

## Clarinet Warm-Up

### Robert S. Spring

The most important part of any day's practice time is the warm up period. I have a comprehensive warm-up that I use daily in my teaching and playing. I feel that each aspect of the warm-up should lead to the next, and that the objective should be a warm up of all muscle groups from large to small. The warm up should emphasize relaxation and comfort with the instrument and should cover all of the fundamental aspects of clarinet performance. These should include breathing, sound production, intonation, finger motion, (both adjacent and non-adjacent), articulation, (both single and multiple), registral sound unity, range extension, consistency, and combinations of the above.

Begin with long tones. This, as well as the rest of my warm up, is done with a metronome. Keeping things the same tempo everyday seems to help with overall consistency in performance. Play a chromatic scale in long tones. Set the metronome at 60 and play each note for four counts breathing every four notes for four counts. This means that one is forced to exhale for 16 seconds without a breath, Make certain to breathe only in the rests, and try to maintain a solid *mf* sound throughout the range. Do this to make certain that every note on the clarinet is performed in a long tone fashion every day. I used fifths and twelfths for many years, but found this to be superior as I was forced to listen to each note daily. Notes that had inferior sound quality or were not in tune with the rest of the clarinet were quickly fixed. Use a tuner to check the intonation on each note.

Next play the entire Klosé scale pattern, (page 123 in most Klosé books) in either the melodic, harmonic or natural form, (vary these by day) at a tempo of quarter note = 60. Play the pattern slurred and expand each of these scales to three octaves. This is followed by page 14 from the Langenus Book three, the major and minor arpeggios. These are also played at 60 and are all slurred.

I begin now to increase the tempo of the finger motion. I play the Klosé thirds at quarter note at 120, again all slurred. I do not want to introduce the tongue until the fingers are relaxed and accurate. I increase the tempo again to 176 and play the Klosé scales in all three forms at 176, and the Klosé thirds and Langenus arpeggios at 160.

I now begin warm up work on the tongue. I use page 22 from the Langenus book three, for my single tongue warm up. Dr. John Mohler, (my teacher now retired from the University of Michigan) stressed this exercise as being the single most important for developing speed with the single tongue. I think that the aspect of tension and release, tension on the two fast notes, and release on the longer note, is the same idea as tension and release that weight lifters and body builders use. I have found that during the 25 years that I have been working on this exercise my tongue speed and accuracy have gone beyond my wildest dreams. I begin at 120 and play the exercise four more times. 144, 176, 208 and 224. This is all single tongued.

I then introduce the single tongue with finger motion, again using the Klosé scales. I play them all tongued at 132 and two slurred and two tongued at 176. I again vary the minor form daily.

I warm up my double and triple tongue next. I play major scales using the pattern



I play them at 120, 144, 176, 208, 240, and 288. I follow this with scales triple tongued in the following pattern - two octaves and one note in range.



This is played at 160, 192, 224, 264, and 320. Last I do some circular breathing studies using again the Klosé scales pattern.

The entire warm up takes about 45 minutes to one hour if I do not have any reed work to do. I usually practice music on which I am working for another 30-45 minutes following. As I said, I think that everything in the warm up leads one to the next, and that every part of the clarinetist is warmed up. I also feel that it prevents some of the problems that many performers have with muscles, tendons and other performer related physical problems. I know that this is pretty extensive, but I find that I am not at a loss for technique when it's necessary. The long tones and slow playing help in sound stabilization, control, and endurance.

I do not vary the warm up on performance days, I do not warm up differently for different types of performances, nor do I use a special warm up for contemporary music. I feel that if the performer is approaching contemporary music in a different manner than "traditional" music, the clarinetist is probably playing the clarinet in the wrong fashion. The length of the warm up stays pretty much the same. If I do have less time I might leave out the circular breathing for a day. This very rarely occurs.

I hope this routine proves to be helpful to others. I have been teaching this type of warm up for about ten years. I really believe that we need to be teaching the comprehensive clarinetist and making our students aware that the physical aspects of performing the clarinet are every bit as demanding as those of the brass player.

As you can see, I feel very strongly about this aspect of clarinet performance. If I teach this to students, I find that they are "teaching themselves" so much more than if I do not insist on a comprehensive warm up. After all, they are their own teachers most of the time.

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# Clarinet Warm-Ups: Long Tones

$\text{♩} = 60$

11

21

31

41

51

**DAILY PRACTICE OF DIATONIC SCALES (MAJOR AND MINOR) AND EXERCISES  
ON TRIADS, DOMINANT SEVENTHS, DIMINISHED SEVENTHS, Etc.**

1.

C Major A Minor  
F Major D Minor Bb Major  
G Minor Eb Major  
C Minor Ab Major  
F Minor Db Major  
Bb Min. Gb Major  
Eb Min. B Major  
G# Min. E Major  
C# Min. A Major  
F# Minor D Major  
B Minor G Major  
E Minor C Major

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Langenus Arpeggios p. 14

The image displays a page of musical notation for 'Langenus Arpeggios p. 14'. It consists of 12 staves of music, each containing a series of arpeggiated patterns. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature, and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The word *simile* is written above the first few measures of the first staff. The patterns are organized into groups of four measures per staff, with each group enclosed in a slur. The keys vary across the staves, including C major, F major, B-flat major, and D major. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The overall structure is a continuous sequence of arpeggiated figures.

Considerable time should be devoted to this exercise; the author considers it to be one of the most important studies.

3

C Major

A Minor

F Major

D Min.

Bb Major

G Minor

Eb Maj.

C Minor

Ab Major

F Minor

Db Major

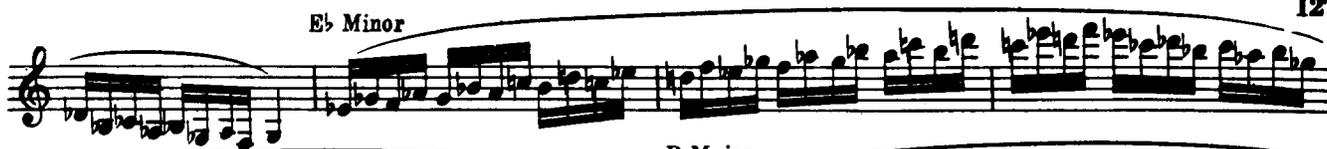
Bb Minor

Gb Major

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E $\flat$  Minor



B Major



G $\sharp$  Minor



E Major



C $\sharp$  Minor



A Major



F $\sharp$  Minor



D Major



B Minor



G Major



E Minor



C Major



