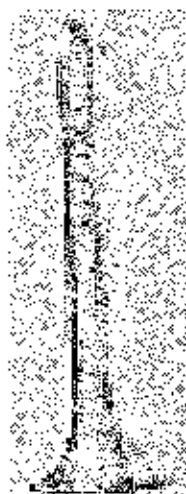


The Clarinet

Early History

The earliest known ancestor of the clarinet was called the *chalumeau*. Used in Ancient Greece, this woodwind instrument had a reed that was a part of the instrument and it required no mouthpiece. Finally, the range was limited to only one octave.

Despite the fact that there is evidence of an early version of the clarinet, the invention of the instrument is credited to a man from Nuremberg named Johann Christoph Denner. In 1690, he developed what he called the speaker key (which we now call a register key) to extend the range of the instrument. Furthermore, he added two keys that filled in some of the gaps in the range of the clarinet (namely the pitches A and B).



Later Developments

After Denner created the first version of the clarinet, more keys were gradually added to get the instrument we use today. Another clarinetist named Ivan Muellor designed and produced the thirteen key model we are familiar with. Later, two other inventors, August Buffet Jr. and H. E. Klose created two other parts called a *clutch* and a *sleeve*. These two parts allow for multi-key use (or what we call alternate fingerings).



Beginning Players

The clarinet is a great woodwind instrument for beginning musicians to learn, especially those who are interested in learning the saxophone. However, there are a few physical requirements that a student needs to have in order to be successful on the instrument:

1. Students must be big enough to hold the instrument.
2. Both hands must be big enough to hold the instrument properly and cover the holes.
3. Normal teeth, lip, and chin formation make it easier for

students to learn the instrument. Students with overbites, under bites, crooked or straight teeth, or even thick or thin lips may have to adjust their mouth position to get a proper sound.

In Performance

Over the years, the clarinet has been widely used in a variety of musical styles. Musicians such as Phil Nimmons continue to play the orchestral music that the clarinet was originally designed for. However, other performers such as Benny Goodman, Sidney Bechet, and Artie Shaw have used the clarinet in jazz ensembles (from New Orleans Jazz to Big Band). The clarinet is also often found in concert and marching band settings.

