focus (such as overemphasis on marching/pep functions for athletic events, parades, contests, and excessive pop music) have caused, in the longer range, serious damage to every aspect of the band program. Fault for this has to be somewhat akin to the "chicken and the egg" dilemma.**

The above factors, in different proportions form school to school, are principal reasons for the drastic drop-out rate from elementary to junior high and from junior high to senior high thus causing the decline of the school band program.

What Constitutes A Quality Artistic–Academic Program?

1. **The Concert Band must be the central focus where most of the teaching takes place.**
2. **Marching and Pep Bands, extracurricular in nature, should be accomplished before or after school. They should not take artistic–academic class time for the concert band. Exploitation of students by too many athletic and civic performances and contests must be carefully guarded.**
3. **Contests must not be over-emphasized as they too–often deny teaching time with extremely excessive focus on one or two contest compositions over as much as 3, 4, or more months.**
4. **The Concert Band must utilize a progressive curriculum developing comprehensive musicianship and providing testable accountability.**
5. **The repertoire of the concert band must include great music of all periods of Western history as well as a variety of American styles from classical through jazz and "pop".**
6. **Creativity must be nurtured by accomplishing a performing (and perhaps written) knowledge of basic theory in the concert band. Vocabulary of musical form and content is basic to musical creativity just as vocabulary of the English language is basic to verbal creativity.**
7. **The jazz ensemble and use of synthesizers and high tech must be interrelated to the creative vocabulary (basic theory) presented in the concert band.**
8. **A degree of focus on the humanistic–social value of significant musical–artistic expression is essential.**

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The Future of the Bandworld

5 THINGS I DID... (Part 2)

by Andrew Hitz

Played for Every Professional Player That Passed Through Town

Something I was taught at a very early age was to try and play for every single professional that came anywhere near my hometown. Sometimes this was in master classes and other times this was in private lessons. Performing in front of as many professionals as possible was immensely important in me gaining the confidence to play at my best in a wide a range of circumstances.

Master classes are the easiest place for a college student to gain access, even if only briefly, to a professional traveling through town. It was my experience that a visiting artist could say the exact same thing that my teacher had been saying all along but in just a slightly different manner and it would make everything click in my mind.

I am always telling my students that all performing and teaching, both good and bad, counts as "data" that helps to mold me as a musician. If I hear a concept put in a way that makes a lot of sense, I am of course sure to share that with my students. Likewise, if someone teaches something in a manner which doesn't click with me or that I disagree with, it only serves to strengthen my own point of view. Keeping this in mind, any master class that I ever attend is worth my time. Always. And any great teacher will address exactly what you personally need to hear if they hear you play.

When I was a young student I was taught a great trick when someone was listening to multiple students play in a master class. Always volunteer to play first.

There are a few reasons for this. First of all, when conducting a master class it can be very difficult to keep track of time when working with students. If a teacher does not manage their time well, the student playing at the beginning of the class will always get extra time. It is very difficult to stick to time slots as a teacher and the people playing at the end are always the ones affected.

Another equally important reason is that it is natural to be distracted and nervous until you get in front of the group to play. You are going to retain very little information that is given to the players who play before you. If you volunteer to play first, you can simply relax, take notes, and learn from all of the people that play after you. Sometimes the information that is shared without you being on the hot seat can make the biggest impression.

I always raised my hand immediately in every single master class, whether I felt like playing that day or not. As a result, I played in every class, got at least as much time as everyone else that played, and was able to focus on the teaching, and not myself, for the remainder of the class.

Finally, it is great to be able to get a private lesson with someone passing through town. Speaking from experience, my schedule rarely allows time to meet with people individually but there is a trick to increasing your chances of hearing a "yes" when asking for a lesson.

First, contact the person before they come to your town or school. This has never been easier than it is now with email, Twitter, Facebook, etc. If you can't find them through any of those channels, simply ask your teacher if they might know their info. It is a lot easier for me to schedule my day around giving a student a lesson if they contact me well ahead of time.

Second, you should always offer to pay someone for his or her time. Frequently, when a student asks a traveling professional for a lesson and offers to pay them, they will teach them for free. This is not always the case but it definitely sends the wrong message to not offer to pay someone for his or her time. Even if you are very up front in stating that you have no money and understand that you wouldn't expect them to be able to teach you, this will generally be well received. It might not get you a lesson, but you will leave a good impression in a business where impressions are imperative.

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BW 2014

The Future of the Bandworld

5 THINGS I DID... (Part 2) concluded

by Andrew Hitz

Got Out of My Musical Comfort Zone

I was raised as a classical player. I still consider myself a classical player who happens to be able to play some other styles of music. Growing up, I wanted to be the tuba player in a major symphony orchestra. In fact, I wanted to be in only the Boston Symphony. It was a great plan, but before Chester Schmitz retired, I was called by Boston Brass to fill in on that gig in Colorado. When I got there, half of the show was jazz, which included walking bass lines, playing a solo and even singing a tune. Thankfully, I had teachers along the way that had made me encounter all three of those things in performance before I was asked to do them in front of 1200 band directors.

When I arrived at Northwestern University, I already had a very wide range of musical tastes. In high school, I listened to just as much Led Zeppelin as Tchaikovsky. There was a very large disconnect however between the number of styles of music I listened to and the number I played on the tuba. This was not any sort of conscious decision but simply a product of being raised as a classical player.

I was lucky enough to try playing a little bit of jazz in both middle school and high school. I played the bass trombone parts in jazz band down an octave, which did a lot for developing my taste for jazz, but my performance of it was still very limited. My exploration of non-classical music did not expand outside of jazz band rehearsals and performances.
That is until I got to college. Once I got to Evanston I was surrounded by music all of the time. Chicago is one of the best cities in the world for live music and I was suddenly introduced to a whole new set of friends with their own tastes and CD collections. It was an exciting time.

One of the best decisions I ever made was to formally pursue learning how to improvise. I ended up getting the number of a fantastic tuba player and teacher in Chicago named Dan Anderson. I took the El down to DePaul and took a few jazz lessons with him. This is where I really started to get the new language of jazz in my ear. Just like learning how to speak any other language, you have to immerse yourself in it. Dan showed me the different articulations, weights and note lengths that are all a part of “speaking” jazz. I only took a few lessons with him, but they were invaluable to me moving forward.

Next, I enrolled in Jazz Improv class with Tony Garcia at NU. He had a very organized and systematic way of teaching the art of improvising which I responded to well. Even if the class had only been listening to the examples he played for us and discussing them, it would have been one of the most beneficial classes I took during undergrad.

I also began jamming with my friends with some frequency. It didn’t matter what instrument combination we could come up with. We would all pile into a practice room and play. Sometimes it was over a chord progression like the blues and other times it was just free improvisation. The ability to express myself through different sounds, even when they were completely off the wall and unconventional, ended up helping all aspects of my tuba playing. All you have in free improvisation is your storytelling. There are no right notes or wrong notes. No in tune or out of tune. Just a story. And most students of classical music (like me) can learn a lot from that.

Probably the pinnacle musical experience of my undergraduate studies was the last tune on my senior recital. It was an arrangement of Bathtub Gin, a song by the band Phish, for trumpet, trombone and tuba. Dear friends, John Butte, Ben Denne and myself had one simple plan: we had arranged the “head” to start the tune. We would then let the music go any direction it wanted to go and would bring it back around again in the end. We hadn’t planned the length or anything else about it.

It ended up being 10 minutes long and it was BY FAR the audience’s favorite part of the recital. Afterwards, my teacher Rex Martin was as excited about that piece as he had been about anything I had played for him in my almost four years at school. It was an amazing experience and a wonderful way to put a bow on my studies at Northwestern.
Next, I went to graduate school at Arizona State. Sam Pilafian, my teacher there, was already a very accomplished jazz tuba player and he wanted to get me exposed to it as well. His guitar and tuba duo, Travelin’ Light, was one of my favorite bands ever. I think I literally wore out their first album. When I got to school Sam told me that I was playing in a Dixie band called the Dixie Devils. He didn’t ask if I wanted to play in it. He just said I was. Even though I was terrified because I had never done anything like it, I simply opened my mouth and the word “okay” popped out. What an experience it turned out to be!

I was forced to read changes, navigate the road map of tunes (which would change on the fly!) and be ready for a tune to end in any of five different ways. There were hand signals at the end: stop on a dime, firehouse ending (four bars of tonic instead of one at the end), repeating a II-V turnaround. The first rehearsal required more ‘thinking on my feet’ than the previous 13 years of playing combined. I messed up a lot. And I played it right a lot. It was a very freeing experience to be forced to not know exactly how a tune was going to go.

It was also invaluable to be in an ensemble where I was BY FAR the greenest member. Everyone else was used to playing in jazz combos and other Dixie bands. The best and fastest way to learn as a musician is to surround yourself with people better and more experienced than you. I was forced to raise the bar constantly just to keep my head above water. I have never found a way to improve my musicianship on more levels and at a faster rate than by playing with the Dixie Devils. I wouldn’t trade in that experience for the world.

You never know what direction your career will take and I sure am glad that I was prepared for that day in 2000 when Boston Brass called. And since Mike Roylance is both young and awesome, I don’t think the Boston Symphony will be calling anytime soon. Luckily, I was prepared for my opportunity through preparation and being forced out of my musical comfort zone.

continued

Sam Houston State University

PLAYING BASSOON

A guide for young bassoon players

– MUSI 5398 –
Practical Application #2
by Keith Acuncius

ABC

Table of Contents

This project was produced and submitted in partial fulfillment of the Master's Degree in Conducting as prescribed by the American Band College of Sam Houston State University.

A Brief History of the Bassoon

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The bassoon shares ancestral roots with its smaller double reed counterpart, the oboe. Both instruments can be traced back to the *shawm*. The modern bassoon, however, is vastly different. It evolved from a 16th century instrument known in English as a *curtal* or *curtail*. This ancestor of the bassoon, which was also played with a double reed, was fashioned out of a single piece of wood rather than the four separate sections common to today's bassoon.

In the early 17th century, the curtal came in six sizes ranging in length from as short as 15 inches to as long as almost 5 feet. It was the French who later transformed the one-piece bass curtal into the four-piece instrument that looks similar to bassoons we see today.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the bassoon was gradually improved and refined. It evolved from a three key model played during the time of Mozart to six keys during Hayden's time to the the present 17 to 24 key versions of today. Two schools of bassoon-making arose in the 1880s: the French school under *Buffet* and the German school under *Heckel*. Each had it own solutions to tone production, fingering and intonation.

19th century experiments in bassoon construction resulted in many interesting variations. There were bassoons for military bands with globular and other odd-shaped brass and wooden bells, bassoons in F and G called tenoroons, semi contrabassoons, and sub contrabassoons.

During the 18th century, major solo and orchestral music was written for the bassoon elevating it's importance in the orchestra and it began to break away from just playing the bass part. Many important composers have written for the bassoon, particularly during the 18th century, and the repertoire includes impressive parts in orchestral scores, woodwind ensemble music and many bassoon solo concertos. Today the bassoon is used extensively in the symphony orchestra, opera, musicals, television, and movie soundtracks. Many younger bassoon players are finding new and creative ways to continue to innovate on their instrument. Everything from bluegrass to Lady Gaga can now be played on the bassoon with the more complex fingering systems.

| 1200's - 1500's | | 1600 - 1700's | | 1800's - 1900's | Modern Day

It is easy to see that the bassoon has evolved and adapted significantly over its humble beginnings as a Shawm (far left) to a modern Bassoon and contrabassoon (far right)

The Sections of the Bassoon

Before we assemble the bassoon or begin playing, it will be helpful for you to know the names of the different sections of the bassoon. This information will be especially helpful when reading the next section "Assembling the Bassoon". Note that the images displayed are only shown for identification purposes, and the boot joint would actually be reversed if this bassoon were to be put together.

The Bassoon Bell

Shown facing "in" towards the player and thumb side.

Bassoon Reeds
Protected in reed case.

The Long Joint

Showing the left hand "thumb side" of the instrument.

The Wing Joint

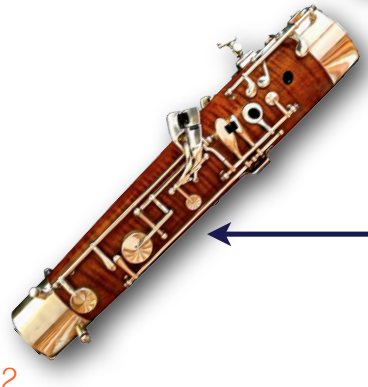
Showing the left hand "thumb side" of the instrument.

The Bocal

With "nib" highlighted.

The Boot Joint

Showing the right hand "finger side" of the instrument.



Assembling The Bassoon

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Important! - Unless you are using this book with your teacher present, please skip ahead to the "Getting Started Section". It will be helpful to understand how to create the embouchure and produce an accurate *crow* before assembling your bassoon. Also, by skipping ahead, you will not have to immediately disassemble your bassoon and return it to the case. If you do assemble the bassoon now, place it on a bassoon stand, or disassemble and return to case to prevent setting it down incorrectly and possibly causing damage to the instrument. During the first few weeks, try to assemble your bassoon at your seat, or practice alone so that no one can damage your instrument as you move.

Step 1 : Remove the *boot joint* from the case, handling it by the large metal ends at the bottom or top.

Step 2 : With your left hand, hold the *boot joint*. With your right hand, pick up the *wing joint*. Slowly twist the *wing joint* into the boot, the concave section where there are no keys should line up parallel to the larger receiving hole on the *boot joint.*

Step 3 : Still holding the bassoon at the top of the *boot joint*, pick up the *long joint* with your right hand. Notice where there are no keys or rods, this will be the section that touches the *wing joint*. Carefully insert the smaller end of the *long joint* into the *boot joint* using little twisting motions. After inserted, activate the locking mechanism if your instrument is equipped with one. Make sure thumb keys are parallel to each other.

Step 4 : With your right hand, pick up the *bell joint* and using your thumb, close the keypad on your bell. This will allow the key at the top of the *long joint* to align with the *bell joint.* (Unless already at your seat, place *bocal* into *bell joint* as you move.)

Step 5 : Attach the seat strap to the bottom of the *boot joint*. Place the seat strap on your chair.

Rules for Assembly

1. Always *twist* the joints together. Sliding or pushing them can damage the tenons.
2. Put your *bocal* into the *bell* until you get to your seat. The longer section of the crook facing down the bell.
3. Keep your reed in your mouth until you are seated and *bocal* is inserted into the *wing joint.*
4. Be extremely careful when inserting the *bocal* into the *wing joint*. The *nib* can easily rip the whisper keypad. (Depress key to open pad)
5. Similar to a clarinet or oboe, make sure the bridge key mechanism is aligned and fits on top when assembling.

Step 6 : Retrieve the *bocal*. Always hold the *bocal* by the curved section, this is the strongest part. Open the whisper keypad. Insert the corked end of the *bocal* into the *wing joint*, adjusting slowly until the *nib* is evenly underneath the whisper keypad.

Step 7 : Attach the hand rest, or *crutch* to the bassoon.

Step 8 : Insert the wet reed (from your mouth if you were moving) onto the *bocal.*

If you are looking for an excellent instructional video to accompany these steps; check out : http://www.musicandthebassoon.org/videos/assembly

Getting Started

If you are starting bassoon without the guidance of a private teacher, start with this section! Beginning with the basics of sound production will ensure that you are successful when you move to the whole instrument.

This section of the book should help you to become familiar with the basics of playing the bassoon. The first step before we do anything else is to prepare our reed. Ideally, you should be playing a hand made reed made by a professional, but this is not always a reality. If a local professional is unavailable, checking eBay or searching for reeds on a search engine is not a bad idea. There are many reed makers online, and most of their sites also contain useful information about getting better at the bassoon, too. The problem with commercial reeds is that the are harder than they need to be. If you are forced to play a commercial reed, you will need to do some adjusting. Flattening the first wire tends to make the reed easier to play. Under the supervision of your teacher (at least the first few times), take pliers and press the top and bottom of the wire closest to the tip to decrease some of the arch and close the tip. The best commercial brands of reeds are made by two companies; Lesher and Emerald.

While preparing the reed, spend some time looking at the section on embouchure formation. After you have familiarized yourself with the embouchure, start making sounds on the reed, starting with the crow and progressing to playing on the bocal. Getting the right sounds on the vibrating portion of your instrument will really help out once the basson is assembled and we start learning notes and fingerings. Do not worry if you end up spending a lot of time playing only the reed and bocal right away. The bassoon is an instrument that takes time and dedication; skipping sections or moving ahead before you can consistently achieve the fundamentals will lead to bad habits that will be more difficult to break in the future. Most importantly, have fun. If you find yourself getting frustrated, take a short break and come back after ten minutes. If you are becoming bored with some of the beginner exercises, see if you can make modifications to the tempo or articulation to create more of a challenge.

Preparing the Reed

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Step 1 : Carefully remove the reed from its' case.

Although nearly any container will do, you can purchase reed specific water vials to soak your reeds in. These are available at www.infinitireeds.com

Step 2 : Place the reed into warm, clean water. Let soak for two to three minutes.

It is very important that the reed is submerged under the water, and not floating on top.

Step 3 : Remove the Reed and continue to soak by holding it in your mouth. Be careful not to chip it on your teeth!

A few notes on maintaining a good reed.

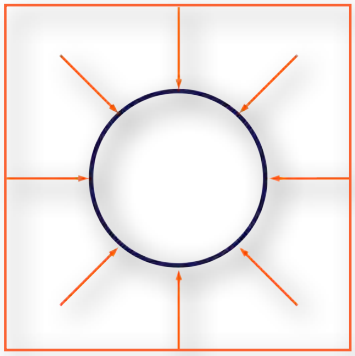
1. Always let the reed dry out between playing.
Do not leave it in an airtight container or in a sealable water vial.
2. After three or four days playing on one reed, clean it with warm tap water.
3. After rinsing with tap water, run a *smooth* pipe cleaner through the large end through the tip.
4. Rotate your reeds every 3 to 4 days maximum.

Forming the Embouchure

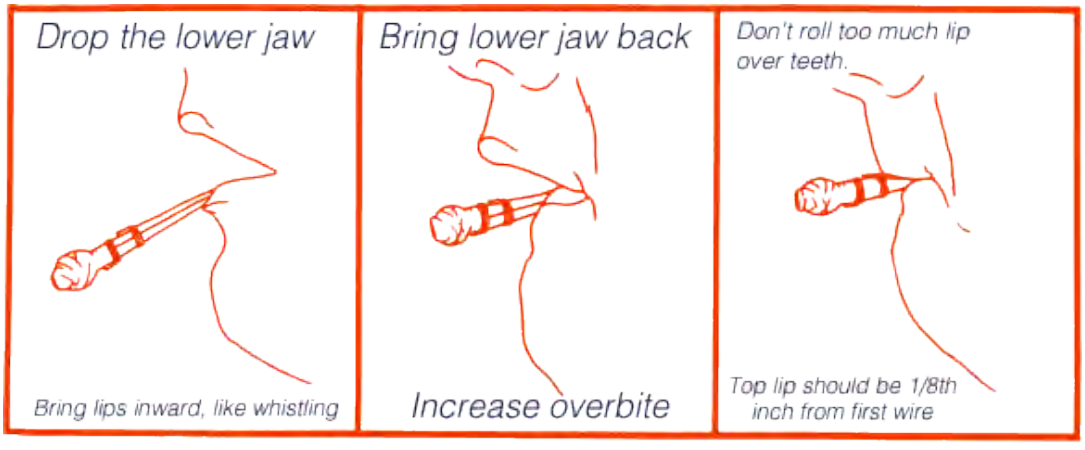
embouchure | ˌämbo͝oˈSHo͝or|
noun
1 Music the way in which a player applies the mouth to the mouthpiece or reed of a wind instrument.

One of the unique aspects of playing bassoon is that the embouchure is created by an *overbite*, and requires very little pressure to play. Typically, if you can produce a C on the combined reed and bocal, your embouchure is correct on the bassoon. This section will describe the correct approach to forming an embouchure starting with the mouth, and moving to the reed.

Begin by placing the tip of your pinky finger on your lower lip. Slowly bring that finger into your mouth and roll the lower lip inward with the finger. The top lip should roll down and curl slightly over your top teeth. Create a very light, even pressure around your whole finger. Imagine a drawstring on a bag, closing evenly in all directions.



Use even pressure all the way around your finger.



Repeat the same exercise, using the reed instead of your finger. Put the tip of the reed on lower lip. Bring reed and lower lip into your mouth. Then bring top lip down over teeth.

Creating the Crow

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Now that we have correctly formed our embouchure around the reed, it is time to create the first sound, the *crow.* The *crow* is a multi-pitched sound that is made up of low, middle, and high tones representing the complete overtone system.

The most important part of creating a good *crow* requires the player keep a relaxed, open throat and a "loose" embouchure. Unlike clarinet or saxophone, the pressure from the lips does not control the pitch. Keep an even pressure, but do not bite down on the reed. If there is only one sound coming from the reed, instead of many, the embouchure is too tight. You may initially struggle with creating the *crow* on the reed only. If this is the case, the following exercises using the combined bocal and reed may be useful to develop the muscle memory needed to create a *crow.*

The accompanying CD, borrowed from the Embou-Sure series, will help provide you with examples of correct and incorrect crow sounds. Track 1 is the correct sound of a crow on a bassoon reed. Track 2 demonstrates a crow that is high, and has too few sounds. The problem here is that the embouchure is too tight, or pinched. Loosen the embouchure and create even pressure. It could be possible that the reed is too stiff or closed off; it may need to be adjusted - refer to the section on adjusting reeds to find a solution. Track 3 is the sound of a crow that is too low. The first solution to try is to apply more support to dampen the reed. If this does not work, the reed may need to be shortened in length or width.

Checklist for creating the crow.

1. *Form the embouchure, go through each step.*
2. *Take a relaxed, comfortably full breath.*
3. *Without adding pressure, blow air through the blades of the reed.*
4. *Make sure the throat stays open.*

Articulating notes on the bassoon reed will also be useful after beginning to create an accurate crow. Begin by relaxing the tongue and letting it fall to the bottom of the mouth. Lightly place the tongue on the reed, start the air and release the tongue from the reed. Touching the tip of the tongue to the tip of the reed is a good place to start, and is easy to remember, but not a hard and fast rule. Often times it is appropriate to be slightly above and behind the tip of the tongue touching the tip of the reed. Think the syllable "too", being careful not to create a heavy sound. If it sounds heavy, try "doo" or even "loo" to lighten up. The tongue should be as relaxed and light as possible, make this your goal. Use the articulation exercises at the back of the book to increase flexibility and speed.

Using the Bocal

Combining the reed and bocal and playing it without the bassoon will help to develop the embouchure, as well as provide a slightly easier approach to creating sound on the reed. It is also important to realize that beyond the reed, and overall quality of the bassoon, the bocal can be the “make or break” factor as to whether or not a bassoonist will sound good. Using a Heckel, or a Fox/Renard bocal will set you up for success. Have a professional assist you if you are purchasing a new bocal; they will need to look for an evenness in pitch and tone quality, as well as an ability to play softly and loud with a full sound throughout all ranges.

Start by attaching the reed to the bocal, holding it from the curved crook. This is the strongest part of the bocal and will prevent damage. Create the embouchure in the same way described before. Start with the tip of the reed on the lower lip, then bring the lip and reed into your mouth. Close the top lip around the reed. Use only enough pressure to keep air from escaping the lips.

Pro tip! - Use a mirror, a camera, or find a friend to visually check your set up from time to time.

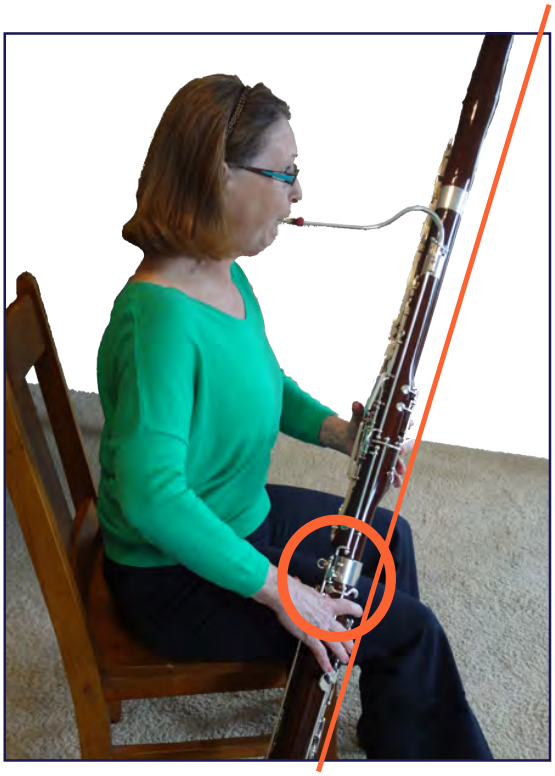
Using the same approach to sound production as the *crow*, blow into the reed. Once you are creating a sustained sound with no issues, take a tuner and check the pitch. You should be producing a C that is flat in pitch. If the tuner reads higher than a C or a sharp C, the embouchure is too tight. Repeat until you can consistently create a flat sounding C on the reed and bocal.

Using a metronome and starting with a slow tempo (quarter note set to 80), try using this exercise with a tuner to ensure that you are set up correctly. Remember, you are trying to produce a flat C, not a C that is completely in tune. Keeping the throat and embouchure relaxed is the key to success here. Breathe in between measure as necessary.

Holding the Bassoon

Sam Houston State University

Now that we can create a solid crow, and the correct sound on the bocal, it is time to assemble and learn to hold the bassoon in preparation to play. If your instrument is not assembled, re-check the assembly section and put the bassoon together. Place the seat strap lengthwise near the front of your chair. You should now be seated with the bassoon assembled. The seat strap should be adjusted so that the reed is level with your mouth when you are sitting up straight with your hips near the lip of the chair. *Always* bring the bassoon to you, never go to the bassoon. Slouching or reaching for the read will create an inferior sound and can lead to long term physical problems later in your playing.

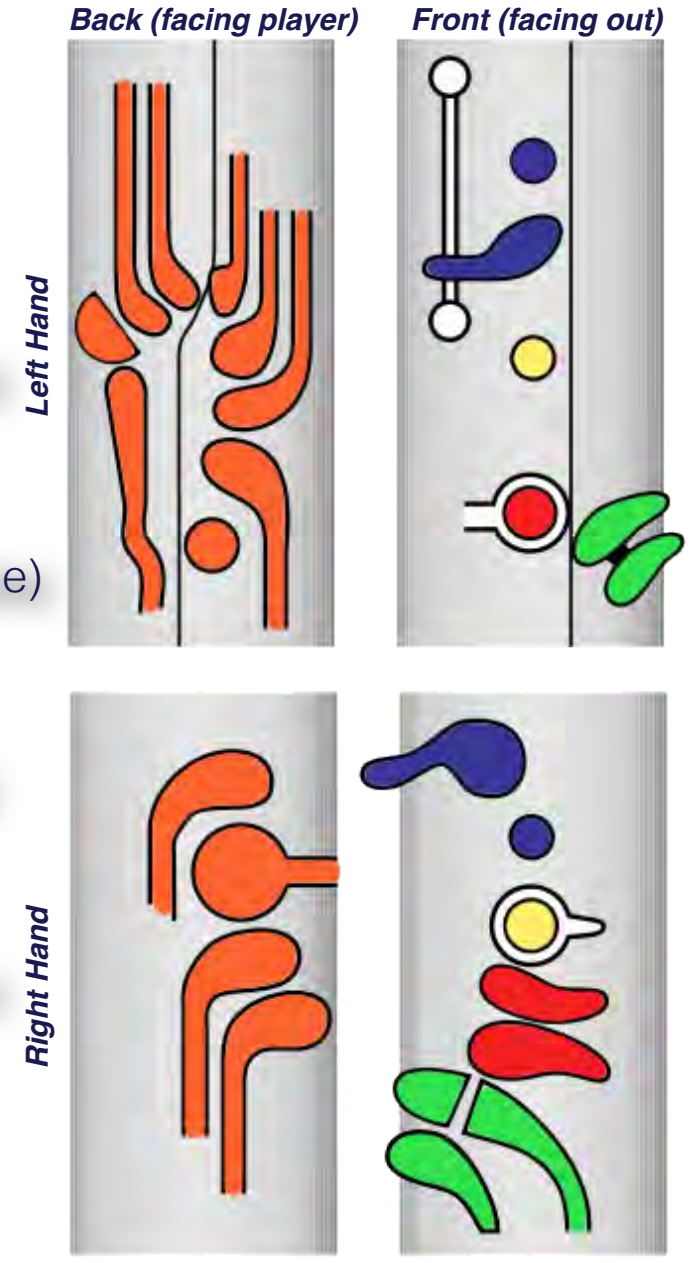


Notice the position of the seat strap at the front of the chair. The circle is highlighting the metal band on the boot joint resting just above the hip. The angle of the bassoon allows for the reed to be centered at the performers mouth, without stretching or slouching. The upper body does not have to twist or turn to find the reed. Your back should be forward from the back of the seat with your spine aligned straight. This is the correct seated posture.

Holding the Bassoon

The following images will show you which fingers need to be placed on the bassoon and where they go. This diagram shows which keys are played by which fingers.

- Thumb
- 1st Finger (Index)
- 2nd Finger (Middle)
- 3rd Finger (Ring)
- 4th Finger (Pinky)



The next page will show you the names of the keys before we pick up the bassoon.

Holding the Bassoon

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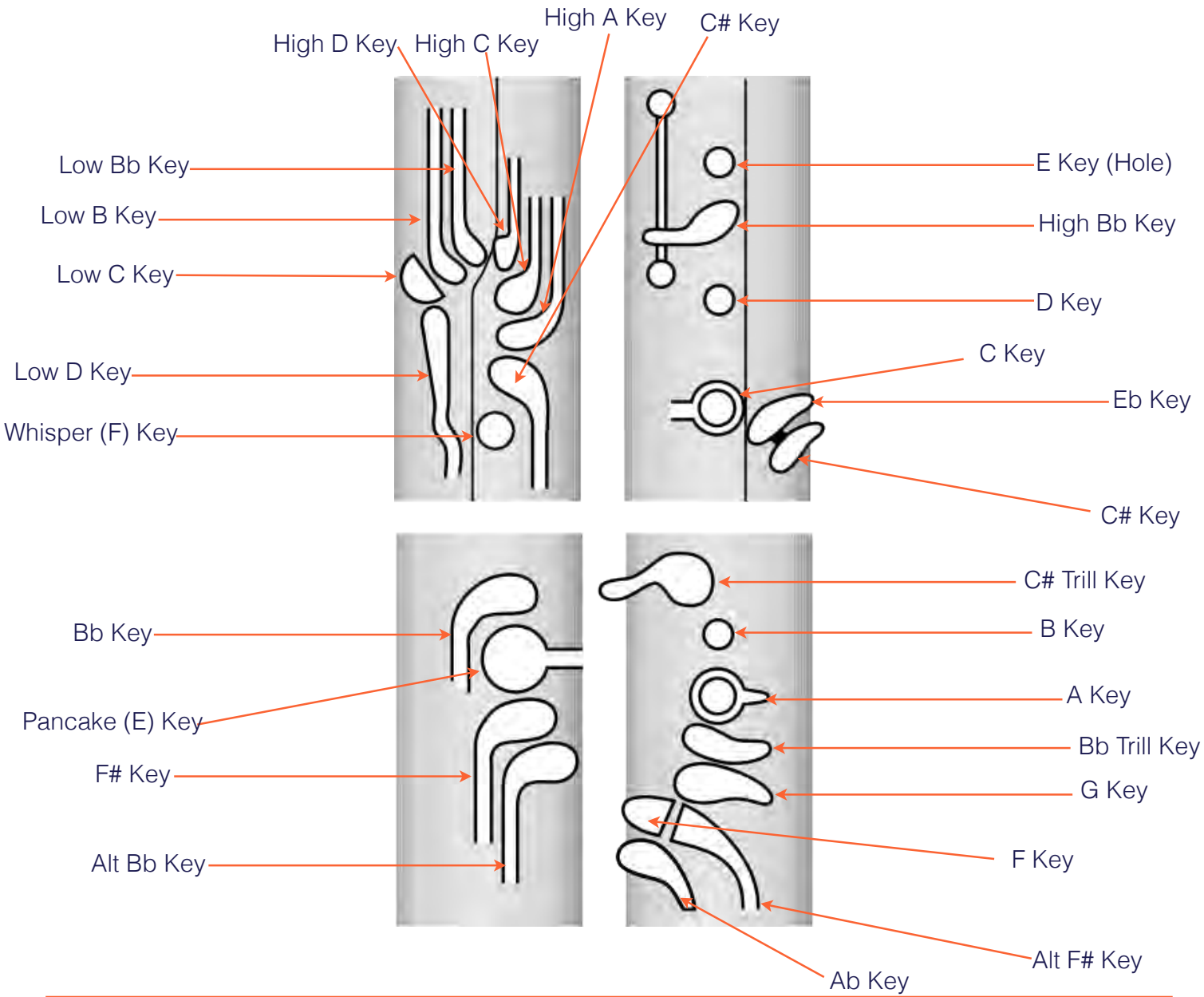
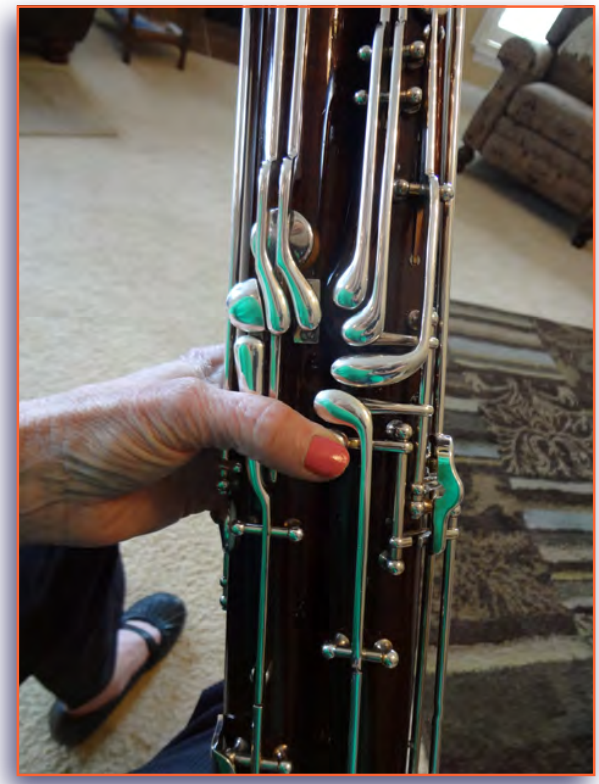
Naming the Keys



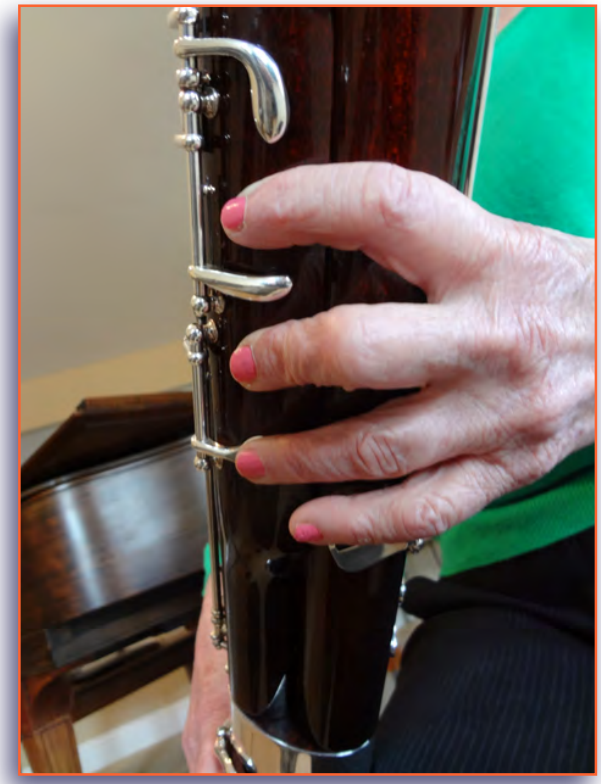
Knowing the names of the keys will greatly help learning fingerings and placement. To aid memorization, start with only the notes that do not have sharps and flats, and leave out trill and alternate keys. Beginning on the whisper key, work your way down note by note, placing the fingers over the keys as you say their names. After you have all of the basic notes, add the sharp and flat keys, repeating the process. Touch each key as you say the name. Finally, add the trill and alternate keys.

Holding the Bassoon - Left Hand Position

Perhaps the biggest challenge for young bassoon players is mastering the hand position. This is due to the the spacing of the keys, it is very important to practice good hand position. Use a camera or find a friend or teacher to check your hand position often.



Left hand thumb pressing down on the whisper key.

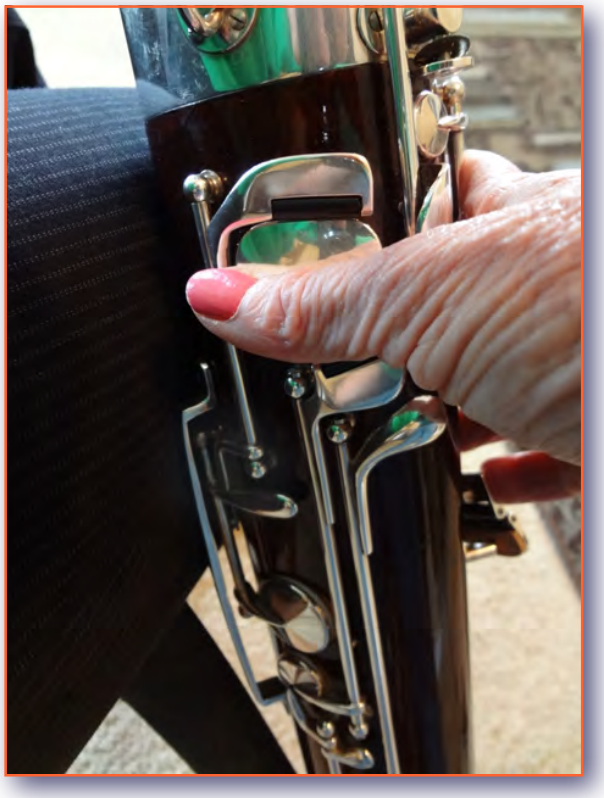


Left hand fingers pressing down the E, D, and C keys with the pinky hovering over Eb key.

Notice that the tips of the fingers are being used to press down on the keys and that the hand is in a curved position. The weight of the instrument is being held by the seat strap and the hands do not strain to hold up the instrument.

Holding the Bassoon - Right Hand Position

Similar to the left hand, the right hand uses the tips of fingers to press down keys and is not being used to hold the weight of the instrument.



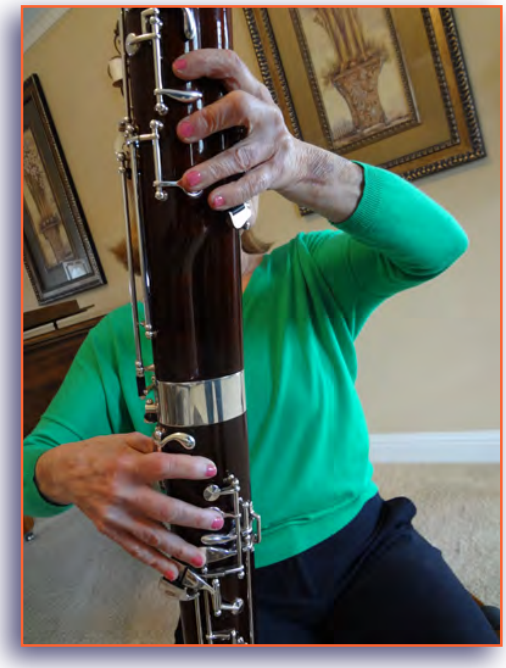
Right hand thumb pressing down on the pancake (low E) key.

Right hand fingers pressing down on the B, A, G, and low F keys.

It is very important to keep the wrists straight. This means that the right arm will be elevated slightly away from the body. You can see this in the first pictures of the correct posture with the bassoon. Keep the fingers arched and in a naturally relaxed position.

Holding the Bassoon

This picture shows from close to the player's perspective how the thumbs should be placed on the bassoon. Notice that the wrists are kept as straight as possible.



The picture to the left shows the bassoon being held up to demonstrate the correct placement of all the fingers. Notice that only the pads of the fingers are pressing down on the keys.

Now that we are aware of the correct posture and hand/fingering positions for playing the bassoon, it is time for us to create our first note! Make sure that you have completely familiarized yourself with how to hold the bassoon correctly, because we will be starting with low F; a note that requires most of our fingers to be pressed down.

The First Note - Low F

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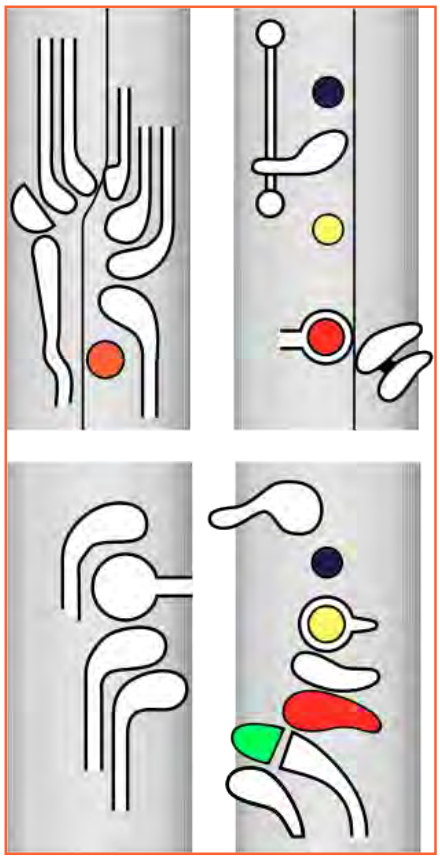
With your bassoon fully assembled and a soaked reed inserted into the bocal, we should be ready to create our first note. Make sure that you have thoroughly read the posture and hand position sections of the book before continuing any further.

You may be wondering, "Why start with low F?", there are certainly easier notes to finger on the bassoon, however, the low F is used because it requires very little lip pressure to produce. The rule on the bassoon is that the fewer fingers that are used to play a note, the more support required from the bottom lip or jaw. Starting here, on low F, will give you the time you need to develop the muscles and nuance of playing notes with fewer fingers. It is also a great note to check your embouchure on the bassoon. Use Track 4 of the included embouchure CD to check if your F sounds correct. Track 5 is a demonstration of an unsupported sound, and an indication that the embouchure is incorrect. If you are getting an unsupported sound, increase support from the diaphragm or with the lower jaw/ lip. Track 6 is an example showing a correct low F, slurred to an unsupported sound, and back to correct.



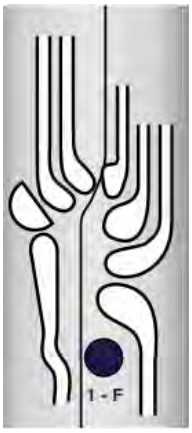
Shown to the left is the fingering for low F. Before trying to play the note, push down the whisper key with the left thumb. One at a time press down the next three keys on the left hand. Say the name of the key as you press it down (like you practiced earlier). Once the whisper, E hole, D, and C keys are depressed, continue working your way downward with the right hand. Say the names of the keys as you go, this will pay off later when you learn more complicated fingerings.

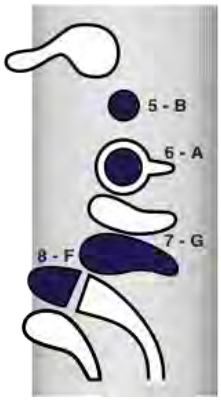
Now that all the keys are pressed, take a relaxed, full breath and blow through the reed. Do not be discouraged if the sound does not immediately respond. Keep trying until you can create a full, supported sound on low F. After you have gotten the note to speak a few times, let up off of the keys. Practice working your way back down a few times until you feel confident that your fingers are all going to hit on the correct key. Every time after you have worked your way down, take a relaxed breath and attempt to play the note for four counts.

Once you are confident your fingers know where to go, attempt pressing all of the keys simultaneously, and play low F for four to eight counts. Check your hand and body position often, and do not neglect the embouchure. Remember, this should be a very relaxed note that does not require much support from the jaw or embouchure.

Playing From F Down to Low F

Hopefully you experienced some level of success starting off with low F. If not, do not be discouraged, the low register will come with time. To help facilitate working the fingers as well as developing tone across the register of the instrument we will now learn the eight basic notes between F in the staff, and the low F you learned on the previous page. If you have been practicing saying the names of the keys as you pressed them down in the previous exercise, learning these fingerings should be a snap. We will start with the whisper (F) key only, and place one finger at a time down until we get to the low F we just learned. The names of these notes relate directly to the names of the keys you are pressing down. Follow the fingering chart at first, then gradually switch to reading the printed scale. Try to say the note names in your head as you go down, it will line up perfectly with what you were saying out loud before



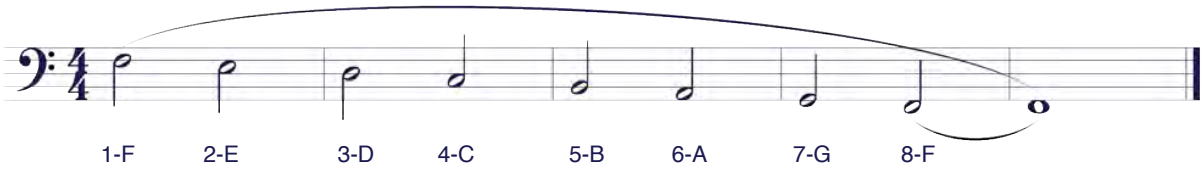


Play this exercise slowly at first. Set your metronome to 80, and try to play each half note with a good tone. Until each note is speaking easily, slur all the notes. Breathe where needed, but gradually try and increase how far you can play without taking a new breath. Once you can play the exercise slurred, try to play each note tongued. Gradually increase the tempo and go back to playing slurred, or change the half notes to quarter notes (the whole note at the end will change to a half note). After you can play it slurred at a faster tempo, practice the exercise tongued again.

If you are looking for an extra challenge, try to start on the low F and work your way back up using the same rhythms!

For even more advanced work start on the F in the staff and play down and back up in one try.

Practice this exercise until you can play it at a variety of tempos, slurred and tongued, down or up and you will have truly mastered these 8 basic notes on the bassoon.

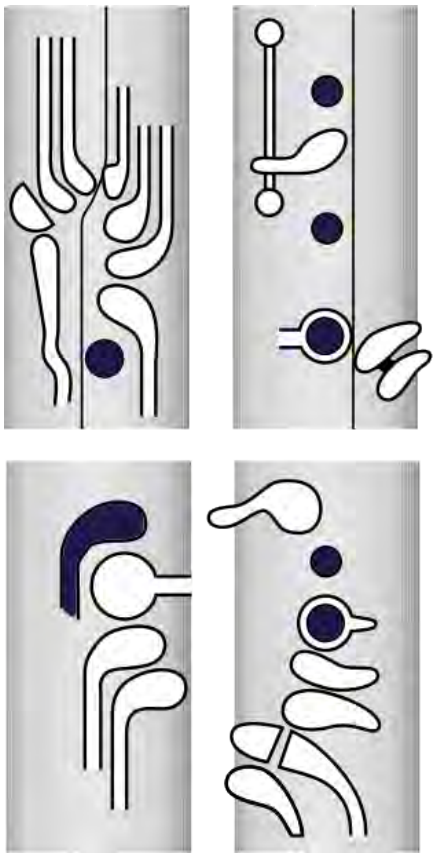


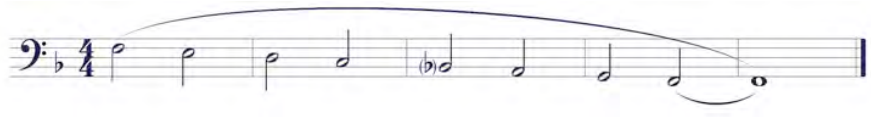
The First Scale - Concert F Major

Sam Houston State University

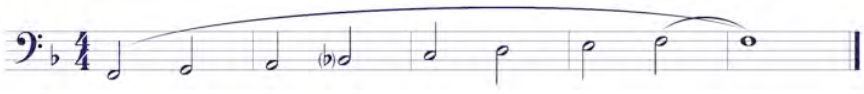
After practicing the exercise on the left page until fingerings and note names are memorized, we can change one note and have our first scale learned. Do not begin this exercise until you have mastered the previous one; be able to play from F in the staff to low F with no issues. We will be changing our B natural to a Bb, our first non-natural note. Below to the right you will see the fingering for Bb (it is assumed that you have the other seven notes memorized at this point). Play the exercise in the same format as the previous one, working from slow to fast, adding articulation only after each note speaks clearly being slurred.

Bb is also the first note that we will learn that uses the thumbs of both hands at the same time. Take extra precaution to make sure that the hand position stays relaxed and in a natural grip. If you are having trouble moving from C to Bb during the exercise, isolate those two notes and practice saying the note name as you move the fingers only. Once the fingers feel more comfortable, try to play between only those two notes, alternating between C and Bb. Begin slowly, and gradually increase the speed until you can play the whole exercise with all of the notes. If you have practiced the steps in the previous exercise, and you also have the names of the individual keys memorized creating this scale should not be too much of a problem.

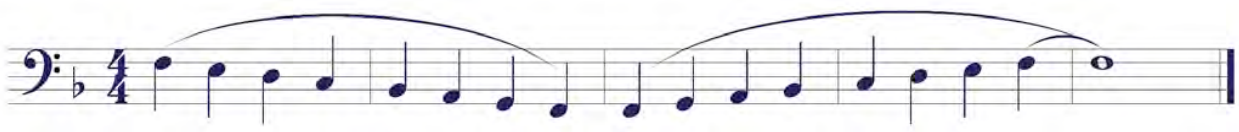




Start by going down the scale first; work for perfection!
Then try going back up. If you get bored, speed up the tempo!

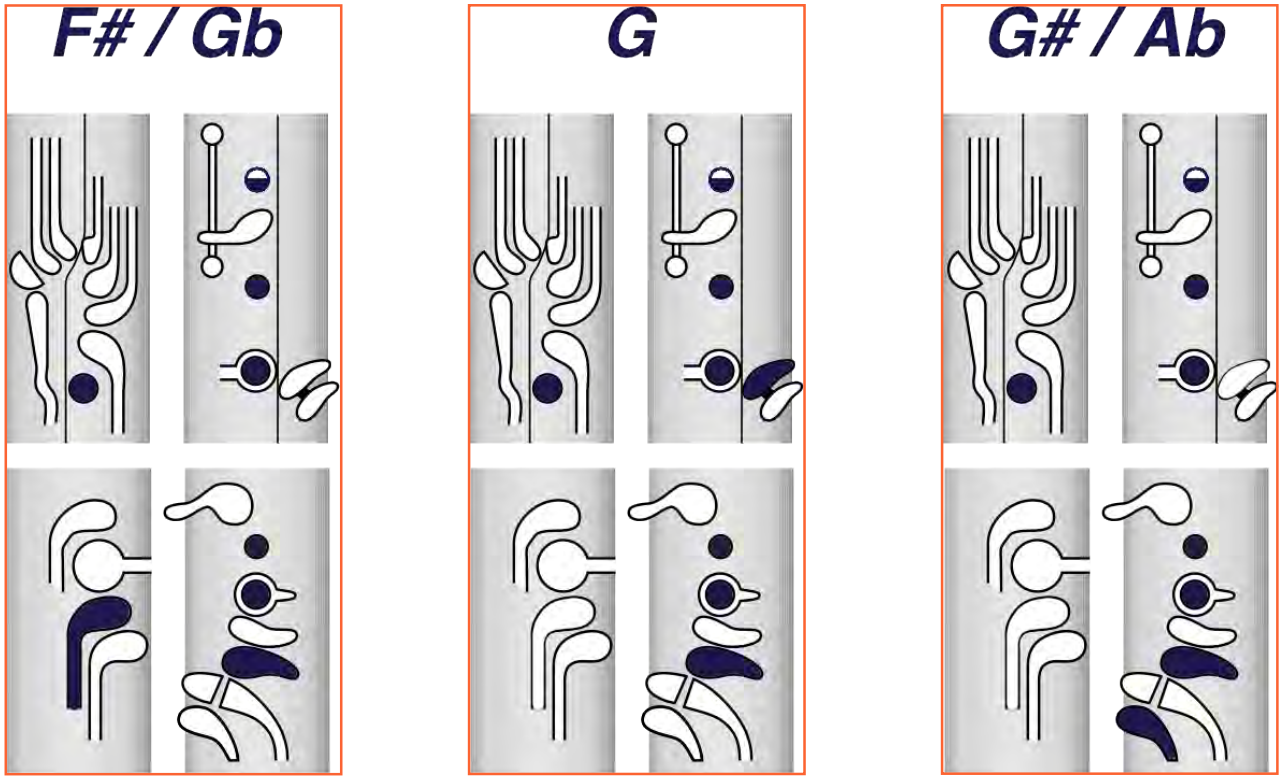


See how far you can make it in one breath. Alternate slurring and tonguing, or see if you can invent your own exercise for a true challenge.



Half-Hole Technique

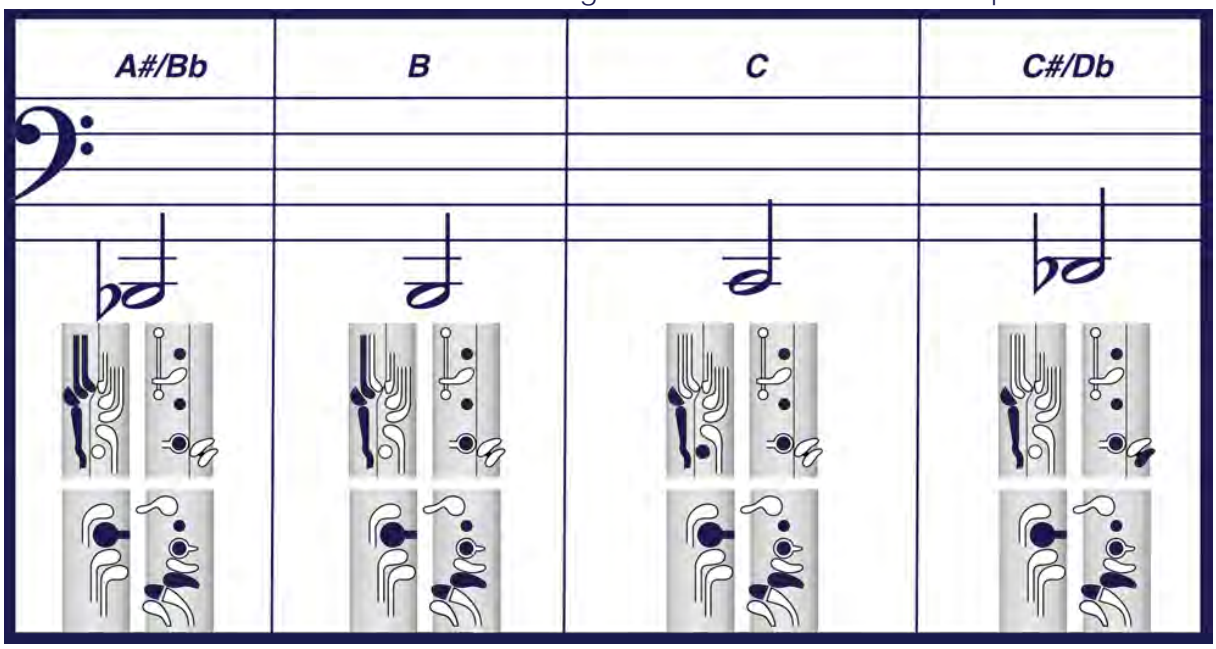
Much like the oboe, the bassoon uses half-hole technique to achieve certain notes. This section is simply here to help clarify why we are using the half-hole, and how to properly play using the half-hole. To half-hole simply means to cover the E tone hole (first finger on the left hand) halfway. The half-hole will *never* be used without pressing down the whisper key in the fingerings shown in this book. In the same way the whisper key acts as the lower octave key, the half-hole venting acts as an octave key for any note in the staff that begins with G. Check the full fingering charts to see exactly where these notes are in relation to the rest of the range of the bassoon. For example, fourth space G requires the use of the half-hole venting. Gb and G# are the other two notes that will use this technique. It is also important to understand the term *enharmonics* when talking about the half-hole. *Enharmonics* relates two notes that sound the same (share the same pitch), but are spelled differently. The enharmonic spelling of Gb is F#, and the enharmonic spelling of G# is Ab. Because of enharmonics, F# and Ab also use the half-hole. Shown below are the three fingerings for half-holed notes. To achieve the half-hole, simply slide the first finger of the left hand (the one that covers the E hole) down a bit until it is only partially closing the hole.

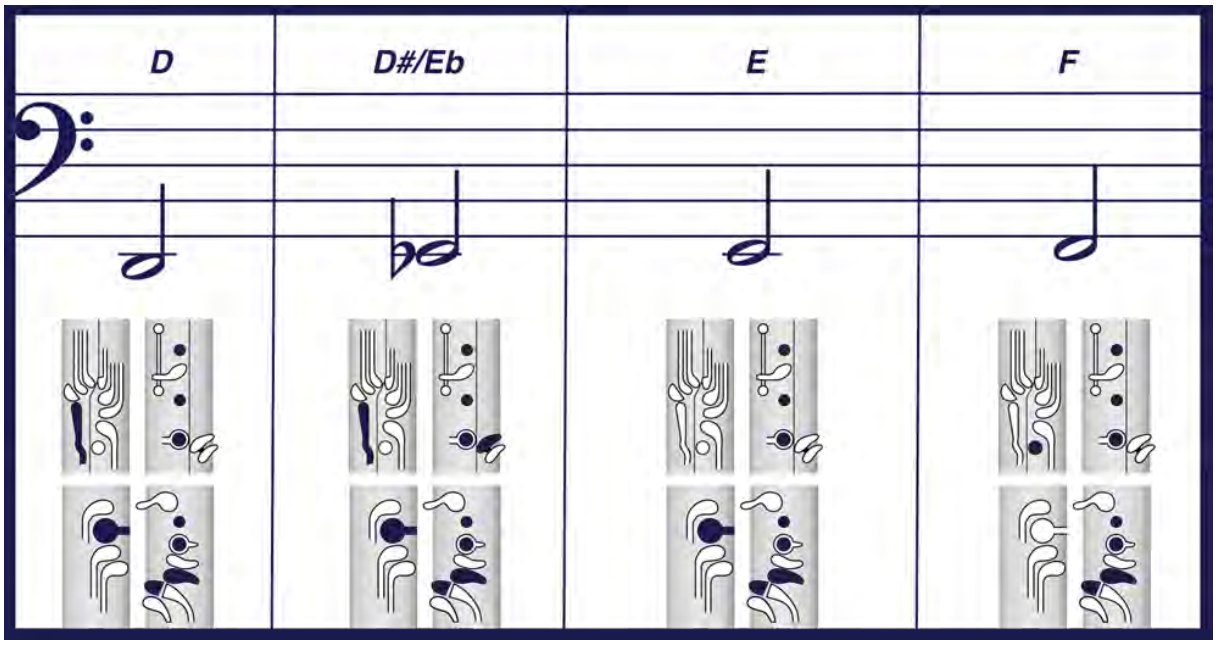


Fingering Charts

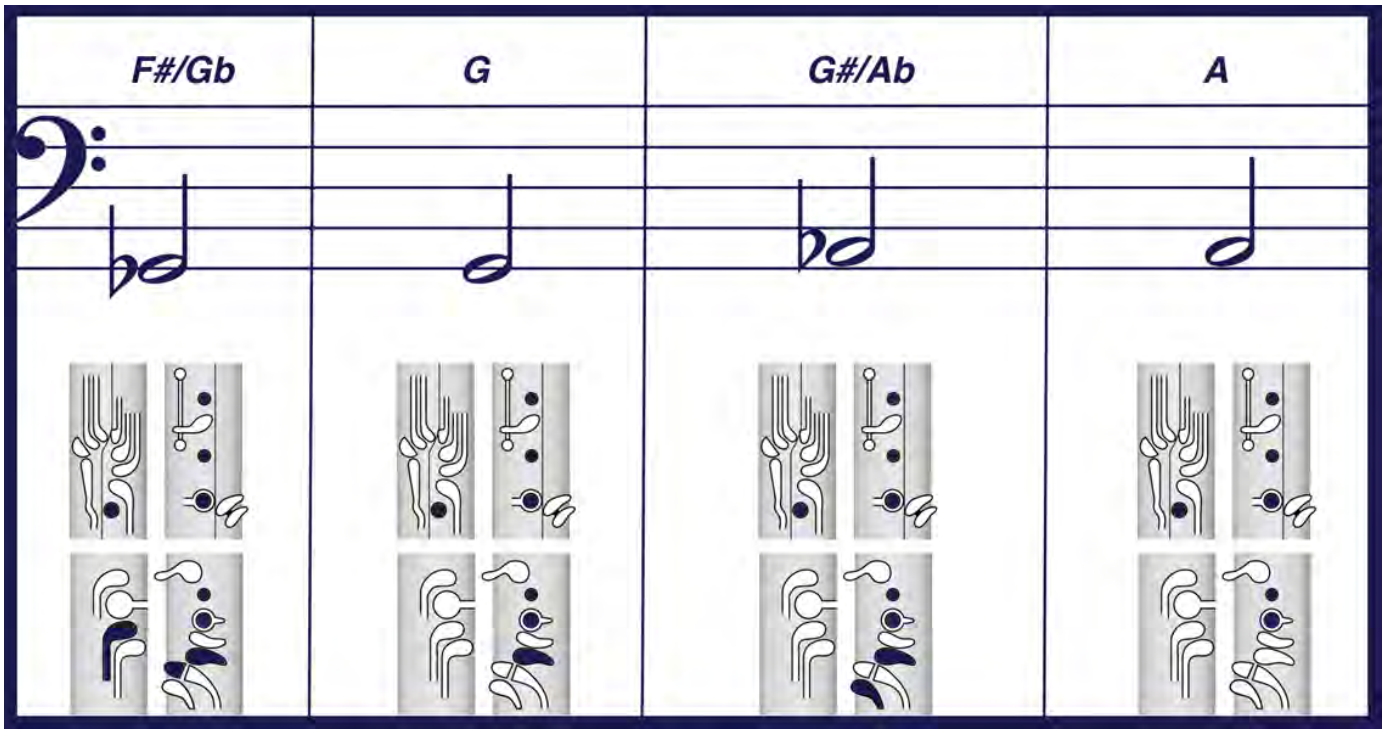
Sam Houston State University

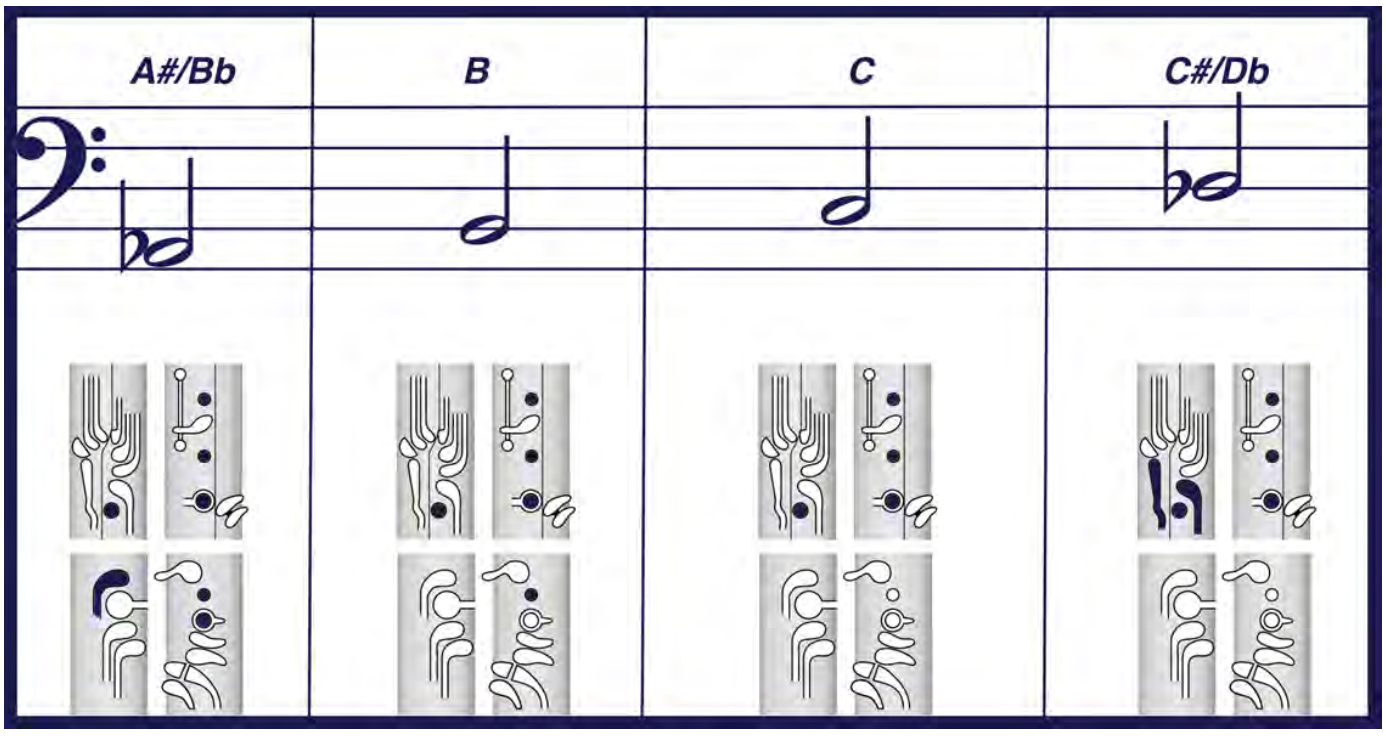
The fingering charts included in this section will cover the range of the instrument from Bb below the staff to high G above the staff, including alternates used for intonation and improved tone quality. Although the range can be extended above the G, these notes should be attempted only after mastery of the basic fingerings. It is also recommended that students who wish to learn the extended range of the instrument consult a private instructor.





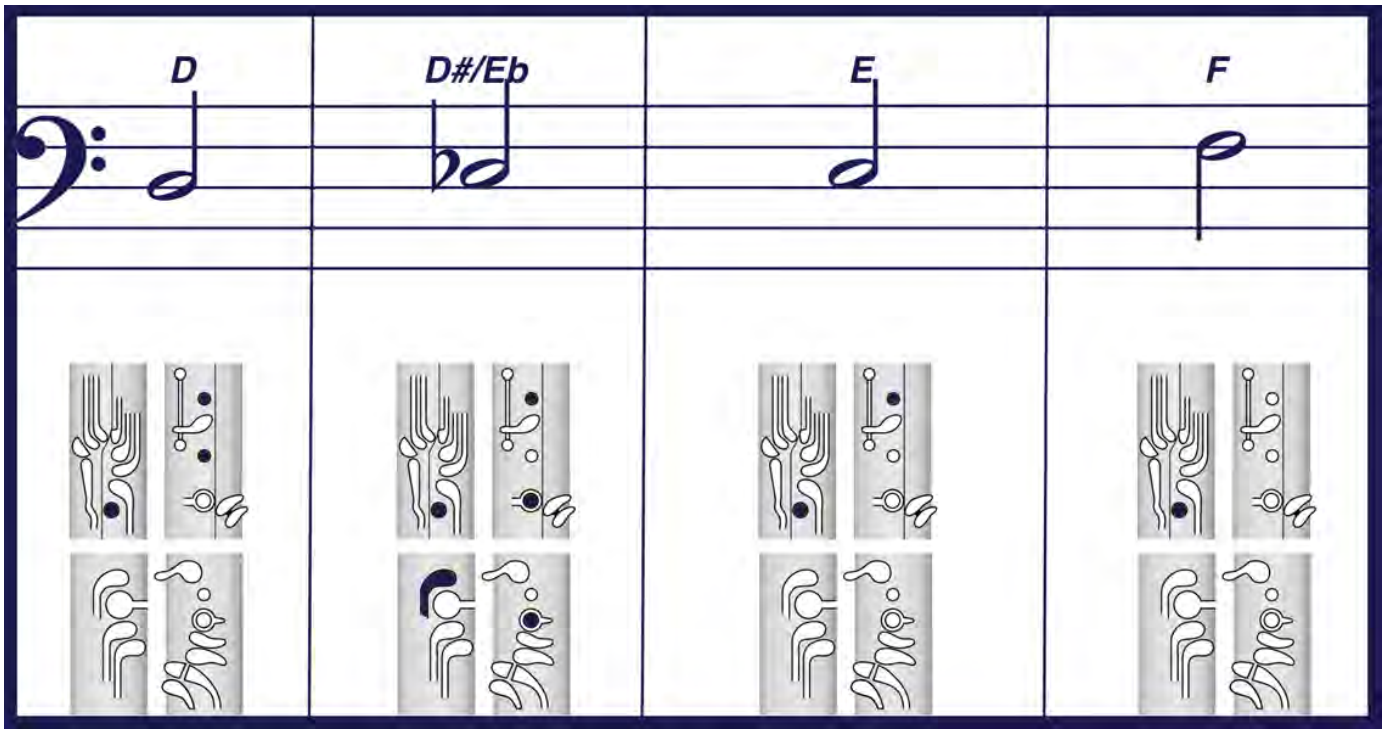
Fingering Charts

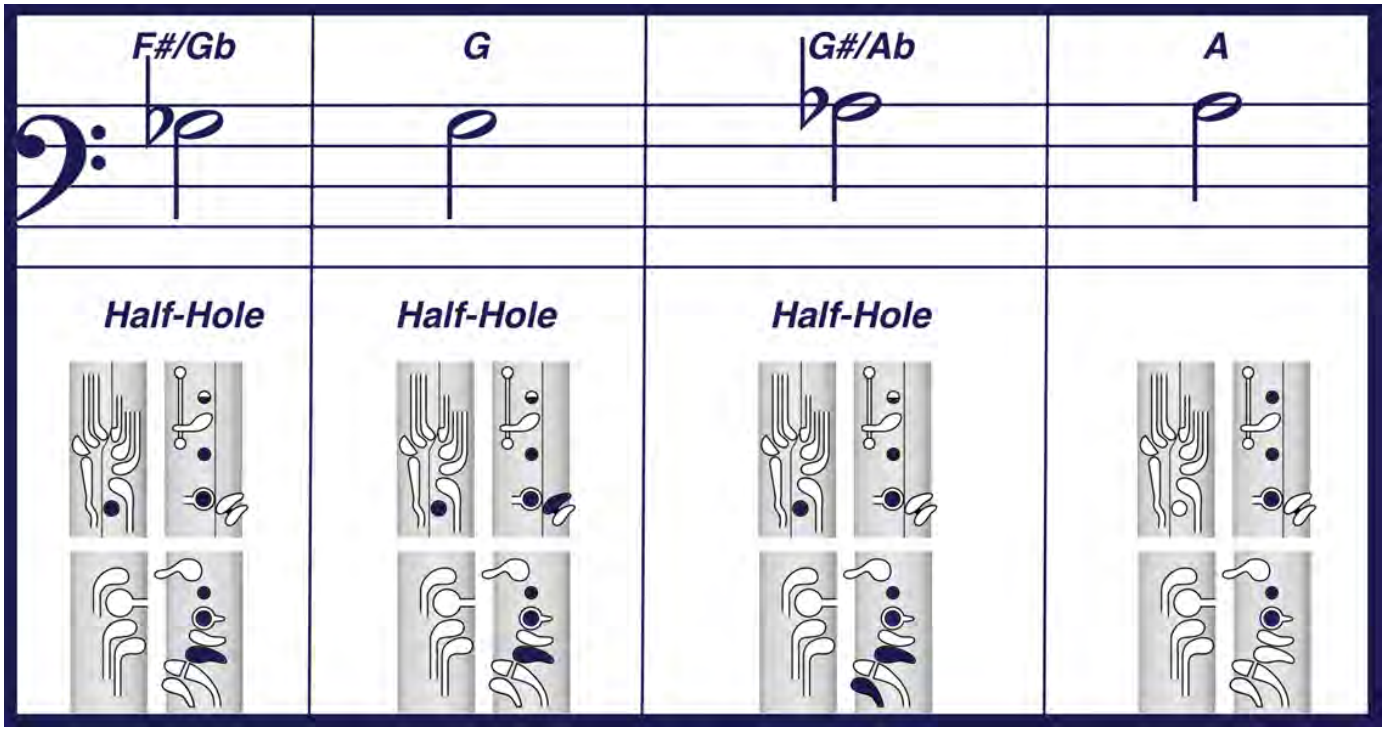




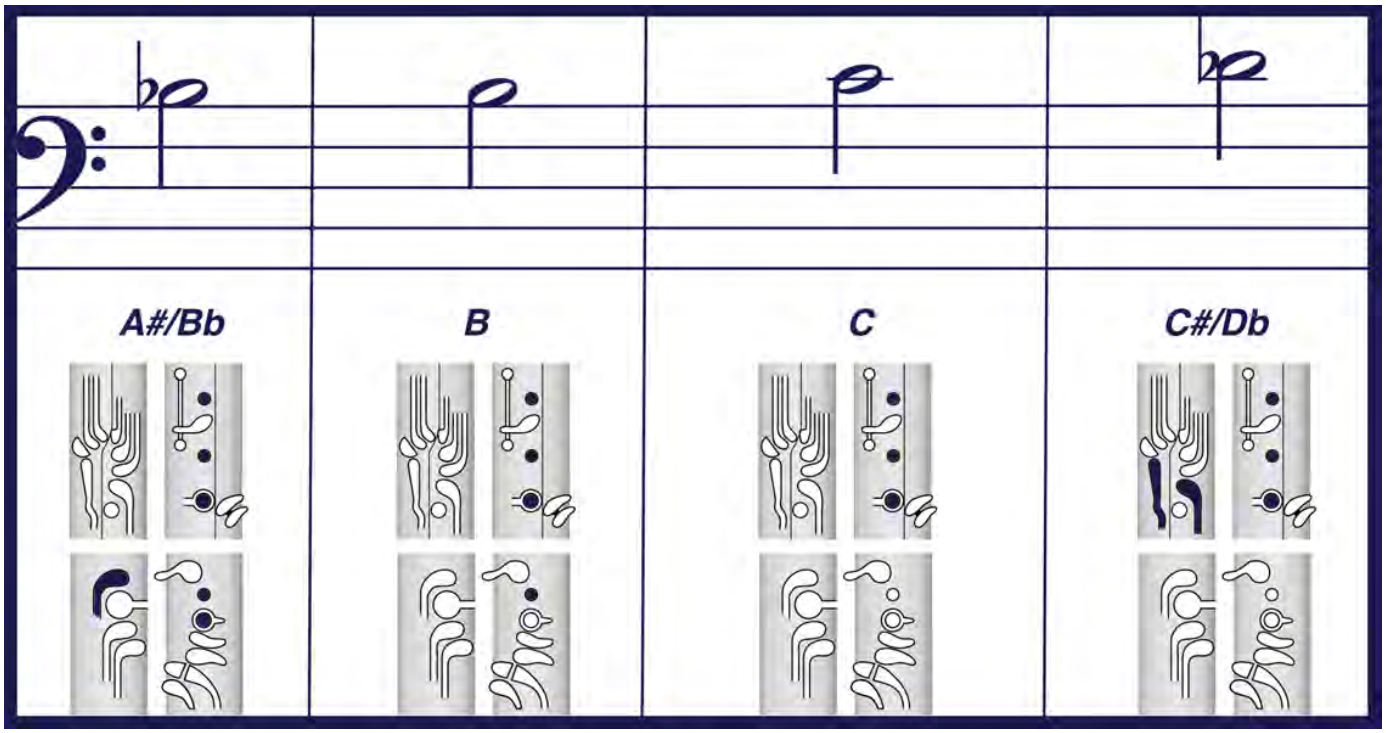
Fingering Charts

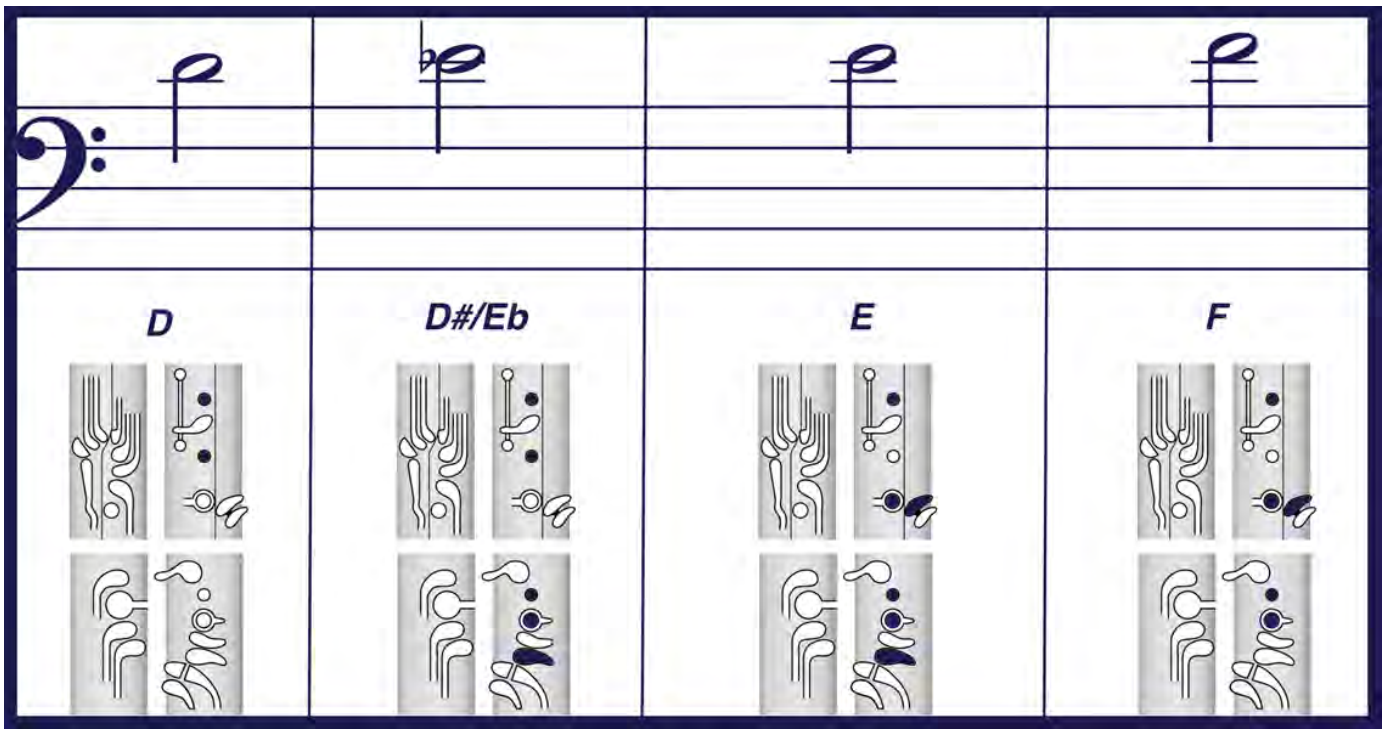
Sam Houston State University





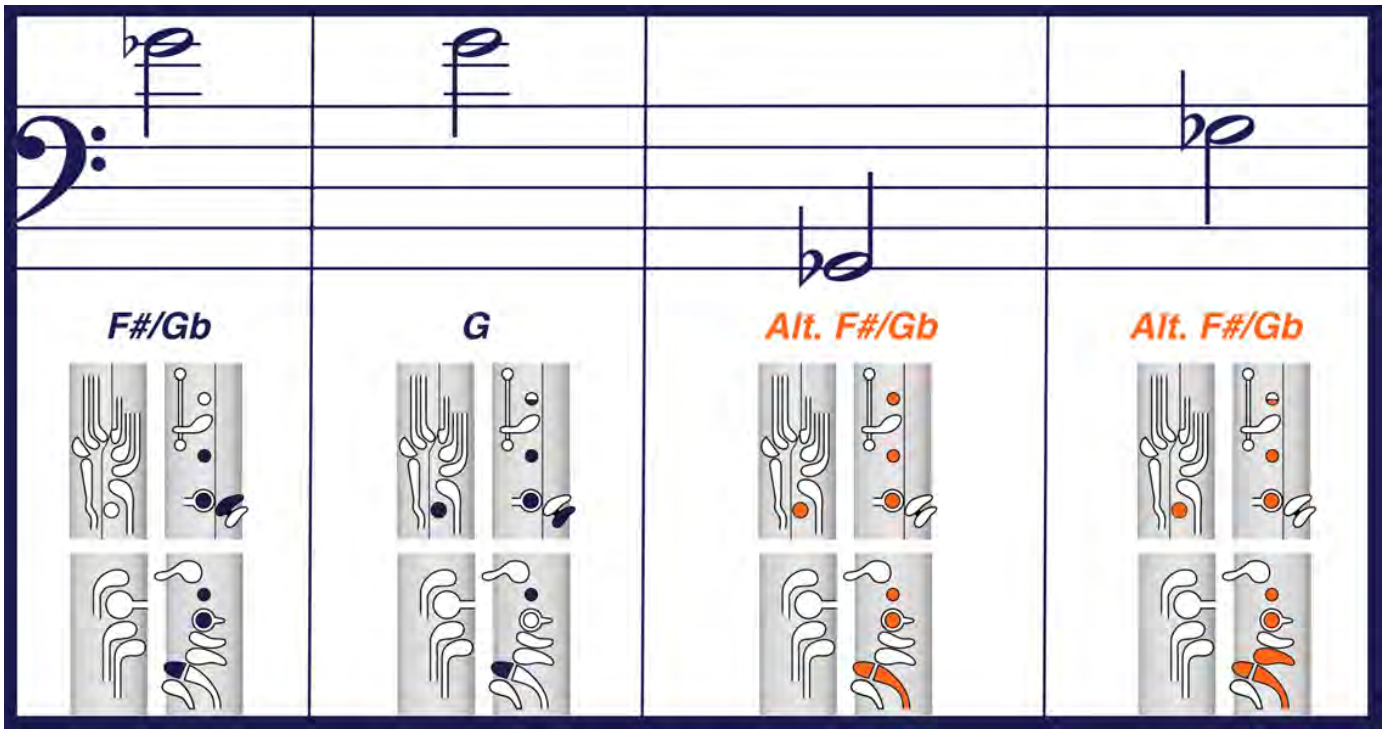
Fingering Charts

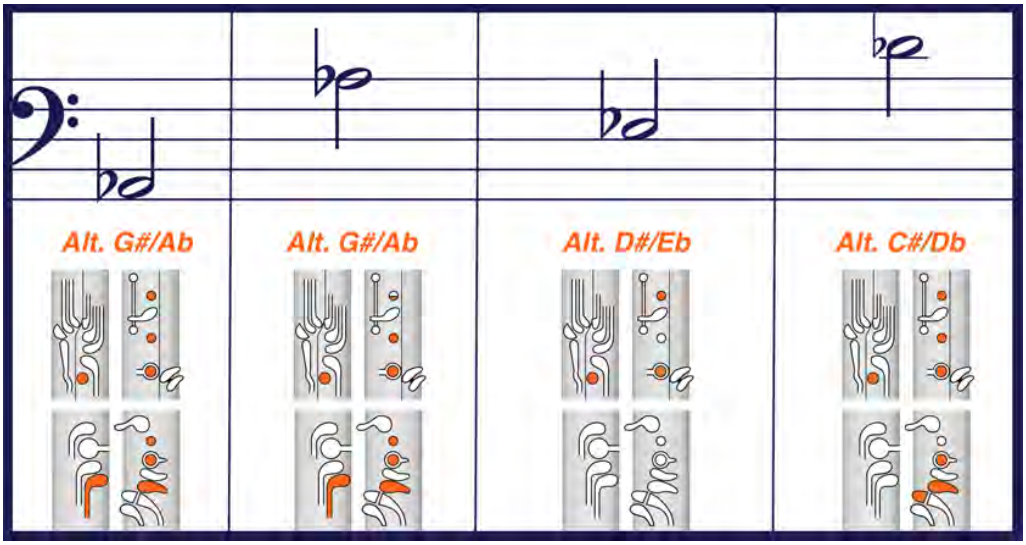


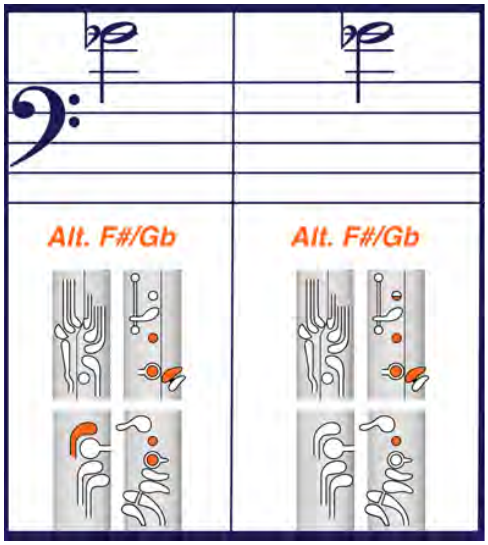


Fingering Charts

Sam Houston State University







Keep in mind that these fingering charts represent the basic and intermediate ranges of the bassoon. If you wish to continue upward, check the resource section at the back of the book for information on finding quality fingering charts and finger trainers.

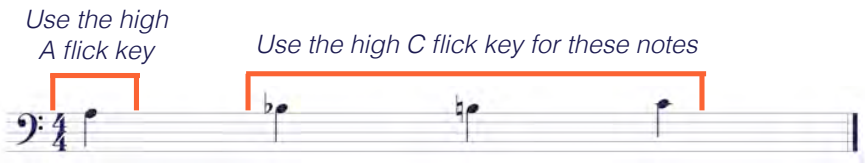
Technique - Flicking

You may be asking yourself, “What the heck is flicking?”. Flicking is a technique used to make playing certain notes easier on the bassoon, particularly when slurring up from a lower note. Sometimes referred to as “snipping”, flicking uses the high A key and high C key shown in the fingering diagram below. This section will provide you with some tools to use when practicing to develop flicking technique. It may be helpful to start with “venting”, a technique similar to flicking that has the player hold down the high A or C key instead of releasing. There has been much debate amongst bassoon players as to which technique is more valid; the bottom line is that consistent practice will make you sound better no matter which technique is used. The goal is to produce a beautiful tone with great intonation on any note under any circumstances. Striving for this goal will ultimately determine your success as a musician.

The Flick Keys

High C key highlighted in orange
High A key highlighted in blue

The notes that require the use of the flick keys start on A at the top of the staff, and go up to high C. Use the high A flick key for A, and the high C flick key for all of the other notes.



The Flicked Notes

Many bassoonists believe that the "flick" keys should be used at all times with these notes, just like a regular fingering. This has the advantage of ensuring that the response for these notes will be consistent and the fingerings will feel less awkward over time. The disadvantage is an increased burden on the left thumb and more complication to some of the already present technical challenges. Many successful bassoonists have found that the advantages of using this technique far outweigh the disadvantages and therefore, employ these keys at all times when playing these pitches. Generally, all slurs from from F in the staff and below moving up to our "flicked" notes, will require the use of the appropriate flick key to aid in response. Additionally, slurs down to these notes from high Eb and above will require the same treatment. On the following page are some examples to help you develop flicking technique.

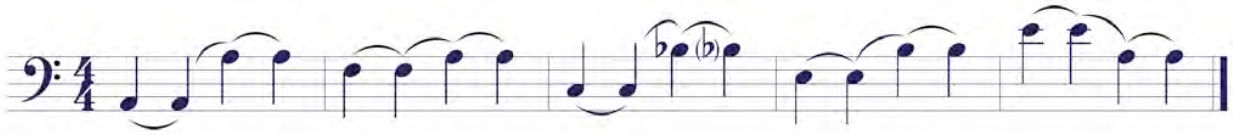
Flicking Exercise

Sam Houston State University

The How-To of Flicking: The technique of flicking is a four stage process. From the low register, begin the note with the whisper key on. Then, lift your thumb, but maintain the pitch you are on. **This is important!** If the pitch jumps to the higher note prior to flicking then the embouchure/air coordination is incorrect. While holding the original pitch, find the desired "flick" key with your left thumb. Once prepared, the thumb (and other fingers) and embouchure/air will be ready to make a coordinated move to the new pitch. At first, it is easiest to put the flick key down with the new pitch and then release after the pitch has been stabilized. With practice, the thumb will briefly tap the flick key to help the new pitch speak.

Note: Flicking is a more advanced technique. It may be necessary to begin by holding down the flick key through the duration of the higher note. Do not let proper embouchure or hand position suffer, or the benefits of flicking will be negated by creating bad habits. Also, make sure you have mastered the fingerings of the notes in this exercise before beginning to practice flicking.

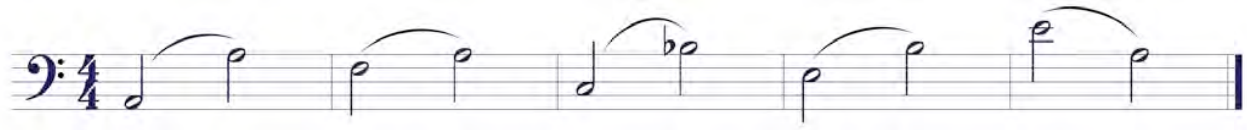
Exercise : Treat each measure as a separate section. Practice each five times before moving on.



Begin with a very slow tempo, quarter note less than 60 beats per minute.
On beat one, play the lower note as written.
On beat two, lift the thumb and keep the same pitch.
(Change of note here indicates an error in embouchure or air)
While still on beat two (use a very slow tempo!), find the appropriate flick key.
Coordinate air/embouchure with pressing flick key to arrive on new note at beat three.
On beat four, release the flick key and sustain the upper note.

Repeat these steps while gradually decreasing the amount of time it takes you to find the correct flick key and press/release (flick) the key. Once the thumb is moving faster, increase tempo and repeat. Remember the sound you are trying to create should be smooth and sustained.

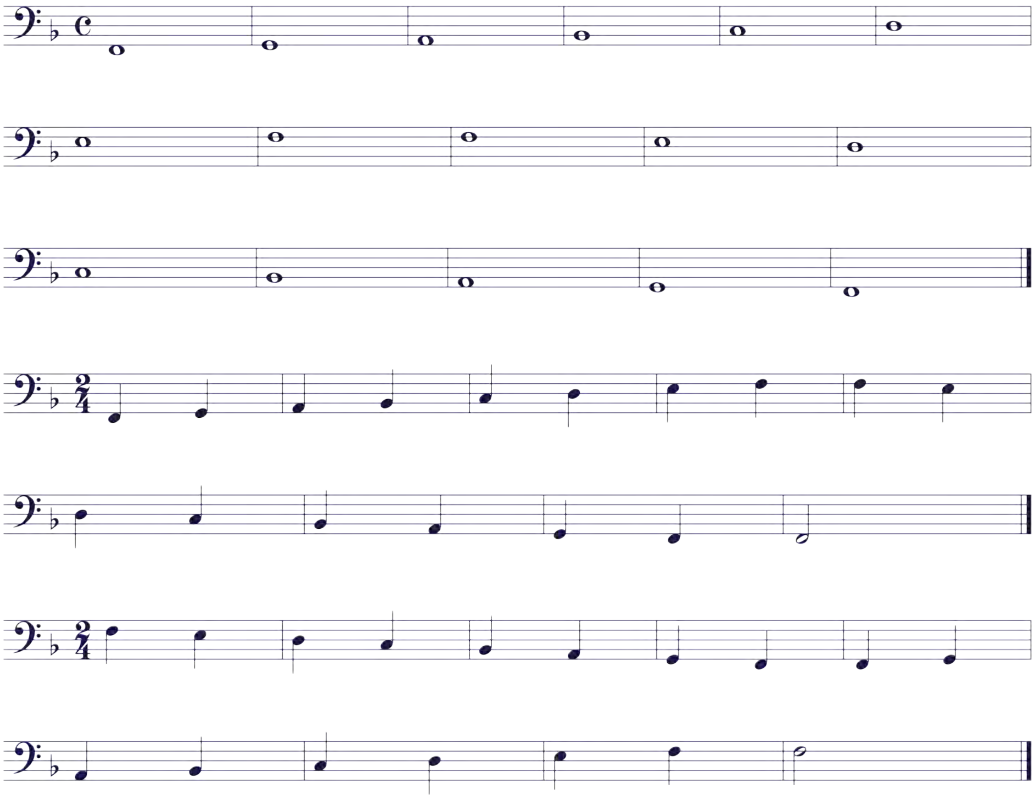
How the above exercise should *sound*:



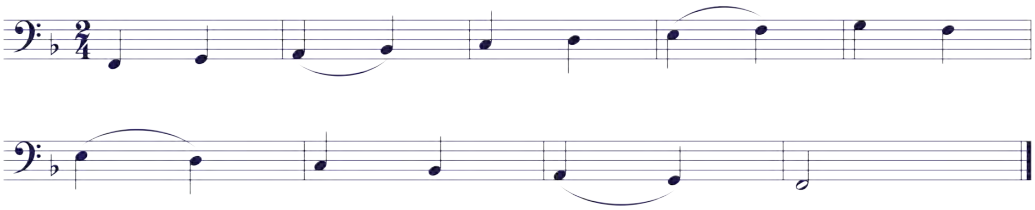
Playing Exercises

This section is designed for you to test your skills, and improve your technical abilities. Feel free to jump around and try different exercises, but it is suggested that you “check off” at least one a week by focusing on it in your daily practice routine.

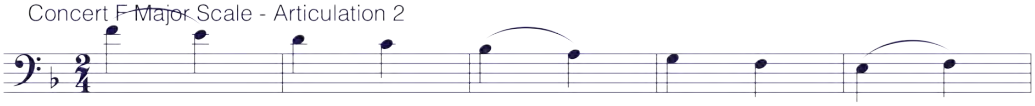
Range Exercises - Beginner



Concert F Major Scale - Articulation



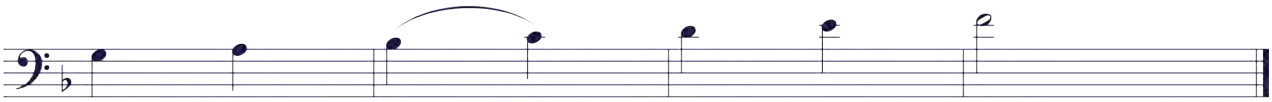
Concert F Major Scale - Articulation 2



Playing Exercises

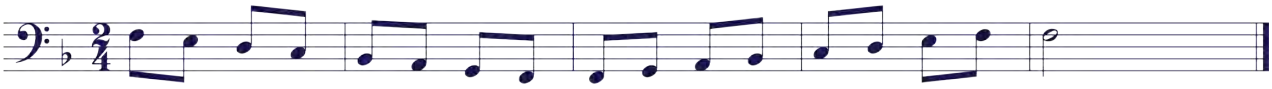
Sam Houston State University

Range Exercises - Beginner



Concert F Major Scale Exercises

Concert F Major Scale Exercises

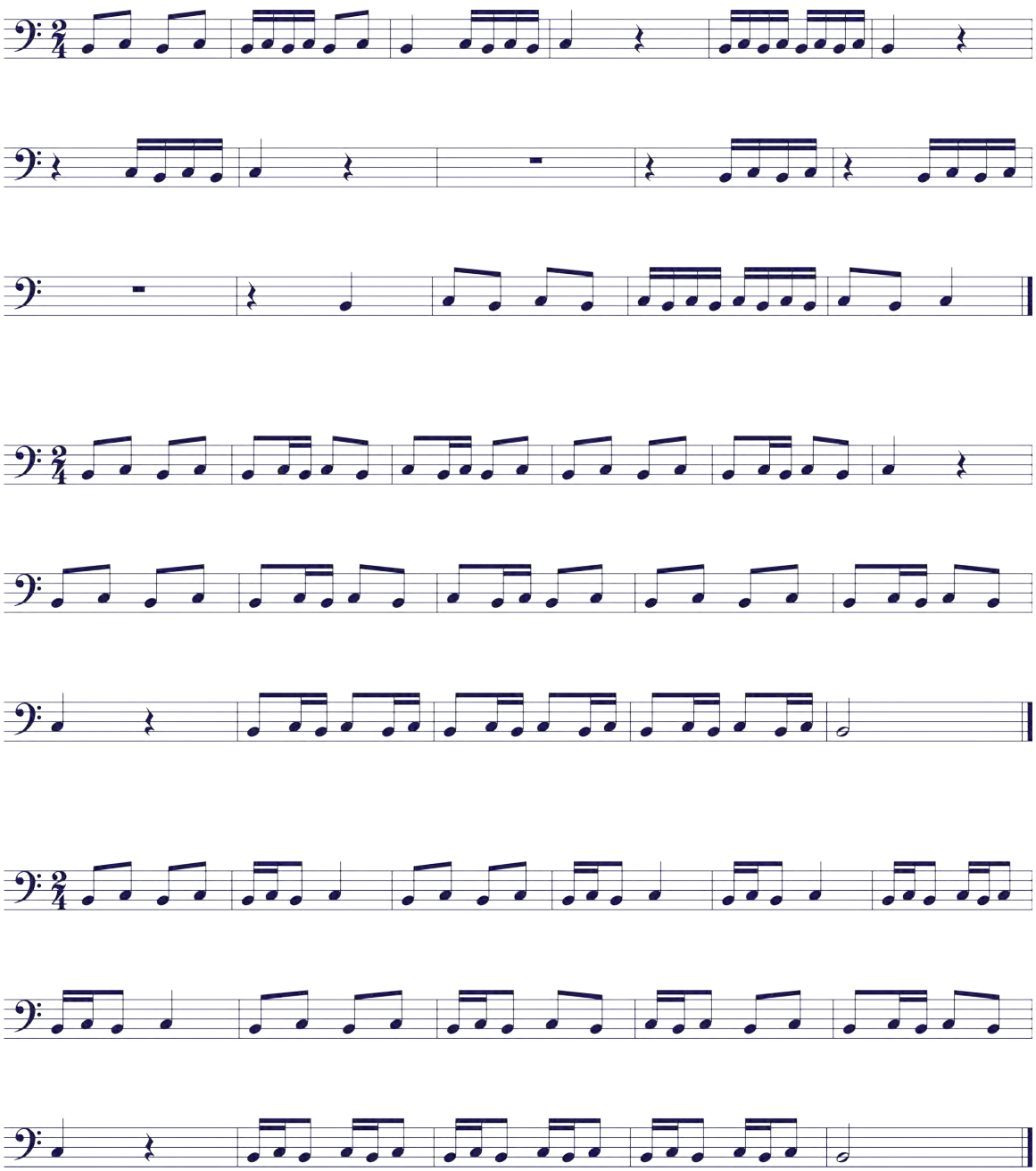


If you are tired of playing the Concert F Major Scale, check with a teacher, online, or in a method book to see if you can get a copy of all twelve major scales. Once you memorize the notes in the scale, try to apply these patterns, rhythms, and articulations to your new scale. The Concert C Major scale would be a great next step!

Playing Exercises

Start these exercises on the bocal, and then switch the bassoon using one note on the rythm. Then begin playing the exercises as written.

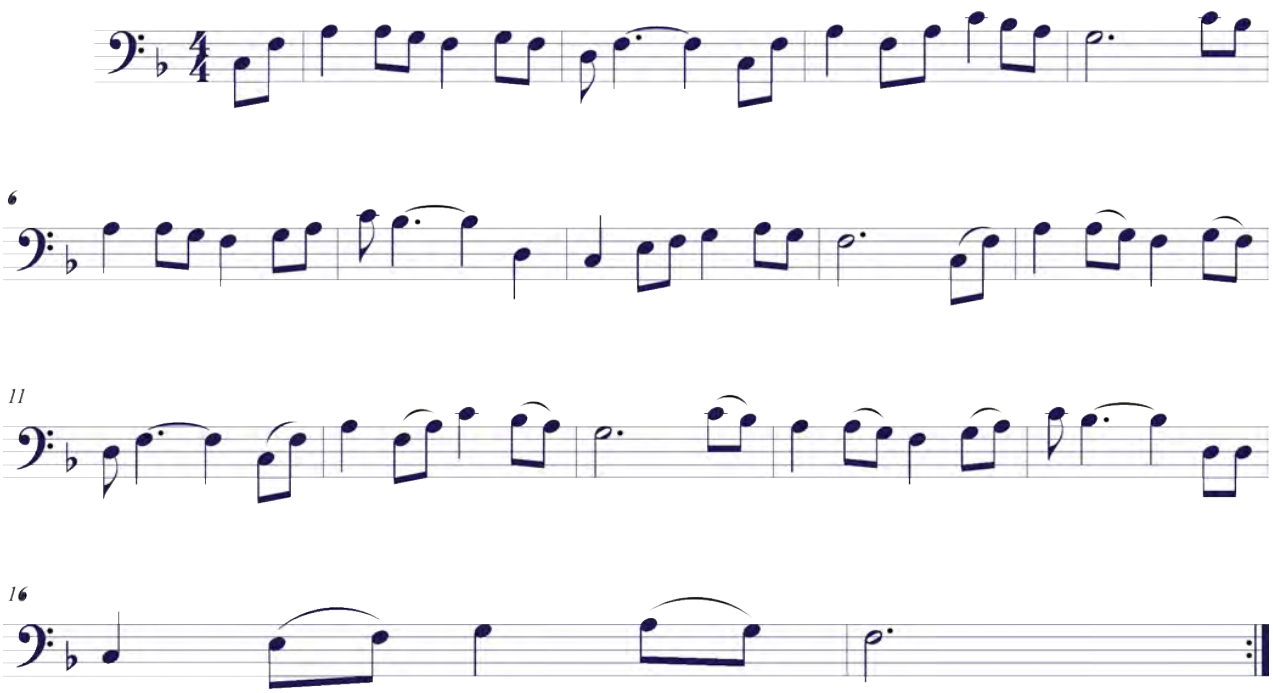
Articulation Exercises



Tone Builder

Red River Valley

American Folk Song



Appendix - Web Resources

The internet is full of great resources to help you with your bassoon playing. The online community of professional and amateur bassoon players is very active, posting articles, videos, and common answers to questions on a variety of forums and message boards. This list of web resources is simply a place for you to start looking for advice if you run into an issue you cannot solve.

http://www.steesbassoon.com/
This website is run by bassoonist Barrick Stees, and includes information on reed making, playing the bassoon, introductory information for students, and some professional recordings.

http://www.foxproducts.com/pdfs/IntermediateBassoonist_JanetPolk.pdf
This link will take you to a PDF file for the intermediate bassoonist. Check it out after you have worked your way through this book to get tips on how to improve further.

www.bassoontrainer.com
This finger trainer is an excellent resource when trying to memorize fingerings. You can pick the difficulty level, and look up trouble notes one by one if you need to check one.

http://www.8notes.com/f/forum28.asp
A bassoon forum where users can read and post questions or comments concerning any aspect of bassooon playing.

http://www.musicandthebassoon.org/
An excellent website with professional instructional videos, audio examples, lessons, and over 300 music examples. It is authored by Kristin Wolfe Jensen, professor of bassoon at the University of Texas at Austin

http://www.idrs.org/
Website for the international double reed society. Parts of this website are membership only, but the forums are now available and open to the public.

Appendix - Where to Find Reeds

Sam Houston State University

http://www.forrestsmusic.com/bassoon_reeds.htm
Forrests Music is a supply store that sells many items related to bassoon, they also sell a variety of reeds. The link above will take you to the reed section of their website.

http://shop.weinermusic.com/Bassoon-Reeds/products/1378/
Weiner Music.com sells many bassoon accessories, music, and related items for musicians. The link above will take you to their bassoon reed catalog. They also sell supplies for making your own reeds. (Do not attempt to make your own reeds without a professional)

http://vigdersbassoonsupplies.com/
Located in California, Scott Vigder has been making bassoon reeds for sale since 1976. Each reed is hand made. He also offers advice on to what reed you should be playing depending on your level or needs.

http://www.hodgeproductsinc.com/catalog/index.php?cPath=28_29
Offering professionally made bassoon reeds by four different professional performers and reed makers, these reeds are not much more expensive than a commercial reed from a music store.

http://www.charlesmusic.com/cgi-bin/theo?action=category&main_category=Reeds&sub_category=Bassoon%20Reeds
The Charles Double Reed Company sells instruments and supplies relating to the bassoon, contrabassoon, and oboe. The link above will take you to the bassoon reed sale page.

http://www.doublereedshop.com/online-catalog/reeds/finished-reeds-and-blanks-for-you-to-finish-professional-student-qualities/bassoon-reeds
Reeds here are made by a variety of manufacturers, and are separated by price and designed for different levels of players.

Credits and Acknowledgements

The images of the bassoon used on page two were taken from http://www.kristianomaronnes.com/MyBassoon.html.

The image of the reed containers on page five came from www.infinitireed.com

The blank copy of the bassoon fingering chart has been sourced from the "Let's Play Basson" book produced by Fox Products. www.foxproducts.com

The drawing of the bassoon embouchure has been adapted from the Primary Handbook for Bassoon by R. Polonchak, published by Meredith Music Publications, P.O. Box 24339, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307

Red River Valley used in the exercise section was adapted from a worksheet provided by MakeMusic Inc. Copyright notice featured on the page.

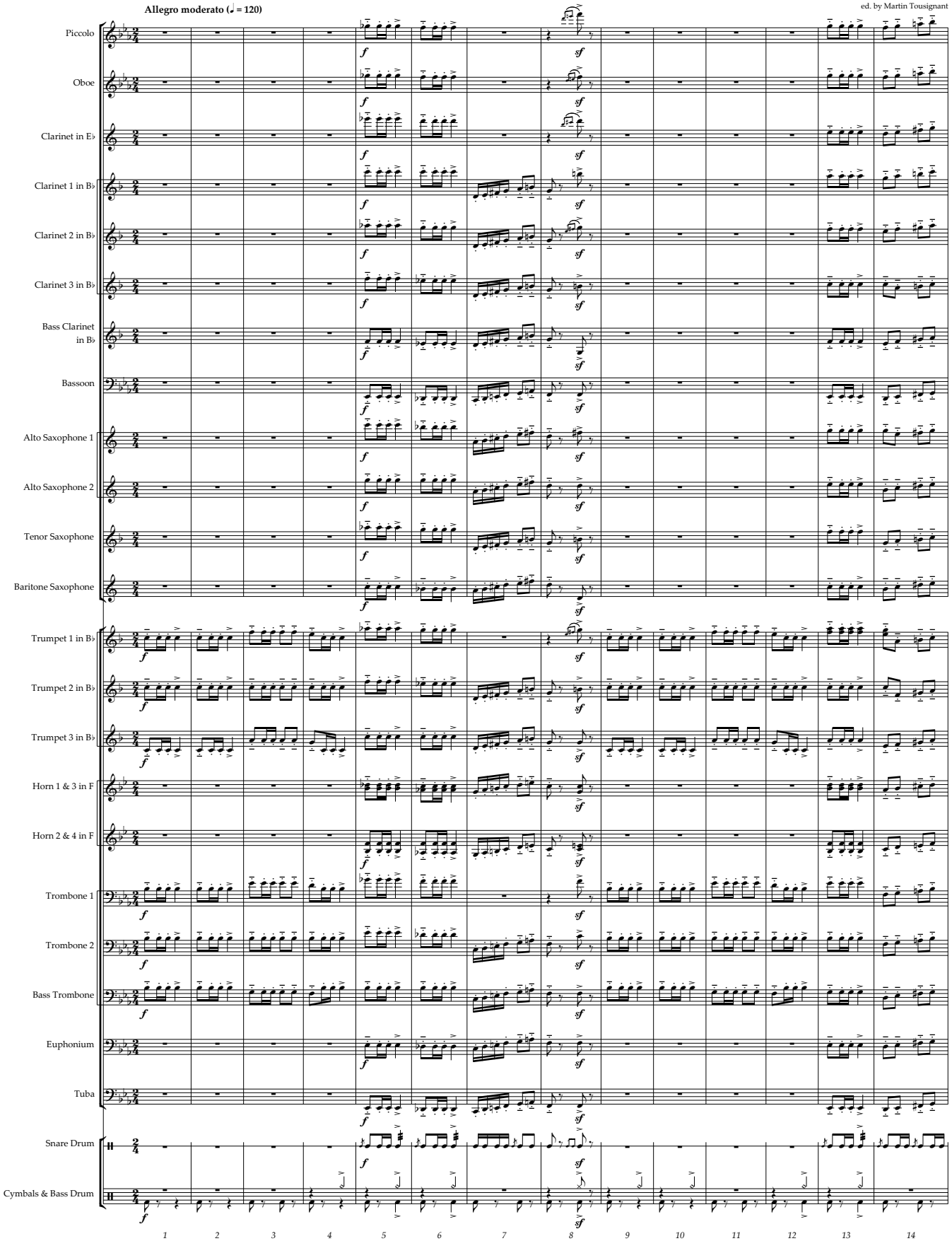
All other pictures feature Mrs. Sheila Acuncius, a big thank-you to her for taking the time to take pictures and answer questions about the bassoon for this project.

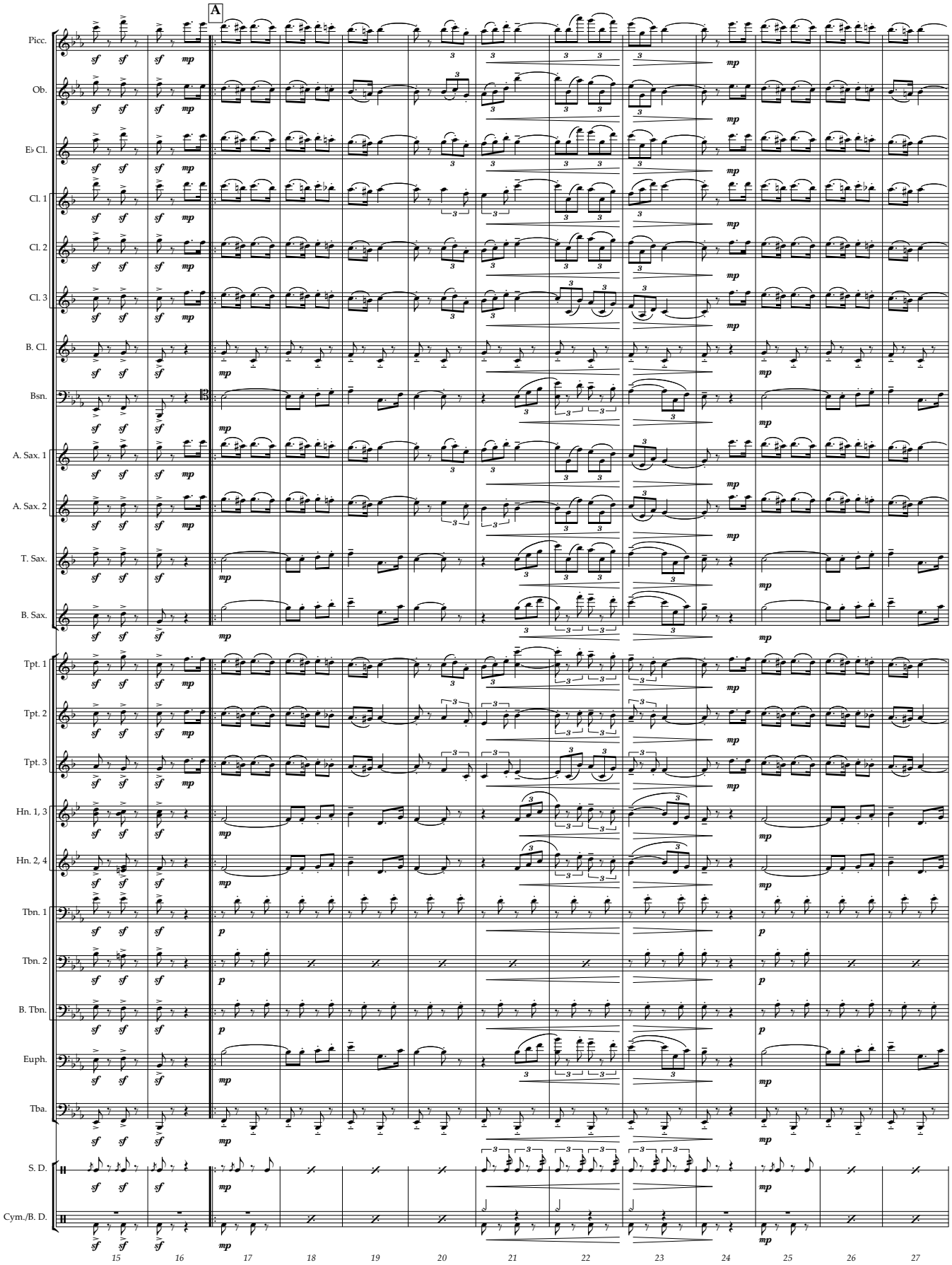
The tracks used as demonstrations for embouchure are taken from the Embou-Sure series and are Copyright 1987 by W.I.B.C. Publishing 407 Terrace Street Ashland, Oregon 97520

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)




A
Picc.
Ob.
E♭ Cl.
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Cl. 3
B. Cl.
Bsn.
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax.
B. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Hn. 1, 3
Hn. 2, 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
B. Tbn.
Euph.
Tba.
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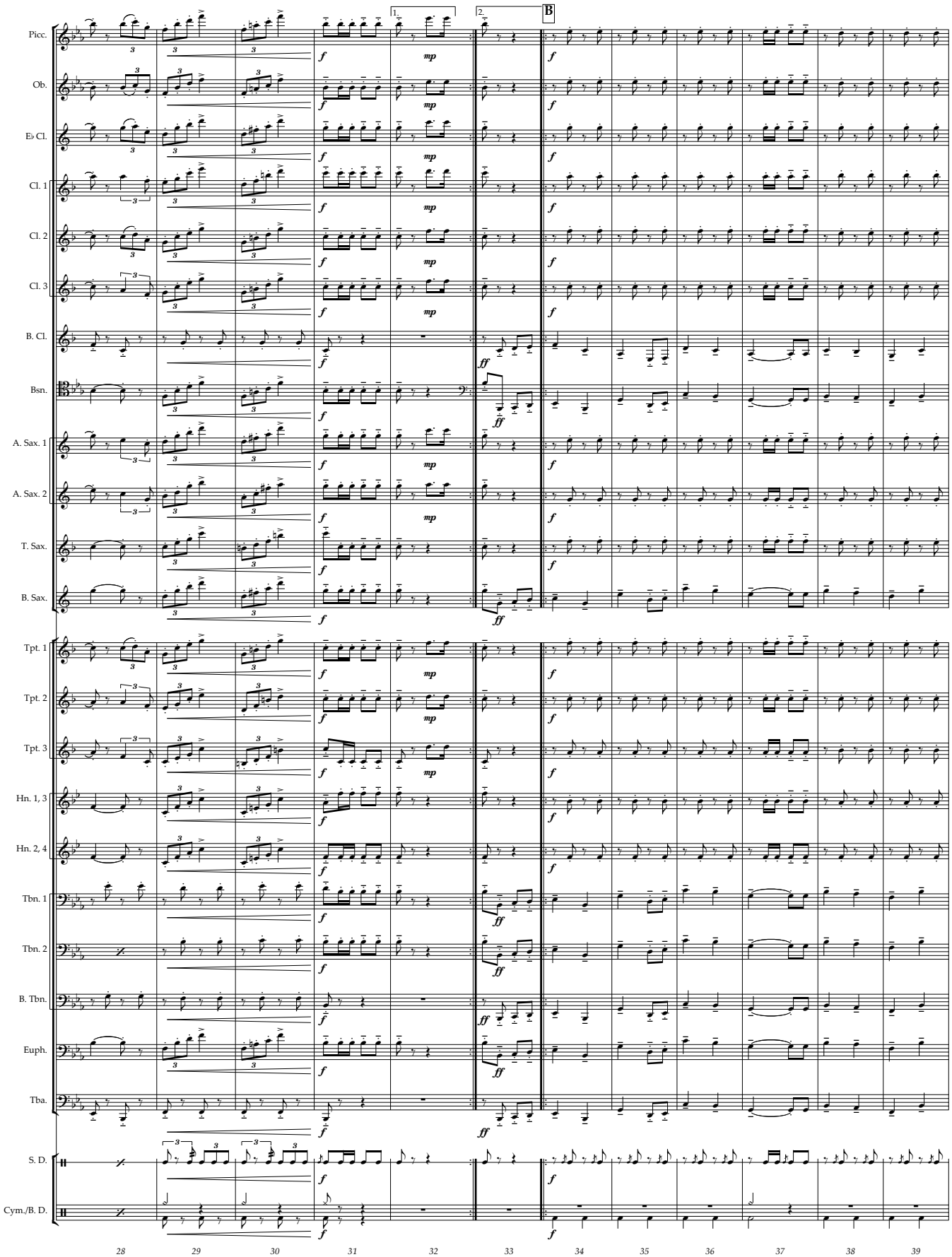
Picc.
Ob.
E♭ Cl.
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Cl. 3
B. Cl.
Bsn.
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax.
B. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Hn. 1, 3
Hn. 2, 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
B. Tbn.
Euph.
Tba.
S. D.
Cym./B. D.
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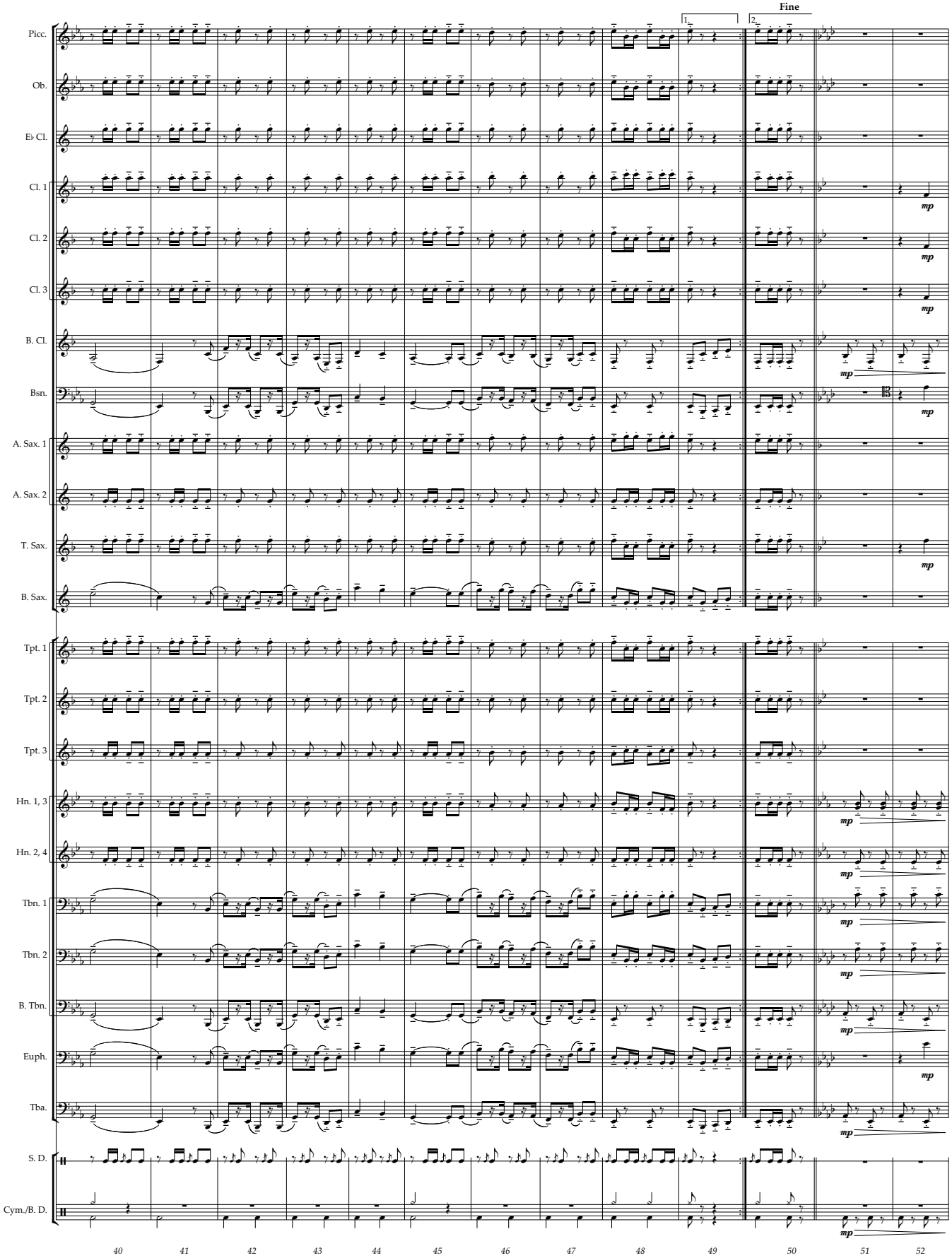
Fine
1.
2.
Picc.
Ob.
E♭ Cl.
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Cl. 3
B. Cl.
Bsn.
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax.
B. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Hn. 1, 3
Hn. 2, 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
B. Tbn.
Euph.
Tba.
S. D.
Cym./B. D.
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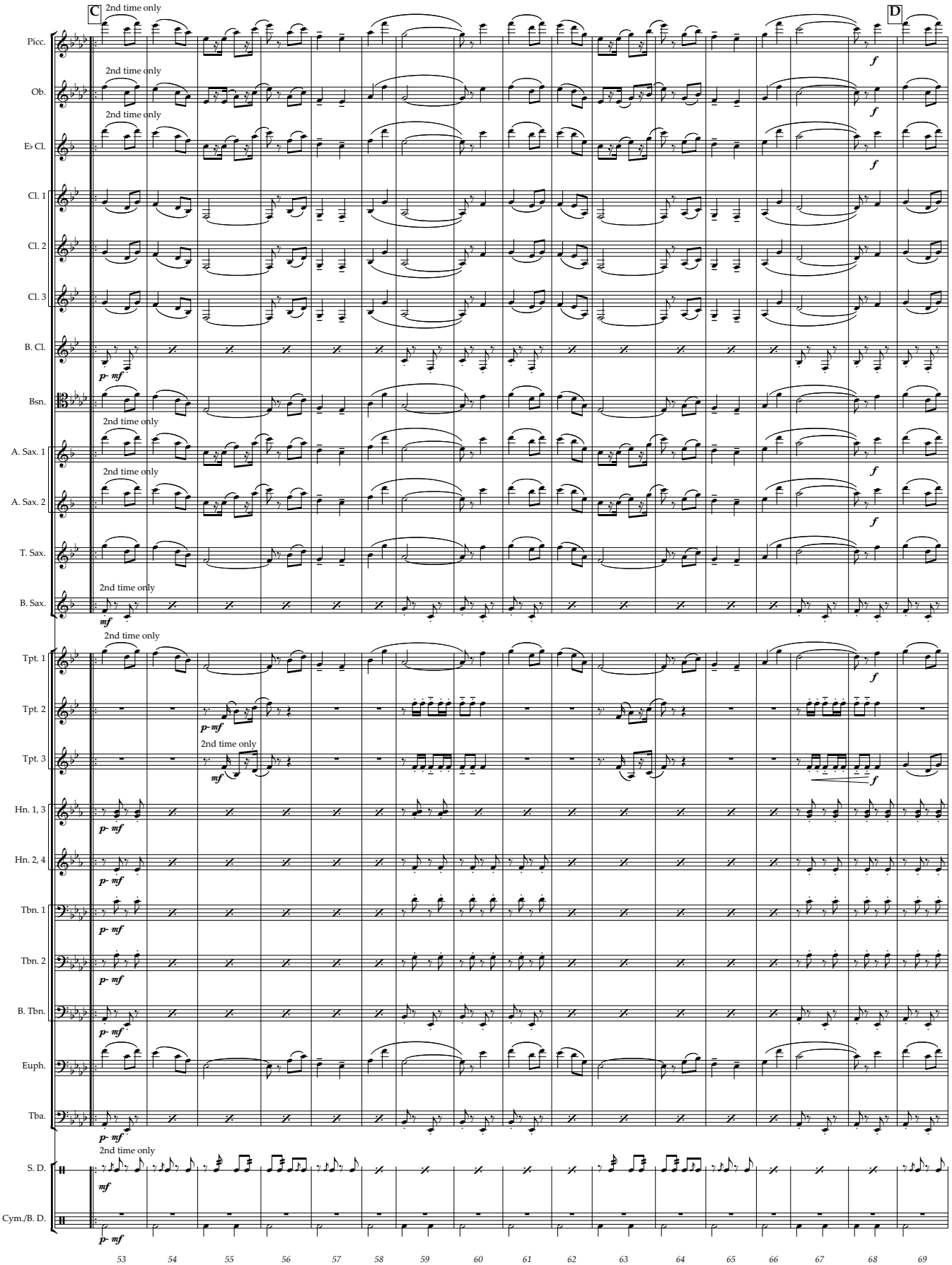
C
D
2nd time only
Picc.
Ob.
E♭ Cl.
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Cl. 3
B. Cl.
Bsn.
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax.
B. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Hn. 1, 3
Hn. 2, 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
B. Tbn.
Euph.
Tba.
S. D.
Cym./B. D.
p- mf
mf
f
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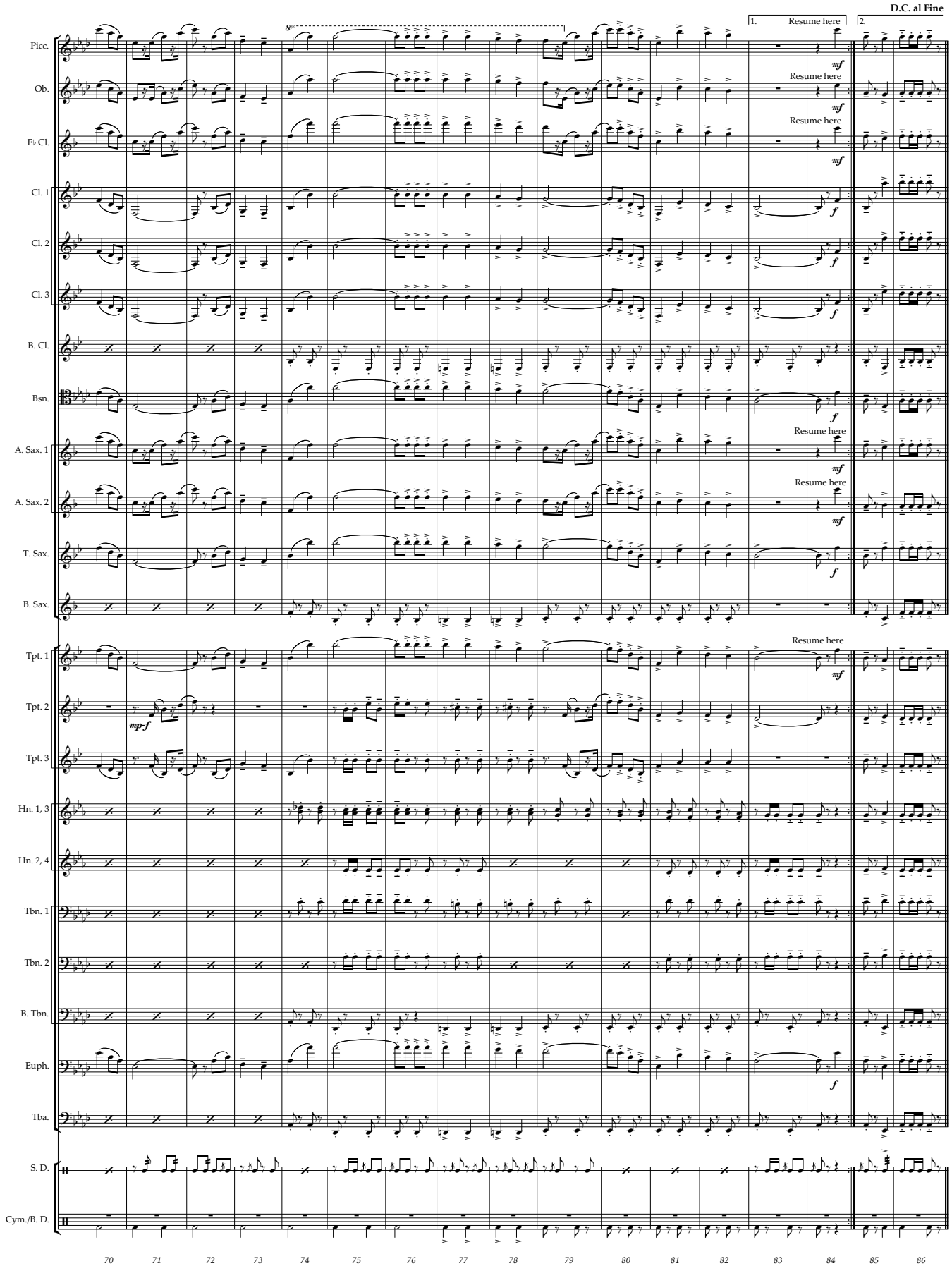
D.C. al Fine
1.
Resume here
2.
Picc.
Ob.
E♭ Cl.
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Cl. 3
B. Cl.
Bsn.
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax.
B. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Hn. 1, 3
Hn. 2, 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
B. Tbn.
Euph.
Tba.
S. D.
Cym./B. D.
mf
f
mp-f
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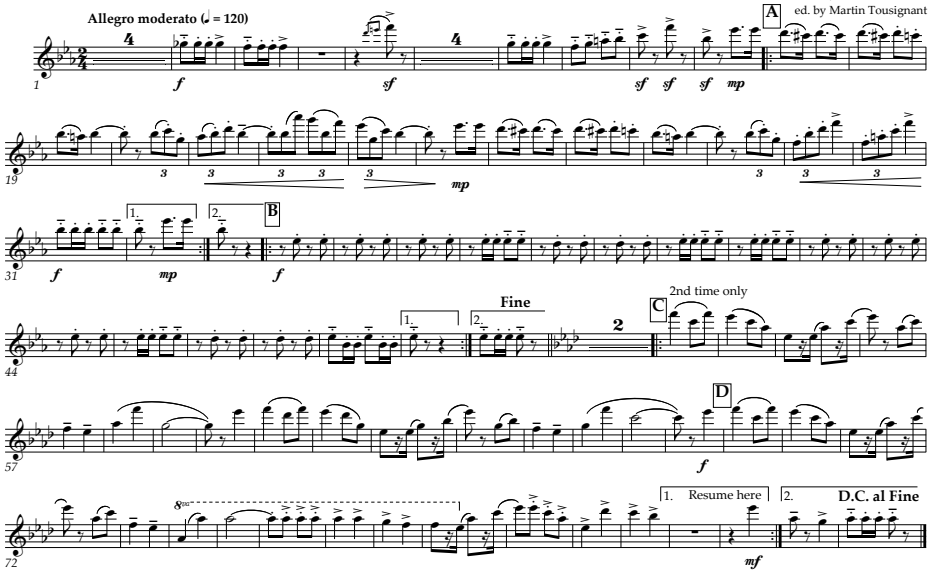
Piccolo/Flute

Under the Double Eagle

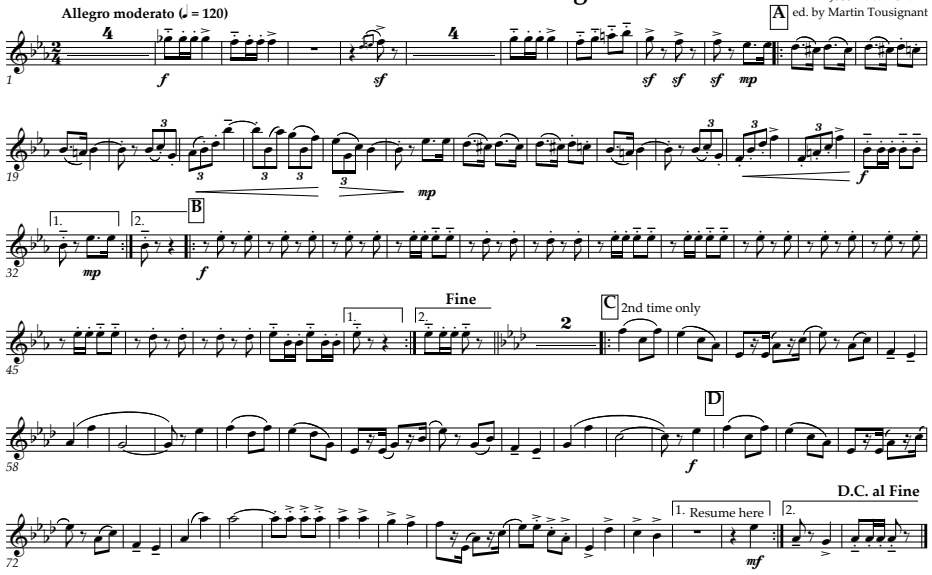
Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant



Oboe

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

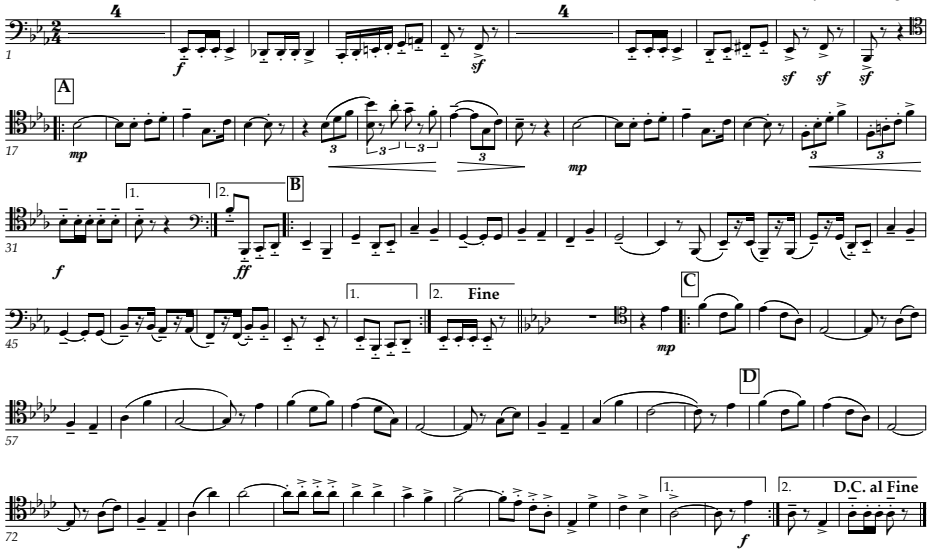


Bassoon

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)

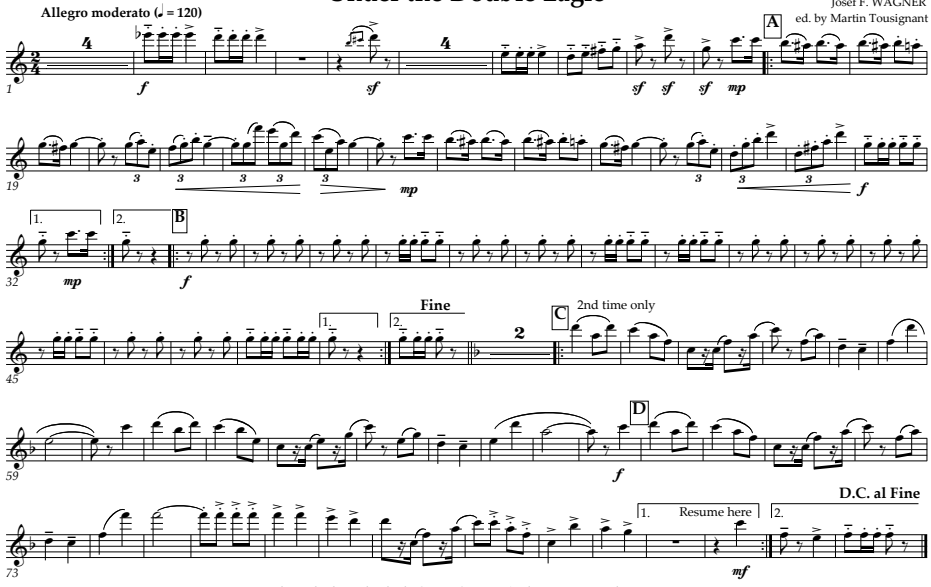


Clarinet in E♭

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

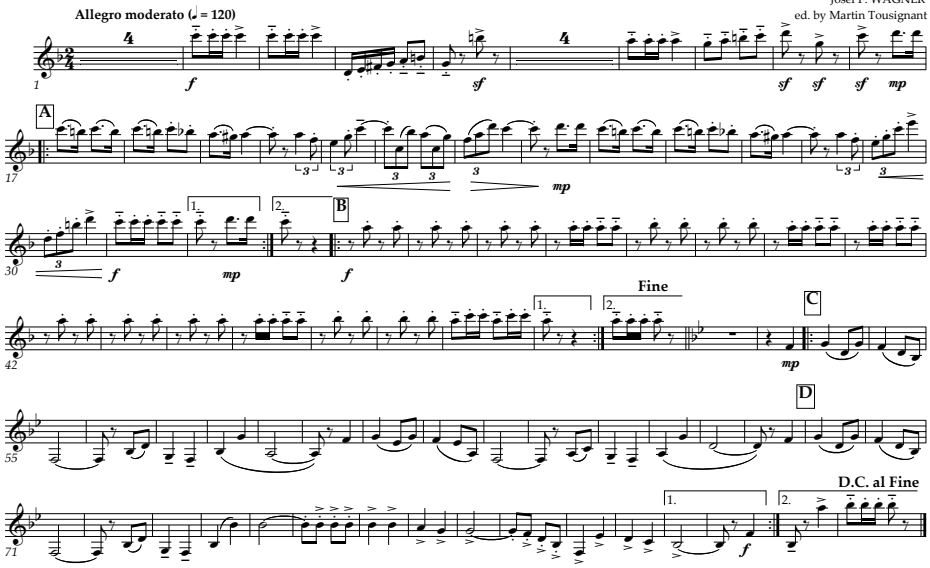
Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)



Clarinet 1 in B♭

Under the Double Eagle

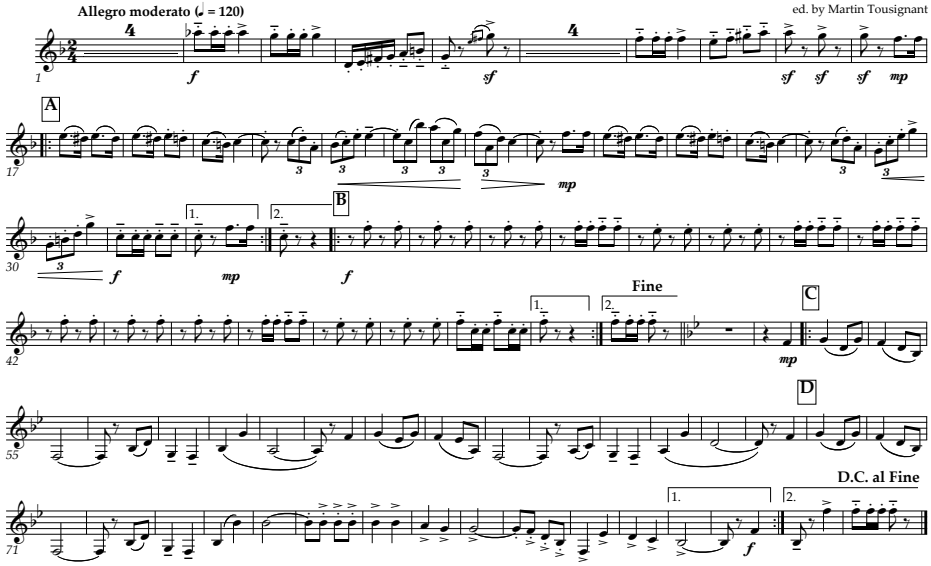
Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant



Clarinet 2 in B♭

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

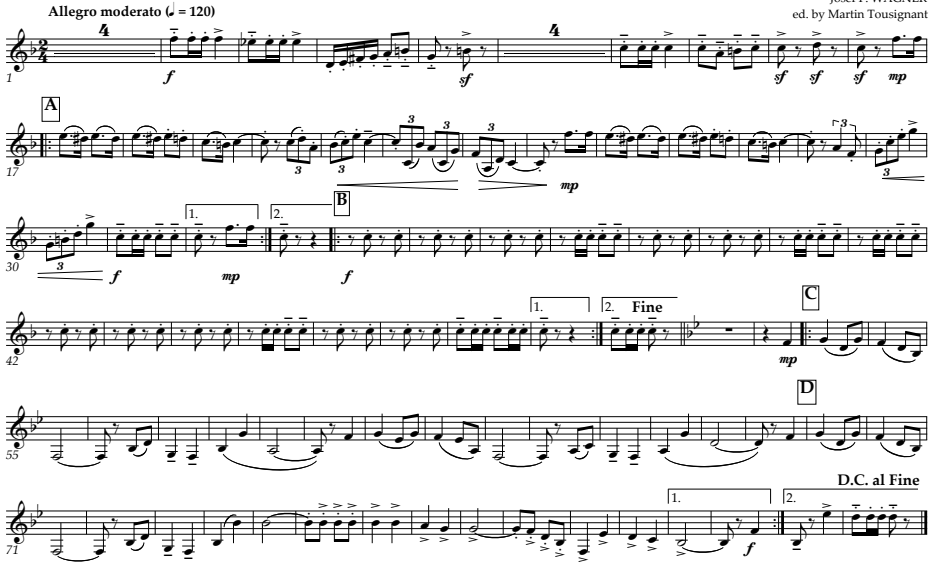


Clarinet 3 in B♭

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

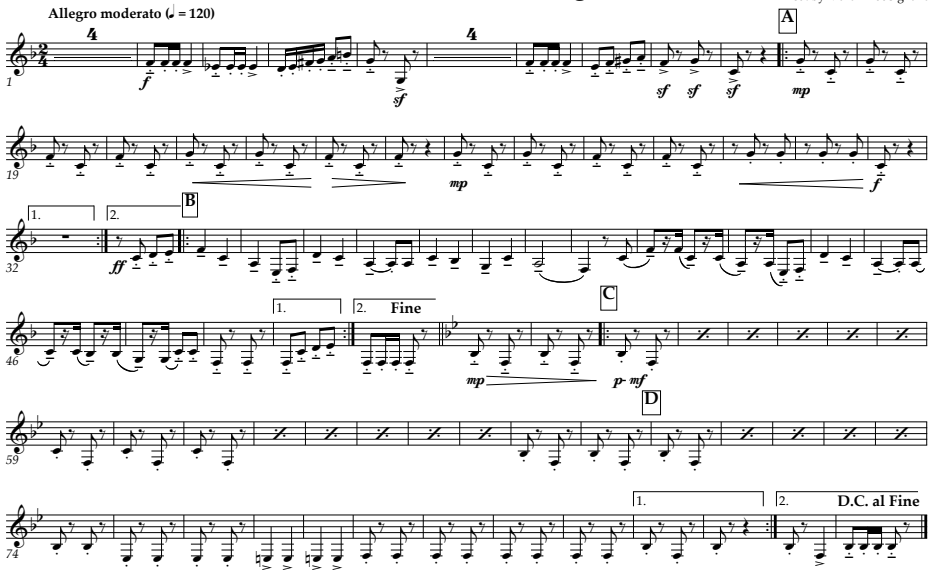
Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)



Bass Clarinet in B♭

Under the Double Eagle

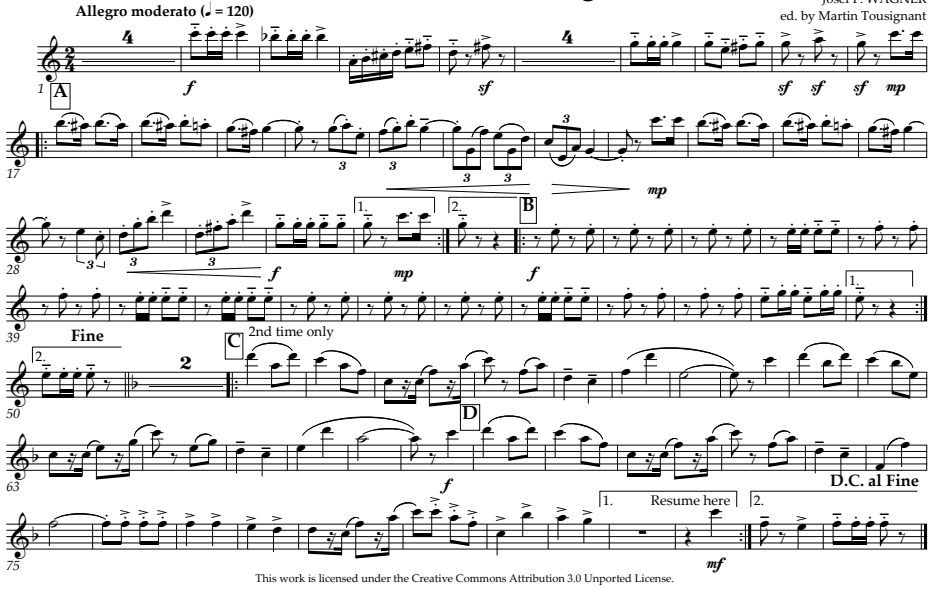
Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant



Alto Saxophone 1

Under the Double Eagle

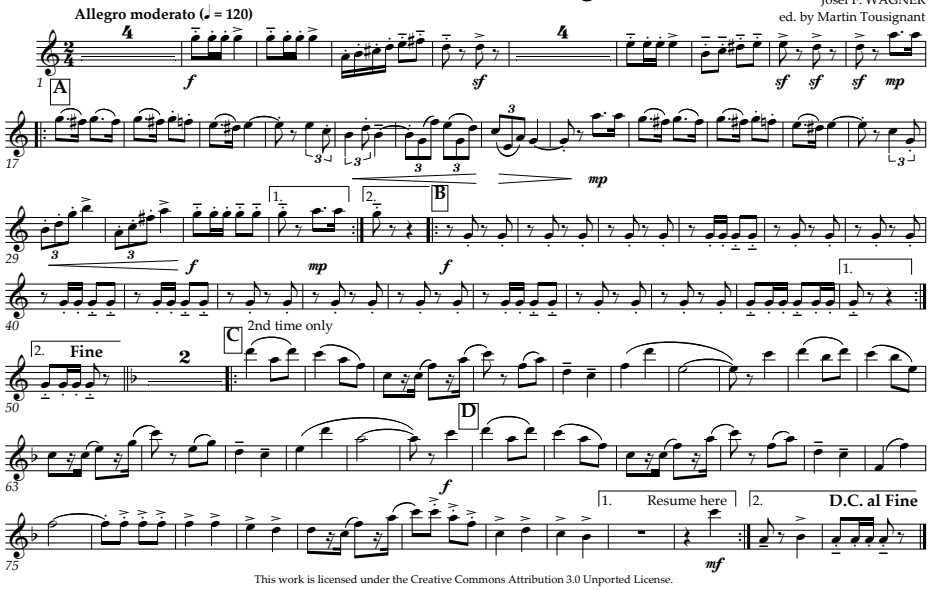
Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant



Alto Saxophone 2

Under the Double Eagle

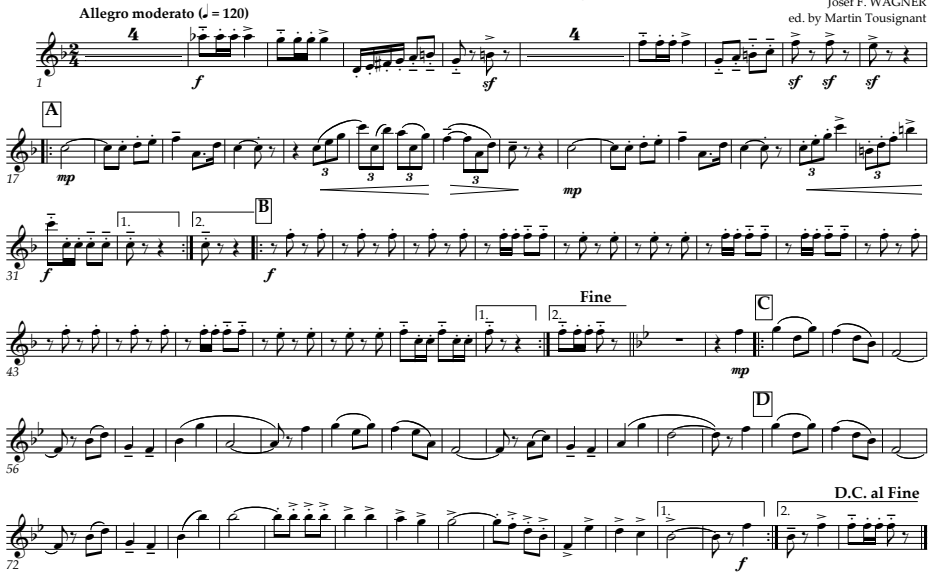
Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant



Tenor Saxophone

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

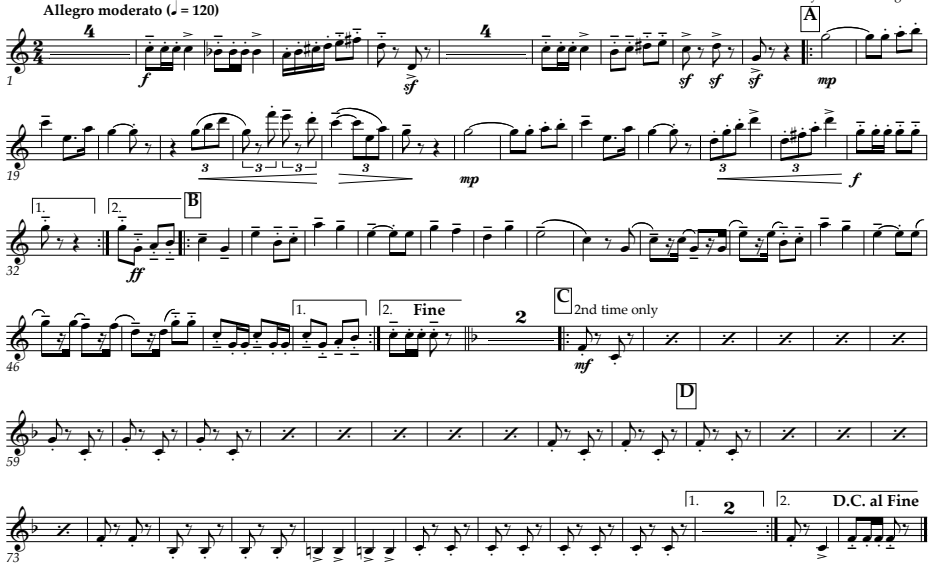


Baritone Saxophone

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

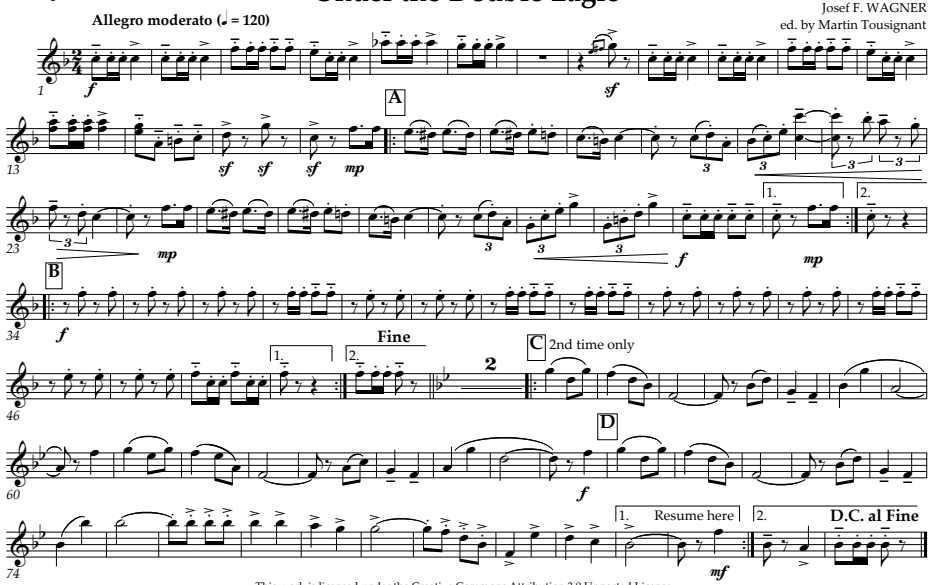
Allegro moderato (♩. = 120)



Trumpet 1 in B♭

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

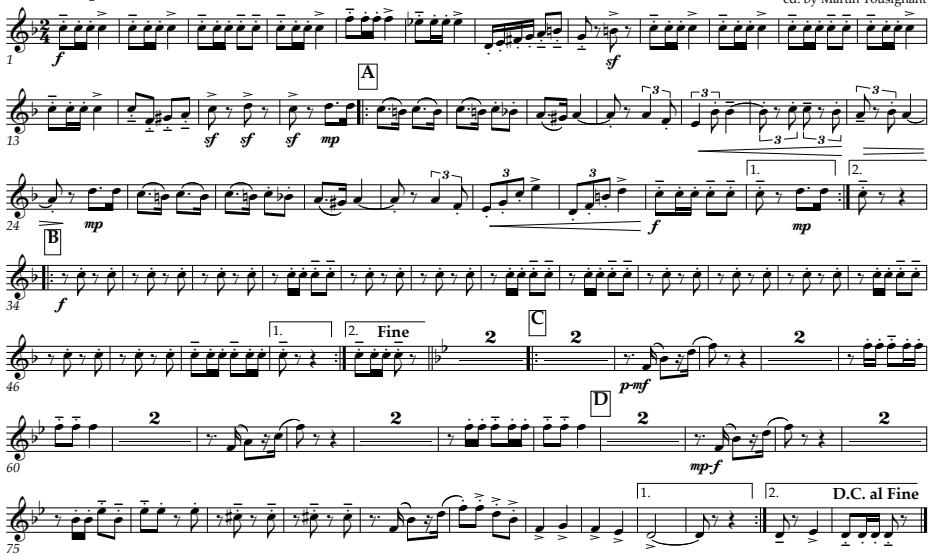


Trumpet 2 in B♭

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)

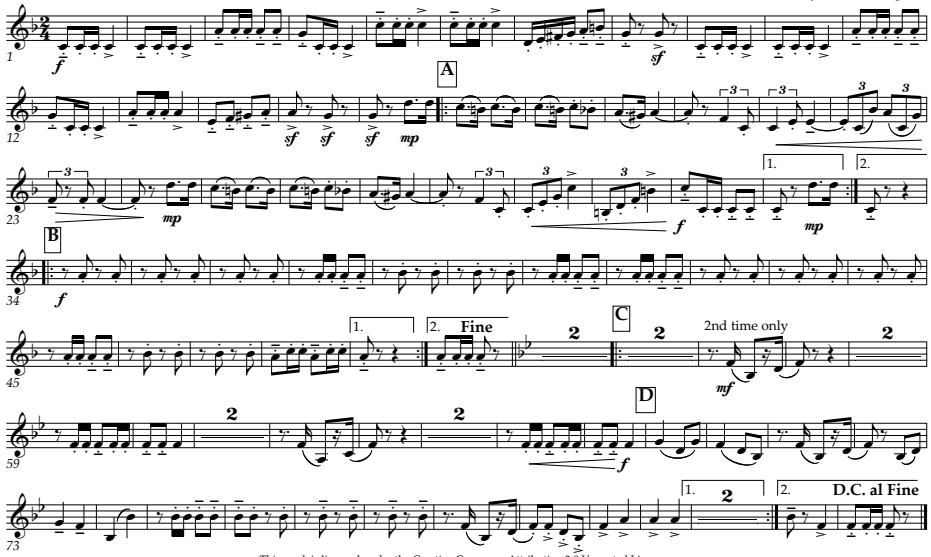


Trumpet 3 in B♭

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

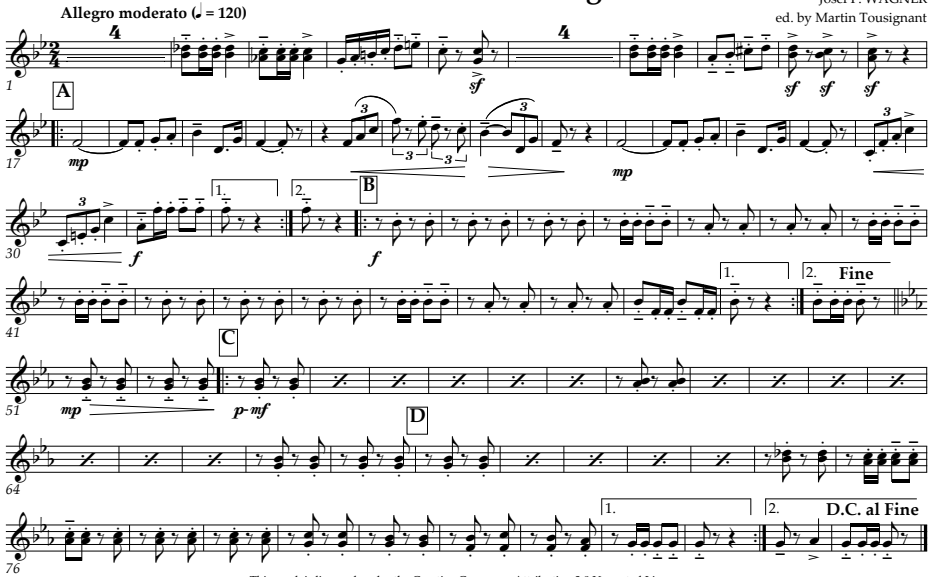
Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)



Horn 1 & 3 in F

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

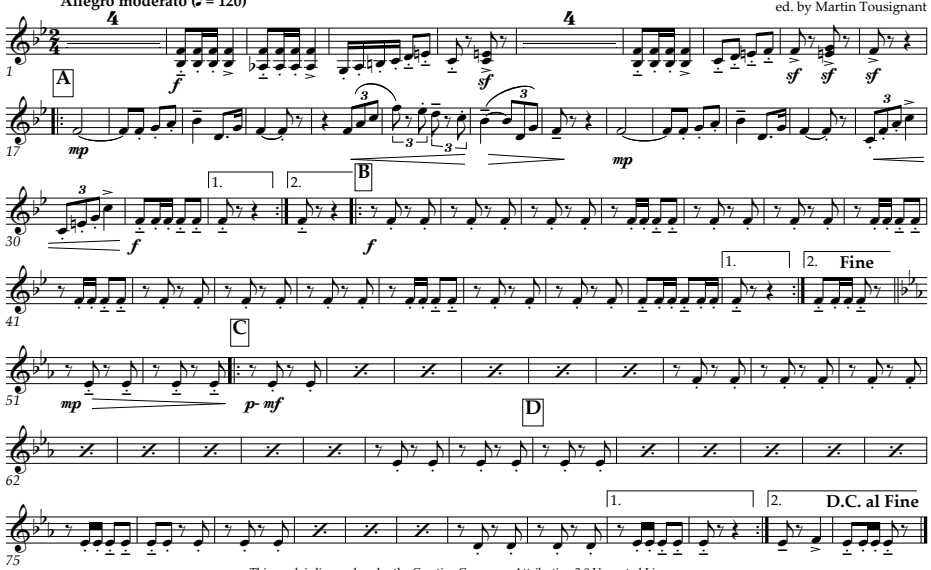


Horn 2 & 4 in F

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)

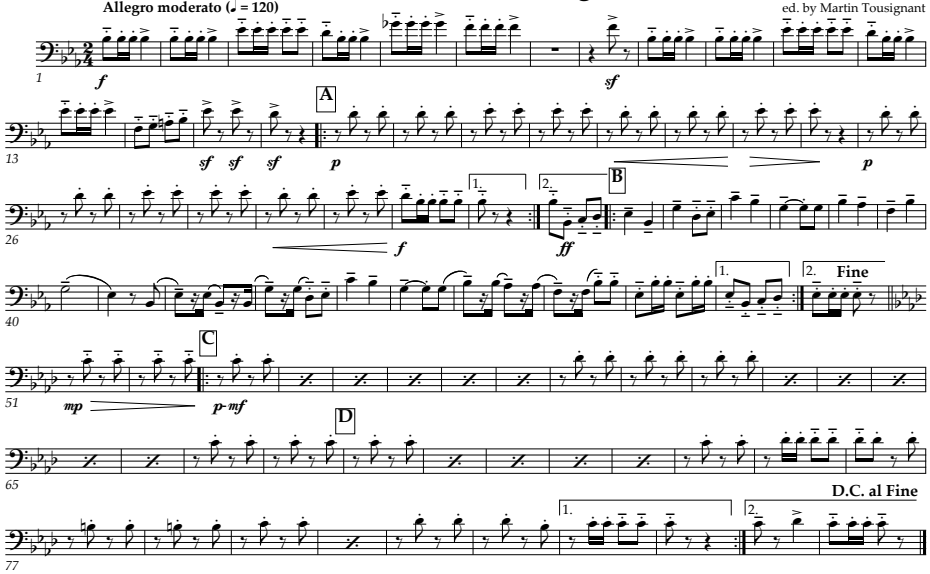


Trombone 1

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

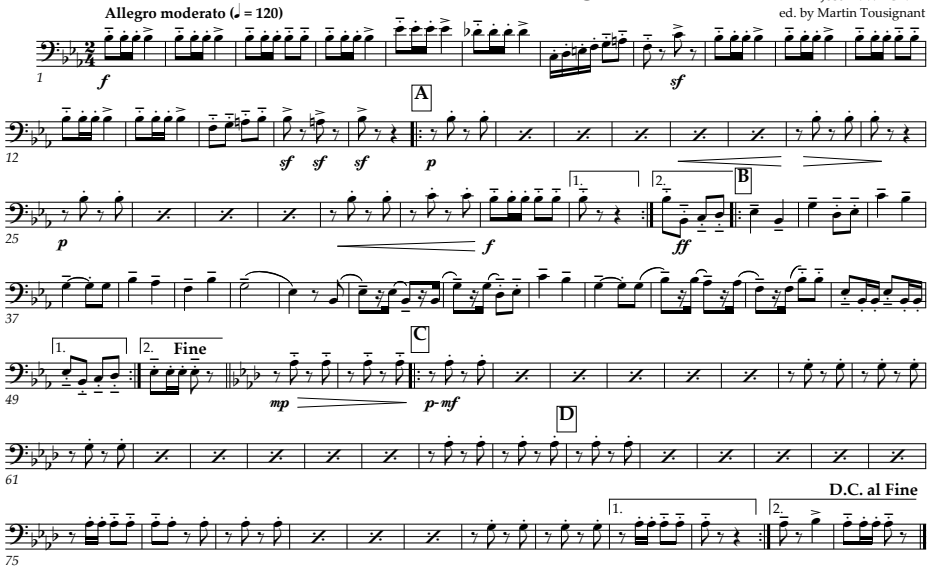
Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)



Trombone 2

Under the Double Eagle

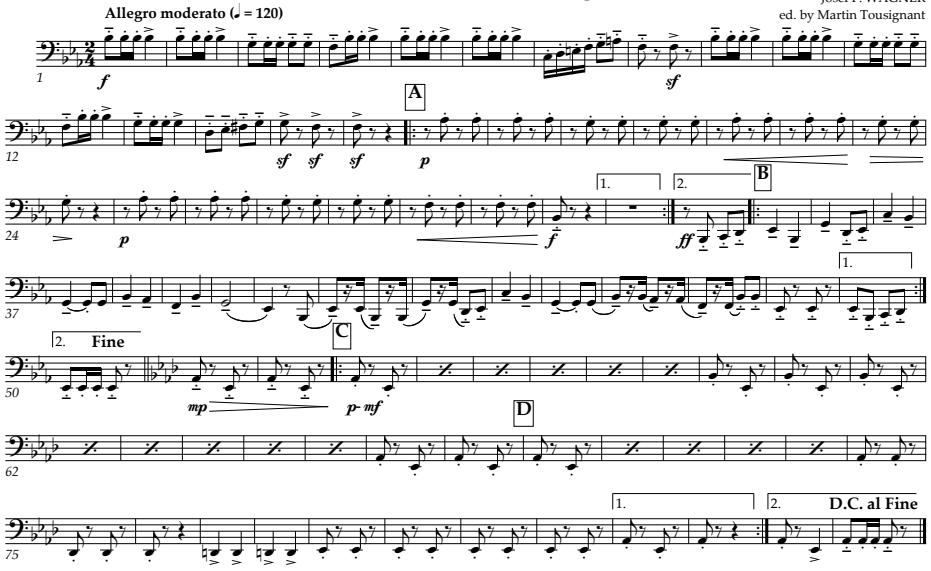
Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant



Bass Trombone

Under the Double Eagle

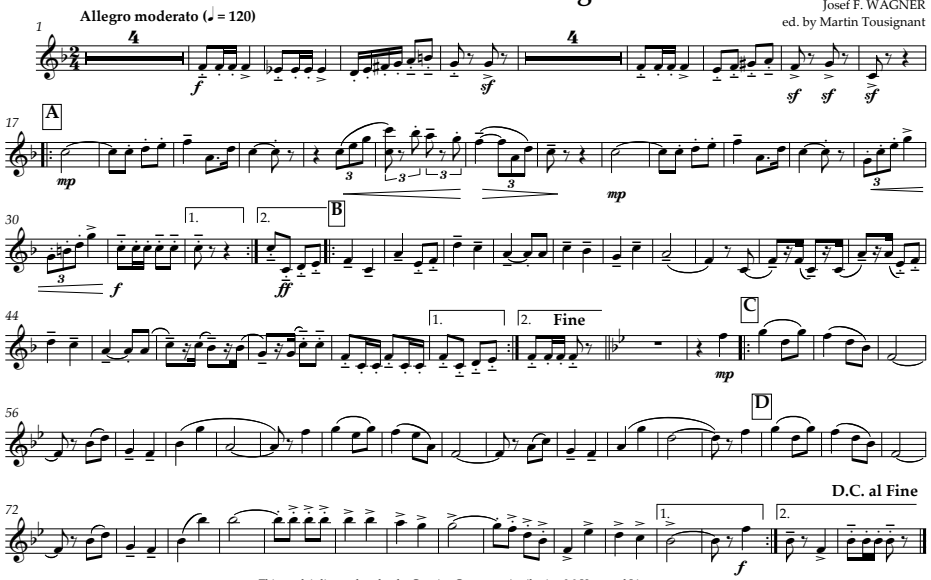
Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant



Euphonium

Under the Double Eagle

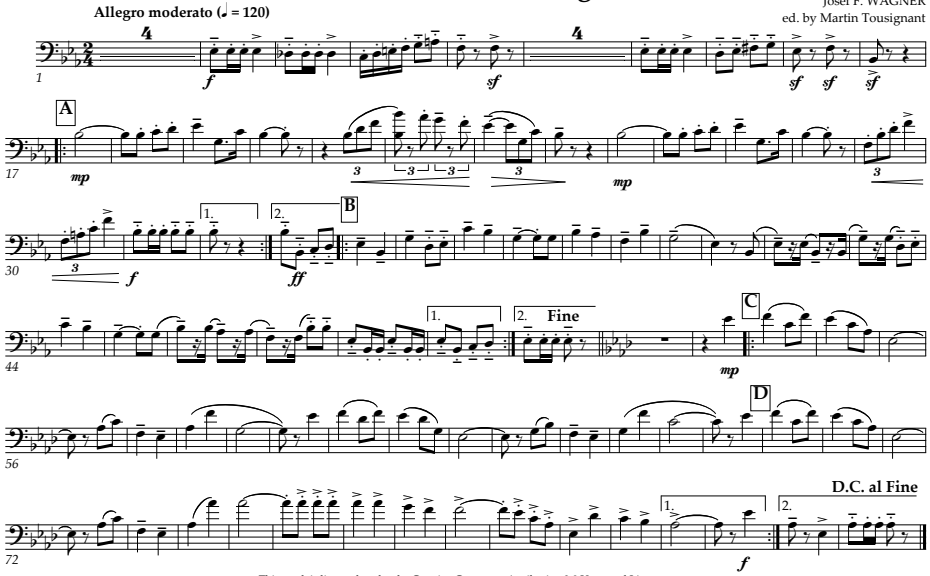
Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant



Euphonium

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

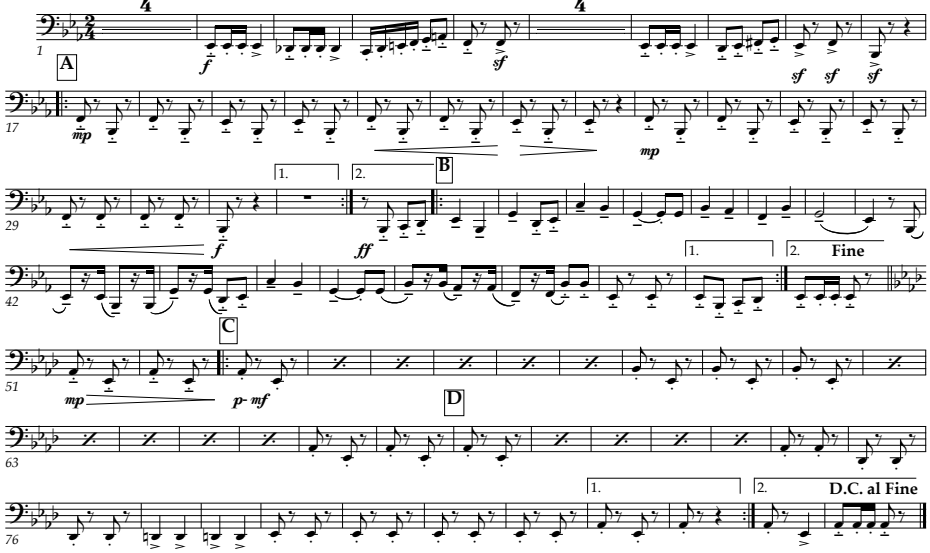


Tuba

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)

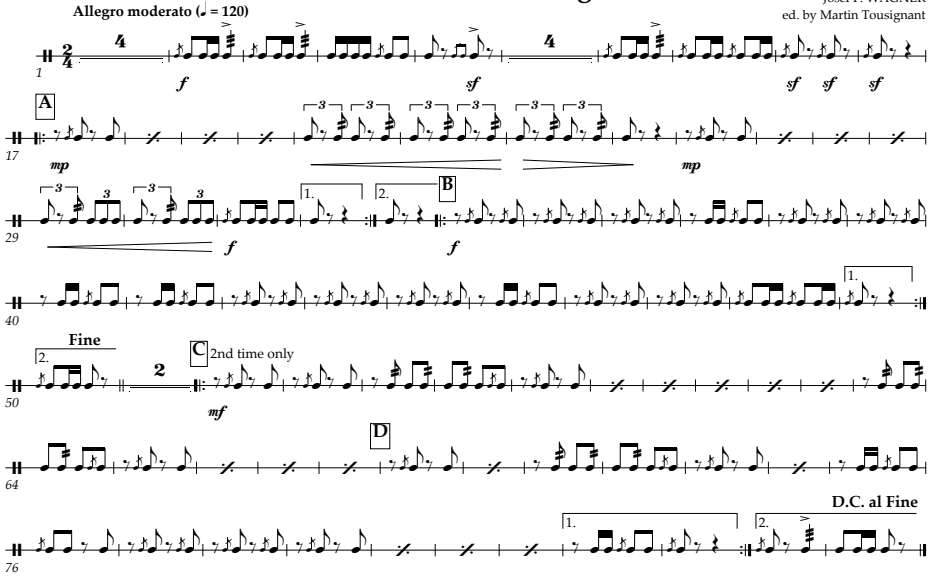


Snare Drum

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)

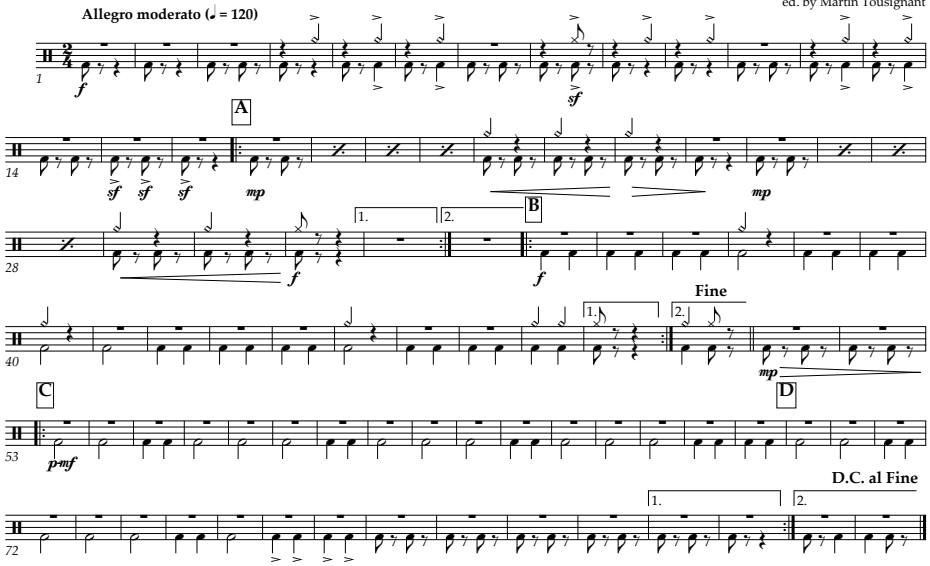


Cymbals & Bass Drum

Under the Double Eagle

Josef F. WAGNER
ed. by Martin Tousignant

Allegro moderato (♩ = 120)



So you want a better sound?

A Guide to Improving Tone for Wind Instruments

Meghan Fay Olswanger
MUSI 5398: Advanced Studies
Practical Application Project No. 2
American Band College
Sam Houston State University

American Band College
of
Sam Houston State University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FORWARD

Introduction and Purpose

This project was created in partial fulfillment of a Masters degree in Music through American Band College and Sam Houston State University. The goal of this project is to provide basic resources to high school aged band students so that they can begin to develop an aural tone concept for their instrument. This project:

1) provides students with several diverse examples of quality tone to listen to and analyze

2) requires students to record themselves playing a simple etude, followed by listening, analysis, and comparison and contrast with the professional recordings

3) provides students with an embouchure check list, several YouTube tone and embouchure masterclasses, visual(s) of correct embouchure, and a trouble shooting problems/remedies chart

4) provides students with basic exercises for tone development on their instrument.

I designed this project to address some of my weak areas (various wind instrument embouchures), but also to provide quality tone models for my students. In my brief tenure as a teacher, I have discovered that many students do not have a defined tone concept and cannot articulate or pinpoint what (or perhaps more aptly **who**) they wish to sound like. This is especially true of students who are not taking private lessons.

My plan is to give this project in an instrument-specific packet to my students to be completed over the course of the year. I have broken each packet into similar parts so that it could be given as a class assignment, either on a computer lab/substitute day (e.g. Part One) or as homework (e.g. Part Two). I envision posting this to our band's webpage so that all students can access it digitally. The written response pages will be provided as handouts as we complete each step.

A Word About Equipment

Equipment (instrument, mouthpiece, reeds, etc.) is not discussed in each section as the focus of the project is developing an aural tone concept and working towards that tone concept through correct embouchure and embouchure/tone development exercises.

However, proper functioning equipment is essential to creating a pleasing tone. For example, it would be very difficult to cultivate a dark, classical sound on a metal jazz mouthpiece. Once one has a tone concept and the embouchure strength and accuracy, playing on a quality, well maintained instrument will almost always produce a better sound than a dented student instrument.

These facts are not forgotten or glossed over and appropriate equipment needs are discussed with my students routinely. However, as they are not within the focus of this project, you will not find a discussion of equipment in each section.

So you want a better **FLUTE** sound?

Let's answer our question with another question....

What is a flute supposed to sound like?

It's probably difficult for you to describe what you think a flute should sound like, but I bet you could offer an opinion of which sound you liked better if you heard two people playing the flute.

Part One: Find a Role Model

Using a critical ear, listen to each performer and fill out the worksheet on the following page. Do not be afraid to listen to recordings multiple times!

These six individuals are accomplished flute players who have great tone. However, none of them have the exact **same** tone. The sound that appeals to one ear might not appeal to another.

Example No. 1:
Jeanne Baxtresser
Former Principal Flute of New York Philharmonic

Example No. 2:
William Bennett
Former Member of London Symphony Orchestra

Example No. 3:
Mary Karen Clardy
Flute Professor, University of North Texas

Example No. 4:
James Galway
Flute Virtuoso

Example No. 5:
Renee Siebert
Former Member of New York Philharmonic

Flute Tone
YouTube
Playlist

Example No. 6:
Emmanuel Pahud
Principal Flute of Berlin Philharmonic

SO YOU WANT A BETTER **FLUTE** SOUND?

Vocabulary Bank:

Airy Big Brassy Bright Buzzy Clear Closed Cutting Dark Deep Dull
Edgy Focused Free Full Harsh Heavy Light Mellow Muffled
Narrow Open Pinched Relaxed Resonant Rich Ringing Round
Shallow Small Spread Strained Strong Vibrant Weak Wide Woody

The adjectives in this word bank are only suggestions. You can create your own adjectives/short phrases in your responses. Some of these adjectives have a positive association and others negative. Listen for both. Remember, we are only considering tone quality and not other elements of performance.

1. Example #1 Tone Quality Description:

_____

_____

2. Example #2 Tone Quality Description:

_____

_____

3. Example #3 Tone Quality Description:

_____

_____

4. Example #4 Tone Quality Description:

_____

_____

5. Example #5 Tone Quality Description:

_____

_____

6. Example #6 Tone Quality Description:

_____

_____

7. Which performer's tone quality do you like best? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

So you want a better **FLUTE** sound?

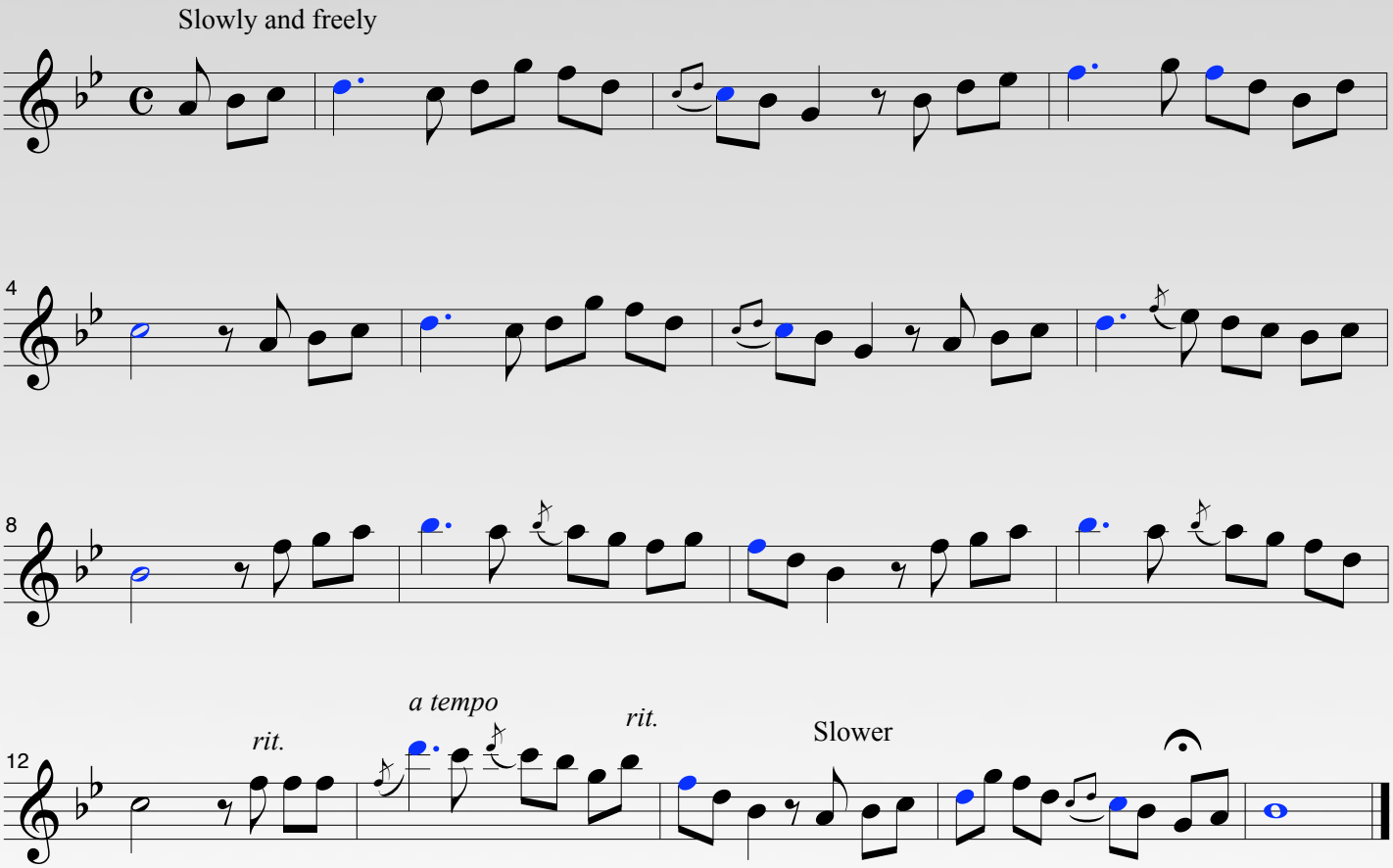
Part Two: Self-Analysis

Record yourself playing the simple exercise provided.

Flute

Danny Boy

Old Irish Air



SO YOU WANT A BETTER **FLUTE** SOUND?

Using a critical ear, listen to your recording of Danny Boy and reflect on your tone quality, guided by the worksheet below. In question 3, you might find it helpful to replay the recording of your tone role model. Do not be afraid to listen to recordings multiple times!

Vocabulary Bank:

Airy Big Brassy Bright Buzzy Clear Closed Cutting Dark Deep Dull
Edgy Focused Free Full Harsh Heavy Light Mellow Muffled
Narrow Open Pinched Relaxed Resonant Rich Ringing Round
Shallow Small Spread Strained Strong Vibrant Weak Wide Woody

The adjectives in this word bank are only suggestions. You can create your own adjectives/short phrases in your responses. Some of these adjectives have a positive association and others negative. Listen for both. Remember, we are only considering tone quality and not other elements of performance.

1. How would you describe **your** tone quality?

_____

_____

_____

2. Positive Elements of Your Tone Quality

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Areas of Improvement for Your Tone Quality

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Compare and Contrast:

Your Current Tone

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

'one Role Model's Tone

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

So you want a better **FLUTE** sound?

Now you have an idea of where you are. You have an idea of where you want to go.

But, how do you get there?

In the next section, you will find some common embouchure problems that result in a decrease in tone quality as well as how to fix them.

Part Three: Embouchure Check

Correct Formation of the Embouchure

1) The embouchure plate on the head joint is placed in the natural indentation of the jaw/chin.

2) The lower lip covers 1/4 to 1/3 of the embouchure hole.

3) Say "Whee" - This pulls the corners of the lips outward and flattens the lower lip.

4) Say "Too" - This brings the whole embouchure set up forward.

5) Air is directed into the hole from this position (rather than over the hole).

So you want a better **FLUTE** sound?

Common Embouchure Issues & Remedies

Sounds Like	Problem	Remedy
No Tone, Rushing Air	Air is going across hole. Lower lip not on hole. Corners of lips not pulled together.	Blow more into the hole. Place more lip over hole. More "Whee."
Some Sound, Much Air	"Splitting" the tone. Too large of opening in lips.	Lower chin, blow down. More "oo" needed.
Whoof Sound	No tongue being used.	Emphasize "Too."
Thu Sound	Tongue going between teeth and/or lips.	Tongue on the roof of mouth.
High Pitched Whistle (Overtone on head joint only)/Harsh and Loud Tone Quality	Too much air. Head joint rolled in too far. Hole covered too much.	Blow less hard. Turn head joint out. Cover less hole.
Flat Sounding	Rolled in too far.	Roll out.

Learn from the Masters

Take a tone quality lesson from some of the best! Look at videos 7 and 8 for brief tone quality masterclasses.

Flute Tone
YouTube
Playlist

American Band College
of
Sam Houston State University

Aperture Shapes for Different Ranges

For more information on aperture shapes, see **Marianne Gedigen's website.**

Low (First Octave)

Middle (Second Octave)

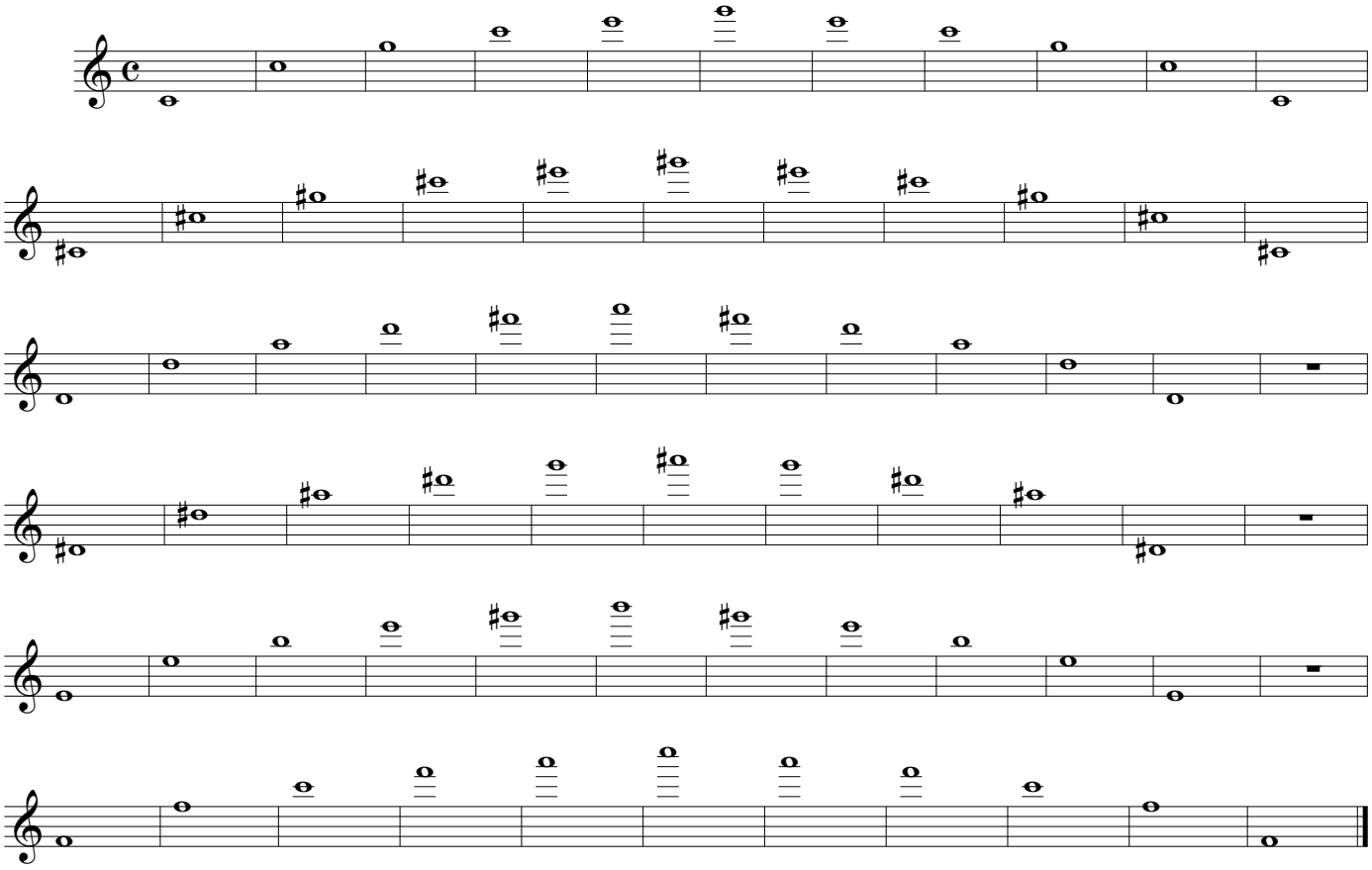
High (Third Octave)

SO YOU WANT A BETTER **FLUTE** SOUND?

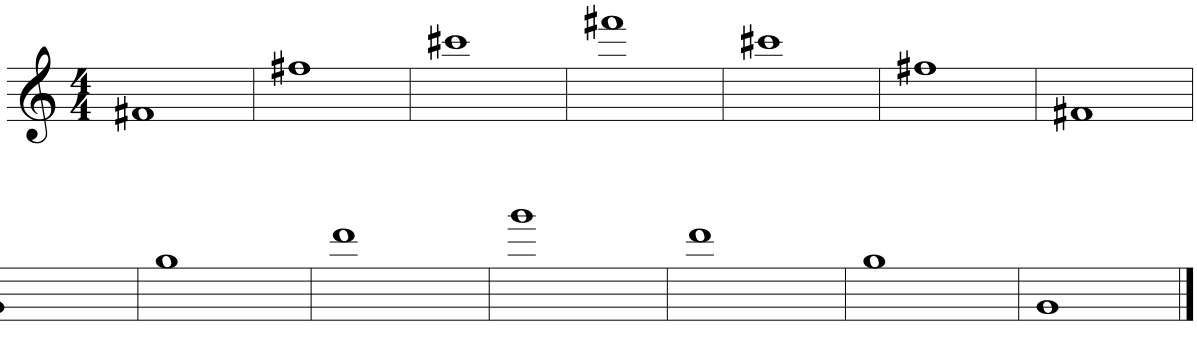
Play these tone exercises daily to improve tone quality. Always listen to make sure that you are producing your most beautiful tone possible. Slow intentional practice is what develops a better tone!

HARMONICS

When practicing these harmonics, the fundamental fingering is used for each line, therefore you will not switch fingerings in each line. All harmonic exercises are slurred. Practice different combinations for flexibility (i.e. 1 2 3 4 5 6 5 4 3 2 1, 1 3 2 4 3 5 4 6, etc.).



For F# and G, you will not complete the harmonic series. Practice them this way:

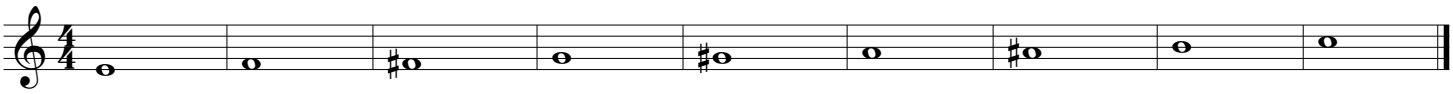


SO YOU WANT A BETTER **FLUTE** SOUND?

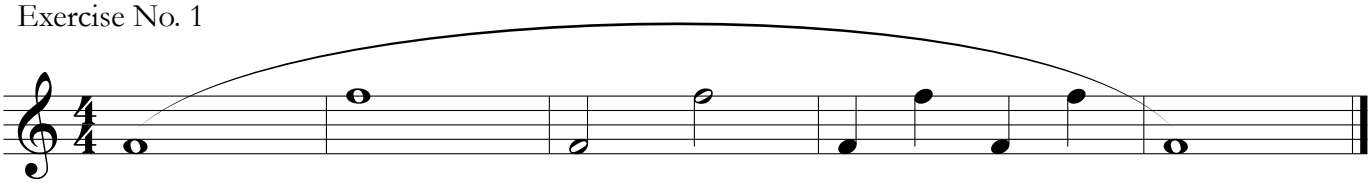
Play these tone exercises daily to improve tone quality. Always listen to make sure that you are producing your most beautiful tone possible. Slow intentional practice is what develops a better tone!

OCTAVE SLURS

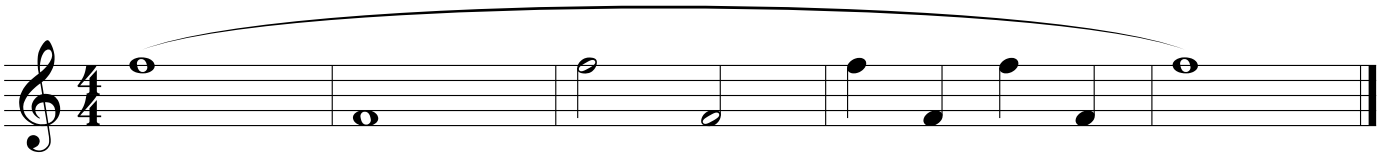
The following octave slur exercises should be played on the pitches listed below. For simplicity's sake, each pattern is listed only once, on the F pitch. Work to develop a smooth octave transition (both ascending and descending) without "bumping" the note. Practice with a metronome is suggested; as always, **start slowly!**



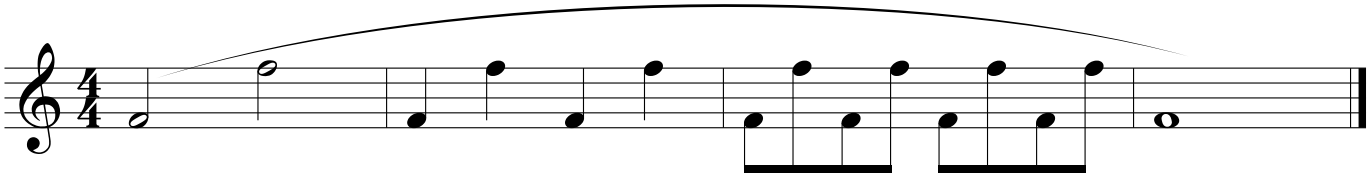
Exercise No. 1



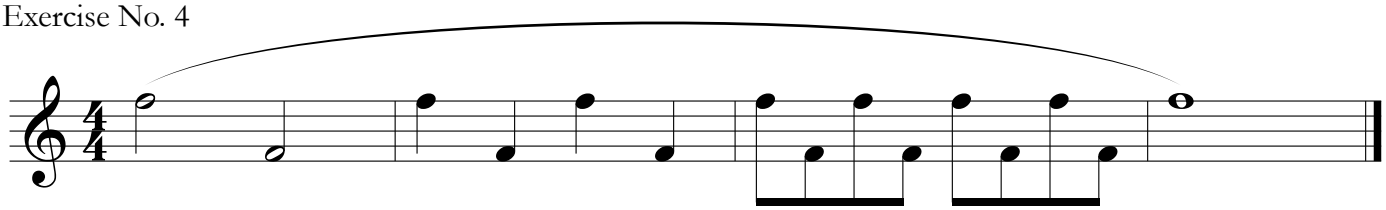
Exercise No. 2



Exercise No. 3



Exercise No. 4

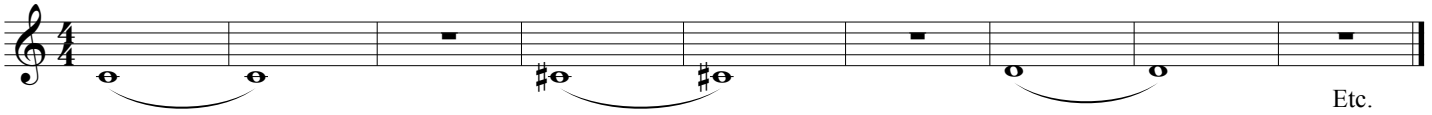


SO YOU WANT A BETTER **FLUTE** SOUND?

Play these tone exercises daily to improve tone quality. Always listen to make sure that you are producing your most beautiful tone possible. Slow intentional practice is what develops a better tone!

LONG TONES

Long tones should be played on the full chromatic range of the instrument, with careful attention to the tone quality produced. When playing long tones, the goal is consistently beautiful tone quality. Focused practice and listening is essential. Make sure to play these for the full chromatic range of the instrument (see below). For simplicity's sake, only a small demonstration pattern is listed here.



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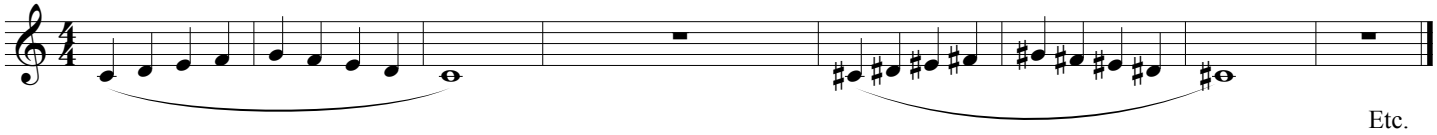
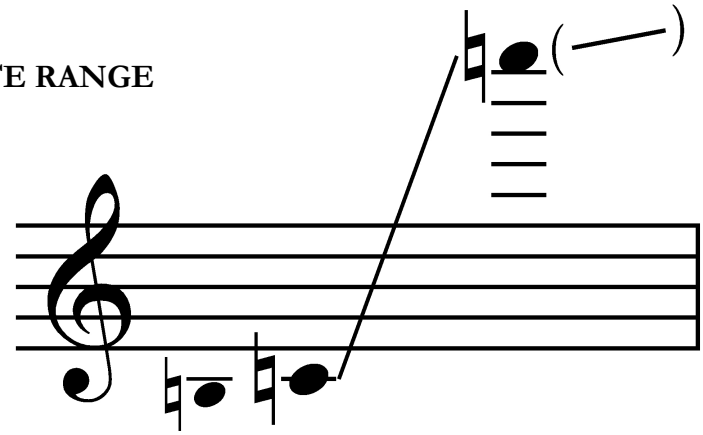


FLUTE RANGE



So you want a better **OBOE** sound?

Let's answer our question with another question....

What is a oboe supposed to sound like?

It's probably difficult for you to describe what you think a oboe should sound like, but I bet you could offer an opinion of which sound you liked better if you heard two people playing the oboe.

Part One:
Find a Role Model

Using a critical ear, listen to each performer and fill out the worksheet on the following page.
Do not be afraid to listen to recordings multiple times!

These six individuals are accomplished oboe players who have great tone. However, none of them have the exact **same** tone. The sound that appeals to one ear might not appeal to another.

Example No. 1:
Albrecht Mayer
Principal Oboe of Berlin Philharmonic

Example No. 2:
Liang Wang
Principal Oboe of New York Philharmonic

Oboe Tone
YouTube
Playlist

Example No. 3:
Alex Klein
Former Principal Oboe of Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Example No. 4:
John de Lancie
Former Member of Philadelphia Orchestra

Example No. 5:
Bill Bennett
Former Principal Oboe of San Francisco Symphony

Example No. 6:
John Ferrillo
Principal Oboe of Boston Symphony Orchestra

So you want a better **OBOE** sound?

Vocabulary Bank:

Airy Big Brassy Bright Buzzy Clear Closed Cutting Dark Deep Dull
Edgy Focused Free Full Harsh Heavy Light Mellow Muffled
Narrow Open Pinched Relaxed Resonant Rich Ringing Round
Shallow Small Spread Strained Strong Vibrant Weak Wide Woody

The adjectives in this word bank are only suggestions. You can create your own adjectives/short phrases in your responses. Some of these adjectives have a positive association and others negative. Listen for both. Remember, we are only considering tone quality and not other elements of performance.

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7. Which performer's tone quality do you like best? Why?

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So you want a better **OBOE** sound?

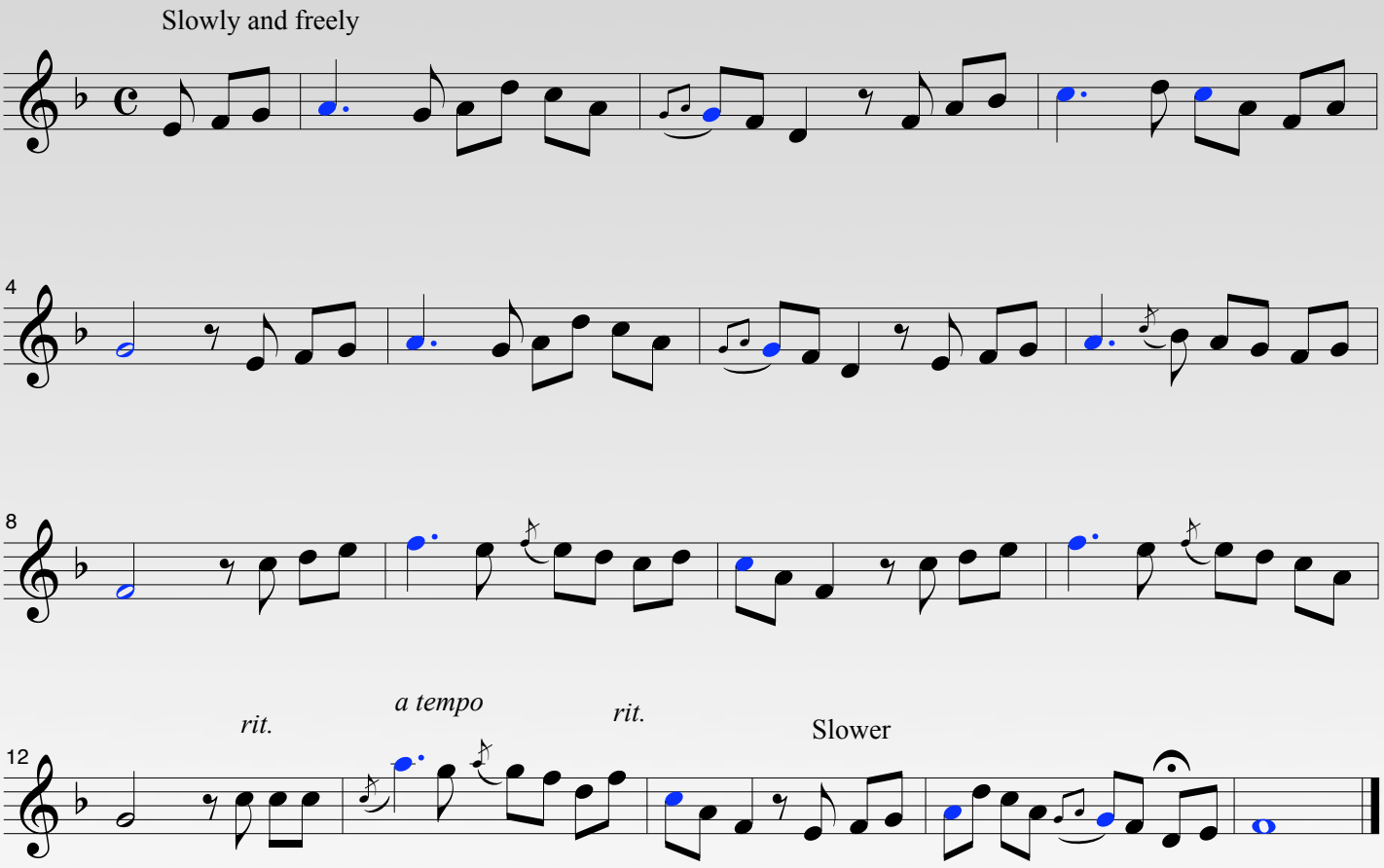
Part Two: Self-Analysis

Record yourself playing the simple exercise provided.

Oboe

Danny Boy

Old Irish Air



So you want a better **OBOE** sound?

Using a critical ear, listen to your recording of Danny Boy and reflect on your tone quality, guided by the worksheet below. In question 3, you might find it helpful to replay the recording of your tone role model. Do not be afraid to listen to recordings multiple times!

Vocabulary Bank:

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Areas of Improvement for Your Tone Quality

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So you want a better **OBOE** sound?

Now you have an idea of where you are. You have an idea of where you want to go.

But, how do you get there?

In the next section, you will find some common embouchure problems that result in a decrease in tone quality as well as how to fix them.

Part Three: Embouchure Check

Correct Formation of the Embouchure

1) Imitating an English accent, say 'No oboe.'

2) Bring the corners of the mouth firm and forward, against the teeth.

3) The jaw should be separated, the chin down and firm, and the tongue down.

4) Think 'Oh' or 'Oo' to create a relaxed, resonant chamber in your mouth.

5) Think of the lips as a firm, springy cushion.

6) AVOID a tight-lipped "E" configuration.

So you want a better **OBOE** sound?

Common Embouchure Issues & Remedies

Sounds Like	Problem	Remedy
High pitch crow with too few sounds.	Embouchure too tight, pinched. Reed is too stiff, closed off.	Decrease pressure in embouchure, more relaxed. Check thickness of reed, balance in cane.
Low pitched crow.	Reed too soft. Lack of support. Horn angle too high.	Change length/width of reed. More support, faster air. Reduce angle of oboe.
Rushing Air.	Lack of support. Embouchure too loose.	More support, faster air. Firmer lips and corners. Roll lower lip in slightly.
Stopped, No Sound.	Reed too soft. Pinching or biting reed.	Change length/width of reed. More 'Oh;' Separate teeth; Less reed in mouth.

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Learn from the Masters

Take a tone quality lesson from some of the best! Look at videos 7, 8, and 9 for brief tone quality masterclasses.

Oboe Tone
YouTube
Playlist

Did you know?

Crow on the reed
pitch = 2 octaves of C

If yours doesn't line up, something may be wrong with the set-up of your reed!

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Fay Olswanger 17

SO YOU WANT A BETTER **OBOE** SOUND?

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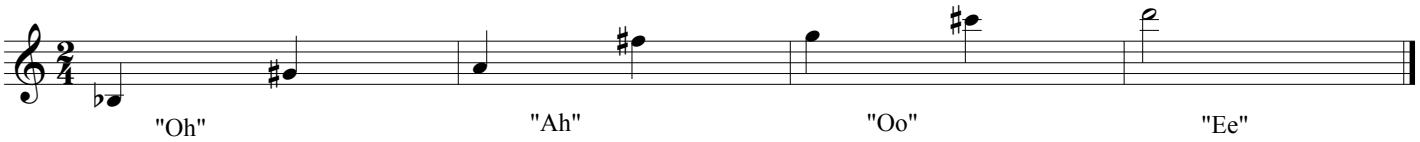
VOICINGS

The shape and placing of the oral cavity has a huge effect on pitch and tone for the bassoon. The voicing for bassoon changes with register, as is indicated below. Practice your chromatic scale, **slowly**, while focusing on the shape and placement of the vowel.

Say these to get the feel of the voicing shapes in your mouth:

"Oh" as in "Go to Costco"
"Ah" as in "Rickshas from Oz"
"Oo" as in "Ooze and Snooze"
"Ee" as in "She Sees Me"



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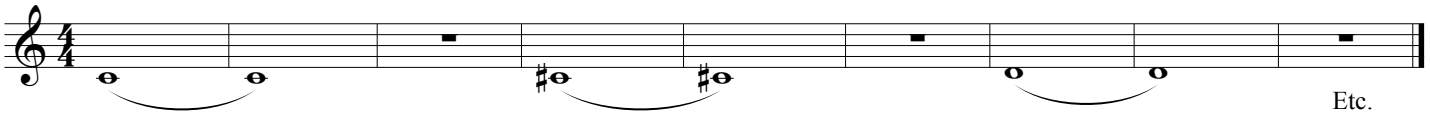

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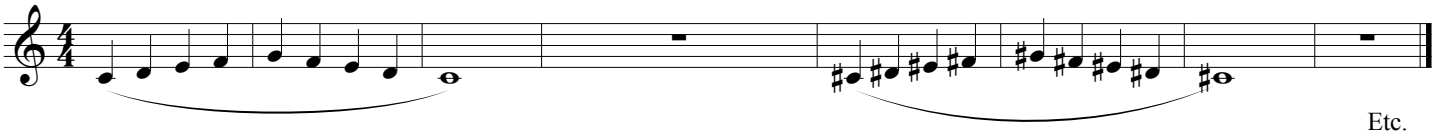
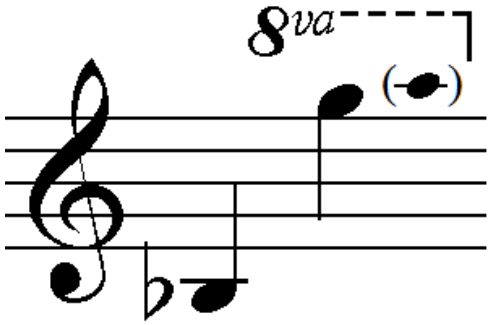


OBOE RANGE



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of
Sam Houston State University

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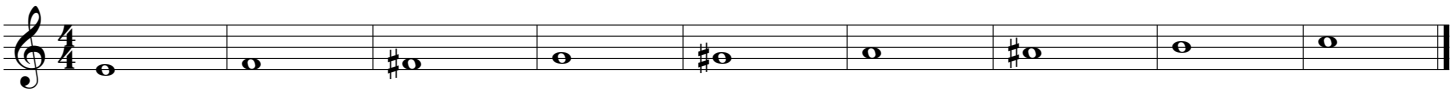
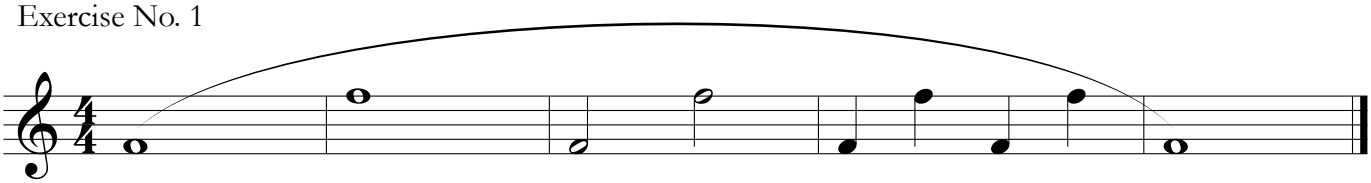
OCTAVE SLURS

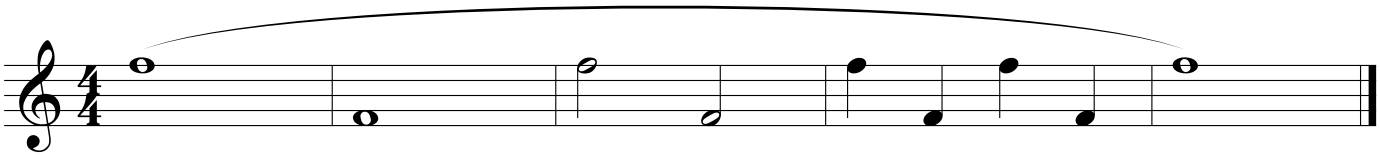
The following octave slur exercises should be played on the pitches listed below. For simplicity's sake, each pattern is listed only once, on the F pitch. Work to develop a smooth octave transition (both ascending and descending) and keep in mind the voicings from the previous page. Practice with a metronome is suggested; as always, **start slowly!**



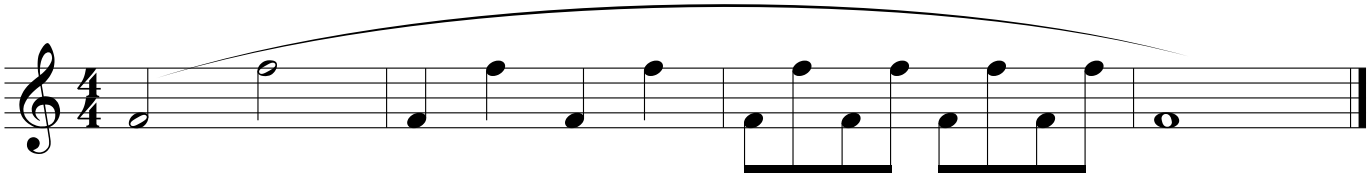
Exercise No. 1



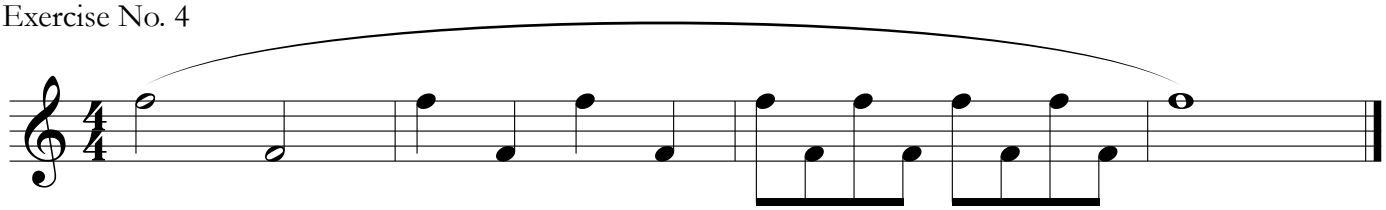
Exercise No. 2



Exercise No. 3



Exercise No. 4



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Using a critical ear, listen to each performer and fill out the worksheet on the following page.
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These six individuals are accomplished clarinet players who have great tone. However, none of them have the exact **same** tone. The sound that appeals to one ear might not appeal to another.

Example No. 1:
Sabine Meyer
Solo Clarinetist with EMI, Former member of Berlin Philharmonic

Example No. 2:
Richard Stoltzman
Clarinet Virtuoso

Example No. 3:
Martin Fröst
Clarinet Virtuoso

Example No. 4:
Karl Leister
Member of Berlin Philharmonic

Clarinet Tone YouTube Playlist

Example No. 5:
Ricardo Morales
Principal Clarinetist of Philadelphia Orchestra

Example No. 6:
Stanley Drucker
Former Principal Clarinetist of New York Philharmonic

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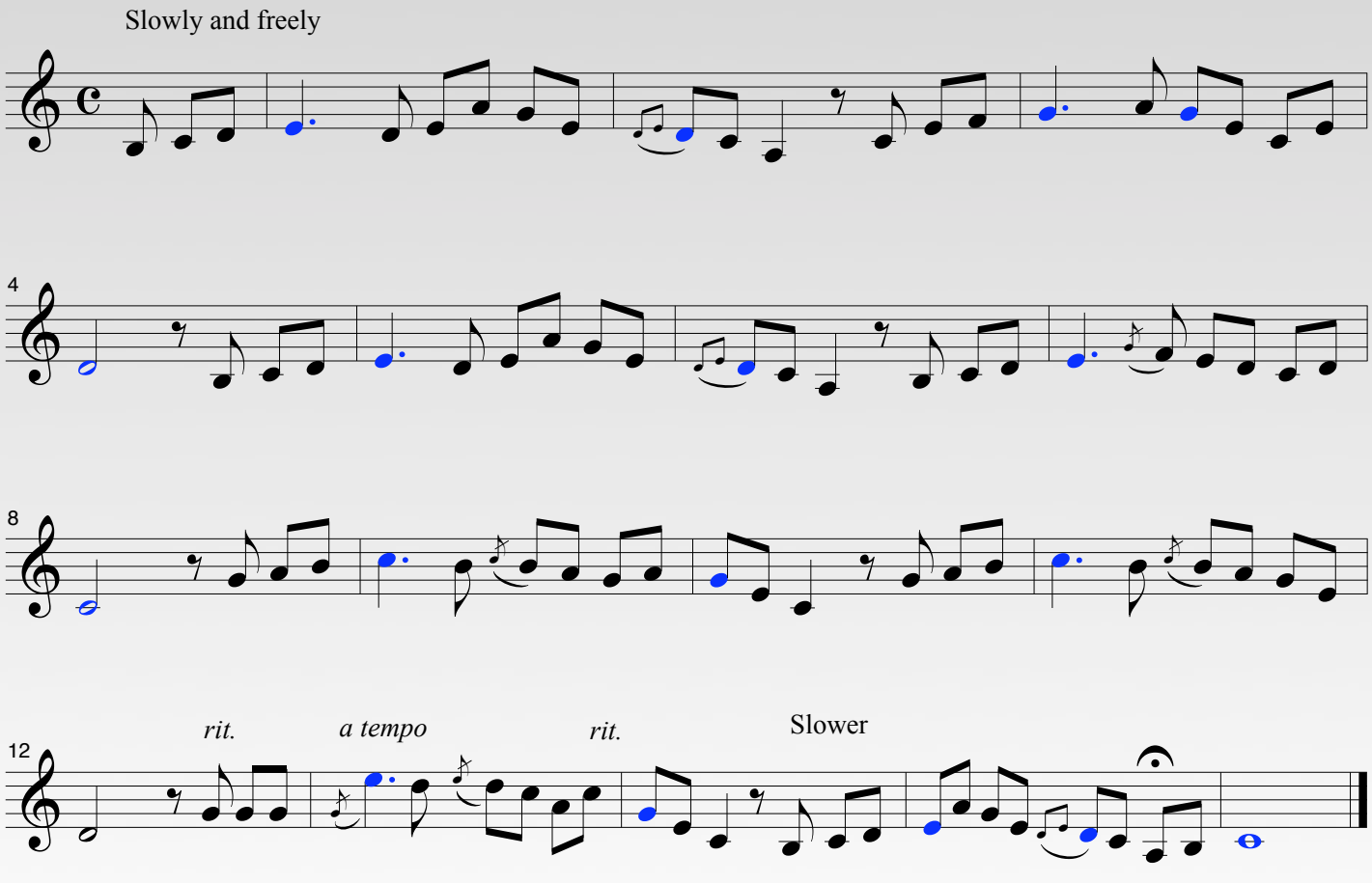
Record yourself playing the simple exercise provided.

Clarinet

Danny Boy

Old Irish Air



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In the next section, you will find some common embouchure problems that result in a decrease in tone quality as well as how to fix them.

Part Three: Embouchure Check

Correct Formation of the Embouchure

1) Make an exaggerated facial 'A' sound. Follow that with a 'Q' sound (we're really interested in the 'oo' while maintaining the shape of the 'A.'

2) Another way of thinking about it: All you have to do to check your embouchure is remember: **TLC²**
    1) TEETH
        1) The top teeth are on the mouthpiece.
        2) The bottom teeth are covered by the lower lip.
    2) LIPS
        1) The top lip is pulled firmly against the top teeth and top of the mouthpiece.
        2) The bottom lip is curled over the lower teeth, acting as a cushion against the reed.
    3) CHEEKS
        1) The cheeks are pulled inward in a firm manner - not overly tight.
    4) CHIN
        1) The chin is extended down.
        2) The chin is flat or slightly concave.

So you want a better **CLARINET** sound?

Common Embouchure Issues & Remedies

Sounds Like	Problem	Remedy
No Tone, Rushing Air	No pressure against reed. Too much reed in mouth. Stiff reed.	Increase lower lip pressure. Less mouthpiece in mouth. Sand reed.
Squak, Flat Pitch	Insufficient pressure against reed. Too much reed in mouth. Insufficient intensity in air flow. Soft reed.	Increase lower lip pressure. Less mouthpiece in mouth. Faster air. Clip reed.
Sqeaks, High Squeal	Insufficient pressure against reed. Too much reed in mouth. Clarinet angled too far away. Soft reed.	Stop tone; increase pressure. Less mouthpiece in mouth. Stop tone; bring clarinet closer. Clip reed.
Stopped or Intense Air	Stopped: Soft reed. Intense air: Hard reed. Too little reed in mouth. Too much lip pressure.	Clip reed. Sand reed; Check symmetry. More mouthpiece in mouth. Less biting; Check for bunched chin.
Thin, Sharp Pitch	Too little reed in mouth. Tight, closed throat.. Hard reed.	More mouthpiece in mouth. "Oh" position; Review sigh. Sand reed.

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Clarinet Tone Playlist

Did you know?

Mouthpiece and Barrel pitch = F#

If yours doesn't line up, something may be wrong with your embouchure!

American Band College of Sam Houston State University

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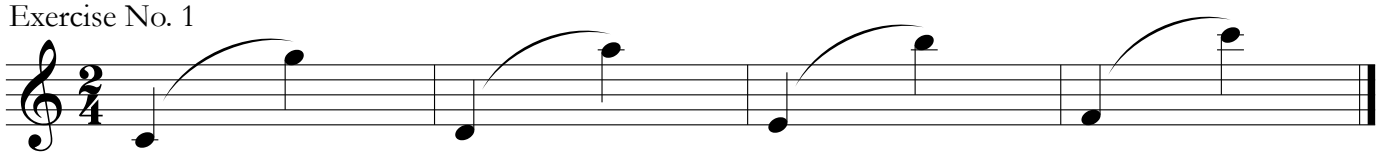
EMBOUCHURE BAROMETER

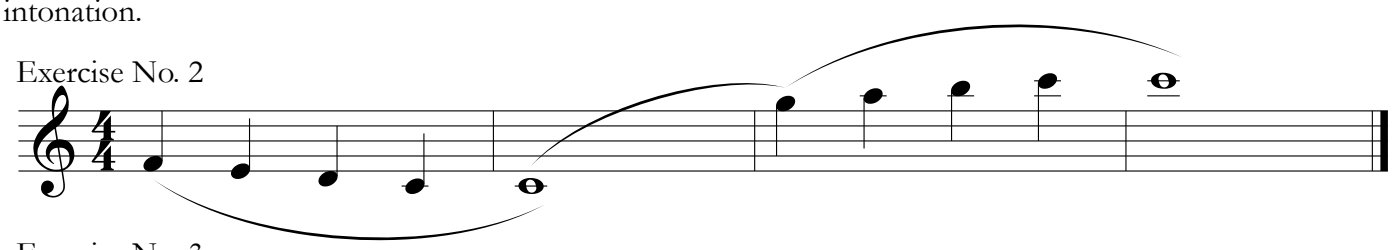
If the upper register notes can be played easily, freely, and with good tone and intonation, then the rest of the registers in the clarinet should also produce a beautiful tone. These exercises serve as a diagnostic tool to check where the student is, but also help to develop the upper octave. All the exercises should be slurred as written with an emphasis on a fast, continuous airstream. Again, start each exercise **slowly!**

Exercise No. 1

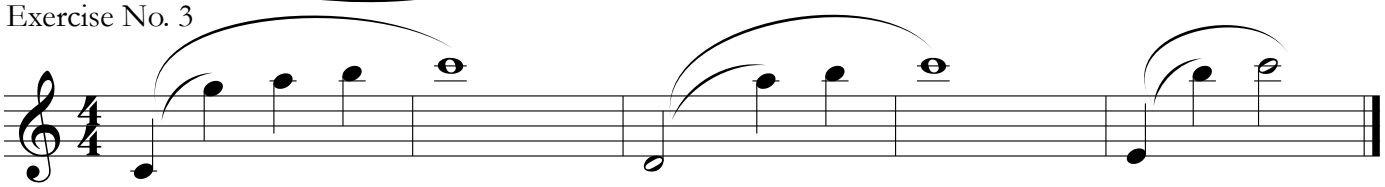


The goal is to be able to play Exercise No. 1 with good tone and intonation, but if that is not possible, students should move on to the exercises listed below until they **can** play Exercise No. 1 with good tone and intonation.

Exercise No. 2



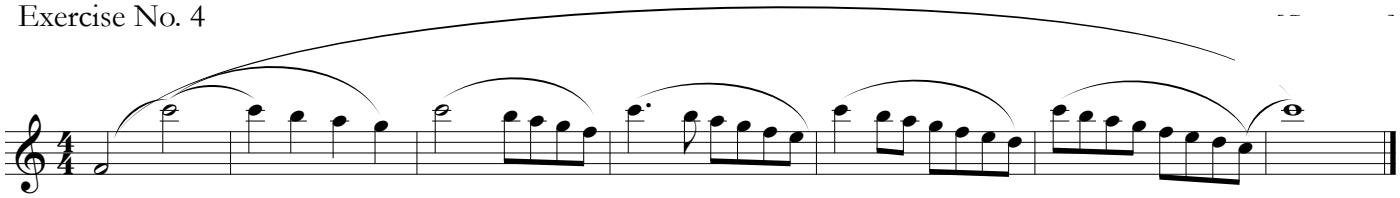
Exercise No. 3



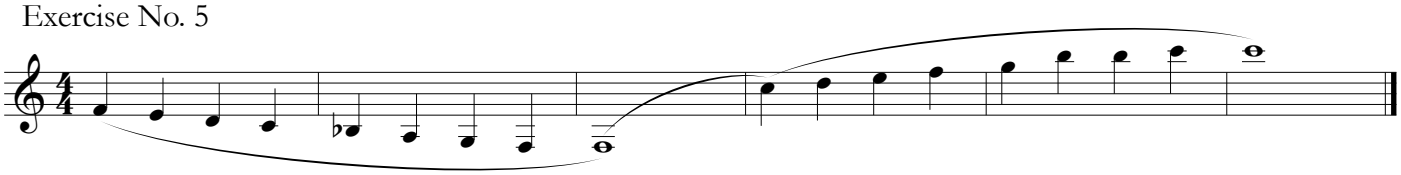
If you are having trouble with Exercise No. 3, make sure that you:

1) Have enough mouthpiece in your mouth.
2) Are using a hard enough reed.
3) Are protruding your lower jaw.
4) Are **NOT** jamming the mouthpiece towards your top teeth.

Exercise No. 4



Exercise No. 5



SO YOU WANT A BETTER **CLARINET** SOUND?

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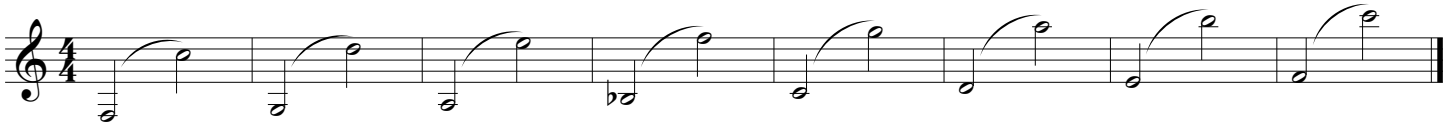
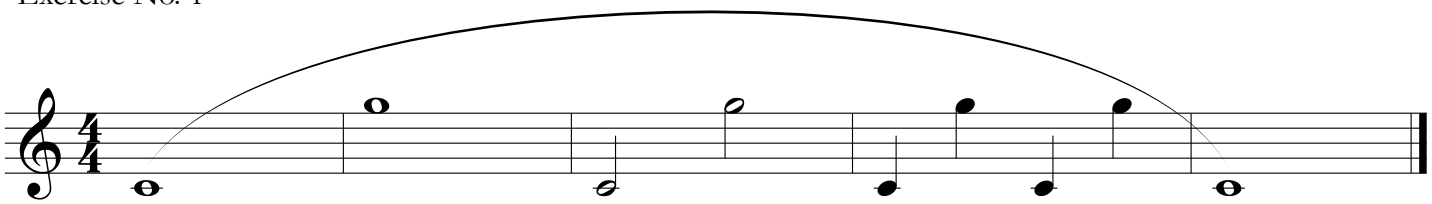
REGISTER SLURS

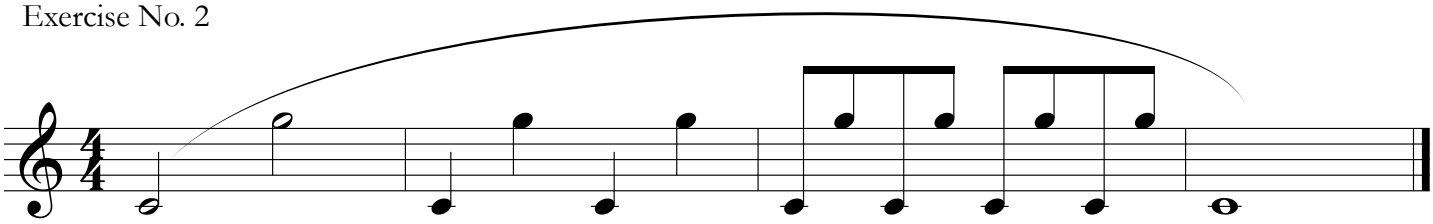
The following register slur exercises should be played on the pitches listed below. For simplicity's sake, each pattern is listed only once, on the C and G pitches. Work to develop a smooth register transition. Practice with a metronome is suggested; as always, **start slowly!**



Exercise No. 1



Exercise No. 2



Once you have achieved a comfortable and consistent slur using the octave key, work to play these exercises starting the note with the register key, but then removing it and maintaining the pitch.

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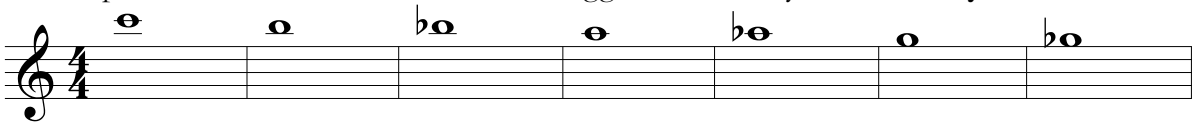
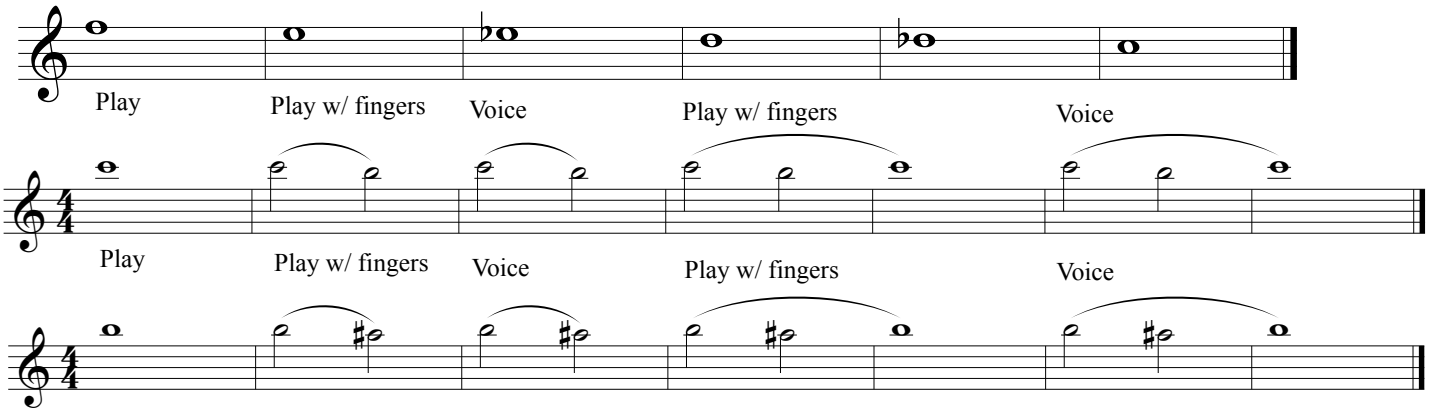
PITCH BENDS

The following pitch bend exercises should be played on the pitches listed below. For simplicity's sake, I have listed two examples. Practice with a metronome is suggested; as always, **start slowly!**





LONG TONES

Long tones should be played on the full chromatic range of the instrument, with careful attention to the tone quality produced. When playing long tones, the goal is consistently beautiful tone quality. Focused practice and listening is essential. Make sure to play these for the full chromatic range of the instrument (see below). For simplicity's sake, only a small demonstration pattern is listed here.