

Clarinet 102

Voicing/Tongue Position and its role in playing clarinet

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Clarinet 101 Reminders

Embouchure

- As easy as the clarinet is in the chalumeau register, it's equally intolerant of poor embouchure as one plays higher into the clarion and altissimo registers
- Think of a 2-step embouchure: form it...then "snug up/wedge up"
- Flat bottom lip against bottom teeth and point the chin to the floor
- Space between teeth letting reed vibrate...double lip embouchure
- "Firming up" embouchure is usually not a solution...students will tend to bite

Air

- Fast, hissing air
- Say "kee" to approximate feel of tongue in oral cavity
- Also think about "TSST" to point the air at the tip of reed/mouthpiece

Bass clarinet differs in some ways from soprano clarinet

"No piece of equipment or embouchure technique can adequately make up for an incorrect and/or unstable tongue position."

"Learning the correct things to do with the tongue is not a matter of precise slide rule measurements which precludes listening. Not at all. Rather, it is a matter of understanding a few basic principles which serve as a guide in the process of making the needed physical adjustments to correct the tone, pitch, color and/or shape, listening to the results, making further adjustments until the sound is correct, and then remembering what it feels like at that point."

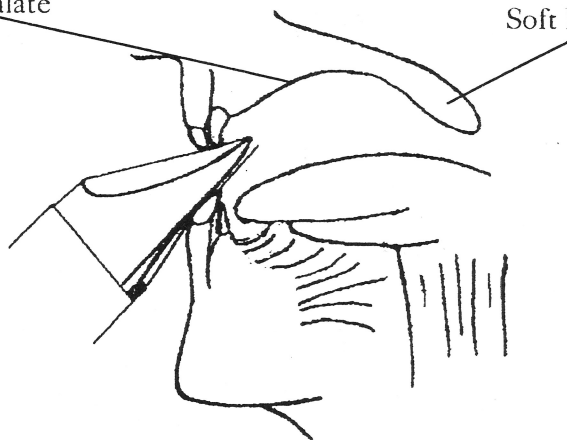
Source: Ridenour, W. Thomas. *The Educator's Guide to the Clarinet* [2000]. Duncanville, TX: Ridenour Clarinet Products, 2002.

-From W. Thomas Ridenour's *The Educator's Guide to the Clarinet*.

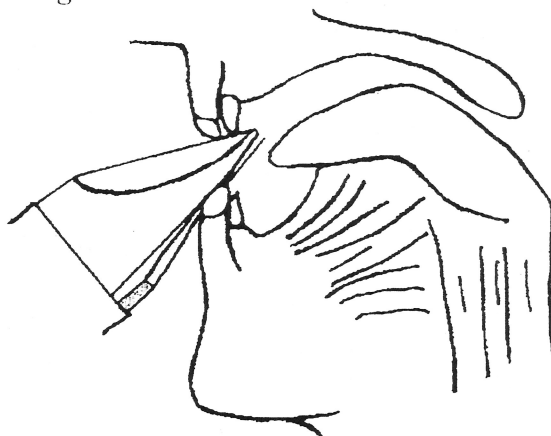
Example 1: Comparison of Correct and Incorrect Tongue Positions

Hard Palate

Soft Palate



Incorrect low/forward tongue position: Notice how great the distance is between the tongue and the roof of the mouth. Also notice how the broad stream of air this position creates is directed only generally toward the front of the mouth and lacks the necessary concentration for keeping the high tones from tuning flat.



Correct high/back tongue position: Notice how the high/back position narrows the passage between the surface of the tongue and the roof of the mouth. Notice also how the air is directed right at the reed, instead of just generally towards the front of the mouth. (Not indicated in the drawing is the lifting of the soft palate that should be done in tone production).

Exercises to help make students aware of different voicing “feels”

(In approximate order of easiest to more challenging)

1. G-G-G-D exercise
2. Thumb C-remove register key-descending C scale staying on 3rd partial
3. Thumb C w/second trill key
4. B w/second trill key
5. bouncing between chalumeau/clarion (using breath starts)
6. Elgar exercise


Exercises to help connect feel with pitch

1. bouncing octaves
2. blowing air then engaging reed

Daily maintenance exercises

1. register slurs using double-lip embouchure
2. upside down scales

Smearing/Gliss preparation: Bend notes down a half step at a time from thumb C



* use 3rd partial or 'open' fingering

#4

*use second trill key from top

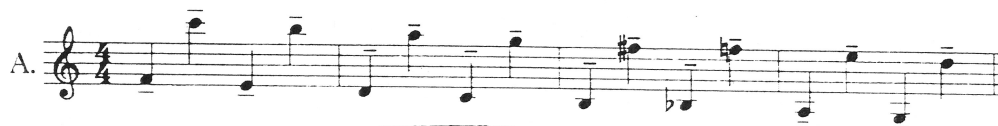
PLAY ENTIRE PASSAGE WITHOUT REGISTER KEY



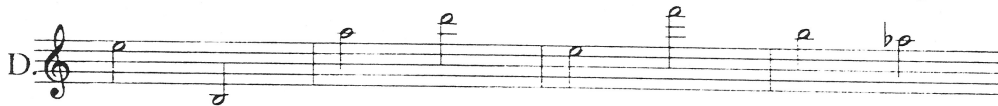
-From W. Thomas Ridenour's *The Educator's Guide to the Clarinet*.

Example 4: Honks and Squeaks

#5



#2



Example A should be played with breath attacks and without using the register key to produce the high pitches. This may be frustrating at first, but with practice the student will learn the differentiation of air and position of the glottis to help produce each pitch. The student should not be allowed to bite to get the higher pitches.

Example B should be played completely without the use of the register key. All the left hand twelfths can be played similarly.

Example C shows all of the overtones being produced while only fingering the low register pitch. The very highest tones will be out of tune without the register key, but that is not the point of the exercise.

Example D tests the student's ability to accurately pick pitches out of the air. Only the low register fingering should be used for each