

Introduction to oboe and bassoon

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An Introduction Oboe and Bassoon By Marie A Rogers 300005290 Woodwind Techniques 1 1010-1100 Mr. Robinson The oboe is a soprano-range double reed instrument with a length of 62cm. Its wooden tube is distinguished by a conical bore that expands into a flaring bell. The modern oboe's range extends from the B flat below middle C (b3 flat) to about 3 octaves higher (A6). The oboe has a very narrow conical bore. It is played with a double reed consisting of two thin blades of cane tied together on a small metal tube called a staple, which is inserted into the reed socket at the top of the instrument.

Traditionally made from African Blackwood, also called grenadilla, the instrument is made in 3 parts. The top joint has 10 or 11 holes, most of which are manipulated by the players left hand. The bottom joint also has 10 holes, which are predominately controlled by the right hand. The bell has 2 keys that are not used very much by the player. Oboe History The baroque oboe first appeared in the French court in the mid-17th century, where it was called " hautbois". This name was also used for its predecessor, the shawm. The basic form of the hautbois was derived from the shawm.

Major differences between the two instruments include division into 3 sections or joints, for the hautbois, and the elimination of the pirouette, a cup placed over the reed that enabled the shawm players to produce greater volume. The latter develop more than any other, was responsible for bringing the hautbois indoors where, thanks to its more refined sound and style of playing, it took up a permanent place in the orchestra. Classical period brought upon an oboe whose bore was gradually narrowed, and the

instrument became outfitted with several keys, among them were those for the notes D#, F, and G#.

A key similar to the modern octave key was also added called the “slur key”. It was used more like the “flick” keys on the modern German Bassoon. Only later did French instrument makers redesign the octave key to be used in the manner of the modern key i. e. held open or upper register, closed for lower. The narrower bore allowed the higher notes to be played easier, and composers began to utilize the upper register of the oboe in their works. Oboe Reeds Most professional oboists make their own reeds since every oboist needs a slightly different reed to suit his or her individual needs.

By making their own reeds, oboists can precisely control factors such as tone color and intonation. Novice players often begin playing on “fibrecane reed” which is made of synthetic material. Fibrecane reeds are much easier for the novice to control and take a shorter amount of time to ‘break in’, and usually last longer. After learning on fibrecane reeds, which are available in several degrees of hardness, a medium reed usually being used. These reed, like Clarinet and Bassoon reeds are made of arundo donax. Different types of Oboes

The oboe has several family members. The most widely known today is the Cor Anglais or English Horn, the tenor (or alto) member of the family. A transposing instrument, it is pitched in F, a perfect 5th lower than the oboe. The Oboe d’ Amore the alto (or mezzo soprano) member of the family, is pitched in A, a minor 3rd lower than the Oboe. A less commonly played instrument is the Bass Oboe which is an octave lower than the oboe. Even

less common is the Hecklephone, which has a wider bore and larger tone than the bass oboe. Only 165 hecklephones have ever been made.

Its hard to find competent players because of the rarity of the instrument. The least common is the mussette or (piccolo oboe), the sopranino member of the family (usually pitched in Eflat or F above the oboe), and the Contrabass Oboe (typically pitched in C, 2 octaves deeper than the standard oboe). The Bassoon Bassoon is a member of the double-reed family, and generally plays in the bass and tenor registers. The bassoon plays most commonly in concert bands, orchestras and chamber ensembles. It is a non transposing instrument.

The bassoon is generally made of maple, with medium hard types of wood, such as sycamore, maple and sugar maple preferred. Less expensive models are also made of materials such as polypropylene and ebonite, primarily for student and outdoor use. The bassoon is 4. 4 feet long. The bore of the bassoon is conical, and the two parallel bores of the boot joint are connected at the bottom of the instrument with a U- shaped metal connector. Both bore and tone holes are precision machined, and each instrument is finished by hand for proper tuning.

The bocal connects the reed to the rest of the instrument and is inserted into a socket at the top of the wing joint. The range of the bassoon begins at bflat 1 and extends upward over 3 octaves. Bassoon history Earlier bassoons were called “ Dulcian”. They two instruments are quite similar; they both have a double reed fitted into a metal crook, obliquely drilled tone holes, and a conical bore that doubles back on itself. The origins of the dulcian are not

clear, but by the mid 16th century it was available in 8 different sizes from soprano to great bass.

Its primary function seems to have been to provide the bass in a typical wind band of the time. Early “dulcian” technique was rather primitive, with 8 finger holes and generally one key, indicating that it could only play in a few keys. The Baroque period was when the bassoon became very similar to what it is today. The man most likely responsible for developing the true Bassoon was Martin Hottorre. He was responsible for breaking the instrument down the one-piece dulcian into 4 sections (bell, bass joint, boot and wing joint).

The modern Bassoon exists in two distinct primary forms the Buffett system and the Heckle system. Most of the world plays the Heckle system, while the Buffett system is primarily in France, Belgium, and parts of Latin America.

Bassoon techniques The Bassoon is held diagonally in front of the player, but unlike the flute, oboe, and clarinet, it cannot be supported by the players hands alone. Some means of additional support is required; the most common ones used are a neck strap or shoulder harness attached to the top of the boot joint, a seat trap attached to the base of the boot joint which is laid across the chair seat prior to sitting down. To stabilize the right hand, many Bassoonists use an adjustable common shaped apparatus called a “crutch”, which mounts to the boot joint. An aspect of Bassoon playing technique called flicking involves the momentary pressing or “flicking” of the high A, C, and D keys by the left hand thumb at the beginning of certain note in the middle octave in order to eliminate the cracking or brief microphonic that happens without the use of the key.

Bassoon Reeds Bassoon reeds, made of *Arundo donax* cane, are often made by the players themselves, although beginner bassoonists tend to buy their reeds from professional reed makers or use reeds made by their teachers. Reeds begin with a length of tube cane that is split into three or four pieces. The cane is then trimmed and gouged to the desired thickness, leaving the bark attached. After soaking, the gouged cane is cut to the proper shape and milled to the desired thickness, or profile, by removing material from the bark side.

This can be done by hand with a file; more frequently it is done with a machine or tool designed for the purpose. After the profiled cane has soaked once again it is folded over in the middle. Prior to soaking, the reed maker will have lightly scored the bark with parallel lines with a knife; this ensures that the cane will assume a cylindrical shape during the forming stage. On the bark portion, the reed maker binds on three coils or loops of brass wire to aid in the final forming process. The exact placement of these loops can vary somewhat depending on the reed maker.

The bound reed blank is then wrapped with thick cotton or linen thread to protect it, and a conical steel mandrel (which sometimes has been heated in a flame) is quickly inserted in between the blades. Using a special pair of pliers, the reed maker presses down the cane, making it conform to the shape of the mandrel. (The steam generated by the heated mandrel causes the cane to permanently assume the shape of the mandrel.) The upper portion of the cavity thus created is called the "throat", and its shape has an influence on the final playing characteristics of the reed.

The lower, mostly cylindrical portion will be reamed out with a special tool, allowing the reed to fit on the bocal. After the reed has dried, the wires are tightened around the reed, which has shrunk after drying. The lower part is sealed (a nitrocellulose-based cement such as Duco may be used) and then wrapped with thread to ensure both that no air leaks out through the bottom of the reed and that the reed maintains its shape. The wrapping itself is often sealed with Duco or clear nail varnish (polish).

The bulge in the wrapping is sometimes referred to as the "Turk's head"—it serves as a convenient handle when inserting the reed on the bocal. To finish the reed, the end of the reed blank, originally at the center of the unfolded piece of cane, is cut off, creating an opening. The blades above the first wire are now roughly 27–30 mm (1.1–1.2 in) long. In order for the reed to play, a slight bevel must be created at the tip with a knife, although there is also a machine that can perform this function. Other adjustments with the knife may be necessary, depending on the hardness and profile of the cane and the requirements of the player.

The reed opening may also need to be adjusted by squeezing either the first or second wire with the pliers. Additional material may be removed from the sides (the "channels") or tip to balance the reed. Additionally, if the "e" in the staff is sagging in pitch, it may be necessary to "clip" the reed by removing 1–2 mm (0.039–0.079 in) from its length. Playing styles of individual bassoonists vary greatly; because of this, most advanced players will make their own reeds, in the process customizing them to their individual playing requirements.