

TEXAS BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION

ADVANCED YOUNG PLAYER SERIES



CLARINET

JIM DREW
CLINICIAN

52ND ANNUAL CLINIC
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
1999

FORWARD

The Texas Bandmasters Association is dedicated to providing its membership opportunities for quality professional growth. After much success with the Beginner and Intermediate Series, TBA is sponsoring a series on advanced middle school and junior high school teaching methods. This series addresses the needs of the third year band students. Our clinicians are chosen from the ranks of superior music educators in our state. They also represent a wide diversity in geographic location as well as school size and setting.

This year, clinics are scheduled for flute, oboe, Bb clarinet, trumpet, F horn, and mallet percussion. These sessions will be presented with a companion booklet. In each handout, you will find teaching methods, and classroom organizational skills which are useful in today's schools.

We appreciate the extra effort of the clinicians who prepared these clinics and booklets. In addition we acknowledge Jim Hagood, TBA Past President, whose initiative began the series, as well as Bob Brandenberger, Mike Olsen and Bob Parsons who have worked so hard to continue the series.

This series is respectfully dedicated to the many band directors, past and present, who have built a historical music education program in Texas and have worked so hard to make our student's experience in band music such an outstanding one.

Charlotte Royall, Texas Bandmasters Association

James Drew

James Drew opened Macario Garcia Middle School in 1995 as the head band director. A native of Phoenix, Arizona, James received a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Oral Roberts University in 1986. Earning a Master of Music degree from West Texas State University in 1988, James studied instrumental conducting with Gary Gamer and clarinet with Robert Spring. He began his career in Killeen, Texas, teaching at Smith Middle School for one year. For the next six years, James held the position of head band director at Dulles Middle School in the Fort Bend Independent School District. While at Dulles, the band was selected to perform at the forty-eighth Annual Mid-West International Band and Orchestra Clinic and, in 1994, finished second place in the TMEA CCC Middle School Honor Band Competition. In 1997, James was selected by the Alpha Chapter of Phi Beta Mu as the Texas Outstanding Young Bandmaster of the Year. That same year, the Macario Garcia Middle School Honors Band was selected to perform at the fifty-first Annual Midwest Clinic. In 1998, the Macario Garcia Symphony Orchestra was chosen to perform at the fifty-second Midwest Clinic under the combined direction Mr. Drew and orchestra director Ann Victor. James is a member of the Texas Music Educators Association, the Texas Bandmasters Association, and the Texas Music Adjudicators Association. James is married to Lisa, who is currently the head band director at Dulles Middle School. They have one son, Nigel Hunter.

Texas Bandmasters Association Convention 1999

Advanced Instructional Series - Clarinet

Clinician: James Drew

I. Overview

- A. A continuing process from beginning band through the third year; introducing and refining concepts and skills.
- B. A holistic approach; tone versus technique.

II. T o n e

- A. Description: a focused, centered tone with a dark, resonant core, throughout the entire range of the instrument without extraneous noise in the sound.
- B. Embouchure.
 - 1. The correct amount of lower lip must be placed over the teeth. The lower lip must be held firmly against the bottom teeth. Too much lip inside the mouth muffles the vibration of the reed. A soft lower lip causes a flat, unfocused tone, especially in the clarion register.
 - 2. The top teeth should rest on the top of the mouthpiece. A rubber patch can mellow the tone slightly and provide cushioning for the teeth. Avoid biting which stifles the vibration of the reed. The reed should always **freely** vibrate inside the mouth.
 - 3. The entire upper lip, corner to corner of the mouth, should **firmly** grip the top of the mouthpiece. This creates a dark, centered tone and provides the control necessary for altering the pitch.
 - 4. The correct amount of mouthpiece should be placed inside the mouth. Too little mouthpiece produces a small, thin tone with response problems in the clarion register; too much mouthpiece produces a **"honky"** tone with too many higher overtones in the sound and prodigious squeaking. Two strategies for getting more mouthpiece into the mouth are: pushing up with the right thumb; jutting the jaw forward and/or pulling the top teeth back.
- C. Voicing. Use an "EE" vowel at all times, in all registers, unless it is necessary to humor the pitch down a great deal. A good description: feel the sides of the tongue touching the inside of the top molars. The tongue should be high and forward in the mouth as when hissing loudly, however, great care must be given to keeping the throat open and unrestricted. Voicing incorrectly causes an unfocused tone, flat pitch in the clarion register, and response problems when articulating quickly.
- D. Airstream.
 - 1. Airstream and embouchure must be balanced. Use a calm, steady, smooth airstream. Never force the air into the instrument as this creates a spread sound and flat pitch. Too little air, usually coupled with biting, creates a thin sound and extremely sharp pitch.
 - 2. Breathe in and out calmly in one fluid motion. Never hold the air inside the body before expelling it (Ferris Wheel).
- E. Equipment.
 - 1. The lay and tip opening of the mouthpiece must balance with the strength of the reed. Harder does not mean better; reeds that are too hard for the mouthpiece will produce a fuzzy sound with no core.
 - 2. Beginning Band: *Vandoren* 5RV Lyre or M-13 mouthpiece, *Bona&* inverted ligature, and *Vandoren* #2 1/2 - 3 reeds.
 - 3. Second or third year: *Gigliotti* P34 mouthpiece with a *Bonade* or *Harrison* inverted ligature, and *Vandoren* #3.4 reeds. When a student makes the initial switch to a *Gigliotti* P34 mouthpiece, the pitch may be slightly flat.
 - 4. Mouthpiece patch: ready-made or make your own **from** a thick rubber glove and some double-sided tape.
 - 5. By the second or third year, an advanced clarinetist should be encouraged to purchase a professional model clarinet. The standard professional model is the *Buffet R-* 13.

III. Technique

A. Articulation.

1. **Tongue** placement: The tip of the tongue should touch the reed at the tip opening of **the** mouthpiece. The tongue should not come in contact with the face of the reed. Tonguing on the face of the reed will cause extraneous noise to be heard before the start of the tone.
2. Tongue movement: The tongue should pull straight back away **from** the reed about **1/4** inch and recoil. The tongue should not move up and down; this motion will create visible throat movement. It is impossible to voice correctly and tongue in an up and down fashion. It is not necessary to move the tongue very far **from** the reed; more rapid single tonguing will be possible by leaving the tongue recoiled as close to the tip opening of the reed/mouthpiece as possible without interfering with the vibration of the reed.
3. Multiple-tonguing: Multiple-tonguing should be encouraged by advanced middle school clarinetists. Keep the following in mind **the** “ku” or “gu” syllable will be made closer to the front of the mouth than on a flute or brass instrument; never sacrifice voicing for the ability to **multiple-**tongue; aim the airstream down the center of the inside of the mouth.
4. To stop or not to stop: It is impossible to play short notes on the clarinet without stopping the reed with the tongue. Unlike every other wind instrument, **the** clarinet is a closed-tube instrument, acoustically speaking. That is why the clarinet jumps one harmonic when changing registers. These unique acoustics make playing short notes more difficult but also makes playing at **softer** dynamic levels relatively easy. Repeated short notes require a “**DEET**” syllable, where the end of the previous note becomes the beginning of the next note. It is imperative, however, that the airstream does not slow down or stop even when the tongue contacts the reed.

B. Facility of Fingers.

1. **Hand** Position:

- a) Right hand The hand should form into a flat “C” shape; the thumb rest sits half way between the cuticle of the thumb and the first knuckle. The fingers should come straight in towards the instrument. The pinkie rests on the F/C key.
- b) Left hand: **The** hand rests along side the upper joint and the fingers slope downward; the thumb should point toward the two o'clock position. The **first** knuckle of the index finger should grab the A key and the second knuckle should grab the G# key. The pinkie should rest on the E/B key.
- c) Tone holes: The pads of the fingers cover the tone holes; this is the area of the fingertips directly beneath the fingernail.
- d) Finger motion: Keep the fingers as close to the tone holes/keys as possible. Keep the pinkies in contact with the proper keys at all times.

2. Register crossings:

- a) First finger roll: The first finger should stay in contact with the clarinet at all times. Roll (as if taking a fingerprint) the index finger from the **first** tone hole to the A key. Remember to grab the A key with the first knuckle of the index finger.
- b) Thumb roll: The thumb should never rest on the wood of the clarinet below the tone hole; the thumb must hover over the tone hole when it is not covering it. By bending the thumb at the knuckle, the register key can be depressed. Do not move the entire thumb up and down with the thumb joint to move from the tone hole to the register key. Instead, the clarinetist should be able to set the thumb in one place and touch the edge of the register key to depress it.
- c) Air resistance: Tremendous air resistance is encountered when crossing **from** the throat tones to the clarion register. It is imperative to play the throat tone with the same air support as the following clarion note will require; this will facilitate smoother register crossings. It is also important to keep the throat open and relaxed when crossing registers.
- d) **Clarion/altissimo** register crossing: When learning to cross smoothly into the altissimo register, use the first finger half-hole technique. Later, try to simulate the same smooth transition without the aid of half-holing.

3. Finger Pattern Exercises:

- a) Twelve major scales in the circle of fourths.
- b) Scales in thirds in all major keys.
- c) Tonic-dominant seventh arpeggios in all major keys.
- d) Clark Study #2 pattern in all major keys.
- e) Chromatic scale the full range of the instrument (low E to high G).

- f) A basic understanding of the relative minor keys and their relationship to **the** major keys.
- g) A basic understanding of the three forms of the minor scale and how to form them.
- h) Scales in thirds in all minor keys.
- i) Tonic minor-fully diminished **vii⁰ arpeggios** in all minor keys.

IV. **Intonation**

A. Tendencies: Each clarinetist must know the pitch tendencies of all troublesome notes throughout the range of their instrument.

B. Pitch Bending: Each clarinetist must have enough control over the instrument to be able to bend **the** pitch up or down as necessary. The following are mechanisms for bending pitch:

1. Bending up: The bottom lip stretches more **firmly** against the bottom teeth, **the** jaw juts forward, and more of the mouthpiece is placed inside the **mouth**.

2. Bending down: The corners of the mouth come forward toward the mouthpiece and the upper lip grips **the** mouthpiece more firmly.

3. **Voicing**: Correct use of voicing can aid in bending the pitch, especially downward. Because **the** clarinetist almost always voices with the "EE" vowel, it is fairly difficult to bend a centered clarinet tone upward a significant amount. However, the pitch can be bent down significantly by voicing with an "AH" or even "OH" vowel. If a given pitch must be lowered significantly, great care must be given to insure that the sound does not spread nor **the** quality of the tone suffer.

C. Venting/Dampening: If a given pitch needs to be raised significantly, it is possible to open (vent) a **close-**by key in order to raise the pitch. Likewise, if a given pitch must be lowered a significant amount, it is preferable to close tone holes/keys (dampen) in order to lower the pitch and preserve the quality of the sound. This is especially true of the throat tones (second line **G#**, second space A, and third line Bb).