Teaching Bassoon & Oboe Reed Adjusting Virtually: A Guide for Music Educators

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Check for Accuracy



Reed Requirements

- 1. Tuning
- 2. Tone
- 3. Tonguing
- 4. Range
- 5. Feel and flexibility



Parts of Oboe and Bassoon Reeds

Oboe and Bassoon Reed Areas Responsibilities



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Reed Pitch & Crow

Oboe

Pitch of reed: The pitch of a reed should be a B to a C. To check the pitch of the reed, <u>go to the</u> <u>string</u> and blow moderate air. The reed should produce 1 pitch. That pitch is a B to a C. If the pitch is below a B, the reed will be flat. If the pitch is above a C, the reed will be sharp. When you add more pressure to the air, the reed pitch should break into an octave. That lower octave is the "crow". The pitch of the reed and crow is vitally important to the reed maker/adjuster.

Bassoon

Pitch of the reed plus bocal: The bassoon reed plus the bocal should be a C#. The addition of the bocal is equivalent to the staple of the oboe reed and I think this is critical to checking the pitch of the reed. To crow the bassoon reed by itself (no bocal), put the lips on the first wire, use no pressure with the lips, and blow calm, warm air. You should hear a crackling sound where the pitch breaks into octaves (lows and highs) – we are striving for a balance of the lows and highs. Lows correspond to flexibility and highs correspond to strength.

Oboe Crowing Embouchure/Position



Bassoon Crowing Embouchure/Position



Oboe Playing Embouchure/Position



Bassoon Playing Embouchure/Position



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Bassoon Reed Common Problems and Solutions

PROBLEM	CAUSE	SOLUTIONS
The reed is hard to control. The player may sound buzzy or	Too much vibration.	 Try tightening the first and/or the second wires. Try squeezing from side to side on first and/or
very flat, especially on 4 th line F and 3 rd space E.		the second wires (check tip opening after).3. Last resort is to clip the tip 1mm, which can be done with scissors.
The reed is hard to tongue.	Not enough vibration.	1. Try squeezing the first wire from top to bottom to close the tip, then test.
The reed may sound explosive	Possibly tip too open or	2. Try using sane paper at the tip (220 grit).
(player blows, sound hesitates and then explodes).	too thick.	 Try sanding the tip with sandpaper flat on a table.
The reed is hard to blow.	Not enough vibration	1. Try squeezing from top to bottom on first and/or the second wires (check tip opening
The player may also sound sharp		after).
overall.		 Iry using sandpaper in the heart and the back (220 grit).

First Wire Adjustments

Second Wire Adjustments

Side to Side	Top to Bottom
Opens the tip	Closes the tip
Adds resistance	Makes more flexible
Makes sharper	Makes flatter
Strengthens	Weakens
Makes tone darker	Makes tone brighter

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Closes the tip	Opens the tip
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Oboe Reed Common Problems and Solutions

PROBLEM	CAUSE	SOLUTIONS
The reed is too hard to blow	There is too much cane still on the reed.	The reed has to vibrate in order to produce sound. Positive scraping ADDS vibration to a reed. Take a small layer of cane off all areas of the reed to get it to vibrate. Check the pitch of the reed. Lightly thin the rails of the heart to relax the tip opening. If the reed sounds too muffled or fuzzy, lightly blend the upper heart into the tip and out to the corners. To help the upper register, lightly thin the upper back (windows) just under the heart. Always scrape away from the spine.
The reed is too hard to tongue	Either the tip is too heavy or the division between the tip and the heart is not blended enough or both issues.	The very tip of the reed needs to be the thinnest part of the reed. Make sure the tip does not flair out. Check the reed from the profile view. The tip should come down to a point. It should not flair out. If looking at the flat of the reed in the light, there should not be a shadow at the tip. If the blend of the tip to the heart is too steep, it is as if the air hits a brick wall. Therefore, the response stops. Lightly blend the upper heart into the tip and out to the corners. Always check the pitch of the reed while doing adjustments.
The reed is hard to control.	Basically, a reed that is hard to control is too free or over vibrating.	This means we need to add resistance. Resistance is controlled vibration. Negative scraping CONTROLS how the reed vibrates. Thinning the rails of the tip pushes strength to the center of the reed. Thus, forming a spine in the tip. The spine adds focus and control to a reed. Check the pitch of the reed. If the pitch of the reed is flat, clip the tip of the reed a very tiny amount. Making the reed shorter will raise the pitch of the reed as well as add resistance. Always scrape away from the spine. Check the pitch of the reed often.