

THE COMPLETE WOODWIND INSTRUCTOR

A GUIDEBOOK FOR THE MUSIC EDUCATOR

By Deborah A. Sheldon
and Robert Sheldon



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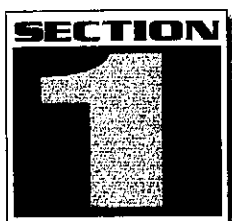
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The Beginning Woodwind

Program

Experts, texts, and methods have been consulted in the creation of this comprehensive and updated guide to teaching all of the woodwind instruments. Most band directors know that when teaching beginning students to play a woodwind instrument in a classroom situation, it's often difficult to address the needs of each individual at every step of their musical and technical development. As the difficulty level of the ensemble literature increases, so do the challenges faced by the students and their instructors. This text is full of teaching strategies which have been proven successful by outstanding school band and orchestra directors and university instructors from across the country. It is designed to help instrumental music teachers give their woodwind students a successful experience characterized by a positive approach to the technical idiosyncrasies of playing the instrument.

Band and orchestra directors will want to use *The Complete Woodwind Instructor* in planning rehearsals, sectionals, and lessons. It is compact enough to fit on a music stand and be a constant teaching companion. Music education students will find it user-friendly and will refer to it often as they learn to teach and play all instruments in the woodwind family. University methods instructors will enjoy having a complete, unified woodwind text all in one.

The Complete Woodwind Instructor contains practical ideas for teaching included sound and sequential methods for starting beginners. Complete task analysis of the processes for beginners, which include assembly, creating a sound, posture and hand positions, and tone production are compactly outlined for immediate access.

Most of the common problems associated with playing each of the instruments are addressed and a variety of solutions suggested. This text takes much of the guess work out of teaching the mechanics of the instrument and problem diagnosis. Ultimately, this saves the music educator valuable time to focus on other musical issues.

In the flurry of starting woodwind students, instrument care and maintenance is sometimes overlooked. This book includes appropriate care and maintenance suggestions for each instrument. Crystal-clear descriptions of these processes make it easy for beginners to develop good care habits. The exceptional format of the section on care and maintenance make the book simple to use and band directors will find they consult it regularly.

Instrumental music educators have the added challenge of making sure that instruments are in good working condition. Instruments which are in need of repair cause frustration among students, parents, and teachers. Sometimes repair problems are relatively minor and, if corrected by the instrumental music teacher, little instruction time is lost. The text addresses many common repair problems associated with each of the instruments and a variety of "do-able", cost effective and time-saving solutions which can be easily executed by the teacher are recommended.

It's difficult to remember all of the fingering for each woodwind instrument, especially if you're not a woodwind player. This text provides uncomplicated fingering and trill charts in addition to a

complete section on special fingering considerations which are specific and unique to each instrument. This information will help your students to play with improved technique, confidence, and intonation.

Some other topics included in *The Complete Woodwind Instructor* focus on tips for selecting an instrument (helping to guide students, parents, and teachers in making good musical decisions), a guide to vibrato study for more advanced players, special equipment needs, recommended recording artist, intonation exercises, tips for guiding students into private instruction, and thoughts on bringing experts into the classroom.

This book is meant as a practical guide. There is a lot to know about each particular instrument, so an extensive related literature list is included for students and teachers interested in more advanced information.

Enjoy *The Complete Woodwind Instructor*!

SECTION 2

The Flute



INSTRUMENT ASSEMBLY

The flute presents probably the least difficulty of all of the woodwind instruments with regard to assembly. Still, there are several points that will help the player achieve the best results.

- Check to be sure the tenons are clean. Wipe gently with a soft, clean cloth to remove dirt if necessary.
- Start by picking up the main body of the flute and the foot joint. Avoid gripping the rods as they are easily bent. Twist together gently, but don't wiggle side-to-side as this will loosen the connection. Tenons should fit snugly into the sockets.
- Turn the foot joint slightly to promote proper finger position of the right hand. Align the key rod of the foot joint so that it bisects the tone holes on the main body.

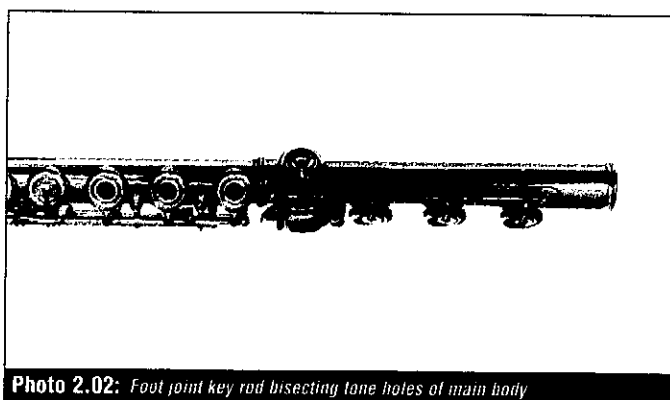


Photo 2.02: Foot joint key rod bisecting tone holes of main body

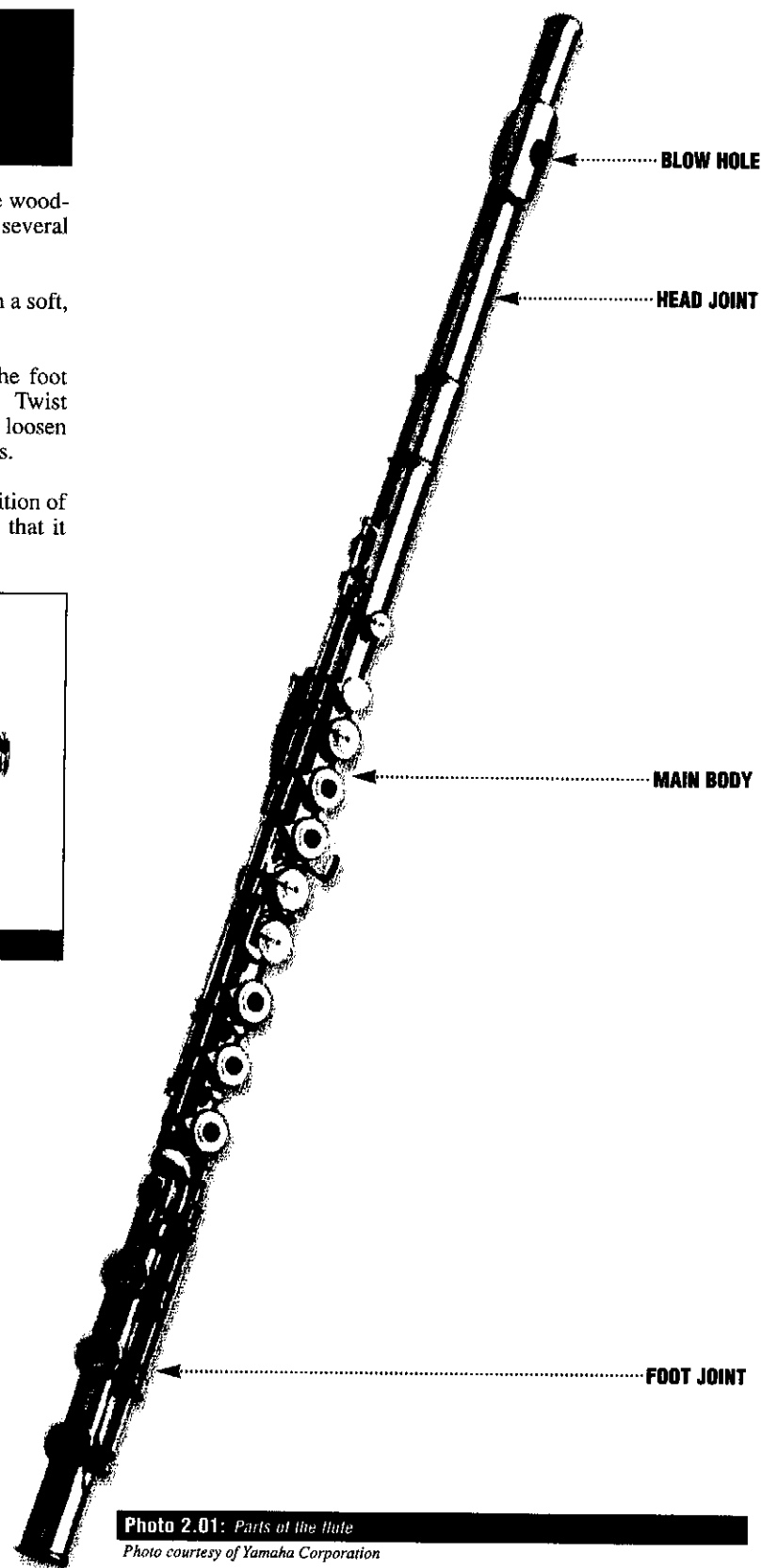


Photo 2.01: Parts of the flute

Photo courtesy of Yamaha Corporation

- Next, take the head joint and gently twist onto the main body in the same manner as the foot joint. Note that the head joint was the last to be assembled and will be first in disassembly. The head joint should be pushed in until it fits completely into the tenon receiver. It can later be pulled out a bit to help get the instrument in tune.
- Align the blow hole on the head joint with the tone holes of the main body.

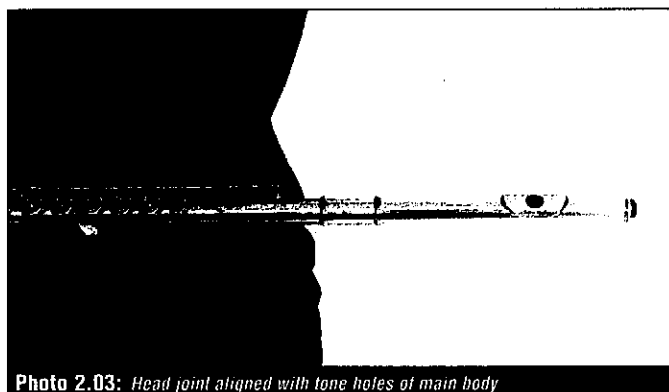


Photo 2.03: Head joint aligned with tone holes of main body

- Other points to remember during assembly:

Check that all trill keys are closed as they sometimes open due to spring problems encountered in storage.

Check bumper corks as they can sometimes become dislodged and create problems.

- Disassemble the instrument in reverse order of the assembly.



This can be a very frustrating part of learning to play the flute for many students. Some seem to discover a sound immediately while others can take many days. The following are some ideas for developing a good sound from the start.

- Produce the first sounds using just the head joint. This allows the student to concentrate on the sound without thinking about fingerings.
- Set the blow hole against the center of the closed lips. Roll the head joint down and out while maintaining contact with the lower lip.

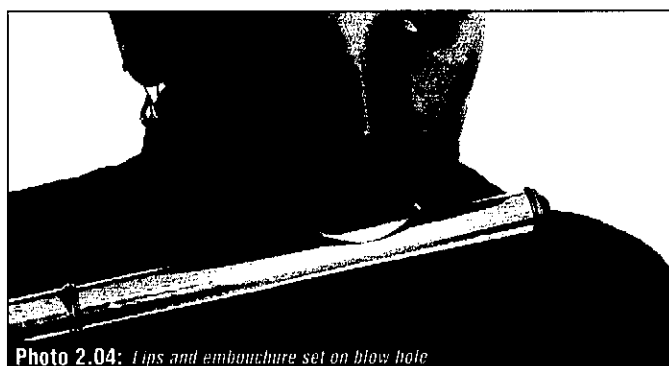


Photo 2.04: Lips and embouchure set on blow hole



Photo 2.05: Lips and embouchure set on blow hole (side view)

- Blow a focused stream of air across the open hole toward the outside edge.
- Breathe through the mouth, not the nose. Let old air out before taking a new breath.
- When the student has successfully created a sound using only the head joint, put the entire flute together and have the student use the same tone production suggestions to play a third space open C-sharp (**Details in Posture and Hand Position**).
- When the student is somewhat comfortable in creating a sound on a third space open C-sharp, start using the left hand by having the student play C, B or B-flat, A, and G.
- Some techniques which may help teach tone production include:

Once the sound is achieved, set the flute lower (toward the chin) and roll the head joint in to improve focus of air stream through smaller aperture.

Use the word "POOH" to create a burst of air when beginning a sound.

Think of creating a sound by blowing across an open pop bottle.

Play with relaxed facial muscles.

Think of playing with a light bulb in the mouth to open the inner chamber and lower the tongue.

Imagine you are splitting the air stream over the outer edge of the blow hole.

Watch yourself play in a mirror to be sure air condensation forming on the embouchure plate opposite the lips is focused.



The most common flute posture problem is the habit of resting the right elbow on the back of the chair. This problem alone can cause many related difficulties, such as reduced technical facility and problems with breath support affecting tone and pitch. Good habits must start from the outset. "Unlearning" bad habits is difficult and often confusing to some students. There are other specific posture and hand position considerations also listed.