Clarinet

by Andrew Scott

illustrated by Matt Bridges
Let’s Play Clarinet

by

Andrew Scott
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Parts of the Clarinet

- ligature
- mouthpiece
- reed
- cork
- barrel
- upper joint
- bell
- lower joint
Lesson 1

Preparing the Reed

The reed must be damp for it to vibrate properly. Some players soak their reeds in a glass of water for a few minutes before playing, but you can usually get away with holding the thin end in your mouth for about thirty seconds.

Fitting the Mouthpiece

Apply some cork grease to the cork at the top of the mouthpiece. Push the mouthpiece all the way into the barrel with a twisting action.

The mouthpiece should slide smoothly but very firmly over the cork. You may not need to apply grease every time you assemble the clarinet.

Fitting the Reed

After you have dampened the reed, place it on the mouthpiece. Secure it loosely with the ligature, then adjust it so that there is only a hairline of mouthpiece showing behind the tip. Tighten the ligature screws.

Making a Sound with the Reed on the Mouthpiece

Hold the barrel with one hand.

Make an O shape with your lips. Put the end of the mouthpiece into your mouth so that your bottom lip becomes a cushion to support the reed.

Your top teeth should touch the mouthpiece about eight millimetres (three eighths of an inch) from the end.

Blow gently and smoothly. The mouthpiece should make a buzzing noise.

Buzzing Sounds

When you can make a sound, vary it by tightening and loosening your lips. You can hear this on Track 2 of the CD.

Buzzing Sounds Track 2

This track contains the sound of the reed and mouthpiece attached to the barrel. The pitch is bent down and up as the player loosens and tightens her lips.
**Attaching the Bell to the Lower Joint**

Place the mouthpiece and barrel aside.

Attach the bell to the end of the lower joint that has the cork, again with a twisting motion. Try not to squeeze very hard on any keys or rods, because too much pressure can bend them.

**Attaching the Middle Joint**

After attaching the upper and middle joints, twist the upper joint gently so that the finger holes on the front of the clarinet make a straight line. Be careful to prevent any levers from becoming tangled.

**Connecting the Barrel and Middle Joint**

Apply grease to the remaining cork on the upper joint. Twist it into the barrel. Line up the single hole at the back of the clarinet with the reed side of the mouthpiece.
**Tonguing**

Use your tongue to start and stop the notes. As you play the note E, whisper the word *doo*, several times.

The tip of your tongue will push the end of the reed against the mouthpiece, blocking the flow of air. When you release your tongue, the air flow will start instantly, creating the syllable *doo*.

This technique is called tonguing. Clarinet players use it all the time to make notes start and stop cleanly.

Listen to Track 3 on the CD.

**Tongued Notes**  

*Track 3*

First you will hear four E notes played without tonguing. Then follow four notes with tonguing. You can hear the difference. Without tonguing, the attack on the note sounds more like a *foo* than a *doo*.

**Thumb Support at the Back**

Right Thumb here all the time.
Fingering Diagram for the Note E

- Left Thumb
- 1st Finger of Left Hand
- Back of Clarinet

Left Hand Above the Right Hand
**Holding the Clarinet**

Whenever you pick up the clarinet, make sure you hold it with both hands. One hand should grip it across the join between the upper joint and the barrel. The other hand should lift the clarinet under the bell. This technique reduces the risk of the clarinet falling to pieces if the joints do not fit together snugly.

**Cleaning the Clarinet**

Clean your clarinet after every practice session. Use the weight, cord and cloth that came with your clarinet.

**Care for Your Reeds**

Reeds are fragile and delicate. It doesn’t take much to split one, making it useless. They are also expensive.

As you play more, you will learn that some reeds are much better than others.

Be very careful when you handle your reeds not to touch the thin tip.

Keep your reeds safe in flat holder when you are not playing your clarinet.

---

**Tips**

- Fingers which are not pressing a key closed should hover above their home keys, ready to close the key when necessary.
Lesson 2

The Staff (or Stave)

A staff (plural: staves) is a set of five lines and four spaces upon which music can be written. The lines and spaces are numbered from the bottom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5th line</th>
<th>4th line</th>
<th>3rd line</th>
<th>2nd line</th>
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</table>

4th space 3rd space 2nd space 1st space

The Treble Clef

The symbol at the left end of the staff is called a treble clef. Every line of clarinet music has these clefs to show you how notes are named. There are other clefs, such as bass and alto clefs, but for clarinet playing you only need to know this one.

The Half Note (or Minim)

The half note (or minim in some countries) symbol looks like a hollowed out egg, with a stick on one side. A half note has a value of two beats.

The Half Note E

The position of a note in the staff tells us its name.

The note above, written on the first line of the staff, is the E note you learned in the previous lesson.
Lesson 2
The Note G

George the Giraffe

1

Tongue each note.

G for Me

2

Tongue each note.
Dark Blue Tongue

George the giraffe with his head up high,

dark blue tongue as he licks at the sky.

Two Beat G

Two beat G Two beat G Two beat G

Two beats on G, two beats on G, two beats G.
Lesson 3
The Note A

Ann the Ant

Ask an Ant

1. Ann the ant.
2. Ann the ant.
3. Ann, Ann,
4. Ann the ant.

1. Ask an ant,
2. ask any ant.
3. Ask an ant,
4. ask any ant.
Creepy Crawl

1 Ann the Ant,

2 What a cute ant!

3 creepy crawl, creepy crawl

4 up the plant.

---

Tots in Tutus

1 Two tots in tutus

2 dancing under trees.

3 Two tots in tutus

4 dancing in the breeze.

---

Tip of My Tongue

1 Tip of my tongue,

2 tip of my tongue.

3 Toot each note with the

4 tip of my tongue.
Lesson 4
The Note F

Two Beat F

George and Fred

George walks fast. Fred hops past.

George, Fred, who comes last?
Two Note Rock

1 Rock ing a _
2 round,
3 Fin _ ger up and 4 down.

Ann and George

1 Ann crawls 2 past, 3 George runs 4 fast.
5 Ann, George 6 Ann, George 7 who goes 8 last?
**Hot Cross Buns**

1. Hot Cross Buns!

2. Hot Cross Buns!

3. One a penny, two a penny,

4. Hot Cross Buns!

**Yankee Doodle**

1. Yankee Doodle

2. went to town,

3. riding on a

4. po - ny.
In the Light of the Moon

1 I will meet you so on,
in the light of the moon.

Merrily

1 Merrily we roll along,
roll along,
roll along.

2 roll along.
3 roll along, roll along.
4 roll along.
5 Merrily we

6 roll along across the deep blue sea.
7 cross the deep blue sea.
8 sea.
Lesson 5

The Note E

Ellen the Elephant

1

Ellen the elephant walks very slow.

George and Ellen

George says to Ellen "Would you like to play?"

Ellen says "That sounds nice, and I'm free all day."
Ellen and Fred Stomp

Walk and Talk
Lesson 5

The Note D

Dan the Dog

Dan is a dog. He's a big dog, he runs and he jumps and he sleeps like a log.

Run, Dan, Run

Run, Dan, run as you fetch the stick. Hurry, Dan, hurry you like to be quick.
Dan Likes a Pat

Dan likes a pat. Are you good at that?

Dan likes to lick. Move your face away quick!

FED Song

Four Note Song
Lesson 6

The Note C

Coco the Cat

Co-co is a cat, she's a fine cat.

Co-co cat, Co-co cat, wears a big hat.

Coco Sat on a Mat

Co-co the cat sat on a mat.

Wearing a smile, she purred for a while.
Hot Cross Buns - Key of C -

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
Shave and a Haircut

Shave and a hair-cut,

six-pence.

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Mary had a little lamb,

little lamb, little lamb.

Mary had a little lamb, it's fleece was white as snow.
Lesson 7

Ode to Joy

Let us sing a song of joy for love and peace today, let us join our voices now for God to whom we pray.

Lightly Row

Lightly row, lightly row, a cross the rolling waves we go. Lightly row, lightly row, a way from shore we glide.
When the Saints Go Marchin’ In

O when the saints go march-in’ in,
O when the saints go march-in’ in,
O Lord I want to be in that number,
when the saints go march-in’ in.
Oats, peas, beans and barley grow. Oats, peas, beans and barley grow, can you or I or anyone know how oats, peas beans and barley grow.
Lesson 8
The Note B

Ben the Bee

Fly About Ben

Ben the Bee said to me, "I can see you, can you see me?"

Ben Bee, fly about fast. Buzz Ben, as you fly past.
Mary Ann

All day, all night, Miss Mary Ann.

down by the sea-shore sifting sand.

All the little children love

Mary Ann, down by the sea-shore sifting sand.
Old Macdonald Had a Farm

1. Old Mac-Don-ald had a farm.
2. And on that farm he had a cow.
3. O.
4. With a moo moo here, and a moo moo there,
5. here a moo, there a moo, everywhere a moo moo,
6. Old Mac-Don-ald had a farm.

E I E I
E I E I
O.
E I E I
O.
Lesson 9
The Note Low A

Alan the Antelope

\[ \begin{align*}
1 & \quad A A A A A A A \\
2 & \quad A A A A A A A \\
3 & \quad A A A A A A A \\
4 & \quad A A A A A A A
\end{align*} \]

Al-an the an-te-lope knows where to go.

\[ \begin{align*}
3 & \quad A A A A A A A \\
4 & \quad A A A A A A A
\end{align*} \]

Where it's warm, far from the snow.

C & A Exercise
ABC Song

Two fingers for A to C, first finger for A to B, when we practise every day,

we will sound O K.

The Volga Boatmen

Yo____ heave

ho. And yo____ heave

ho. Heavy working,

heave____ slow.
The Animals Went in Two by Two

The animals went in two by two,

two, hurrah,
hurrah.

The animals went in two by two,

two, hurrah,
hurrah.

The elephants, tigers and kangaroos,

cats, the dogs and the emus
too, and they all went into the ark for to get out of the rain.
Lesson 10
The Note Low G

Georgia the Gorilla

\[ \text{Hot Cross Buns - Key of G} \]
Twinkle Twinkle Little Star - Key of G

Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are. Up above the clouds so high,
Lesson 11

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

We wish you a merry Christmas, we wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Good tidings we bring to you and your kin. We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.
Happy Birthday

Dotted Eighth Note
(or Dotted Quaver)

Sixteenth Note
(or Semiquaver)
A slur is a curved line written over or below several notes. When a slur is applied to notes it means that you play them smoothly. To do this, keep blowing as you change the fingering for the different notes. Only tongue the first note of the group enclosed by the slur.

Another word for playing smoothly, often used in music, is legato.

**Slur Exercise 1**  
Track 31

**Ode to Joy**  
Track 33

Ludwig van Beethoven lived in Europe from 1770 to 1827. This piece is an excerpt from his 9th Symphony.
Lesson 13
The Note Low G

This G is written beneath the second ledger line below the staff.

Low G Exercise  
Track 63
Bossa Nova Style

Low G Exercise 2  
Track 64
Swing Jazz Style
We Wish You a Merry Christmas  Track 65
Waltz Style

Sweet Blues  Track 66
Jugband Style
A Bicycle Built for Two    Track 67
Waltz Style

Happy Birthday    Track 68
Gospel Style
Lesson 14

The Dotted Quarter Note
(or Dotted Crotchet)

Adding a dot after a quarter note increases its length to one and half beats.

Dotted Quarter Note Exercise 1  Track 69

Dotted Quarter Note Exercise 2  Track 70

Dotted Quarter Note Exercise 3  Track 71

Dotted Quarter Note Exercise 4  Track 72
Composing  Track 73
Chet Atkins Style

Dreamy Waltz  Track 74
Moon River Style

Dotted Ballad  Track 75
Serena Style
Lesson 15
The Note A (in the Second Space)

This A is written in the second space of the staff.

2nd Space A Exercise 1  Track 77

2nd Space A Exercise 2  Track 78
Jam Session Style

2nd Space A Exercise 3  Track 79
Bluegrass Style
On the CD there are five beats to introduce this song.
**Auld Lang Syne**  **Track 81**

**Fingerpicking Folk Style**

On the CD there are three beats to introduce this song.

**Blues with A**  **Track 81**

**Traditional Jazz Style**

This song gives you good practice at taking breaths quickly between notes.
For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow  Track 86
Old Style Waltz

Above bar 24 is the instruction **D. C. al Fine** (pronounced “fee-nay”). This is an abbreviation of Da Capo al Fine, which means that you play the song again from the start until you reach the word **Fine** (bar 16).

Five beats introduction.
Susanna  Track 82

Fingerpicking Folk Style

On the CD there are three beats to introduce this song.
Lesson 16
The Note Low F

There are two fingerings for this note. Choose the one that is more comfortable for you.

This F is written on the third ledger line below the staff.

Low F Exercise 1  Track 82  Teddy Wilson Style

Low F Exercise 2  Track 83  Folk Style
Lesson 17

The Note B Flat (B♭)

This note is lower than B, but not as low as A. Its pitch is halfway between B and A.

The sign ♭ in music notation is pronounced “flat.”

The flat sign is written after the note in text, (e.g. B♭) but before it on the staff.

B♭ Exercise 1  Track 86

Classy Swing Style

The flat signs in bars 1 and 4 apply to all the B’s in those bars.

F Major Scale  Track 87

Son-Montuno Style

When the flat sign is written on the middle line at the beginning of the staff, it applies to all the B notes in that staff, including B’s below the staff.
You have seen that a dot written after a note lengthens the note (pages 19 and 45).

A dot written above or below a note means that you play the note short and detached from other notes. This method of playing is called staccato. It is the complete opposite of playing legato, or smoothly.

To play notes staccato, think of the letter “d” when you tongue the note, instead of the syllable “doo.”

**Staccato Exercise 1**  Track 88
**Orchestral Style**

**Staccato Exercise 2**  Track 89
**Bossa Nova Style**

**The Can-Can**  Track 90
**Orchestral Style**

Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) began his musical career as a cello player. This is part of his most famous composition.

Remember to play all B notes as B♭.
The Can-Can (continued)
**Tips**

**General**

It is normal to feel dizzy from all the blowing.

You may also get pains in your arms, neck and shoulders. The clarinet may seem unbearably heavy, especially on your right thumb.

Most of these problems go away as you build up new strength in muscles which were hitherto hardly used.

**Cleaning the Clarinet**

Clean and dry your clarinet by pulling a cloth through it after each practice session. Pay particular attention to the mouthpiece and reed. You will need to take the reed off to clean the mouthpiece properly. Failure to do this will result in a buildup of stale, green mould. Do you really want that in your mouth next time you play?

If your mouthpiece has already reached the disgusting stage, merely soaking it in a basin of warm soapy water will not work. Scrub it clean with an old toothbrush.

**Reeds**

If your reeds become wrinkled after you moisten them in hot weather, you can iron them flat with your thumb. Press the thin end against the flat part of your mouthpiece for about half a minute, or until the reed regains its normal shape.

**Reed Strength**

The best reed to start playing the clarinet with is one that has a strength rating of 1 or 1½. The lower the rating on the reed, the softer and more flexible it is, and the easier it is to blow. Reeds with a higher number become progressively stiffer and harder to blow but produce a bigger volume of sound. Allow yourself plenty of time to build up your mouth muscles before you consider changing to a reed with a higher rating.

**Reed Quality**

There is enormous variation in the quality of reeds. When you begin playing clarinet, you will not be able to tell the difference between one reed and another. As you become more experienced, you will begin to notice differences in the quality of sound that reeds produce, and also how some reeds are easier to blow than others. The worst reeds are very difficult to blow, produce a sound that is rough and feel downright stubborn to play. The best reeds are easy to blow, produce a sweet sound and feel as though they enjoy being played.

**Choosing a Good Reed**

Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to tell by looking how a reed is going to perform. As a general rule, favor reeds that have a greenish tinge, which means they have been cut from cane that is young and flexible.
Lesson

How to Tune the Clarinet

You will need to be able tune the clarinet to make it sound at its best when you play with other instruments or recordings.

You can do this by playing a note and then comparing it to a reference tone.

**Step 1**
Listen to Track 1 on the CD, following the music on the chart below.

![Chart for Step 1](image)

**Step 2**
Start Track 1 again. Play your E, then listen to the clarinet on the CD.

**Step 3**
Was your E at exactly the same pitch, or was it higher or lower?

**Step 4**
If your note sounds the same as the CD note, your clarinet is already in tune. Go to Step 7.
Step 5
If your note sounds lower than the CD, your saxophone is said to be flat. Raise its pitch by pushing the mouthpiece further onto the cork, then repeat Steps 2 and 3.

Step 6
If your note sounds higher than the CD, your saxophone is said to be sharp. Lower its pitch by pulling the mouthpiece out along the cork, then repeat Steps 2 and 3.

Step 7
As a final check, play your A at the same time as the saxophone on the CD. If the two notes are in tune they will sound like one instrument. If not, there will be a harsh, irritating beating sound, somewhat like two blowflies sparring. Return to Steps 2 and 3.

Pushing the mouthpiece on raises the pitch.

Pulling the mouthpiece off lowers the pitch.

Tuning Tips
1. Don’t be too concerned if you can’t tell whether you are sharp or flat. It can take a long time before you hear the difference.

2. Hot weather makes the saxophone sharp. Cold weather will make it flat. You will need to adjust your mouthpiece more on very hot or cold days.
Fingering

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

SAMPLE
accidental - a sign indicating a note from outside a particular key. E.g., the natural sign in bar 4 of Cuban Nights on page 46, or the flat sign in bar 1 of Staccato Blues on page 42.

arpeggio - the notes of a chord played one at a time.

choard - a group of two or more different notes played together.

dissossonant - clashing, not harmonious.

D. S. al Coda - go back to the sign $\text{ fs }$, play again as far as the Coda sign $\Phi$, then jump to the second Coda sign, and play to the end.

embouchure - the position of the lips and mouth when playing a brass or wind instrument.

key - a pitch that forms the tonal centre of a piece of music.

harmonize - to combine notes to produce a pleasant sounding blend.

lick - a short musical phrase.

measure - same as bar.

octave - the interval between two notes where the frequency of one is either half or double that of the other. E.g., the two A notes on the staff at right are one octave apart. Notes that are one octave apart usually have the same letter name.

phrase - a group of notes that form the musical equivalent of a sentence.

vibrato - a throbbing in the sound of a note. On the saxophone this is achieved by tightening and loosening the pressure on the reed from the jaw.

register - a range of notes on a particular instrument.

riff - a short musical phrase, usually repeated or varied several times within a song.

sustain - to hold a note or chord for its full value.

syncopation - emphasis given to a normally unaccented beat.

transpose - to change music from one pitch or key to another.
The table below shows you which note you must play to sound the same as another instrument, such as a guitar or piano, or another clarinet.

For example, if you are playing an A on the clarinet, the guitar’s note will be G, and the alto saxophone’s note will be E.

If the flute player blows an A, the clarinet must play B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clarinet Also Tenor Sax, Trumpet</th>
<th>Concert Instruments E.g. Guitar, flute piano, keyboard</th>
<th>Alto Saxophone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D♯ or E♭</td>
<td>C♯ or D♭</td>
<td>A♯ or B♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>C♯ or D♭</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>G♯ or A♭</td>
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