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
    - 12th exercises
    - 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


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