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## INTRODUCTION

*Clarinet Basics* takes the absolute beginner up to about Grade 2 level through a series of twenty-two enjoyable stages. Many tutors go further than this but experience has shown that teachers often abandon them well before reaching the end, choosing instead to devise their own repertoire lists. I believe that the purpose of the tutor is to aid the teacher in setting up a good technical foundation, teaching basic notation and encouraging a love of the instrument.

I have tried to present notes, rhythms, technical hurdles and other musical features in a logical and progressive manner; each aspect is reinforced with ample (and fun!) material to give your pupils plenty of opportunity and time to comprehend and assimilate. The text in the pupil's book has been deliberately kept to a minimum so as to avoid cluttering the page with explanations much better conveyed and illustrated by you, the teacher. The teacher's book contains basic technical information.

In general the material is self-explanatory, but a few pointers may be of use. I have begun with semibreves. The reason for this is to encourage a concern for sound quality from the outset. As beginners vary considerably in size and breath capacity, it has been left up to you to determine where breaths can be taken. I have therefore used breathing marks in Stage 1 only. New note durations and rhythms are introduced in a box at the beginning of the relevant Stage. These should be fully understood by your pupils and clapped before working through the Stage.

From Stage 2 onwards each stage has roughly the same format. Usually there is a 'Warm Up'; your part here always has the same rhythmic shape as the pupil's and there are a number of opportunities to test

intonation by the use of octaves and perfect intervals. The duets (which are really exercises in disguise) introduce new ideas and simple ensemble playing. There is a specially composed character piece with piano accompaniment and then some 'real' pieces: popular tunes, folksongs from all over the world, and pieces by the great masters. From Stage 2 onwards the stages begin with a 'Factfile'; this includes any necessary explanations (on a strictly 'need-to-know' basis), and ends with a 'Quiz' to check that information and rhythm has been understood. Finally there is an opportunity to compose or improvise – this has a number of uses: it will encourage creativity which may tie in well with classroom work and some public examinations (GCSE for example); it will stimulate interesting material for group lessons and it might encourage your pupil simply to spend more time playing!

Occasionally the rhythm produced when saying the titles corresponds to the main rhythmic element of a piece – 'Bubblegum' (Stage 5) and 'Apple pie and custard' (Stage 10), for example.

### Posture

Encourage your pupils to play standing up both in lessons and when they practice. Aim for an upright stance without tension. The instrument should be held in a position between about 40 to 45 degrees in relation to the body. Always bring the clarinet up to the mouth – don't bend the head and shoulders to meet it. Fingers should be very gently curved with the fleshy pads covering the finger holes.

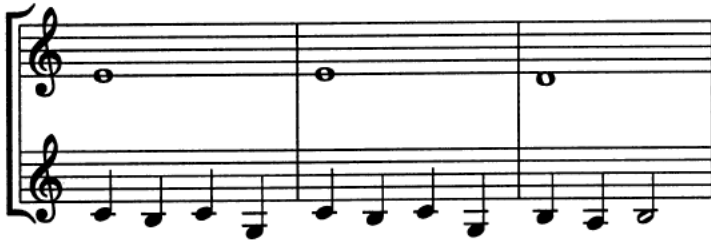
### Embouchure

The embouchure is the word used to describe the formation of the lips and associated facial muscles

# Stage 1

The following four exercises should be played separately. If your pupil has enough stamina you can play them continuously as one piece! You can also combine *Going down!* with *Going up!* and *Further down!* with *Top floor!!* Both can be played as duets with or without the teacher's part.

**Going down!**



**Further down!**



**Going up!**



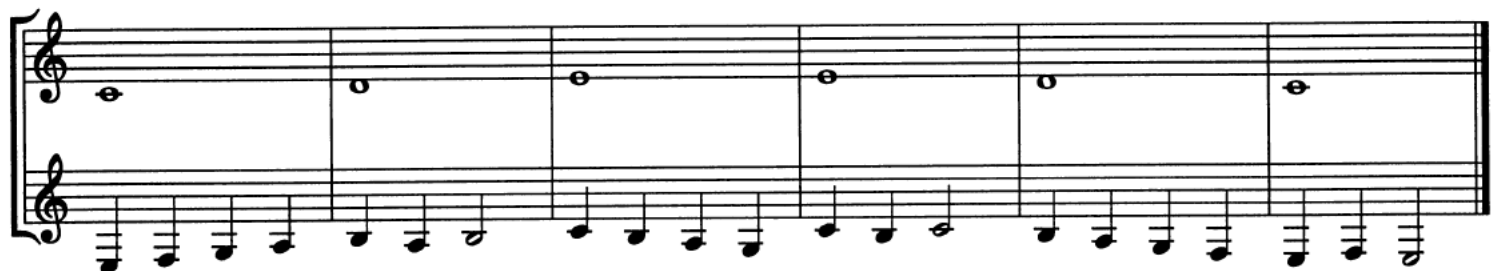
**Top floor!!**



**Saucer**



**Rainbow**



The pupil's parts of both *Saucer* and *Rainbow* can be played together as a duet. Either of the teacher's accompaniments will work.

# Stage 22

## Warm up

Musical notation for the warm up exercise, consisting of two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The music consists of eighth notes and quarter notes, with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) at the beginning.

## Be flat cha-cha-cha

Musical notation for the first system of the piece 'Be flat cha-cha-cha'. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The tempo/mood is marked 'Brightly'. The music starts with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte). The melody features eighth and quarter notes with slurs, while the bass line has a rhythmic accompaniment.

Musical notation for the second system of the piece. It continues from the first system. A measure number '5' is written above the first staff. The word 'Fine' is written above the first staff at the end of the system. The dynamic marking changes to *mf* (mezzo-forte) in the second system.

Musical notation for the third system of the piece. It begins with a measure number '11' above the first staff. The instruction 'D.C. al Fine' (Da Capo al Fine) is written above the second staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

The following rhythms played on percussion instruments would be an effective accompaniment to this piece:

Percussion rhythm notation consisting of two staves. The top staff shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents (>). The bottom staff shows a corresponding bass line with quarter notes and accents (>).