

OILING INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLARINETS

Equipment: Sweet Almond Oil, purchased at a health food store. Make sure it is 100% sweet almond oil. It can contain a small amount of natural vitamin E. This is good for the wood. Also, you need a wire Oboe swab for the UPPER JOINT. This has a tapered yarn or thread body on it that is smaller than the bore of the instrument. These are available at most Music stores or online. They usually come either as a one piece swab with a smaller “tapered” end, and a larger end for the lower joint of the oboe, or as a two piece set. In either case you want to use the SMALLER TAPERED END for your oiling. Finally, you will need a pack of soft pipe cleaners, not the “bristle” type.

1. Bell, and barrels – Use the pipe cleaner, bent in half. Dip the pipe cleaner in the oil, and “paint” the bore, outside, and sockets with oil. Set aside for 24 hours, and then check to see if the oil has disappeared from any surface. If so, repeat the oiling in these areas, and let sit Overnight once more. Once the oil is still coating all surfaces, wipe them down well with a paper towel, and then make a final wipe of the outside of the bell and barrels with a soft cloth.

2. Upper and Lower joints – Use the swab and “paint” the bore with oil. Use the bent pipe cleaner to coat the sockets, the ends of the tenons, and the wood that is on both sides of any corks. NOTE, the oil will not harm the

corks, but try to avoid them. Set both joints aside and follow the same procedure as mentioned above.

NOTE: When oiling the bores of the upper and lower joints, hold them up to a light so that you can see where you have places you might have missed. Also try to coat the area just below the register tube. When you are finished, it is a good idea to remove the register key, and clean out the register tube with a pipe cleaner dipped in rubbing alcohol. Use a “doubled” pipe cleaner dipped in the alcohol, to clean the thumb tube.

I recommend oiling your barrels once every two months if you are playing regularly, and the bore of the instrument every four months. This provides a barrier that protects the wood against the damaging effects of the digestive acids in our saliva. It also allows “good moisture” to go into the wood, and help keep it hydrated.

Musically Yours,
Michael A. Lomax
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