Teachers: Make Friends With A Bassoon!

with Christopher Weait

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Sponsorship and instruments provided by

Fox Products Corporation

South Whitley, Indiana

Clinic Format

- 50 minutes
- Participants will play bassoons;
- Non-playing observers welcome
- PowerPoint slides
- Ensemble with participants
- Question and answer period at end **

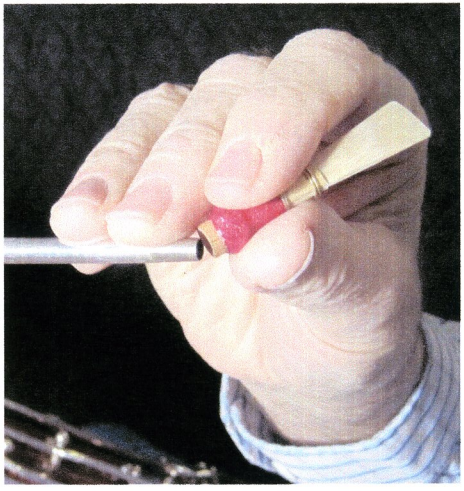
Clinic Equipment

- Fox bassoon in bassoon stand
- Bocal in bassoon bell
- Seat strap on chair
- Reed soaking in cup on right front chair leg **

Tooting on the Reed

- Carefully remove reed from water cup
- Open mouth, place half of blade in middle of lower lip - push it slightly inward
- Inhale
- Close mouth over upper blade - don't bite the reed with your teeth!
- Place tongue (above tongue tip) on reed tip
- Toot ! **

Putting Reed on Bocal



- Fingers on bocal: approach from side

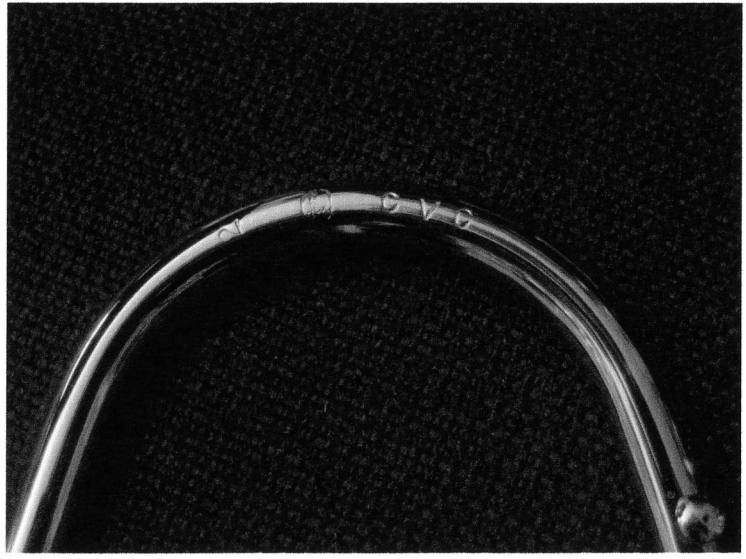
- Twist back & forth - NOT like a bottle cap **

Tooting on Reed and Bocal

- Tooting the soaked reed on the bocal is a good way to get used to feeling the reed on the lips and
- Form embouchure without biting
- Should sound a pitch near "C"
- Correct use of the tongue can be heard (front of tongue behind tip touches tip of reed) **

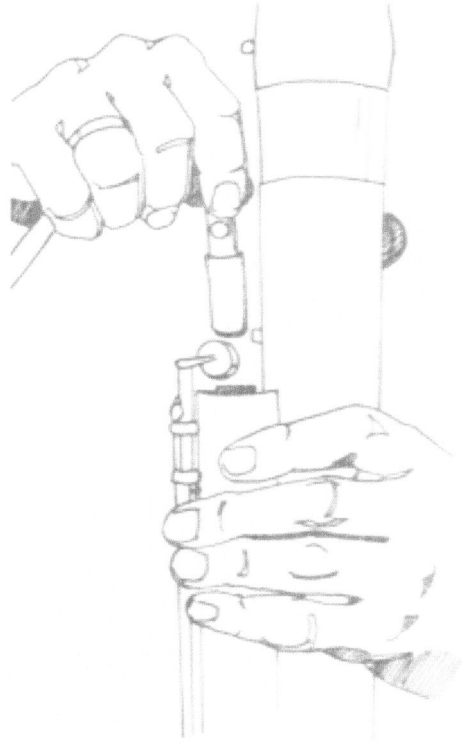
Bocal lengths

- Bocal lengths are numbered from shortest to longest: 0, 1, 2, 3
- Number is stamped on bocal
- Most often used is #2 bocal **



Inserting Bocal

- Grasp instrument with two hands: right hand below lowest metal band / hand rest
- Place bottom of bassoon on floor in front of you
- Grasp bocal close to cork end
- Firmly twist into receiver with back and forth motion.
- DO NOT insert by grasping near bocal tip **



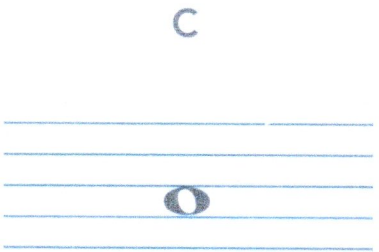
Hooking Up !

- Move bassoon to your right thigh
- Hook seat strap onto butt cap on side opposite hand rest
- Line up bocal tip with your lips.
- Holding instrument with right hand, adjust bassoon's height by adjusting seat strap with left hand
- "Bring the bassoon to you" **

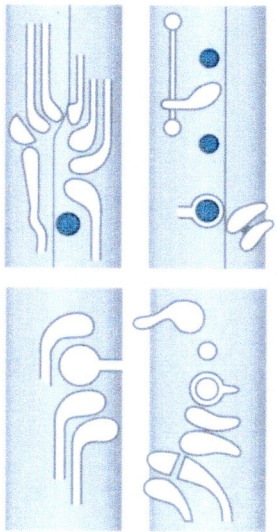
Before First Notes

- To steady the bassoon, put the right hand around the top of the boot joint
- Place left thumb on the lowest key on wing joint - the 'whisper' key
- Cover tone holes with three fingers of left hand **

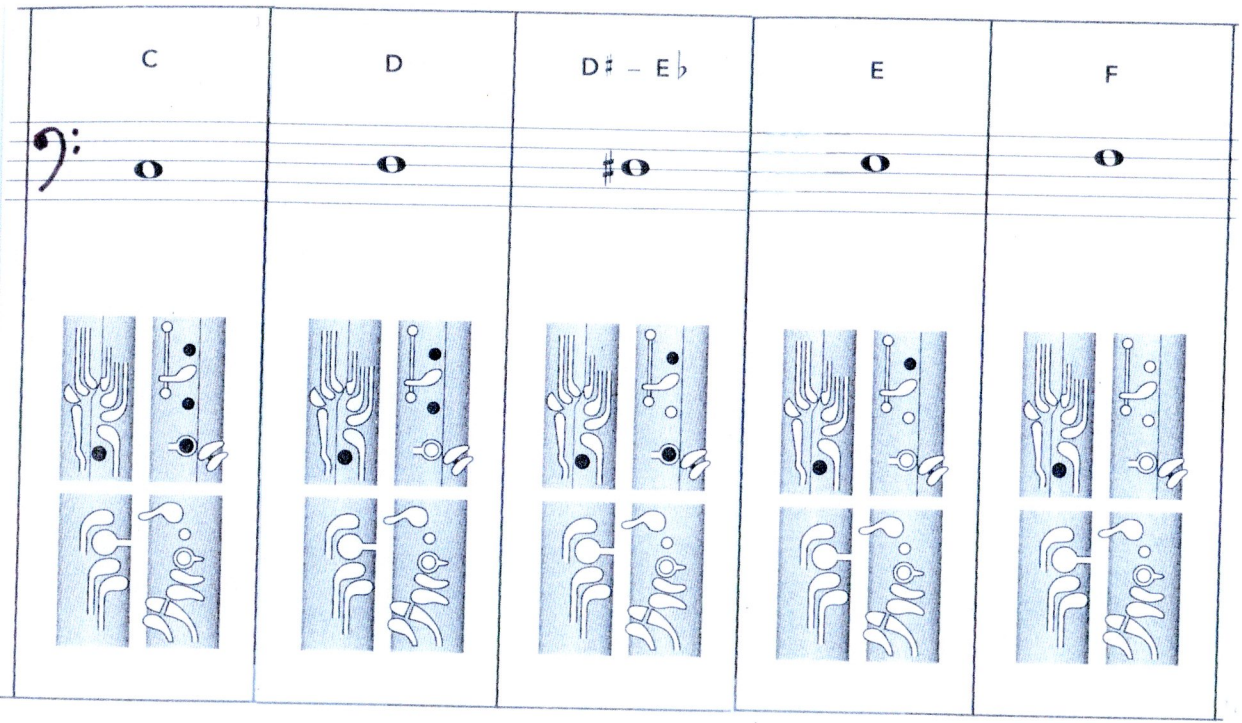
First Note (C3)

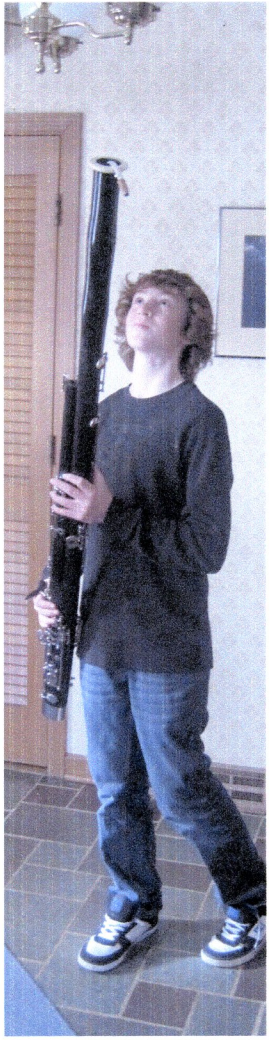


- Left thumb on whisper key for all of our notes today
- 3 left fingers on wing joint tone holes
- Let's play that note **



Next Left-Hand Notes



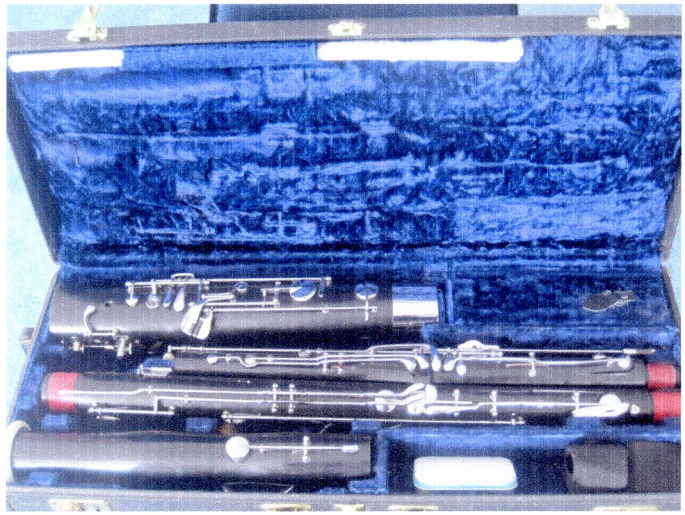


Carrying the Bassoon

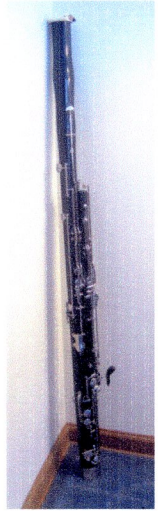
- Bocal in bell, reed in case or in mouth
- Holding it upright, use two hands with one on the boot
- Beware door lintels
- Always remove reed and bocal when moving instrument **

Keeping it safe

- Best place to store it is in case



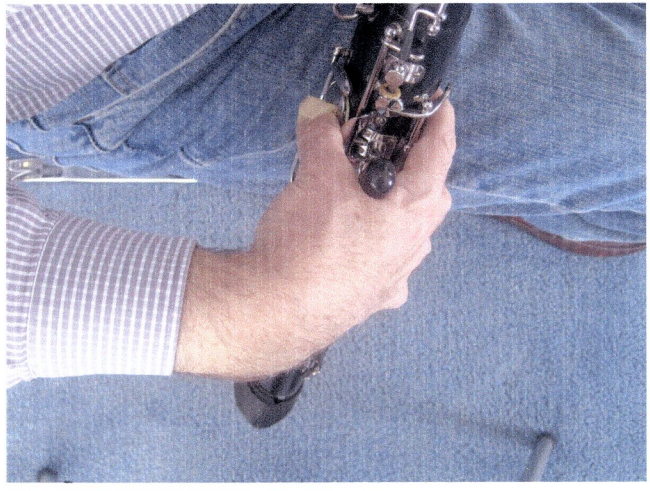
- Temporarily store in a secluded, carpeted corner **



Right Arm

- Using the hand rest gives good finger position

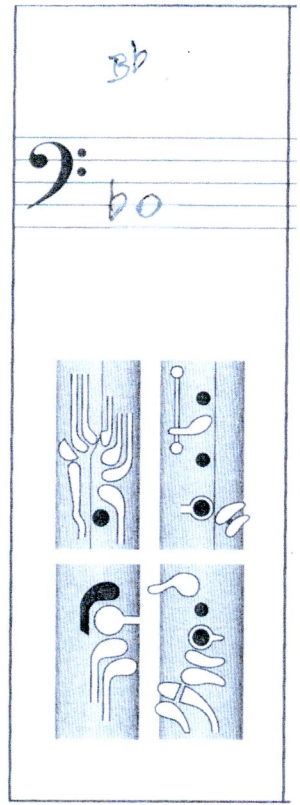
- Notice the elbow away from the body



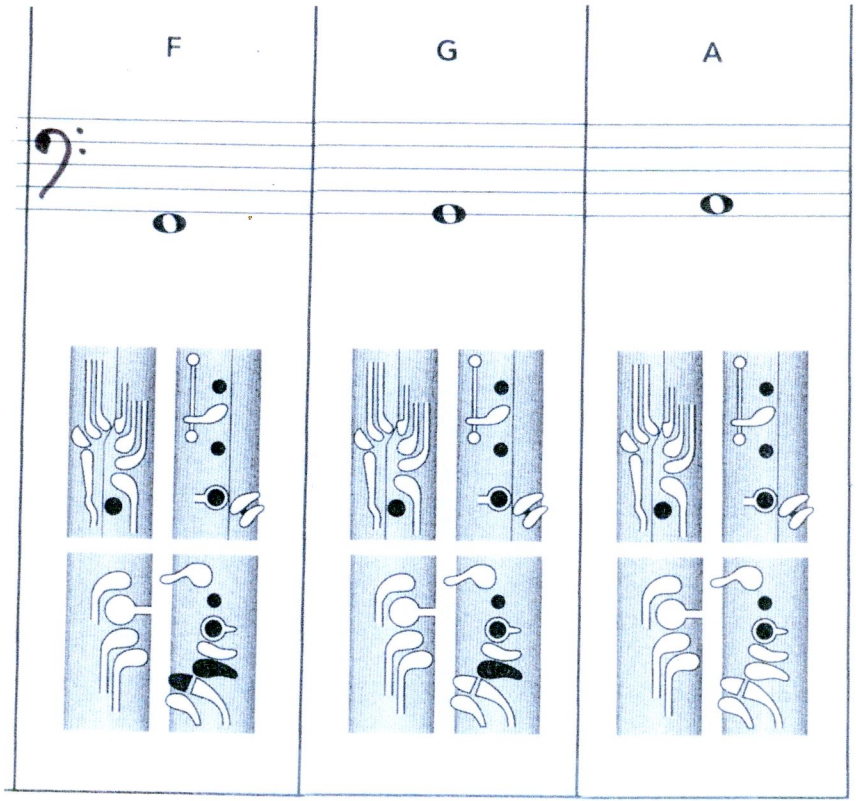
- AVOID bending wrist **

B-flat

- Preferred fingering
- Place right thumb on key above ‘pancake’ key
- Place first two right fingers on top two tone holes **



More Notes in Right Hand

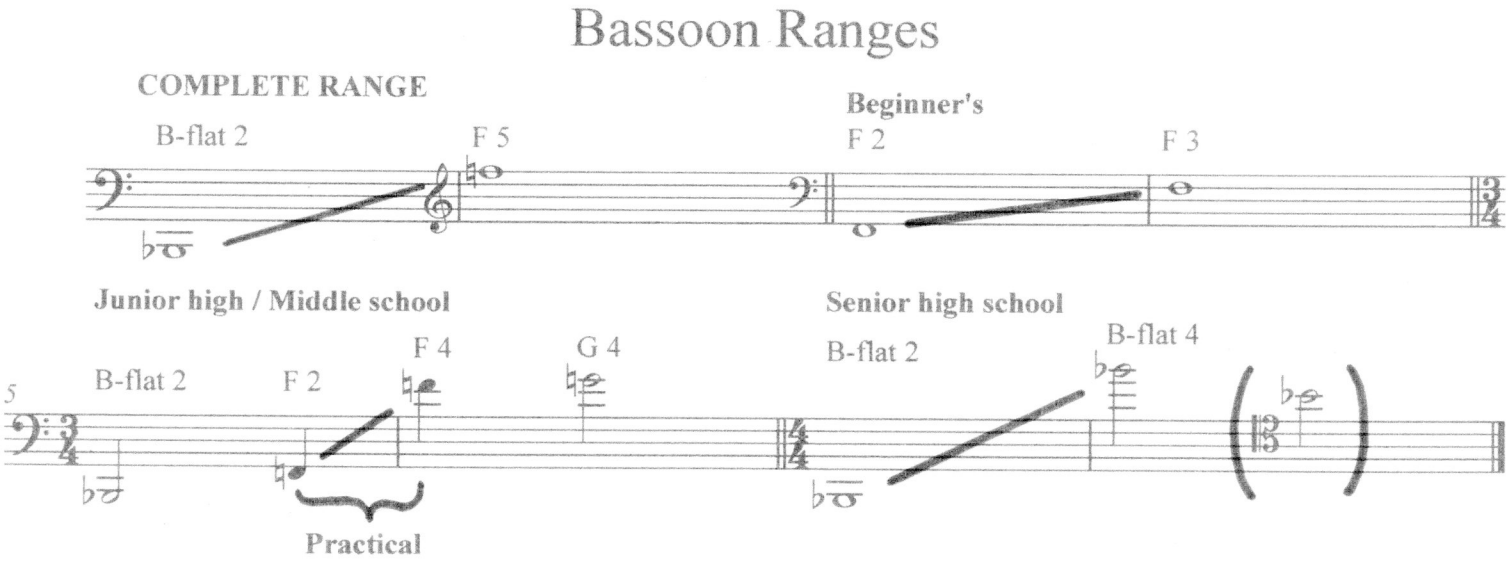


Choosing Potential Bassoonists

- Notice student's size and finger spread, double-joints
- Intelligent
- Self-starter
- Wants to play one-of-a-kind instrument
- Knows how to read music
- Previous woodwind experience, especially flute
- Might have to teach self! **

Bassoon Ranges

- While total range is wide, recommended beginning student range is F2 - F3
- Accomplished players learn 3 clefs: bass, tenor and treble
- Majority of well-known solos F3 - F4 **



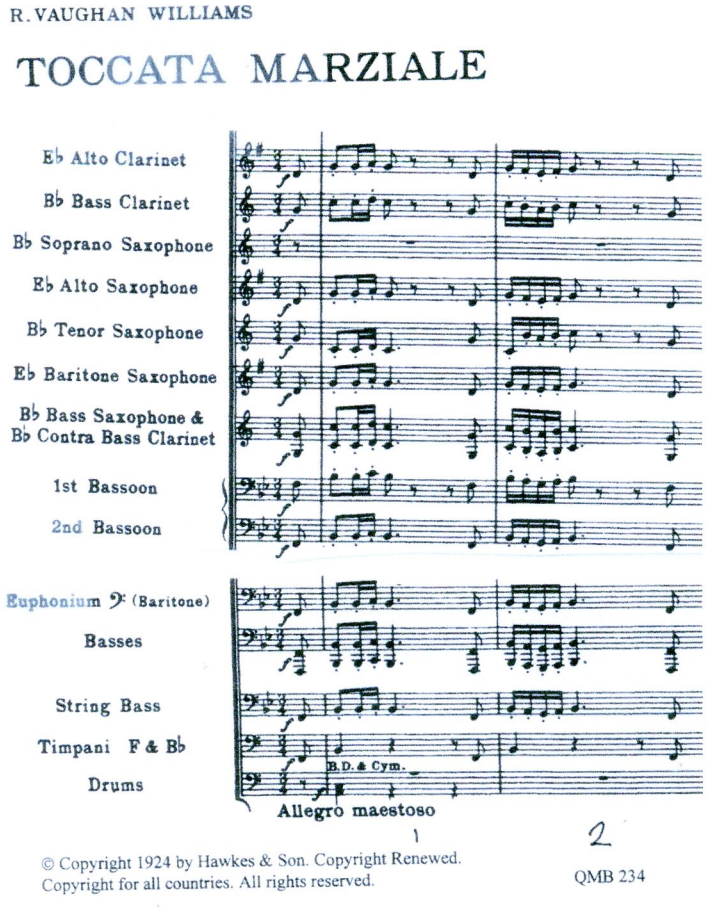
Bassoon Tone

- Exotic sound: full in low register; thins out as it ascends
- Can be comedic in staccato, melancholy in legato
- In comparison to a large ensemble's dynamics: bassoon dynamics are ***pp - mf***
- Similar to other conical reed instruments - soft playing is difficult at first **

Intonation

- Most common overall problem is being too sharp
- Good reeds, firm air support with NO BITING will bring pitch down
- Double reeds: closed tip plays sharper
- Many bassoonists play too loud trying to be heard **

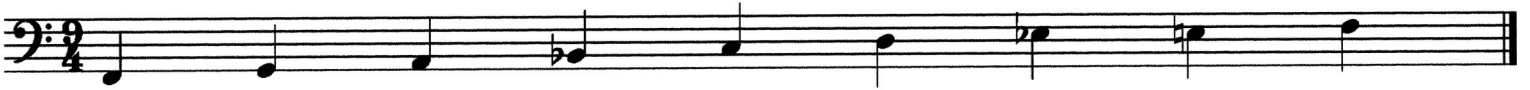
Bassoon in Ensembles



- Bassoon dynamics not loud (***pp - mf***)
- Doubled in band by euphoniums, trombones, bass clarinet, tubas etc.
- Often used on soft bass lines
- Encourage players by letting them be heard **

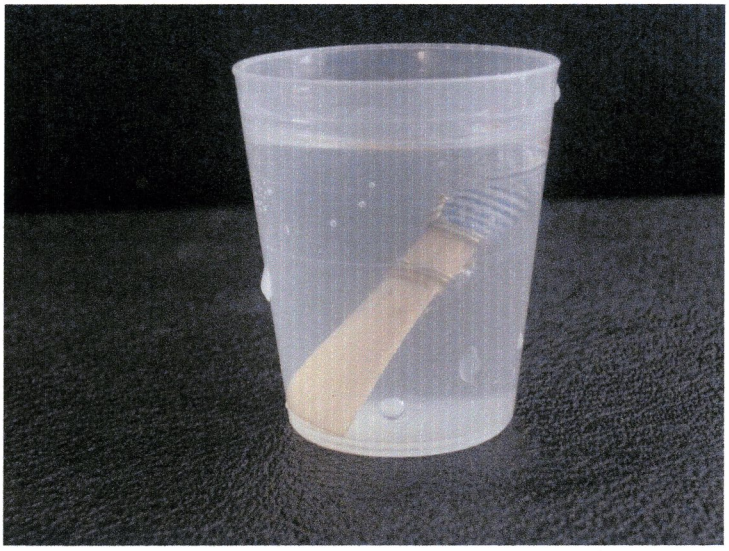
Let's Play Some More Notes

- We've learned from F2 to F3 with these pitches



Reeds (1)

- Find a good source
- Range from $10 - $20 each
- Have some basic tools: plaque, mandrel, nail file, ruler, reamer, pliers
- What about a reed knife in school? **

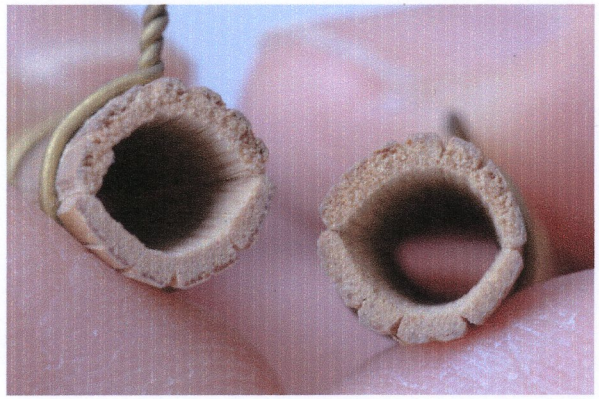


Reeds (2)

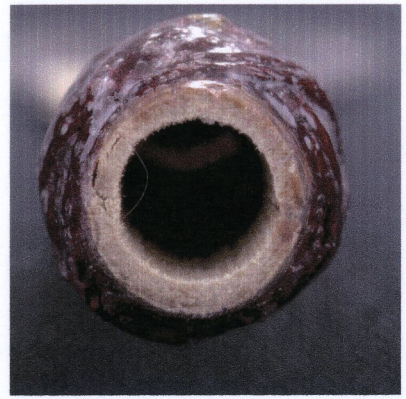
- Soak entire reed, not just tip

- Store only in reed case NEVER back in plastic tubes **

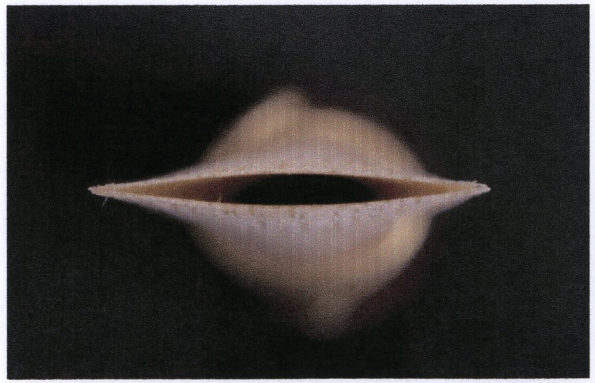
What is a “Good Reed”?



Bad butts !



Good butt !



Good tip opening **

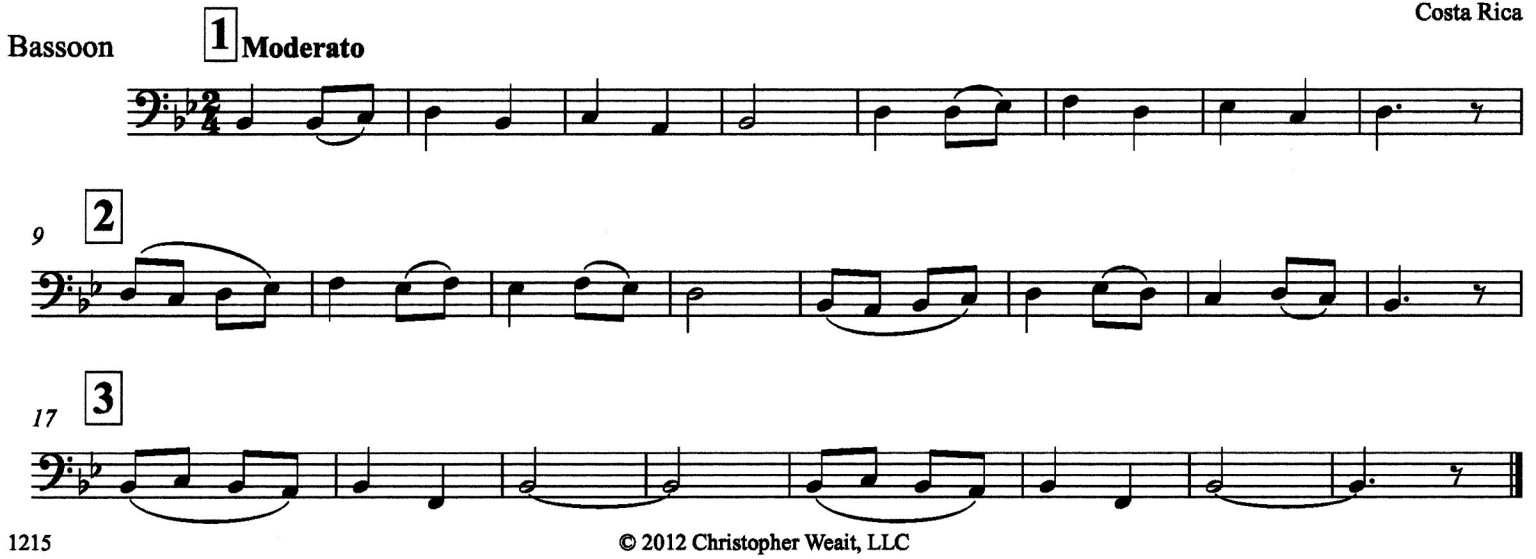
Reed Measurements

- Measurements from my "Bassoon Reed-Making: An Illustrated Basic Method" and two-set DVD
- Also available: 10 minute DVD "Improve Your Bassoon Reed" for those who use store-bought reeds**

Mi Gallo

Costa Rica

Bassoon



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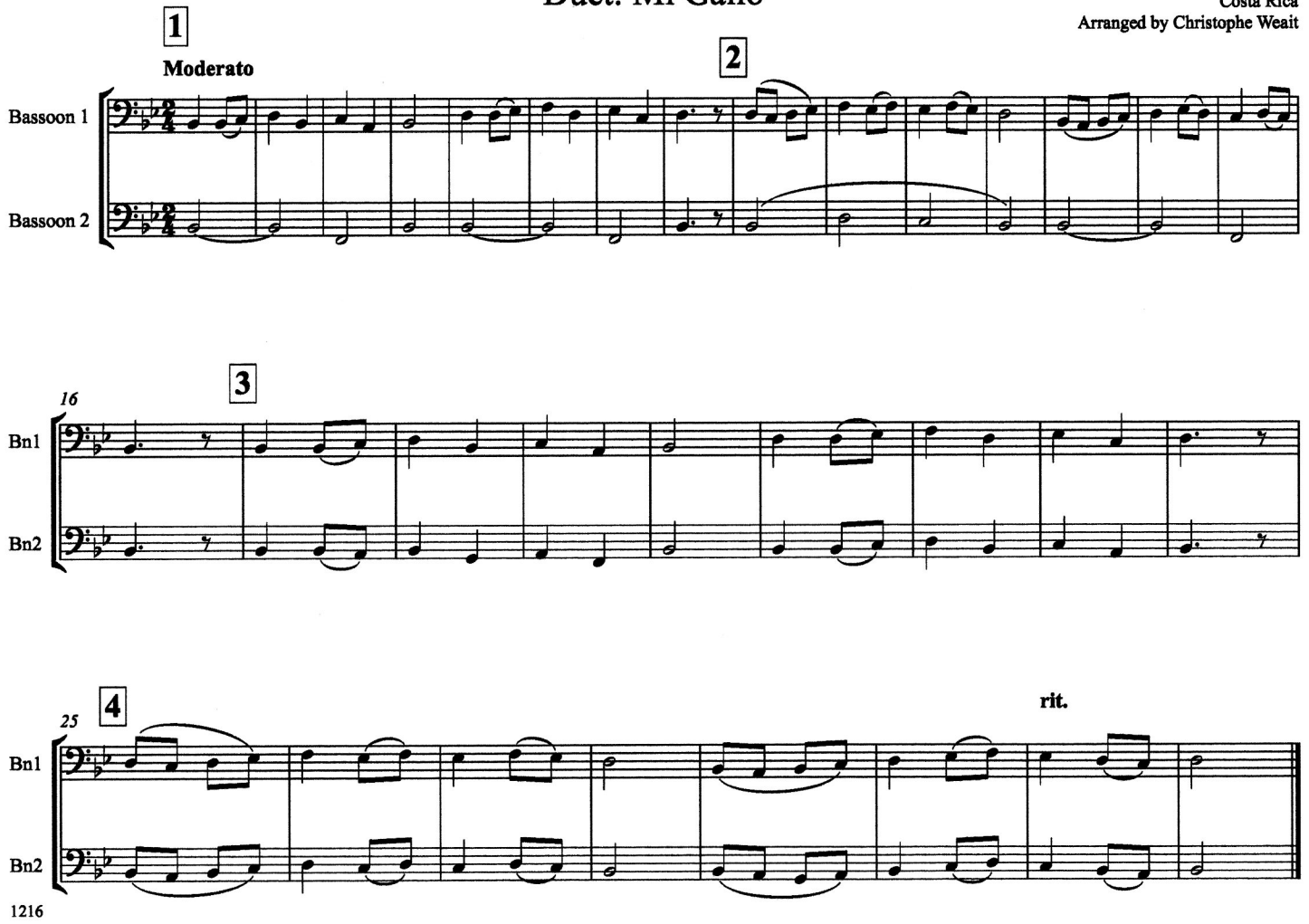
Duet: Mi Gallo

Costa Rica
Arranged by Christophe Weait



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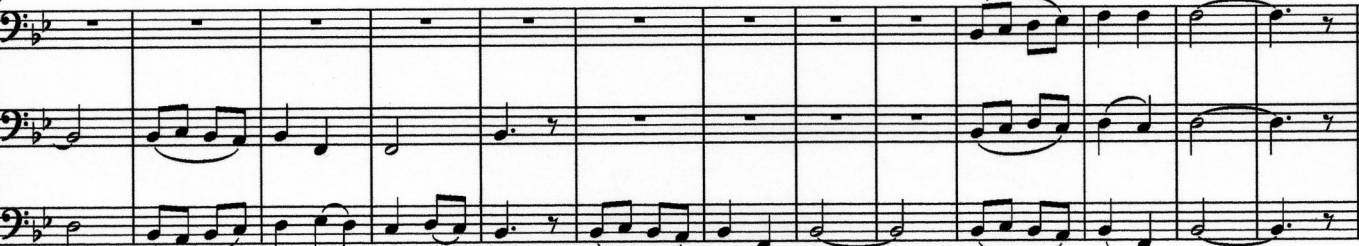
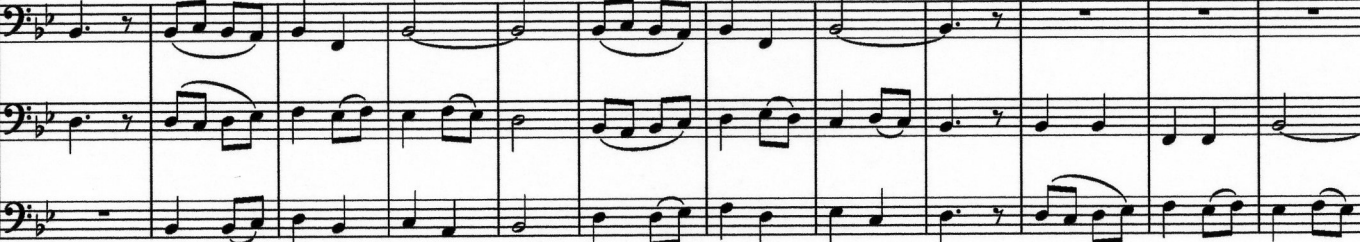




1

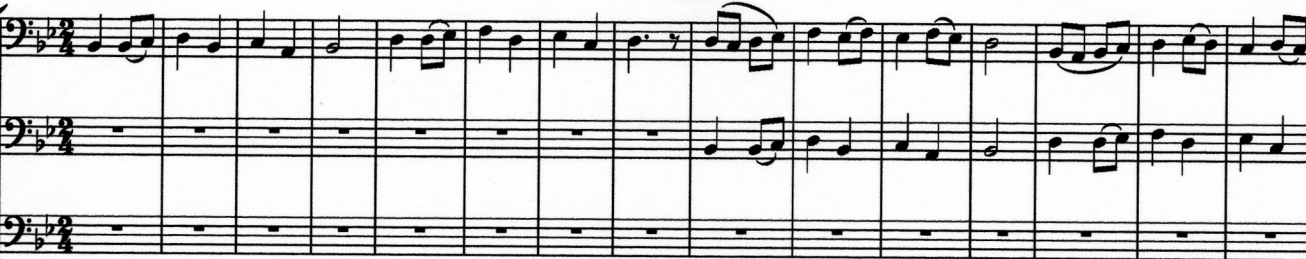
Moderato

Round: Mi Gallo

2

Costa Ric

Freely adapted by Christophe Wea



TEACHERS: MAKE FRIENDS WITH A BASSOON!

Question Period

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

Teachers: We Hope You Have Made Friends With A Bassoon!