

# ***I RECOMMEND***

**A Complete Warm-Up Technique Book Designed to Improve Fundamental Musicianship**

An ideal supplement to individual instruction, class lessons or full band rehearsals!

**By JAMES D. PLOYHAR**

with individual TUNING suggestions and WARM-UP exercises by Harold Brasch, William Bunch, Mervin Britton, Charles DeLaney, Larry Ford, Frederick Hemke, Lyle Merriman, Jack Rausch, Frank Stalzer, Paul Tanner and Stuart Uggen.

INSTRUMENTATION		
CONDUCTOR	B $\flat$ BASS CLARINET	TROMBONE
C FLUTE	E $\flat$ ALTO SAXOPHONE	BARITONE BASS CLEF
OBOE	B $\flat$ TENOR SAXOPHONE	BARITONE TREBLE CLEF
BASSOON	E $\flat$ BARITONE SAXOPHONE	BASS (TUBA)
B $\flat$ CLARINET	HORN IN F	DRUMS
E $\flat$ ALTO CLARINET (E $\flat$ Clarinet)	B $\flat$ CORNET-TRUMPET	

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## Unit I

## TUNING - WARM UP

Lyle C. Merriman, Ph.D.

For Clarinet use only

Basic tuning of the clarinet should be done on three pitches:



First, play third space C; if you are sharp, pull out at the barrel **and** middle joints. Next, play open G, with the fingers of the right hand covering the holes of the lower joint. This note is to be tuned only by moving the barrel. Now play third-space C again; if you are flat, push in at the barrel slightly. Play low C; if sharp, pull out at the middle joint. Now check all three pitches. Remember, third-space C is to be tuned by adjustments at the barrel, middle, and lower joints; open G is to be tuned by adjusting the barrel; low C is to be tuned at the middle joint.


Since clarinets cannot be built perfectly in tune, you will still have to use your lip slightly to adjust where necessary. Don't rely entirely on pulling out or pushing in. If you consistently have to pull out at the barrel, however, a longer barrel should be purchased or a tuning ring temporarily inserted. Remember that open G is a very flexible note and you can do a lot with embouchure and fingerings to adjust its pitch. **When tuning, always play with a full sound.**



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## INTONATION

"Tuning-up" does not ensure "playing in tune." The clarinet, as with all wind instruments, has certain notes that are

usually out of tune to a varying degree. The most notorious area is the throat-register  which is usually sharp. In many cases, an adequate adjustment cannot be made with the barrel joint without upsetting the overall intonation of the instrument. The most satisfactory solution is to "add fingers," i.e., cover the tone holes with the right hand (and the left, if necessary) to lower the pitch. A little experimentation will determine the number of fingers you have to put down to arrive at the correct pitch. Then, develop the habit of playing these notes with that fingering, especially in non-technical passages.

Dynamics can also create intonation problems since there is a tendency for the pitch to be sharp in soft passages and flat in loud passages. Always try to use your ear, embouchure, and fingers to produce the desired pitch. The key to good intonation is **listening** and **adjusting** while you play.

## TONE, EMOUCHURE, BREATH SUPPORT

A beautiful **tone** should be the primary goal of every performer. Listen to good players and try to develop a concept of the sound you would like to produce. The production of this sound, then, will be determined by your embouchure **and** breathing or breath support.

Basically, the **embouchure** should be formed with the lower lip forming a cushion over the lower teeth, the corners of the mouth "tucked in", and the upper lip pulling down to seal around the mouthpiece. The upper teeth should rest upon the mouthpiece  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the tip. Do not pull the corners of the mouth into a "smile" position. Instead, think of the lips as an elastic band providing muscular support from all directions. Try to avoid biting with the lower jaw; make the muscles do the work. There should be very little change in your embouchure as you play throughout the range of the instrument.

The main points to remember for **breathing** and **breath support** are: (1) Breathe deeply; shallow breathing fills only the upper chest cavity and you will have little breath support; (2) The air should be expelled in a steady stream through an open and relaxed throat; (3) Playing softly requires little air but a great amount of muscular support.

## TONGUING

One of the most elusive fundamental aspects of clarinet playing seems to be the development of a good, fast staccato. To acquire this technique, check the following points: (1) Breath support (air pressure) should remain constant in tonguing; think of the tongue as a valve that lets the air pass; do not "hoot" or "puff" the air for each note; (2) Keep the tongue relaxed; a stiff, muscular tongue tends to restrict both speed and finesse; (3) Touch the reed lightly and gently with the front part of the tongue; striking the reed too hard or with too much tongue produces a thick, ugly sound; all the tongue has to do is stop the vibration of the reed; (4) For fast staccato, keep the tongue close to the reed, use as little motion as possible; moving the whole tongue not only slows you down, it also partially closes the throat; (5) To develop a light tongue, practice tonguing high C (repeated notes) slowly until the attacks and tone are acceptable; then gradually increase the speed.

## REEDS

The reed is the "life-blood" of the clarinet. A few basic guidelines will help in selecting and maintaining your reeds. (1) Select reeds that have a golden color, symmetrical cut and taper, and a fairly thick, evenly cut heel. (2) Always have three or four playable reeds and alternate from day to day. Do not let yourself get attached to one reed. (3) A number 2½ to 3 strength reed is adequate for most performers. Avoid the temptation to go to stiffer reeds as you improve. (4) Learn a system for breaking in reeds.

## MOUTHPIECES

A good mouthpiece is probably the most important part of your clarinet. It influences tone, response, intonation — practically every aspect of playing. To make sure that you are not being handicapped by an unsatisfactory mouthpiece, check the following points: (1) A mouthpiece with a medium tip opening is best for most players. Avoid using an extremely open tip. (2) If the rails or the tip are chipped, the mouthpiece should be discarded. (3) The rails should be exactly parallel. (4) Clean the mouthpiece after each use. Do not let foreign matter accumulate. (5) If you are consistently bothered by squeaks and yet your instrument is in good repair, the mouthpiece is probably at fault.

### PRACTICE

To make the most of his practice time, every performer should have a daily practice routine. The beginning or warm-up session should include long tones, scales, and intervals and arpeggios. These three items should never be slighted; then the remainder of the time can be spent working on various technical problems, sight reading, etudes, solos, etc.

A few hints for technique and finger control: (1) Check your hand position (2) Keep the fingers relaxed and fairly close to the keys (3) Avoid slapping the fingers down too hard (4) Learn and use alternate fingerings as well as correct fingerings.

The development of a smooth, facile technique can best be gained by slow, careful practice. Do not play an etude or solo any faster than you can play it accurately. Always listen to yourself and be your own toughest critic. Remember, speed without control is wasted effort.

Note: Exercises 3-15 are to be played slowly at first, with a full sound; gradually increase the tempo.

1 One full breath per note

2 For flexibility and intonation

*pp* *ff* *pp* *simile*

*etc.*

3

4

5

6 Rapidly

7

8

9

10

11 Rapidly

12

13

14

15 Staccato