

CLARINET PEDAGOGY 101

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Daily Routine

Tone--Flexibility/Range--Facility--Articulation

Tone Production

Two Pillars = AIR+EMBOUCHURE

AIR

- Fast, cold air
- Air constantly pressurized like aerosol can
- Hissing air-say “key” and make the ‘k’ sound long
- Higher pitched hiss as you play higher into the altissimo register
- Commit to a good sound by taking in a good breath
- ***be cautious of “warm air” and “open throat”***

EMBOUCHURE

- Flat bottom lip against bottom teeth-firm lip cushion and corners in
- Line of chin/lip on front of teeth
- 2-step embouchure-form it/snug it
- Snug up/wedge up--more reed in mouth is generally better
- Very important to get bottom lip flat from the start—form good habits early
- ***NO ‘3-step’ embouchure***

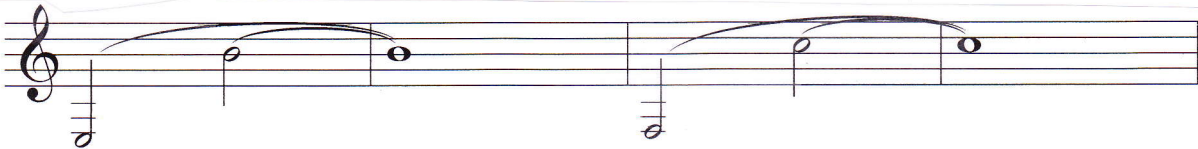
Students need a model for tone development--the sound concept must come first. The student must first imagine the sound they want to make, then they can produce it. Encourage them to listen to recordings.

Flexibility/Range

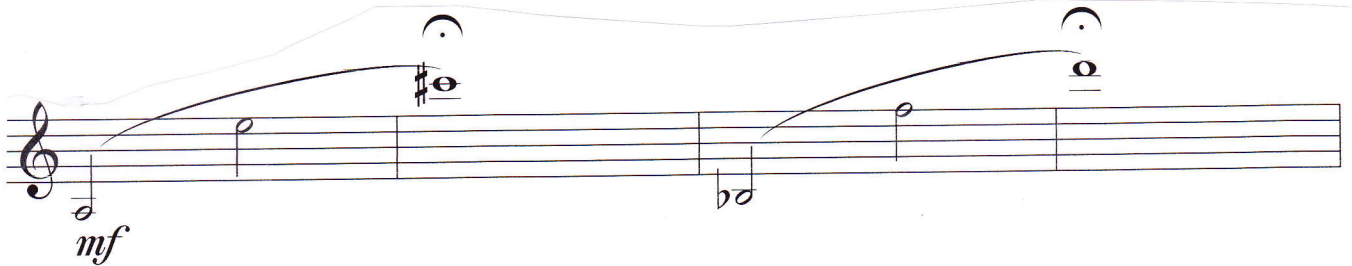
Being able to slur smoothly between registers is, quite possibly, the most important aspect of playing the instrument.

- 12th exercises
 - chalumeau-clarion

♩ = 50



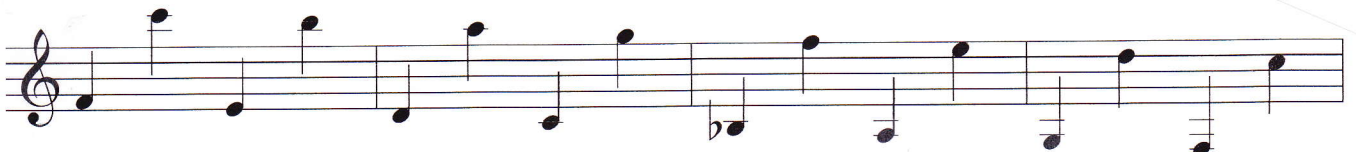
- chalumeau-clarion-altissimo



- Two parts to the 12th exercise: 1) ascending intervals 2) diminuendo on top note
- Register flexibility exercises can start early-as soon as student is getting a good, vibrant chalumeau sound
- Introductory voicing exercises:
 - G-G-G-D exercise



- Voicing 3rd partial without register key



- Stubbins exercises: root-fifth-root-fifth, etc. as high as student can play
- Let the reed vibrate! Give student permission to squeak!
- Play scales backward [i.e. start at the top, go up a little, then all the way down, then back up again]

Facility

- Scales and arpeggios; scales in thirds
- Finger ‘noodles’—there are lots of these in the various method books: Klosé, Langenus, etc. Opperman Velocity Studies-elementary and intermediate volumes
- Use a metronome-no compromise with this!
- Make up your own exercises-scale based; octave based; trill based; whatever the weak point is.
- Record fast passages with metronome and then play them back at a slower tempo-*Audacity* (free download)

Articulation

- Tip of tongue to tip of reed. Getting as close to tip of reed as possible will be better.
- Say “tee”/whisper “tee”
- Faster articulation “dee” is OK-tongue more relaxed
- Bring tongue up to reed slowly-let reed tickle tongue
- Starting notes as a release
- Stopping reed from vibrating; NOT stopping air column [leaky air exercise]
- If fingers/tongue not lining up, it’s probably the fingers that aren’t even.



Notes about posture:

- Sit as you stand
- Elbows relaxed at sides
- When sitting, bell should be somewhere close to the knees
- Fingers hinge from the knuckle [put hand on flat surface and move fingers] Knuckles below fingertips
- Use neck strap if there is any hand/wrist discomfort [two types: regular and elastic]

References

Etheridge, David. *A Practical Approach to the Clarinet for Advanced Clarinetists*. Norman, OK: Woodwind Educator's Press, 2009.

Opperman, Kalman. *Velocity Studies*. New York: Carl Fischer, 1999.

Ridenour, Thomas. *The Educator's Guide to the Clarinet*. Duncanville, TX: W. Thomas Ridenour, 2002.

Stubbins, William. *Essentials of Technical Dexterity for the Clarinet*. Ann Arbor, MI: George Wahr Publishing Co., 1977.

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