
Fall 2016
M 1:10-2:00 pm

MUSIC 490

Oboe Reed-Making

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Overview

Oboe Reed Making is an in-depth course for music majors, minors and other students studying oboe who want to improve their reed-making skills.

Goals

- Provide students time for careful study, research and experimentation as well as to master the techniques and tools involved.
- Study a variety of styles of reeds and reed-making tutorials as well as experiment with different measurements, products and tools.
- Students will finish the course with a very good working knowledge of oboe reed making and will be, ideally, playing solely on their own reeds in practice, rehearsal and performance.

Requirements

This is a hands-on course therefore attendance is mandatory. Each unexcused absence will lower your grade one full letter grade, and three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. In case of illness, students contact me to be excused. Other absences will not be excused unless arrangements are made in advance.

Evaluation

- Daily participation: 50%
- Three new reeds/week: 25%
- Tutorial: 25%

Daily Participation

The first part of class will be devoted to reading and discussing. The second half will be reserved for working on reeds. Please come to class each week with three new, numbered reeds. Reeds from the previous week will not be accepted. The reeds need not be done or even playable, just new ones. This is an exercise in “practice makes better” and we can learn just as much or more from failed reeds than from those we really love. I will hand out a new tutorial at the beginning of most classes- these notes should be collected and organized into a binder and used for your own tutorial, which will serve as your final exam for the class. If this is your second semester of the class, you will use the same tutorial only enhance it with more information, better drawings and/or more photographs. This tutorial will be an invaluable resource if/when you

Required Materials

- A knife. If you can spend more, Landwell knives are the best. Choose a soft, double hollow ground.
- A good mandrel. Go ahead and get a good one that fits your staple preference. If you don't lose it, it will last the rest of your life.
- String. Nylon FF. Make sure you pick your favorite color. Variegated is nice because every reed is different.
- Beeswax. Available in the hardware store or through any double reed vendor. A medium-sized cake lasts a long time.
- Staples. 2 dozen, brass, 47mm
- Cane: shaped if you are not gouging your own cane. Tube cane if you are. The studio will have some cane handy but its a good idea to purchase your own. Alliaud, GHYS are both recognized growers. Midwest Musical Imports has a nice list of descriptions of cane from soft to hard on their website.
- Sharpening stone, preferably a diamond stone
- “Fishskin” or plumber’s Teflon tape for sealing leaks
- Plaques. Get several; they get lost easily. Flat, blue steel, rounded or pointy ends. Nothing fancy.
- Cutting block. Rosewood or grenadilla. NOT plastic. At

finish school and begin teaching students yourself. It could even serve as a rough draft for a published work.

Binder

All class notes, supplementary essays and articles shall be collected in your binder and saved as a reference for you to use for yourself and with future oboe students. All of the readings will be provided at the beginning of each class. Notes should be made on each reading and be legible, neat and organized by date. They will be due on the last class before the final exam and will represent 12.5% of your final grade.

Tutorials

The tutorials listed for each week of class are to be read/reviewed or watched in your own time, outside of class. The purpose of these is not only to discover little bits of wisdom worded in different ways but also to help you in preparing your own tutorial, which will serve as 25% of your final grade.

Final

Write your own tutorial, from tube cane to finished reed with a beginning reed maker in mind. Please include specific instructions with measurements and simple hand-drawn illustrations or photographs. The tutorial is due during finals week.

August 30: Reconnect; Hand out syllabus; Knife sharpening

- “Oboe Reed Making : An Annotated Bibliography” : David Moore
- “The American Style Oboe Reed” : Eleanor B. Dusté
- “Different Reeds for Different Oboists” : Nancy Bonar
- “Oboe Reed Bibliography” : David Bourns
- TUTORIAL: “A Brief Reed Making Guide” : James Ryon
- Discussion: Knives “How do I sharpening this thing?”

September 6: Choosing Cane, Gouging

- TUTORIAL: “Oboe Reed Making in Four Acts”
www.youtube.com/watch?v=83CAPfjwaOU
- Discussion: Choosing Cane/Gouging
- Gouge Cane- 24 pieces

September 13: Shaping, Tying, Measuring

- TUTORIAL: “Oboe Reed Class I” : Elaine Douvas, Linda Strommen
- Discussion: How to shape cane, tie on and measure correctly

September 20: First Day Scrapes: “Take it Easy”

- TUTORIAL: “Oboe Reed Class I” : Elaine Douvas, Linda Strommen
- Discussion: What do I scrape first?

September 27: NO CLASS- Woodwind Divisional

least 1 inch in diameter.

- Ruler or caliper. Small steel ruler calibrated in millimeters.
- Work light. A small desk light with an opaque shade.
- Easel. Used to score the center of a gouged piece of cane. This line aids in folding the gouged cane.
- Supplied tools: Cane splitter, easel, razor blades, pre-gouger, gouging machine, shaper tip and handle, profiler

Gouging Cane

Cane can be gouged in the reed room in the basement of the Music Building. If you don't have your own cane, please see me before you will need it. The gouging machine is made by RDG and should be treated very carefully- no jostling, dropping, bouncing, or other generally careless behaviors while handling. Remove the machine carefully from the foam insert of the case by the base of the machine, not the handle. Place it carefully on the counter far enough away from the edge to ensure it will not fall to the ground. Protect the blade from nicks at all times. Always use well-soaked cane, NEVER dry. If the blade doesn't seem to be removing material, please see me. It may need to be sharpened by the manufacturer. When finished gouging, remove all scrapings and small bits of cane. Try to blow any small particles off the nooks and crannies on the base with the paintbrush and carefully place the machine, holding it by the base, back into the box. Many generations following you are depending on the gentle care and long-life of the gouging machine. TREAT IT WITH CARE.

Supply Resources

Midwest Musical Import www.mmi.com

Forrests Music www.forrestsmusic.com

Charles Double Reed
www.charlesmusic.com

McFarland Double Reed Shop
www.mcfarlanddoublereed.com

RDG Woodwinds www.rdgwoodwinds.com

October 4: Second Day Scrapes: “Break Me in Slowly”

- TUTORIAL: Illustrated Encyclopedia of Oboe Reed Making / Ann Rosandich (Book)
- Discussion: What do I scrape second?

October 11: Third Day Scrapes: “Getting Used to Abuse”

- TUTORIAL: “Making Reeds with Kathryn Greenbank”
musaic.nws.edu/videos/making-reeds-with-kathryn-greenbank
- Discussion: How do I finish/adjust this reed?

October 18: Leaks and Crows

- TUTORIAL: “Reed Making Tool Guide” : Rebecca Mindock
- Discussion: Keep the crow, toss the leak
- Gouge cane: 24 pieces

October 25: Pitch Stability: “F# and G are flat, flat, flat”

- TUTORIAL: Oboe Reed Making and Problems of the Oboe Player / Myron E. Russell (Book)
- Discussion: How to fix pitch problems

November 1: NO CLASS- Woodwind Divisional

November 8: Response: “Whoa, I can tongue a low Bb”

- TUTORIAL: “Oboe Reed Book” : Rachel Landers
- Discussion: How to get a reed to play low (and high) notes

November 15: Resistance: “It Works Playing *pp* and *ff*”

- TUTORIAL: The Art of Oboe Reed Making / Melvin Berman (Book)
- Discussion: How to get a reed to play soft and loud

November 22: NO CLASS- Thanksgiving

November 29: Tutorial Review in class

- TUTORIAL: The Reed Maker’s Manual / Weber and Capps (Book)
- Tutorial rough drafts due

December 6: Tone Quality: “Want a Nice Dark Sound, Fix All of the Above First”

- TUTORIAL: The Oboe Reed Book / Jay Light (Book)
- Discussion: Last but not least, how to make a reed sound good

December 14: Final Tutorials Due

Discrimination

Iowa State University is committed to assuring that all educational activities are free from discrimination and harassment based on disability status. All students requesting accommodations are required to meet with staff in Student Disability Resources (SDR) to establish eligibility. A Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) form will be provided to eligible students. The provision of reasonable accommodations in this course will be arranged after timely delivery of the SAAR form to the instructor. Students are encouraged to deliver completed SAAR forms as early in the semester as possible. SDR, a unit in the Dean of Students Office, is located in room 1076, Student Services Building or online at www.dso.iastate.edu/dr/. Contact SDR by e-mail at disabilityresources@iastate.edu or by phone at 515-294-7220 for additional information.