

# THE BASICS

## Posture

Sit on the edge of your chair, and always keep your:

- Spine straight and tall
- Shoulders back and relaxed
- Feet flat on the floor

## Breathing & Airstream

Breathing is a natural thing we all do constantly. To discover the correct airstream to play your instrument:

- Place the palm of your hand near your mouth.
- Inhale deeply through the corners of your mouth, keeping your shoulders steady. Your waist should expand like a balloon.
- Slowly whisper "too" as you gradually exhale air into your palm.

The air you feel is the airstream. It produces sound through the instrument. Your tongue is like a faucet or valve that releases the airstream.

## Producing The Essential Tone

Your embouchure (*ahm'-bah-shure*) is your mouth's position on the mouthpiece of the instrument. A good embouchure takes time and effort, so carefully follow these steps for success:

### REED PLACEMENT

- Put the thin end of the reed in your mouth to moisten it thoroughly.
- Looking at the flat side of the mouthpiece, the ligature screws extend to your right. Slide the ligature up with your thumb.
- Place the flat side of the reed against the mouthpiece under the ligature.
- Lower the ligature and position the reed so that only a hairline of the mouthpiece can be seen above the reed.
- Gently tighten the ligature screws.

### EMBOUCHURE

- Moisten your lips and roll the lower lip over your bottom teeth.
- Firm the corners of your mouth like a slightly puckered smile.
- Stretch your chin downward.
- Place the mouthpiece on your lower lip so that the reed extends about 3/4 inch into your mouth. Place upper teeth on top of the mouthpiece.
- Close your mouth around the mouthpiece. Keep the corners of the mouth firm and the chin pointing downward.

## Taking Care Of Your Instrument

Before putting your instrument back in its case after playing, do the following:

- Remove the reed, wipe off excess moisture and return it to the reed case.
- Remove the mouthpiece and wipe the inside with a clean cloth. Once a week, wash the mouthpiece with warm tap water. Dry thoroughly.
- Remove the neck and bell, and shake out excess moisture. Return them to the case.
- Drop a weighted chamois or cotton swab into the body of the instrument and pull it out the top end.
- If the body of your bass clarinet has two sections, gently twist them apart. Return the body section(s) to the case.
- As you put each piece back in the case, check to be sure they are dry.
- Your case is designed to hold only specific objects. If you try to force anything else into the case, it may damage your instrument.

## Getting It Together

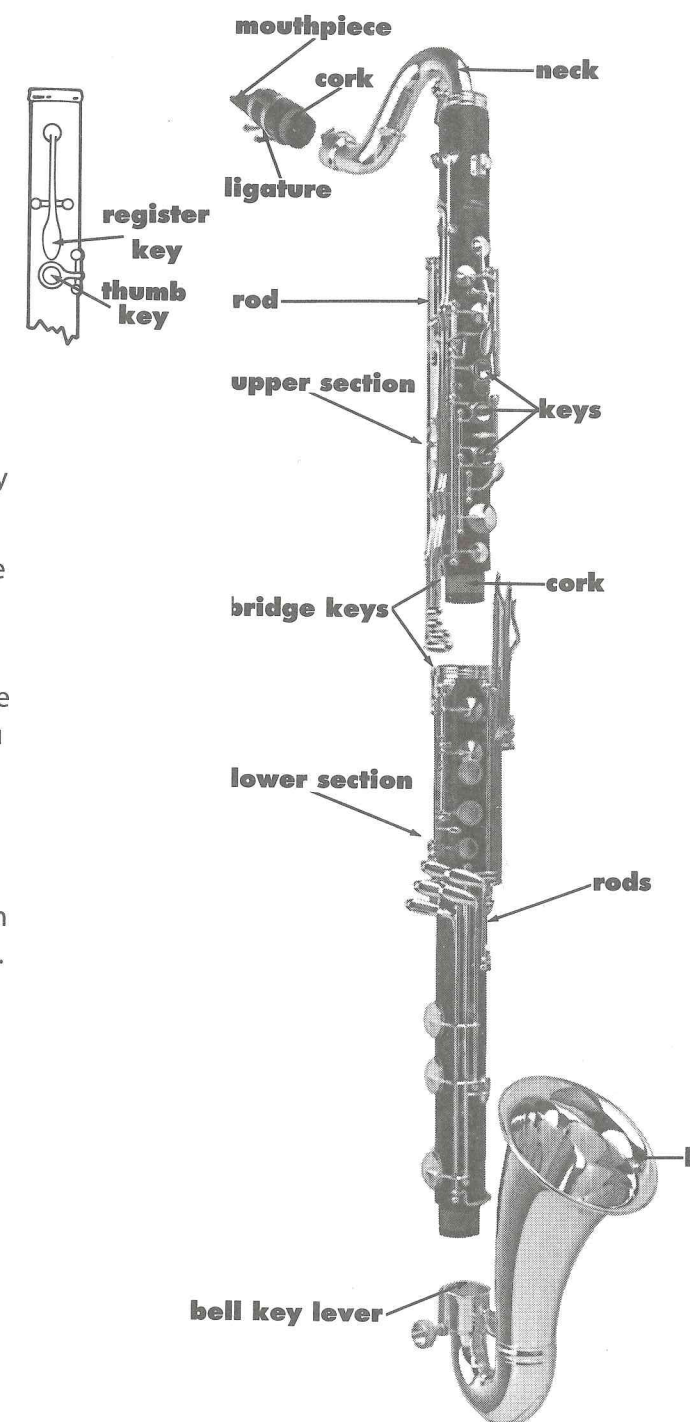
If you just played the MOUTHPIECE WORKOUT, begin by carefully removing the reed. Otherwise, take the reed from its case.

- Step 1** Put the thin end of the reed into your mouth to moisten it thoroughly while assembling your instrument. If needed, rub a small amount of cork grease on all corks. Clean hands.
- Step 2** (If your instrument has one body section, skip to Step 3.) Hold the upper section in your left hand. Press your fingers on the round keys. The bridge keys **must** be raised. Grasp the lower section with your right hand, and press your fingers on the round keys. Gently twist upper and lower sections together. The upper section's bridge key must be directly over the lower section's bridge key. Be careful not to bend any keys or rods.
- Step 3** Press the key on the bell to lift the lever, and twist the bell onto the cork of the lower section. Point the bell forward in line with the round keys.
- Step 4** Insert the end pin on the back of the bell. Tighten the screw and lower the instrument to the ground. If you use a neck strap, put it on.
- Step 5** Twist the mouthpiece into the neck. Place the reed on the mouthpiece (see page 2).
- Step 6** Twist the smaller end of the neck into the body section and align with the register key. Tighten the neck screw.



### Step 7

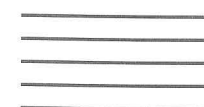
Adjust to a comfortable playing position centered in front of your body. Rest your left thumb across the thumb key. Place your right thumb under the thumb rest. Your fingers should curve naturally. Hold the instrument as shown at left:



## READING MUSIC

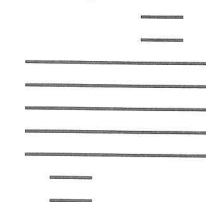
Identify and draw each of these symbols:

### Music Staff



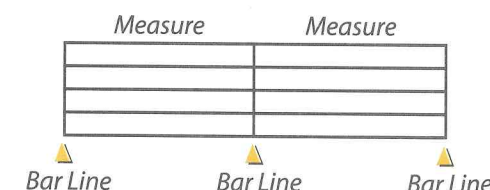
The music staff

### Ledger Lines



Ledger lines extend

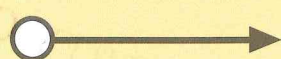
### Measures & Bar Lines



Bar lines divide the music staff

## MOUTHPIECE WORKOUT

Form your embouchure around the mouthpiece, and take a deep breath without raising your shoulders. Whisper "too" and gradually exhale your full airstream. Strive for an even tone.



REST



REST