

noelle's oboe

WORKSHOP


Double Reed Instrument Repair - By Appointment Only

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Basic Oboe Maintenance Information

To keep the inside and the outside of your oboe clean, always brush your teeth and wash your hands before playing. It is important to **swab out** your oboe after every playing session. I recommend a long silk oboe-specific swab with tail. A clarinet or other instrument swab will NOT work. To use the swab, turn the oboe upside down and drop the weight through the bell, pulling it out through the reed socket.

Be sure that your swab is clean. Pulling a dirty swab through the bore will cause buildup in the tone holes which will cause water problems. You should occasionally clean your swab with soap and water, and replace it annually. Do not use your swab to clean your tenons; use a different cloth for that purpose.

Always **check for knots** in the swab before use to prevent it from getting stuck in the bore. If it ever does get stuck, simply pull the tail back out the bell. And if it is ever really stuck, do not keep pulling! Instead, take it in to a repair shop where it can be extracted without damaging the bore.

Oboes have many **adjustment screws** that need to be precisely set, and periodically checked. If your oboe suddenly feels stuffy, certain notes become hard to play, or it feels like none of your reeds work anymore, have your teacher or repair specialist check the adjustment of your instrument. You should not have to squeeze to get the low notes to speak.

After you are done playing, gently wipe your fingerprints off the mechanism/keys with a soft cloth to help **prevent tarnish**, and store an anti-tarnish strip in the case, which should be replaced every six months.

To keep your instrument in good condition, it is recommended to have a **yearly check-up**. Annual upkeep should help you avoid emergencies as well as a costly overhaul down the road.

When you're not playing your instrument, always **store it in its case**. Do NOT just leave it assembled on a peg. The case should be kept away from windows and vents, ideally on a shelf or table on an interior wall. For wooden instruments, keep a small humidifier in your case particularly in the cold/dry winter months. Also, store your instruments with the octave pads propped open, or with ungummed cigarette paper under the two octave pads.