Encycloreedia: A Beginning Guide to Oboe Reed Making

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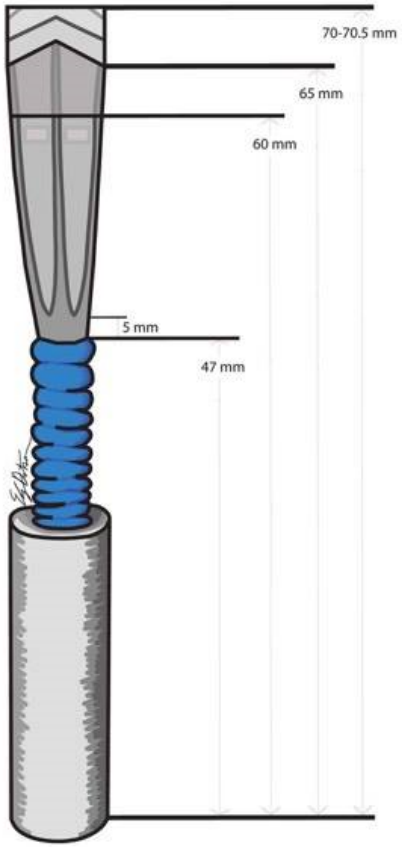
INTRODUCTION

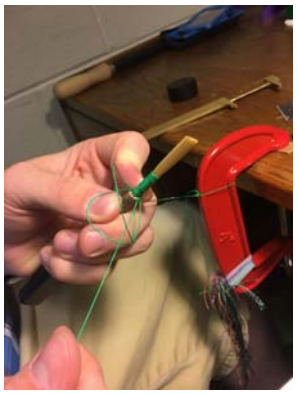
This study examines the process, techniques, and materials needed to make high quality oboe reeds. The oboe uses a double reed, or a piece of cane which has been folded in half and then tied onto a metal tube. The specific requirements of oboe reeds vary from person to person and so it is necessary for each serious oboist to learn how to make their own. The process is very difficult to learn and can only be learned through practice. All major texts on oboe reed making were studied to determine what was missing from each so that the issues could be resolved in this guide. This beginning guide provides the student with preparatory exercises designed to make the process easier to comprehend. Detailed photographs of the entire process, along with diagrams of oboe reeds are included to make the process understandable for the beginning student. Terminology relevant to the process has been explained in full as it pertains to each section of the text.



DAY ONE: CREATING THE BLANK

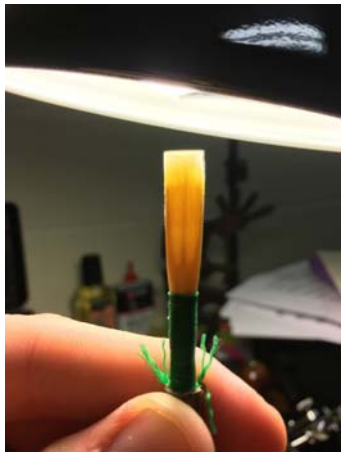
Day One takes the reed from a piece of cane (Bamboo like material used to make reeds) to a "Rough Scraped" blank (reed which does not yet play.)

- The cane is tied onto a cork-covered metal tube using nylon thread. The length used is determined by a combination of the shape of the cane and the tube opening.
- The blank is then measured into three basic sections and scraped enough to remove the bark and under-bark (pulp material directly beneath bark)
- The blank shows a clear spine through the middle and is of a uniform thickness aside form the tip, which is thinnest.



DAY TWO: BALANCING

Balancing involves making the reed begin to play by sounding the pitch C in two octaves. The tip is thinned enough to vibrate very freely before scraping in the heart to create the second octave of the C crow (sound of the reed alone.) The reed is clipped (placed on a block and shortened using a razor blade) until it measures 71mm. The back is then scraped and the reed is left to dry out.



DAY THREE: FINISHING

Finishing aims to focus the vibrations created in the last step and refine the reed to be able to be played In public. When adjusting a reed, there are two questions which will determine what is needed to make the reed work: "Does the reed need to vibrate more or less?" and "Does the reed need more low or high vibrations?" There are two primary types of scraping that will be used to accomplish this. Positive Scraping increases vibrations and Negative Scraping focuses or reduces vibrations.

KNIFE TECHNIQUE/SHARPENING

The quality of an oboe reed is dependent upon the smoothness of the scrape (the way in which the knife removes cane from the reed.) The reed knife requires an extremely polished edge which is much different from the edge found on a kitchen knife. The knife is essentially beveled, or sharpened at an angle. This allows the edge to scrape instead of slicing.

LITERATURE CITED

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CONCLUSIONS

By providing diagrams, preparatory exercises, and explanations of relevant terminology, this guide is ideal for the beginning reed maker; it can be used both by complete beginners without the regular aid of a teacher and to supplement lessons with a qualified teacher. By providing these supplementary materials, this guide fills the gap of existing methods which failed to cater to the complete beginner. These methods are better suited to the experienced reed maker who has a grasp of the relevant terms and techniques. Encycloreedia may serve to take the user from beginning to experienced level reed making.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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