



Beginner's Toolkit: Bassoon

Glenn Einschlag

:17 Putting the Bassoon Together

- Put the seat strap under your thighs on the chair with the cup or hook on your right side
- Put the *boot joint* on the chair between your legs so it is well supported
- Use cork grease on your cork or string *tenons*, if needed
- Gently twist the *wing joint* (with the small tenon) into the small well in the *boot joint*
 - Line up the arrows or markers between the two joints
 - Only hold the wood: Do NOT touch the *keys, rods, posts, or pads*
- Carefully place the combined *boot* and *wing joints* on the floor
- Gently put the *long joint* in the other *boot joint* hole
 - Line up the link into the *wing joint* hole
 - Gently press down the *long joint* to secure
- Line up the key on the *bell joint* with the lever on the *long joint*, and gently secure the *bell joint*
- Put on your *bocal*
 - Use cork grease, if needed
 - Make sure the whisper key pad is NOT locked in place to prevent ripping the pad
 - Only hold the *bocal* near the cork, never by the narrow end
 - Carefully place the *bocal* in the well and gently twist into place
- With the Bassoon all put together, place the *boot joint* into the seat strap cup
- Put on your soaked *reed*
 - Let it soak for about 10 minutes
 - Only hold the *reed* by the string or glue end
 - Gently place it on the *bocal*

5:09 Embouchure

- Pretend to whistle
 - The lips form the shape of "OOOO"
- Place the Bassoon *reed* in the middle of the embouchure circle
- The lips form a cushion around the *reed*
 - The corners of your mouth are more stable and supportive than the middle
 - Use the musculature from the sides to help form the embouchure
 - Do NOT use a flat embouchure

7:17 Breath Support

- Take one or two nice deep breaths
 - When inhaling, feel the ribs go up and out, like opening an umbrella
 - When exhaling, feel the ribs go down and in, like closing an umbrella
- For playing the Bassoon, expand the abdomen while breathing in
 - Make sure the ribs are opening and moving out naturally
- When playing, let the ribs press down against the engaged core abdominal muscles
- The Bassoon does not require a lot of air, but needs fast air
 - Create a focused, steady, and fast air stream that fits in the *bocal* hole

-Feel the fast air right behind your two front teeth

10:09 Hand Position

-Hands should form two opposing curves, like grabbing something

-The knuckles curve naturally and comfortably

-Try not to collapse or extend the fingers

-Make a curved hand and put the right hand on the Bassoon

-Try not to collapse the pinky

-Remember to naturally curve the thumb, too

-Make a curved hand and put the left hand on the Bassoon

-Try not to spread out the fingers

-Keep the fingers on point to easily cover the holes

-Keep the fingers very close to the keys and holes for best efficiency

-Try not to lift the fingers far from the instrument

12:16 Reed Wire Adjustment

-The Bassoon *reed* has two wires

-The 1st wire is closest to the tip

-The 2nd wire is furthest from the tip

-Use scored needle-nosed pliers to adjust, which are available at most hardware stores

-If the tip opening of the *reed* is too open and difficult to control, you must close it

-Fix #1: squeeze the 1st wire from top to bottom

-Fix #2: squeeze the 2nd wire from the sides

-If the tip opening of the *reed* is too small and difficult to blow air into, you must open it

-Fix #1: squeeze the 1st wire from the sides

-Fix #2: flatten the 2nd wire from top to bottom

Enjoy!