

BEGINNING WOODWINDS: NEWBS TO NOVICE

ADDRESSING THE VARIOUS NEEDS OF YOUR NEW WOODWINDS

RICHARD KRISHNAN - MULTIPLE WOODWIND SPECIALIST

An Outline
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Abstract: Are your beginning woodwinds on the struggle bus and you need help getting them back on the path toward successful sounds? Richard is bringing in years of classroom, small group, and individual instruction to help provide tips for getting characteristic sounds from your newbie woodwinds whether they are brand new students or switching around from another instrument. Information includes first-sound check points and common issues with their fixes.

1. Introduction - mini auto bio
2. Background information - Equipment
 - a. Gentle reminder that if the student will not have access to a fully functional instrument, be it through owning, rental, or borrowing from the school, their chances at success are greatly diminished (this includes access to reeds)
 - b. Individual mirrors
 - c. See instrument recommendation list
 - i. Most affordable without being cheap
 - ii. Within reason top of the line
 - iii. Include instruments families might purchase as well as schools can consider
 - iv. School inventory should be mostly low instruments
 - d. fingering charts with preferred fingerings
 - e. Flutes: inline vs offset G, low B + gizmo?
 - f. Oboe/EH: left F! low B \flat oboe
 - g. Bassoon: short reach C, right thumb A \flat , high D?, right front B \flat ?
 - h. Clarinet: nothing weird (no need for left A \flat / E \flat key)
 - i. Saxophone: high F-sharp?
 - i. note that vintage horns with vertical left pinky keys take more strength to use
 - j. [Tri All](#) - perhaps students gravitate to the easier-to-sound instrument
 - k. Legere / synthetic reeds are not for beginners (opinion - two years minimum on cane)
3. Small Instrument - First sounds
 - i. all of these are with a 'hoooo' articulation
 - ii. slow acceleration of air from nothing
 - o avoids overblowing embouchure
 - iii. once embouchure set and pitch established, then start tonguing "hooo-tooo" then "too"
 - b. Flute - headjoint only
 - i. Side-to-side center-ish the tonehole, not all students will play right in the middle
 - ii. Lip plate parallel to the lips, not sagging to the right
 - iii. Fog triangle across lip plate
 - iv. Frown to pull corners down and focus the aperture
 - v. Piccolo - headjoint only
 - c. Clarinet - mouthpiece & reed only or with barrel
 - i. Reed placement can end the career before it starts
 - o If able, time permitting, place the reed for the student the first time

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- ii. Firm chin, stretch all skin across lower jawbone
 - o poke a neutral chin and watch/feel it move easily
 - o poke a firm chin and watch/feel it fight to be secure
- iii. Top teeth on the mouthpiece
 - o nudging at the instrument should not allow it to wiggle in the embouchure
 - o some folks teach top lip tucked over teeth to avoid biting hard, called "double lip", more common in European schools, not necessarily better or worse
- iv. Bottom lip tucked over teeth, placed where the reed first makes contact with mouthpiece
- v. Angle is close to 30° from the body
- d. Other Clarinets
 - i. Most tips are the same as B♭ Soprano Clarinet. Only change is the angle as it depends on what your available instruments require of the player
- e. Alto Saxophone - mouthpiece & reed only or with neck
 - i. - iv. Also all the same as clarinet, except:
 - v. Angle is straight out from the mouth 90°
 - vi. and no double lip embouchure
- f. Other Saxophones
 - i. All tips are the same as Alto Saxophone.
- g. Oboe - reed only
 - i. To Crow or Not to Crow
 - o The crow does not utilize a functional embouchure but it is more of a check on the quality of the reed. This is **not** the first sound a student should be trying to achieve.
 - ii. Both lips tucked over teeth, but without tension
 - iii. Lips should not reach thread
 - iv. Angle is straight out from the mouth about 90°
 - v. English Horn - the bocal helps creates the angle, will feel/look like 45°
- h. Bassoon - reed only or with bocal
 - i. Same thoughts on the Crow, lips (thread=wire), and angle as oboe
 - ii. Contrabassoon is just big
- 4. Full instrument
 - a. Flute
 - i. drooping angle causing lip plate to no longer be parallel to lips
 - o small head tilt preferred to offset angled embouchure
 - ii. right hand thumb placement, under vs behind
 - o thumb under supports the weight of the instrument
 - o thumb behind pushes flute into left index as a pivot point to secure embouchure
 - iii. yes, the E♭ key really is used on nearly every note for pitch and balance
 - iv. focused airstream from the headjoint will allow for longer musical phrases
 - b. Clarinet
 - i. lazy posture, resting arms on legs
 - o neckstraps are more than allowed! ([D'Addario](#))
 - ii. fingers sliding off holes

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- biggest culprit at first in the left middle finger, wide spread from pointer
- iii. accidentally touching G# key
- iv. use pads of fingers, not points
- v. be sure to squeeze fingers enough to see the ring on the pads of fingers
- vi. DO NOT talk about the break being scary, adds psychological war
 - fear is the enemy, fear reduces air and finger strength, causes squeaks
- vii. later on, avoid sliding pinkies; utilize all 8+ pinky keys!
- c. Bass Clarinet
 - i. student and pro horns are built very differently (register mechanism) making the clarion register difficult to access without a very secure embouchure on student instruments
- d. Saxophone
 - i. double check the use of the octave key!
 - ii. side and bis B ♭ fingerings > 1 & 1 B ♭ .
 - iii. focus on “hoo” starts to avoid overblowing
 - iv. note: fingerings match, but sounding good on different sized saxophones is difficult for a young musician due to mouthpiece size and embouchure
- e. Oboe
 - i. first finger half hole on D and neighbors (acting as octave displacement)
 - ii. forked F is fantastic for first five notes, also quickly add in left F, and front F
 - make sure thumb touches and pointer closes
 - iii. as reaching bottom of instrument, D and lower, roll out
- f. Bassoon
 - i. seat strap > neck strap (opinion)
 - ii. instrument angles across and forward, spine shouldn't bend or twist, weight does site on left index upper knuckle
 - iii. right hand crutch, if possible, gives the right hand a home to stay in
 - iv. third space E ♭ , include right hand (thumb+1 or thumb+2)
 - v. if third space E ♯ sags to E ♭ , embouchure too loose
 - vi. fourth line F is very flexible, hear/audiate before playing
 - vii. half hole G, slightly more closed for F#, slightly more open for A ♭
 - viii. flick or vent A through C

5. Q&A

Thank you for attending. If you have any follow up questions, do not hesitate to contact me via email:

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Small Instrument Pitch

Instrument	Mouthpiece only	+ neck/barrel/bocal
Piccolo	A ♭ to A - open and closed	n/a
Flute	A - open and closed	n/a
Oboe	B ♭	n/a
English Horn	B	E ♭
E ♭ Clarinet	D to E ♭ -ish	B to C
B ♭ Clarinet	C	F♯
Alto Clarinet	A ♭	varies by model
Bass Clarinet	pitch F♯ to G	D ♭
E ♭ Contrabass Clarinet	E ♭ -ish	varies by model
B ♭ Contrabass Clarinet	D ♭ -ish	varies by model
Bassoon	C	C
Contrabassoon	G to A ♭	E-ish
Soprano Sax	C	E ♭
Alto Sax	A	A ♭
Tenor Sax	F♯ (some say as high as G)	E
Baritone Sax	D	D

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Suggested instrument list (Updated January 2022)

	School	Personal
Piccolo	Jupiter JPC700 Pearl PFP-105 Yamaha YPC-62	Giardinelli GPC-300 Burkhart Resona Yamaha YPC-81
Flute	Pearl Quantz 505 Yamaha YFL-222 Gemeinhardt 23SSB (Nuvo Flute Curved Headjoint)	Di Zhao DZ 700 Azumi AZ3
Low Flutes	Pearl 201 Alto Jupiter JAF 1000 Alto (straight and curved headjoints) Trevor James Bass Jupiter JBF 1000 Bass	
Oboe	Yamaha YOB-241 Fox 333	Fox, Marigaux, F Loree
English Horn	Fox 555	Fox, F Loree
E-flat Clarinet	Buffet E11 E-flat Yamaha YCL-681	
B-flat Clarinet	Buffet Crampon Premium Student Backun Alpha B-flat Yamaha YCL-255 Backun Beta Buffet Crampon R13	Ridenour 576
Alto Clarinet	(used Bundy / Selmer Bundy) Leblanc 7165	
Bass Clarinet	Selmer 1430LP Yamaha YCL-221 Jupiter JPC1000N Buffet Crampon 1193 (to C) Selmer 67 (to C)	Kessler and Sons 2nd Gen (to C) Ridenour 925C (to C)
Contra Clarinets	Leblanc 7181 (E-flat) Selmer 40 (E-flat) Selmer 41 (B-flat)	

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Suggested instrument list, cont. (Updated January 2022)

	School	Personal
Bassoon	Fox Renard 41 or 51	
Contrabassoon	Amati ABN 36 Fox Fast	
Soprano Saxophone	Yamaha YSS-475II (straight) Yanagisawa SC-WO10 (curved)	Eastman, Yamaha, Selmer, Yanagisawa
Alto Saxophone	Yamaha YAS-26 Selmer 200 Series	
Tenor Saxophone	Yamaha YTS-26 Selmer 300 Series	
Baritone Saxophone	Selmer BS400 Jupiter JBS 1000 Yamaha YBS-480 Yamaha YBS-62II International Woodwind IW 661 (bass)	

Notes:

- Anything listed under “School” can also be purchased by individuals
- All personal purchases SHOULD be made with the consultation of a private teacher / specialist with whom the student and/or band director is familiar
- If an instrument is listed under the “Personal” column, it is either too specialized, too expensive, or uses less sturdy material (softer metals on low keywork like the bass clarinets) that would not be well suited for several users over a long period of time
- Instruments are listed in price order from lowest to highest within each category