# CLARINET METHOD STUDIES

for the beginning student

BOOK ONE

by Jack Snavely

## FORWARD

Mr. Snavely approaches the problems of teaching in unique and challenging ways. His beginning method books are worthy in all respects. Explanations are clear, concise, and as readily comprehended by grade school students as by teachers. Exercises are brief, to the point, and include simply constructed clarinet duets and trios, making the method very useful in class teaching. Mr. Snavely's approach to pedagogy will intrigue teachers who specialize in teaching beginners.

DR. JAMES NEILSON Educational Director G. Leblanc Corporation

# **CLARINET METHOD**

# for

# **BEGINNING STUDENTS**

by

#### JACK SNAVELY

This method for clarinet is designed for beginners at any age level. It works equally well in both private and class study situations. The problems of clarinet playing have been realized, allowed for, approached and solved in the most interesting and logical method possible. Therefore, this method works well for all clarinets, including Bb soprano, Eb alto, Bb bass, and Eb contra-alto and BBb contrabass.

First assignments reduce as many problems as possible for the beginner. The pages of slurred whole notes are intended to place proper emphasis on embouchure and tone production, rather than on counting and tonguing—two of the most difficult problems in the elementary stage. Breaths are to be taken when needed. Repeated tonguing is avoided until the tone is substantially secure and a certain continuity of playing is developed. No counting should be attempted on the first page until the tone is certain.

Each new lesson contains only one new problem. Valuable teacher time is thus saved, with only one new point to explain. Ample studies, both technical and melodic, are given to develop the new problem.

Accidentals are rather freely used due to the supposition that, for example, a C# is no more difficult to play than a C-natural, at least to those well trained. The chalumeau register is well developed before playing the clarion. The register break is not attempted until the clarion register is secure. Crossing the break is then merely a connection of two secure registers.

Tonguing is begun through attack only—starting with the tongue and then slurring. The method is generally in a legato style, developing more liquid playing.

Alternate fingerings are not used other than the necessary chromatic fingerings. This allows for correct development of basic fingerings. Chromatic fingerings are notated with X above the note.

Beginning tone quality should be full and even. Through experience, this type of tone will develop into good quality. The small but good beginning tone rarely improves much with time.

Dynamics have not been used in the first book so that evenness and continuity in the tone may develop. The teacher may add dynamics toward the end of the method if desired. Dynamics introduced too soon, however, may disturb continuity of sound.

Melodic and technical studies are evenly balanced to allow for the student's musical development along with his technical development. The student's interest has been cultivated with carefully-chosen pieces of various styles balanced with technical studies.

#### Embouchure

The clarinet sound is produced by the vibration of the reed. The more reed vibration achieved by the player, the better the tone. Control of the reed vibration is necessary for good quality.

Embouchure is a word that refers to the way the mouthpiece is held in the mouth, and it includes the lips, teeth, mouthpiece and facial muscles. A proper embouchure is absolutely necessary for good clarinet performance. The easiest time to build a correct embouchure is at the very beginning of clarinet study.

Embouchure is the very soul of clarinet tone, since it helps or hinders and controls the vibrations of the reed. It has two purposes: (1) to allow as much reed vibration as possible; (2) to control that vibration.

Five steps provide the easiest way to learn the correct embouchure:

- Place the lower lip so that approximately onehalf of the red portion covers the lower teeth.
- Place the mouthpiece in the mouth approximately one-half inch.
- 3. Set the upper teeth on top of the mouthpiece.
- Allow the lips to close so that no air escapes around the mouthpiece. The corners of the lips must be firm.
- Stretch or point the chin so that it is in a position of pulling downward. The chin must be firm.



These five points constitute the basic embouchure for good clarinet performance. Spend as much time as is necessary in the first few lessons for development of a correct embouchure and insist that the embouchure is correct.

#### Blowing

A common fault in clarinet playing, especially with beginners, is the lack of necessary breath support. The clarinet needs much more breath for good playing than is commonly imagined. A beginning sound should be full, with much breath support in the tone.

Every tone on a wind instrument must be "supported." If it is not supported correctly with enough wind pressure, it is usually supported incorrectly through faulty embouchure such as biting the reed or the chin loses its position and squeezes the reed. It is absolutely necessary for the success of embouchure development to play with proper breath supporting the tone. Understanding embouchure without understanding the importance of breath as related to it is not likely to end in good results.

The feeling, when blowing, must be of blowing through the instrument and not into it.

Remember that the clariner is a woodwind instrument—the manufacturer provides the wood, but the player must provide the wind.

#### Hand Positions

Playing positions should be as natural and comfortable as possible. Bring the instrument to you; do not twist the body or lower the hands to reach the instrument.

The hands must be in a comfortable, natural position. To find this position allow the hands to hang in a relaxed manner along the sides of the body. Notice the half-curve of the fingers. This same "half-curve" should be used when playing the clarinet. In this position the pads, or fleshy part of the fingers, will cover the tone holes correctly.

Both hands should angle slightly upward to facilitate reaching the side levers. The right thumb supports the instrument, which should be placed slightly on the outside of the knuckle. This thumb position places the fingers properly over the keys. Fingers must always be ready to use and should never rest on the rods.



Both little fingers should be placed over the long levers, almost touching them. Never allow the little fingers to be below the keys.



The left thumb is the key to the register change and should be slightly angled to facilitate reaching the register key.

#### Reeds

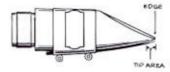
A proper playing reed is a necessity for successful clariner performance. Too often a student begins the study of clariner with only one reed, and not a very good one. In such cases it is not uncommon for the beginning embouchure to be ruined. When the reed will not vibrate as it should, something must be done with the embouchure to make it play. An easy-blowing reed that vibrates properly will allow the lip positions to form naturally, and will provide a happier student and teacher and greater success.

It is an excellent idea for the beginning student to purchase at least three to six reeds. As soon as several notes can be played, try all the reeds and use the one that affords the greatest success.

#### Tonguing

There is more than one correct method of tonguing on the clarinet. The method presented here is used by the majority of players and teachers, and in the author's opinion produces the best results.

The rule for tonguing should be "the tip of the tongue against the tip of the reed." This does not mean that we tongue on the edge of the tongue or reed, but on the tip area.





Tip Area Edge of Tongue

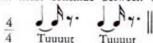
Tonguing should be considered as a method of starting the tone, not stopping it (except for staccato playing). The tongue should be against the reed before beginning, and not back in the mouth. Speed and lightness will develop with a minimum of tongue motion. It is unwise to move the tongue far.

Several syllables may be used in tonguing. The most common are the "too" or the "do" syllables.

First tonguing should be of a broad legato style. Beginning tonguing often sounds incorrect due to a space between notes. Do not take a breath between tongued notes except as needed.

Release is usually accomplished through stopping the breath. This must be done before taking a fresh breath and at phrase endings. In a series of quarter notes, eighth notes, etc. ( ); ) we do not think of stopping the tone but merely of beginning the next one.

Staccato tonguing is indiciated by a dot above or below the note. The term staccato means spaced, detached, or short tonguing. With this type of tonguing the tongue must stop the tone as well as begin it. The tongue must remain against the reed, and the breath must continue between the notes.



Continue blowing between the notes and keep the tongue against the reed.

### Tips to the Students

Always purchase several reeds at a time and use only the reeds that play well. It is a good habit to alternate reeds. The reed that dries properly between playings will last longer. Do not use a reed that blows too hard or too easy. Use a reed of medium strength (about number 2 or 2½). Place the reed evenly on the mouthpiece. It should be even with the tip, sides, and back of the mouthpiece. This small point is very important for good tone quality.

Place the ligature evenly on the reed, low enough to see the line on the mouthpiece and centered on the reed. Functions of the ligature are (1) to hold the reed on the mouthpiece and (2) to allow it to vibrate freely. Adjust the screws firmly but not too tightly, as this hinders reed vibration.

Clarinets are delicate and must be handled with care. Keep cork joints lightly greased with cork grease so that they will assemble easily. When putting your instrument together be careful not to force or bend keys. When finished playing, either lay it down with the keys up (never on the keys) or put it away. The instrument that is correctly placed in the case rarely gets damaged.

Clarinets should be swabbed before they are put away. This keeps them clean and helps prevent cracking. To properly swab a clarinet hold it upside down, drop the swab through the clarinet, and slowly pull it through. Be certain to unfold the swab first, as this prevents it from getting stuck. It is important to have a good mouthpiece. Select a good one with the aid of your teacher. Wash mouthpieces every week or two with soap, lukewarm or cold water and great care. Mouthpieces are an important point of good playing and must not be scratched or chipped. Never use hot water on a mouthpiece.

It is not necessary to begin with the most expensive instrument. However, purchase the best instrument you can afford. The individual who desires excellent performance must, after a few years' study, own a top-quality instrument. Whatever instrument is owned, keep it in top playing condition. This includes regular visits to the repairman.

Work for a full tone with a pleasing quality. Tone that is weak or of unpleasant quality is not satisfying to either the player or the listener.

Posture is important. Sit or stand straight when playing. This will make you look and sound better. Hold the clarinet at an angle of about 45°.

Practice slowly and carefully for best results. Playing that is not accurate is not good. Avoid playing fast and carelessly.

There must be a feeling of pulling the mouthpiece into the mouth rather than out. A slight upward pressure of the right thumb on the thumb support will do this nicely.

A metronome is helpful after a few months of study. Practice with a metronome will help rhythmic accuracy, provide a steadier beat and help the player develop a better sense of rhythm.







#### Listening and Phrasing

One of the most difficult problems in studying a musical instrument is learning to listen carefully to one's own playing. Quality of performance and speed of learning are determined to a large degree by the student's ability to hear the results he is obtaining. From the very beginning consciously listen to such performance factors as tone, holding notes full value, playing melodically, blending with others, degree of loudness or softness, playing notes evenly, rhythmic accuracy, tuning, etc. Improvement in playing is developed largely through hearing just what needs to be improved.

Music is written using many of the technics of the English language. Writing or speaking would make little sense without the various punctuations: periods, commas, questions, answers, quotation marks, breathing and paragraphs. Music played without similar interpretations also makes little sense. These interpretations in music are named "phrasing." The knowledge of playing melodies with phrasing in a musical style is gained through listening carefully to professional players, and again to one's own playing.

Phrasing points out where to take breaths, where to place endings (periods), where to section (comma), etc. Phrasing and listening are the arts through which we change notes into beautiful music.

#### The Alto Clarinet

The Alto Clarinet is an important instrument in the band and clarinet choir. It has a rich sonorous tone and is the alto voice in the clarinet section, comparing to the viola in the orchestra. The development of a clarinet section of the band requires the use of several alto clarinets. The section sound would be as incomplete without the alto clarinet as would the string orchestra without violas.

The Alto Clariner is pirched in the key of Eb. Its closely related ancestor, the basset horn, was pitched in the key of F. The basset horn was almost obsolete but is now slowly finding acceptance in the modern band and orchestra.

When purchasing an alto clarinet it is desirable to buy the closed key or plateau system. The open ring model is losing favor as the holes are too large to cover safely and comfortably.

#### The Bass Clarinet

The Bass Clarinet is one of the most widely used and important instruments in the clarinet family. Parts are written for it in the band, orchestra, choir, and many small ensembles. It performs the same function in the clarinet section as the cello does in the string family. The role it plays in this capacity is indispensable.

The Bass Clariner is in the key of Bb and is one octave lower than the Bb soprano clarinet. Parts for the bass clarinet are usually transposed and written in the treble clef, although it is a sounding bass voice.

#### Performing on the Alto and Bass Clarinets

The alto and bass clarinets use the fingerings of the Bb soprano clarinet, and contain the same written range. Performing problems on these instruments are similar to the soprano clarinet. Several variations from the soprano clarinet must, however, be noted. The largeness of the instrument and mouthpiece necessitates the placement of more mouthpiece in the mouth. A general rule is "the larger the mouthpiece the more in the mouth." Mouthpieces should be placed in the mouth at the point where the reed meets the mouthpiece as in the diagram.



Embouchure principles are the same on the larger instruments; however, larger mouthpieces require less embouchure pressure. Hold the reed slightly looser than on the soprano clarinet.

Tone quality on the alto and bass clarinets should be full and rich. This requires more breath than on the smaller clarinets. It is a common fault of younger players of these instruments to play with a tone that is too small or weak. Strive for fullness of tone to blend with the other clarinets.

Reeds on the larger clarinets should be slightly softer than on the smaller clarinets. Care must be taken when placing the reed on larger mouthpieces to set it evenly as discussed in the section on reeds.

There are two playing positions for these instruments; at the side or in front. Most players prefer to hold them in front in a clarinet position, rather than at the side, saxophone style. Adjustment of the strap is an often neglected point. Place the strap so the mouthpiece enters directly into the mouth without the player having to reach either up or down. Many players prefer a peg which fastens to the clarinet and sets on the floor. The peg takes the weight of the instrument off the neck and places it on the floor. This also allows for better balance of the larger instruments.

Technical demands are usually less on these instruments. Due to their size, they are less ague than the other clarinets. The serious player, however, can achieve considerable technic on the alto and bass clarinets.

It is wise to purchase these instruments with a low Eb key. Parts sometimes include Eb, and instruments with the Eb key will have more resonance in the lower register, plus a more resonant third-line Bnatural.

The altissimo register on the alto and bass clarinets, (beginning with C above the staff)

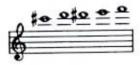


are fingered with a half-hole, similar to the oboe. The key under the first finger has a small hole drilled through it. When playing C# and higher, hold the first finger down but roll it off of this small aperture opening. Altissimo notes speak easier with this half-hole arrangement and will tune more correctly.

A second set of fingerings for the altissimo that work excellently on the alto and bass clarinets are: finger these notes:



and overblow them so that they sound these pitches:



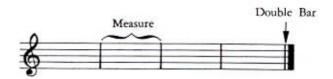
Larger instruments with large keys, pads, rods, etc. are more delicate than the smaller. Special care must be exercised to prevent dropping or bumping the instrument, thereby causing leaks and preventing top performance. When assembling the instrument do not put much pressure on keys, and use cork grease—but sparingly.

The acceptance of the alto and bass clarinets as solo instruments is evidenced by their wide use in school contests. This use frequently shows with clarity the excellent solo performances possible on these instruments by younger players.

# Musical Signs and Terms

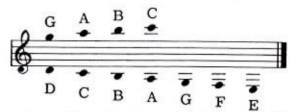






Names of Notes





Ledger Lines - The lines above or below the staff.

| = Sharp — Raises a note ½ tone. | = Flat — Lowers a note ½ tone | = Natural — Cancels a flat or sharp.

Meter or Time Signature



-Beats in a measure

-Kind of note receives one beat



- Beats in a measure

-Kind of note receives one beat



- Beats in a measure

-Kind of note receives one beat



- Beats in a measure

-Kind of note receives one beat



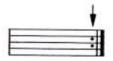
Key Signature







Repeat the preceding measure.



Repeat back to the beginning or double bar.

→ Slur Mark

→ Tenuto or Hold

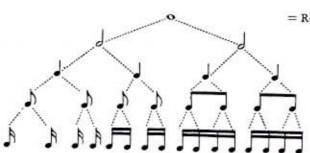
Whole Note

Half Note

Quarter Note

Eighth Note

Sixteenth Nor



= Receives 4 Beats = - Whole Rest = 2 Beats = - Half Rest

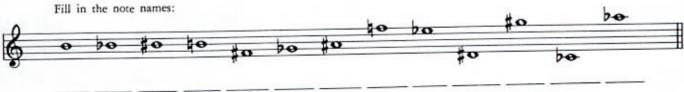
1 Beat = | Quarter Rest

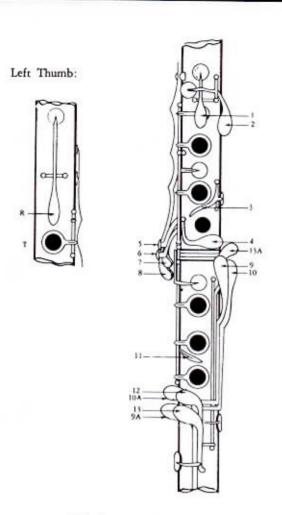
= 1/2 Beat = 7 Eighth Rest

= 1/4 Beat = 7 Sixteenth Rest

# Work Sheet

Fill in the names of the following notes: Fill in the names of the following signs:. | ||: :|| Fill in the note names: Fill in the names of the following signs: Tell what the following mean: How many beats do each of the following receive in 4 meter? Fill in the note names:





# Fingering Chart for Clarinet Boehm System

T = Left thumb down

R = Register key pushed

Key closed

O = Key open

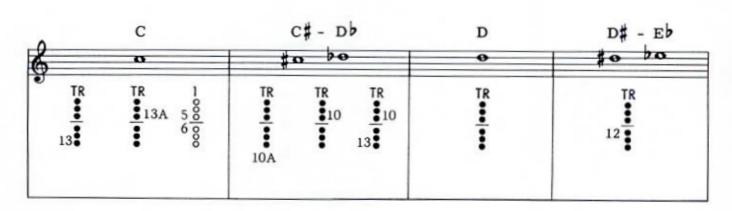
# Chalumeau Register . . . . .

Name of note	E	F	F# - Gb	G
Left hand	I I I		## P#	
Right hand	9A 13	13	10 10A 13	:

Q G#- Ab	A	A# - Bb	В	С	C# - Db	D
# <b>5 5 5 1 2 6</b>	T	# 00	T T	T	# <b>e /o</b> I  4  0 0	T • • 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

D#- Eb		E	F	F#- Gb	G		
	#0	90		0	0	#0 00	0
8 0 00	Ĭ3 000	1 000 000	T • 00 0 0 0 0	T • 00   000	T 000 000	7 7 000 8 000	000 00 000 •

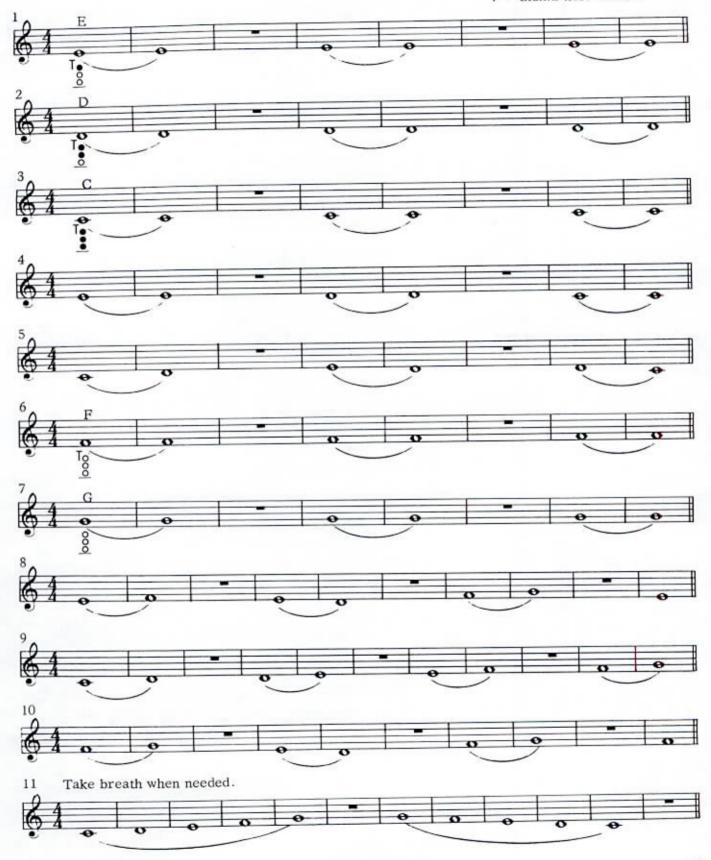
G# -	Ab	A			A #	- вь		Clario	n Reg	rister. B	
#0	20		•		# 0	bo				О	
02	92 •	1000	000	R1 000 000	6 00	R1 0 0 13	R1 000	TR	TR • • • •	TR 	5000



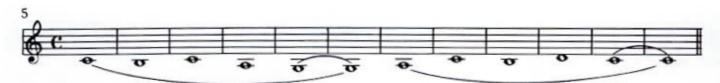
E C	F •		F# - G		G O	G#	- Ab
TR	TR • •	TR	TR	TR • • • •	TR • • • oo	TR • 4	TR

9	A •	_			А# - I	<b>o</b> .				В		C <u>◆</u>
9	TR • 0 000		TR • 0 8 00	TR •3 •0	TR • • • • •	TR • oo o	TR • 4	TR		TR 0 0	110000000	R TR
	Altissimo Register  C# - Db  # • b • •								D# -	Þ <u>€</u>		E —
•	TR • •	•00 000	TR 700 800	R 12	12 °	000 000	R • • • •	111	R T	R TR		TR • • 128
9		F •			F# -	G♭ ●				G ● =		
12	TR • 4	TR 4	TR • • o o o o	TR 00 00 120	TR 8 0 0 0 0 0 0	TR		TR	12	TR • • •	TR 800 000	TR
G# - Ab #≘ bo ≡					\ <u>&gt;</u>		A# # <u>Q</u>	- Bb	В <u>Ф</u>		C <u>9</u>	
11 12	TR	TR • 00 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8	TR	TR	128	4	TR ●13A 28	TR 	TR 02 4	TR T	R 2	TR TR 0 1 1 0 1 1 2 0 1 1 2 0 1 2 0

- o = open hole
- = closed hole (finger down)
- T = thumb hole closed



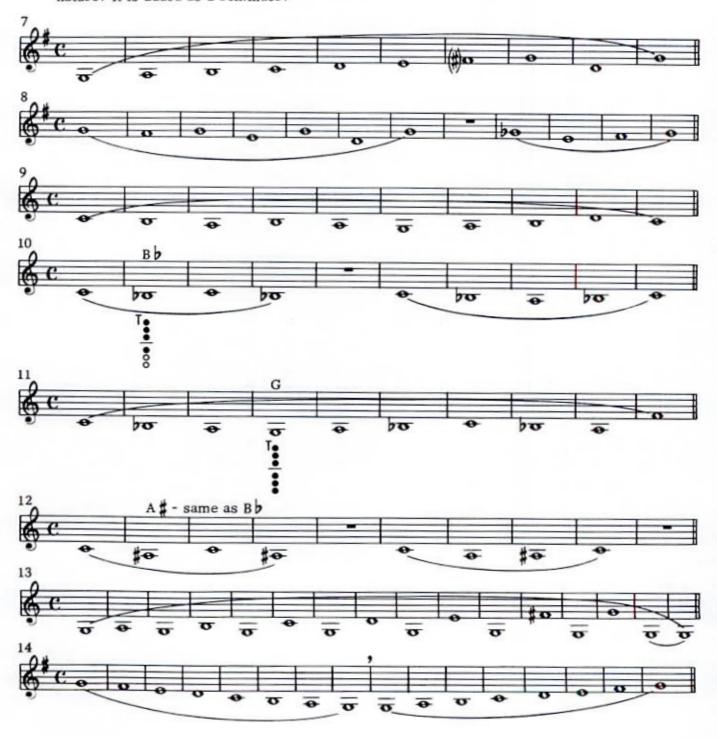


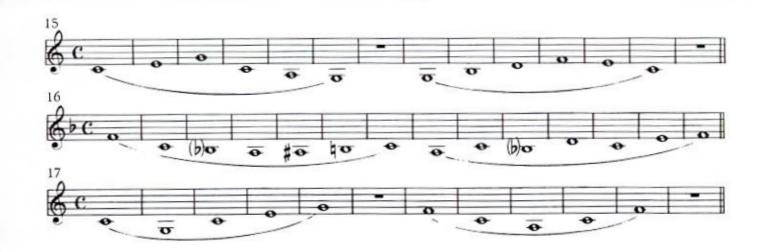


A sharp or flat placed at the beginning of a piece carries through the whole piece. This is called a "key signature." The key signature of exercise 6 is one sharp.



A "courtesy accidental." It is not necessary to place the sharp here, since it is in the key signature. It is added as a reminder.

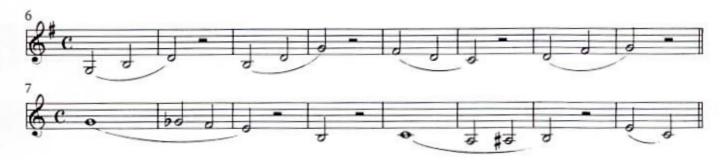




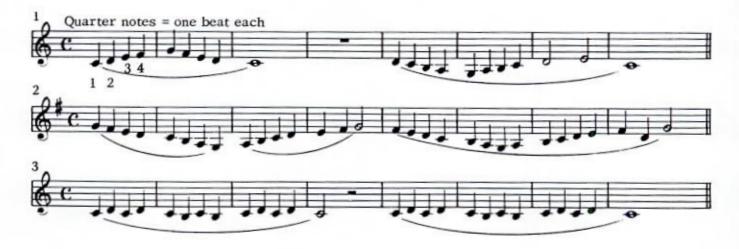
A half note ( ) receives two beats.



Always check the key signature before beginning to play. Remember that it is in effect throughout the piece, or until changed.







The first note after a breath is taken should be started with the tongue. The note should be started by having the tip of the tongue against the tip of the reed and withdrawing it lightly, as if saying "too" or "doo."





A natural sign ( ) cancels a flat or sharp. A dotted half note ( o. ) receives three beats.

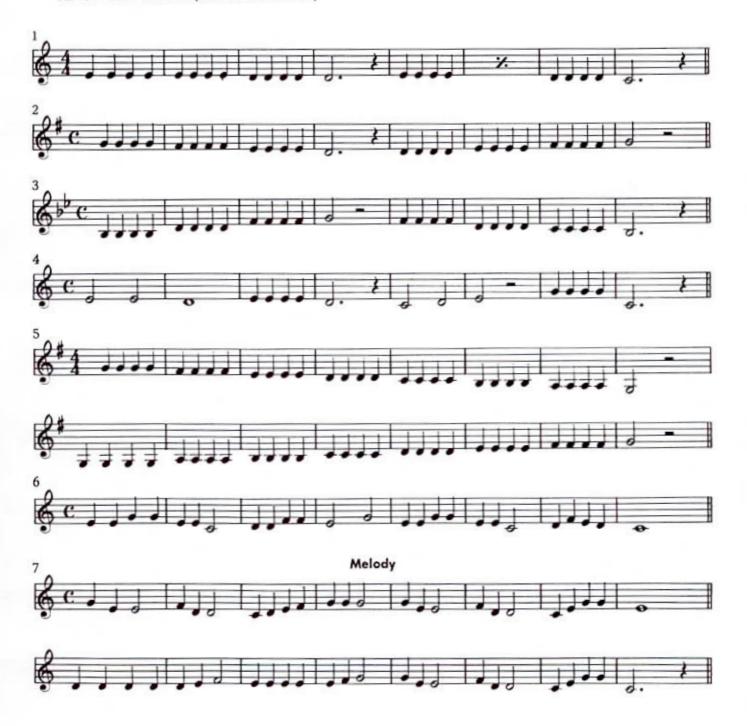




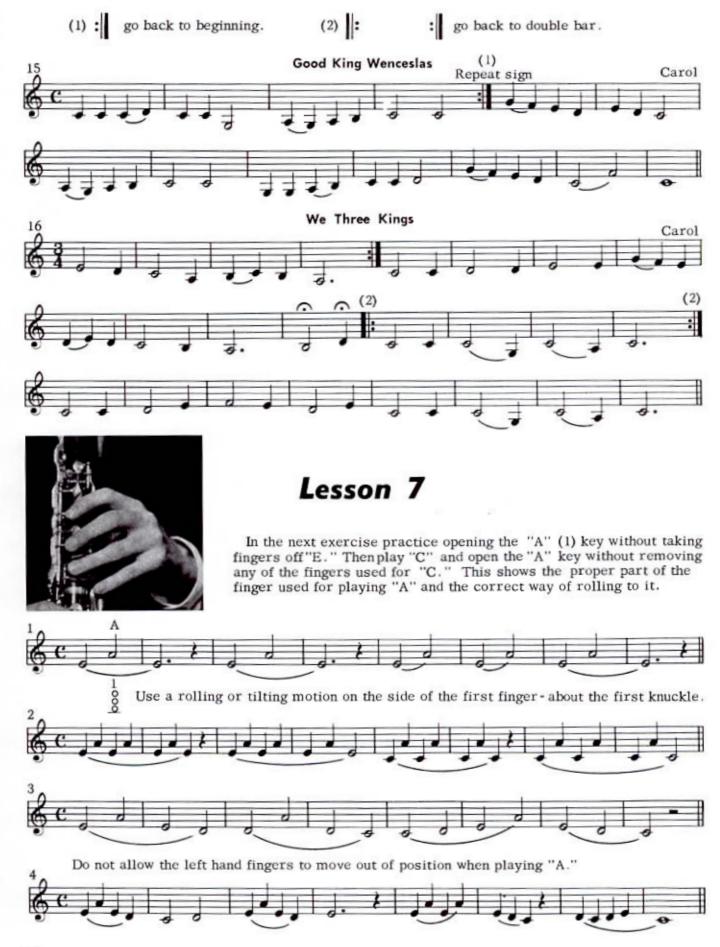
#### TONGUING

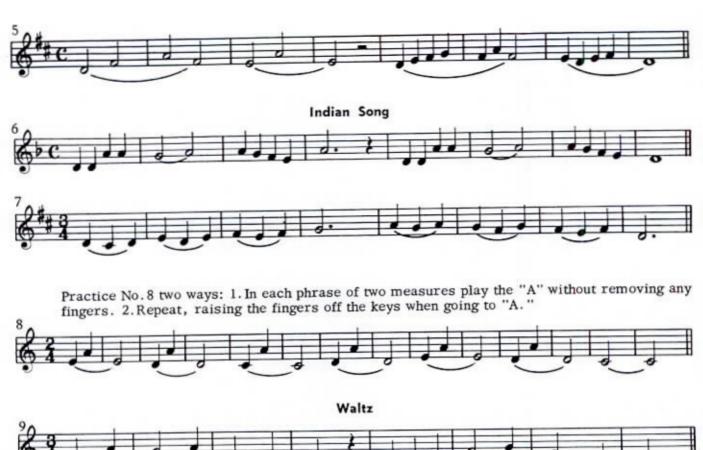
Notes that do not have a slur mark over them must be tongued. The note should be started by having the tip of the tongue against the tip of the reed and withdrawing it lightly as if saying "too" or "doo." In a series of tongued notes, as in the following lines, the breath and the tone must not stop. The tongue moves as if repeatedly saying "too," without stopping the tone. Example: TooTooTooToo would be the tongue action for the first measure of quarter notes. ("Du" may be substituted for "too.") The tongue motion must be rapid.

BE CERTAIN TO START THE FIRST NOTE WITH THE TIP OF THE TONGUE AGAINST THE TIP OF THE REED. (See introduction.)











D.C. al Fine means Da Capo - go back to the beginning and end at the finish or Fine.

When playing in an ensemble, whether it is a duet or a large group, always listen to the other parts and blend with them. One part should not be much louder or softer than the other. Practice both parts and learn to blend well with the other.



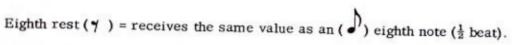
Eighth notes  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 8 \end{bmatrix}$  = two notes to one beat in 4/4, 3/4 or 2/4 time. One when the foot strikes the floor, the other when the foot comes up.



Play the first ending and go back to the beginning. Play the second ending the second time through





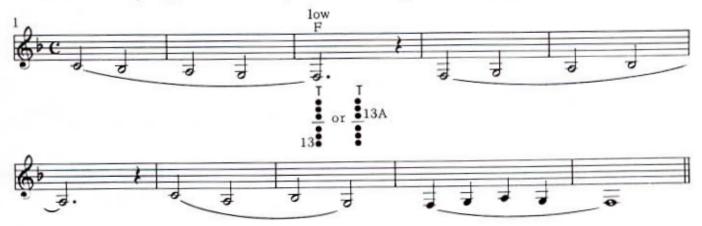








Learn both fingerings for low F. Play first with the right hand and then repeat with the left hand.

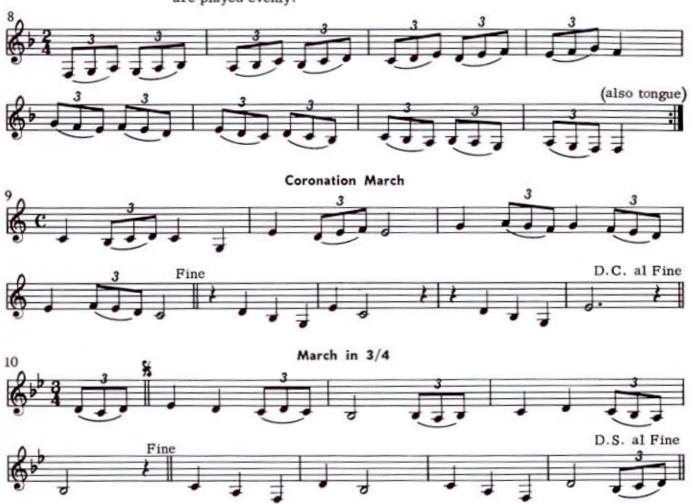




When taking a breath, breathe through the corners of the mouth - keep the upper teeth on top of the mouthpiece and the lower lip on the reed.



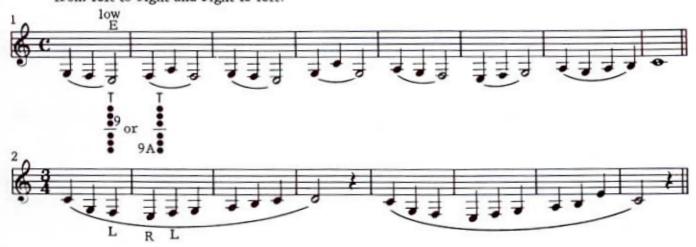
Triplets = Three notes played to one beat in 4/4, 3/4 or 2/4 time. Be careful that they are played evenly.



D.S. al Fine means dal Segno - go back to the sign ( \$ ) and end at Fine.

# Lesson 11

Low E is the lowest note on the clarinet. Learn both fingerings in playing low E to low F (and vice versa), using the little finger of the right and left hands alternately. Practice going both from left to right and right to left.

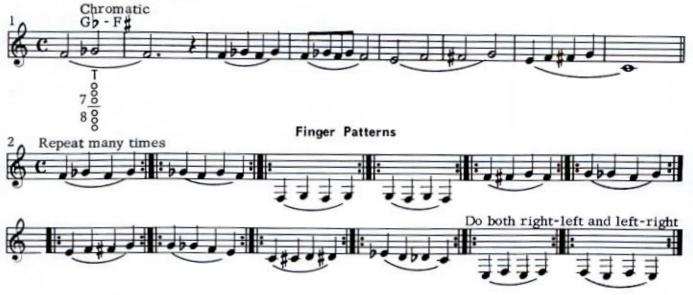








Whenever possible, use the chromatic  $F\sharp$  or  $G\flat$  to avoid the difficult contrary motion of the thumb F to the first finger  $F\sharp$ . A good rule is to use whichever fingering is easier when there is more than one choice.





Press key No.11 with the third finger of the right hand. (x) over a note means to use the chromatic fingering.









#### Clarinetist's Lament



The editor suggests that the student avail himself of Book Two, CLARINET METHOD FOR BEGINNING STUDENTS, wherein Mr. Snavely includes continuing lessons 15 through 37.

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