

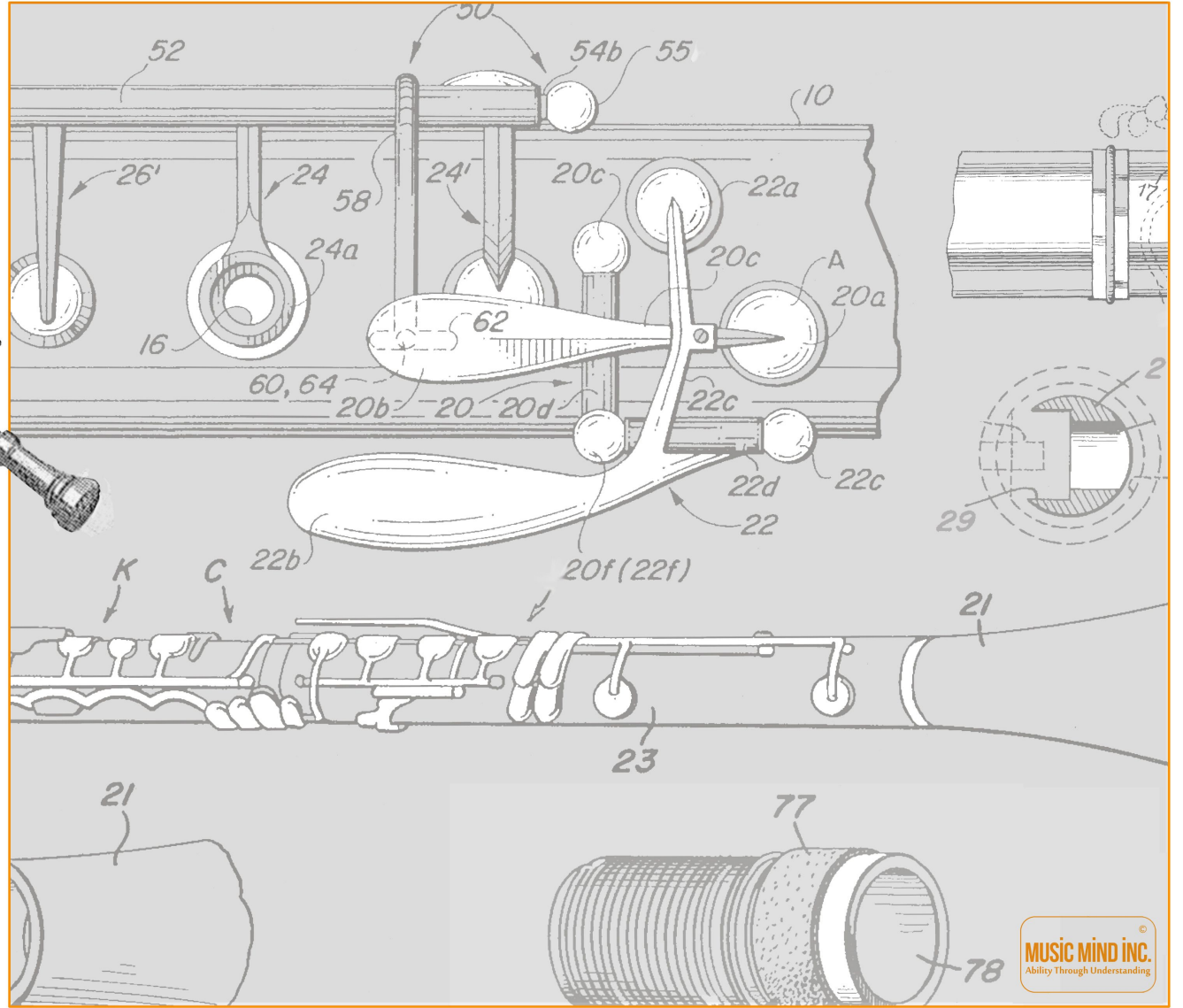
EMBOUCHURE DRILLS | clarinet

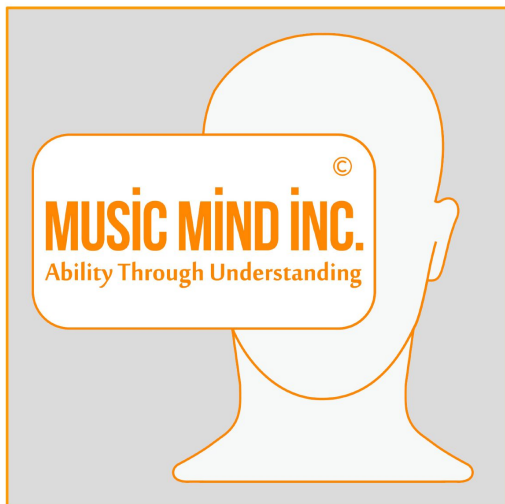
DR. KORNEL WOLAK

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EMBOUCHURE DRILLS | CLARINET DR. KORNEL WOLAK





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 **EMBOUCHURE DRILLS | CLARINET** is the second publication from Music Mind Inc. Instrumental Series following the well - received **ARTICULATION TYPES | CLARINET**. This book contains a selection of previously known exercises as well as some of my own design. Its aim is to provide clarinetists with information and methods to increase awareness, dexterity, and strength of their embouchure. This is accomplished by explaining functions of the embouchure and by presenting these new and existing embouchure-specific exercises.

The following exercises are not musical exercises; they are embouchure-specific drills. Because they focus on the viability of the clarinet embouchure, their ultimate purpose is to help acquire more control over the sound. The drills can supplement etudes, be used as stand-alone exercises or serve as embouchure diagnostic tools. Therefore they are suitable for studio teaching, personal practice, and for warm-ups before large ensemble rehearsals. Some of the drills are fairly simple but some require the player to go far beyond the frontier of what feels “natural” or comfortable by asking for more advanced decoupling between otherwise connected groups of muscles.

EMBOUCHURE DRILLS | CLARINET is designed to encourage further improvement of one’s own embouchure regardless of skill level. I believe that progress happens through searching for innovation as well as through constant comparing of one’s performance to the existing standards of excellence [quality control]. This is why I try to provide the reader with a comprehensive definition of the embouchure as well as with some creative ways to explore it. It is my hope that this book will inspire clarinetists to continue pursuing their personal research in embouchure performance.

DR. KORNEL WOLAK | Founder & President of MM INC.



The idea of separate non-musical exercises for the embouchure is based on the premise that in order for the muscles to perform their functions in the embouchure well and without injuries, they need to be gradually conditioned with specific drills. [Such as athletes who exercise specific muscle groups in order to improve their overall performance].

In the case of the embouchure, the end result is aimed at incorporating the newly acquired control and strength into a musical performance. To learn / teach this properly, one needs to deal with the main problem, which is that the embouchure formation “feels” very different to every player. This is why explaining the organic nature of the embouchure requires more than one way of breaking it down.

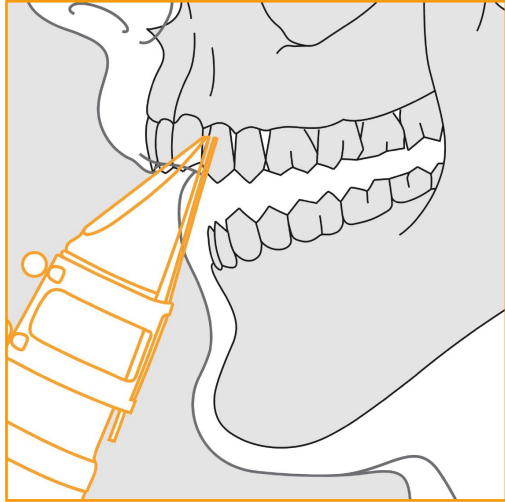


Correcting the embouchure does not end after daily warm-up exercises are completed. One must make necessary adjustments continuously to maintain high quality of performance! This is not to say that playing must be only a labour of extensive thinking about embouchure technicalities. After some practice, this process becomes “second nature”.

It is important because it is virtually impossible to play with ease and expression while being hampered by shortcomings of one’s technique. This is why, no matter how much we get into the music, we should always be aware of the amount of control needed to ensure that what we play sounds beautiful and expressive .



- **EMBOUCHURE** is a state of dynamically balanced tension between the muscles that form and sustain it. Its efficiency depends on muscle control happening in response to, and in anticipation of, the ever-changing resistance of air pressure of different notes on the clarinet. This process makes the embouchure dynamic in nature!
- **WORKING EMBOUCHURE** is embouchure in the process of playing the instrument.
- **STAND-ALONE EMBOUCHURE** is created by mimicking the formation of a working embouchure without playing the instrument. It is a model-embouchure, produced with jaws at a mouthpiece-distance apart.
- **DYNAMIC CONTROL** refers to the real-time adjustments of the embouchure done in anticipation of changes in the air/jaw pressure as well as in the tongue position.
- **AIR BACK-PRESSURE** is the resistance of the air created by the instrument. It changes according to the length of the air column within the clarinet.
- **VOICING** is done by changing the volume of the oral cavity of the vocal tract in order to match/provide the formant frequencies corresponding with a given register.
- **JAW PRESSURE** is used to control the aperture between the reed and the mouthpiece.
- **TONGUE POSITION** is the position of the tongue in relation to the reed and the upper palate of the mouth cavity.
- **DECOUPLING OF VARIOUS EMBOUCHURE PARTS** is a method of singling out and training a particular group of muscles in order to perform their action more effectively, to increase control and awareness of the embouchure.
- **EFFORTLESS PLAYING** occurs when no energy [strength] is either lost or used in excess; when there is only enough energy to produce, sustain and fully control the sound or when all muscles are in dynamic balance.



For clarinetists, the embouchure facilitates the process of the musical idea becoming sound. If we follow Ferron's notion that, "An energy source is a part of every working system" [1] and that "...the air pressure delivered by the instrumentalist's lungs provides the source of energy" that powers the sound generator [the reed], we can recognize that the primary function of the embouchure is to control the reed. The embouchure phenomenon occurs at the junction between the physics of the instrument and the actions of the body.

The body's actions primarily determine acoustic effects – like articulation and pitch control – while the instrument's properties require physical reactions from the body [such as the air-back pressure requiring changes in the tongue position and oral cavity volume]. Each player's embouchure has unique characteristics [its shape] depending on both the player's individual anatomy and the properties of the instrument. Therefore, everyone's embouchure looks different, and it leads – to some degree – to different results. However, in every case the same oral articulators make up the embouchure formation.

■ Ferron, E. " *Clarinette, Mon Amie* ", edition I.M.D. Diffusion Arpèges, Paris 1996, pp. 7