

Mini-Tips
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Spring Tension

Check spring tension of the woodwind instruments. The action and resistance of all keys must be similar. Any stiff springs will result in uneven playing.

Long phrases

Challenge the woodwinds with long phrases. Much of the band's contemporary music has no real phrasing required of the woodwinds. Cliche or percussive effects ask only for a rapid tonguing of 3 to 7 notes. Technical demands in the woodwinds will easily be covered by forte playing in the brass and percussion sections. Select some music which requires the woodwinds to play in the style of the classic or romantic periods; this music will help develop phrasing and technique.

Reed Test

Roll the tip of a good clarinet or saxophone reed across your left thumbnail. Does it bend slightly, a quarter of an inch, three eighths of an inch, more from the tip of the reed? Use the observations in this test to help select new reeds.

Reed Instrument Air Flow

Keep the air flow constant. Let the tongue stay close to the reed and touch it lightly. Keep tongue movement very slight, aiming for a movement of one eighth of an inch away from the reed.

Sticking Pads

Flute, clarinet, and saxophone pads have a tendency to stick at the beginning of a rehearsal. Use a fresh dollar bill or a piece of cigarette paper ("roll-your-own" type) to clean the pad. Hold the pad down and draw the bill or paper through the key opening.

Flute Foot Joint

Adjust the foot joint of the flute so that the rods of the keys on the foot joint point through the middle of the pads for the right hand D, E, and F holes. Then adjust so that the little finger of the right hand drops on C or Eb without any wrist movement.