

Practical Applications #3

Embouchure Boot Camp

*A Progressive Daily Routine for the Serious
Instrumentalist*

Oboe



Christopher Fogderud - Mac
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WARNING!!

YOU ARE ABOUT TO ENLIST IN A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PROGRAM.
IF YOU ARE NOT PREPARED FOR THE FOLLOWING SIDE EFFECTS,
CLOSE THIS OPERATIONS MANUAL AT ONCE!

SIDE EFFECTS OF USING THIS BOOK AS DIRECTED:

1. A sudden belief that your band director has started to pick easier music
2. A sneaking suspicion that band rehearsal has gotten shorter because you haven't even broken a sweat yet.
3. A profound distortion of reality - what was once fast music is now quite slow and easily played
4. "Buff-ness" is evident in the area of the lower face.
5. An increased sense of confidence accompanied by a strong desire to play more exciting and challenging music.
6. In short - YOU WILL BECOME A BETTER PLAYER!



Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe



ENLISTMENT INFORMATION



To the enlistee:

Welcome to Embouchure Boot Camp, Private! By enlisting in Boot Camp, you have shown that you are a serious musician who is looking to improve your playing. Before you begin, the Drill Sergeant has some orders:

General Orders No. 1-5

Embouchure Boot Camp - Rules and Regulations

1. The musical drills contained in this Boot Camp Operations Manual must be practiced DAILY. You will not find success by returning casually to these exercises. They must be played every day with PURPOSE. Plot your progress using the PROMOTION CHART on page 6. Boot Camp is not a casual experience; it involves commitment...YOU MUST ENLIST!
2. None of the drills in Embouchure Boot Camp should be played for the sake of "getting through them." True improvement will result when the drills are played thoughtfully while taking each of the Drill Sergeant's Orders (listed at the beginning of each section of the manual) into careful consideration. The drills must not just be played, but played correctly.
3. **ALL** drills that contain metronome markings **MUST** be played with a metronome.
4. The exercises and drills in the Boot Camp Operations Manual do not consist of an entire practice session. They are meant to give the player a consistent and thorough routine that is played every day before etudes, solos and literature are practiced. The number of drills that are done each day will vary depending on time constraints. A normal routine should take 30 minutes. If the private has only 10 minutes on a particular day, then 1 drill from every section of the manual should be played. At no time should 0 drills be considered - see General Order No. 1.
5. A private lesson teacher is strongly encouraged to progress through this manual. However, many situations arise and every effort has been made to give detailed and concise instructions for every drill. If you read these carefully and put them into practice, you should be able to put yourself through boot camp.

Your band is proud of the commitment and dedication that you have already shown by enlisting in Embouchure Boot Camp. You will need to continue to show these traits in order to progress through Boot Camp. Who knows, if you work hard and follow the rules and regulations listed above, you might graduate boot camp with the rank of Command Chief Master Sergeant. Only one question remains: Do you have what it takes?

Sincerely,

Drill Sergeant
Embouchure Boot Camp



Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe



PRACTICE GUIDELINES



To the enlistee:

Consider these guidelines to help yourself stay on track for daily practice:

- 🎖️ Set a regular time to practice.
- 🎖️ Find a comfortable, well-lit, quiet place to practice, preferably the largest room in the house to help with sound development.
- 🎖️ Practice standing up, not sitting.
- 🎖️ Use your metronome consistently.
- 🎖️ Practicing in short amounts daily is much more preferable than cramming. Developing instrumental technique is much like an exercise workout—teach your muscles by doing a little bit daily.
- 🎖️ Take frequent breaks if you are more advanced and practicing more than 45 minutes per day. Sessions of playing longer than 45 minutes can cause muscular problems such as tendonitis or carpal tunnel syndrome if one does not rest frequently.
- 🎖️ Don't forget that the ultimate goal is not to produce the notes you see on the page as you would type in words on a keyboard. The goal is to produce beautiful music. Never forget to listen to yourself and make music as you practice. Try to mimic the sounds of your favorite players.

To the Commanding Officers of the Household (i.e. Parents):

Congratulations, your student has just enrolled in Embouchure Boot Camp! In order to give your student the best opportunity for success, please consider the following guidelines to assist in the quality of their practice.

- 🎖️ Stay connected. Encourage your student to practice and reward his/her hard work with recognition. Instruments are not quiet, so be sure to support your student's practice time even if you are reading or watching TV.
- 🎖️ Give your student a place to practice that is free of distractions, preferably in the largest room in the house. This will help develop projection by practicing filling up a large space with sound.
- 🎖️ Allow the student to leave the instrument out so it is easily accessible for practice. The safest way to do this is to purchase an instrument stand. Your enlistee will practice more often if the instrument is visible and handy.
- 🎖️ Help your student to stay on track by reminding him/her to practice in a way that helps them to realize their goals. Use language like, "I know it has been a busy day, but if you practice today, you will stay on track to achieve your goal of getting placed in the top band next year."



Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe



PROMOTION CHART



Every drill in this book is intended to be played every day as part of a daily practice routine. However, it is more than likely that this will be impossible for the Embouchure Boot Camp enlistee to achieve immediately. Therefore, it is necessary to plot a course through the book starting with the rank of "Private" and ending with the rank of "Command Chief Master Sergeant."

Each exercise in Embouchure Boot Camp is preceded by a military rank insignia. This denotes the difficulty level of each exercise and helps the enlistee (you) chart your progress through boot camp. The chart below lists what Embouchure Boot Camp exercises that need to be performed in order to achieve the different military ranks. All ranks should drill each warm-up (Breathing, Stretch Drills, Register Drills) every day.

Good Luck on your journey from Private to Command Chief Master Sergeant!

Insignia	Rank	Single Tonguing	Mechanism Exercises	Technical Exercises	Major Scale Exercises	Minor Scale Exercises	Date of Promotion
	Private						
	Private 1 st Class						
	Sergeant						
	Staff Sergeant						
	Technical Sergeant						
	Master Sergeant	ALL Tech Srgt Drills at 90% of Top Speed	ALL Tech Srgt Drills at 90% of Top Speed	ALL Tech Srgt Drills at 90% of Top Speed	ALL Tech Srgt Drills at 90% of Top Speed	ALL Tech Srgt Drills at 90% of Top Speed	
	Senior Master Sergeant						
	Chief Master Sergeant						
	Command Chief Master Sergeant	ALL Exercises Performed at Top Speed	ALL Exercises Performed at Top Speed	ALL Exercises Performed at Top Speed	ALL Exercises Performed at Top Speed	ALL Exercises Performed at Top Speed	





BREATHING



Breathing is the MOST important aspect of oboe playing and is the FIRST thing you should practice every day. Great breathing will aid in fixing every playing problem. However, most players never practice their breathing! This breathing drill helps to practice controlling the large amount of air needed to play. The most important part of this drill is to STAY RELAXED. This is especially important during the "suspend" portion of the drill. Suspending the air is NOT holding your breath. Your throat should stay open during this entire drill. Suspend the air by simply not breathing in or out while keeping your muscles totally relaxed. Sniff a small amount of air at the nose to be sure that you are suspending your air and NOT holding your breath.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

- ✈ Do all five parts of the drill one after another to achieve maximum relaxed respiration. Finish the eight-count drill and go on immediately to the four-count and so on...
- ✈ The first part of your body to expand during inhalation is your mid-section.
- ✈ During the eight and four-count inhalations, suck in the air at the lips as if you were sipping a milkshake through a straw, slow and steady.
- ✈ For the eight and four-count exhalations, put your embouchure into the playing position with the opening small enough to provide resistance. Blow steadily all the way to the end.
- ✈ For the one count inhalations, your mouth should look like you are eating a hot potato in order to inhale quickly.
- ✈ Remember to breathe or exhale all the way to the end. Do not allow yourself to stop the breathing motion during this exercise.
- ✈ **SUSPEND** your air; don't hold your breath.



Set your metronome to: ♩ = 60

Inhale	Suspend	Exhale	Frequency
8 counts	8 counts	8 counts (pp)	Do this 2 times
4 counts	4 counts	4 counts	Do this 3 times
1 count	4 counts	4 counts	Do this 3 times
1 count	4 counts	1 count	Do this 4 times
1 count	(none)	1 count (fff)	Do this 7 times



Some players find it useful to pretend to pull back a bow during inhalation (ready), remaining in the fully extended position during the "suspend" portion (aim), and watching the arrow fly through some far-away target during exhalation (fire!).








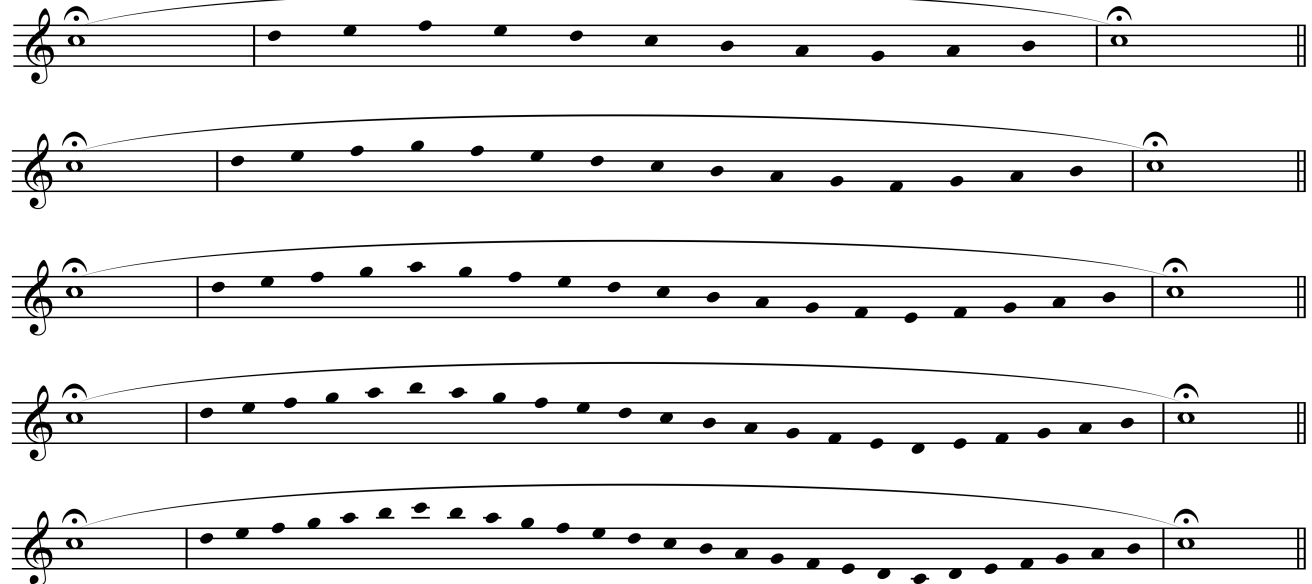
STRETCH DRILLS



The first notes you play on the instrument should be very relaxing. The first notes should start in the comfortable middle range and gradually stretch to the outer registers of the instrument, much like an athlete preparing for a big game. Musicians are, after all, athletes of the small muscles.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

-  Support your sound at ALL times!
-  Play all stretch drills at a comfortable mezzo forte dynamic.
-  Concentrate on keeping a full sound in all ranges. These drills are meant to be played in free time. If a note does not feel comfortable, hold it until it does. The second exercise in particular should be played freely. Hold the top and bottom note of each phrase until your embouchure feels comfortable.





REGISTER DRILLS



Once you have played your first notes of the day, it is important to remind yourself of what a great embouchure looks and feels like. Register drills are the ideal way to do this. As an oboist you are required to change registers on the instrument quickly and easily. It is impossible to execute the following exercises without a great embouchure, air speed and proper finger technique.

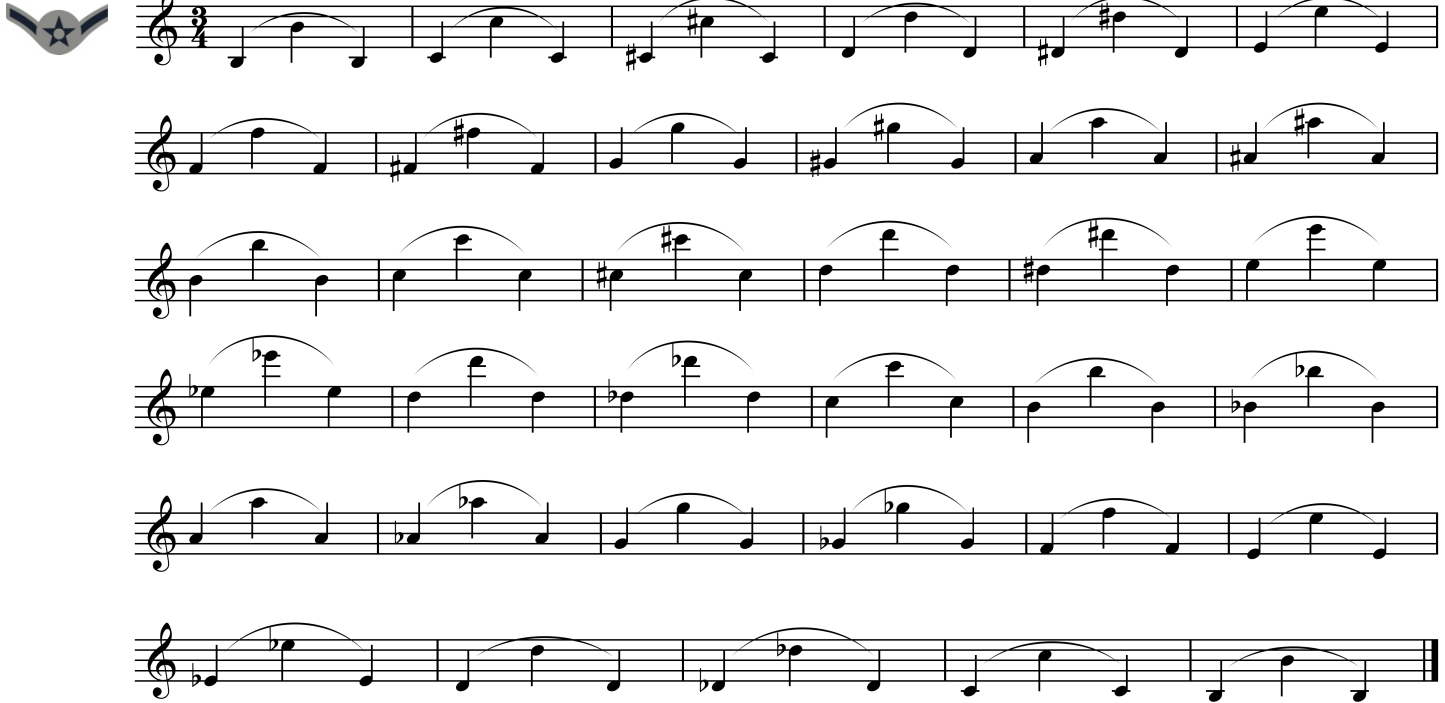
Drill Sergeant's Orders:

- 🎖 Support your sound at ALL times!
- 🎖 Perform the following drills with a metronome.
- 🎖 Concentrate on increasing the air speed and raising the tongue when performing the octave leaps.
- 🎖 As you approach the more extreme high range, slightly more reed should be taken in the mouth.
- 🎖 When performing the half-hole exercise, make sure that the first finger in the left hand is PIVOTING and not LIFTING.
- 🎖 Notes from fourth space E to G# above the staff utilize the first octave key. Notes above G# utilize the second octave key.

Half-hole Exercise



Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe



Heinz Holliger

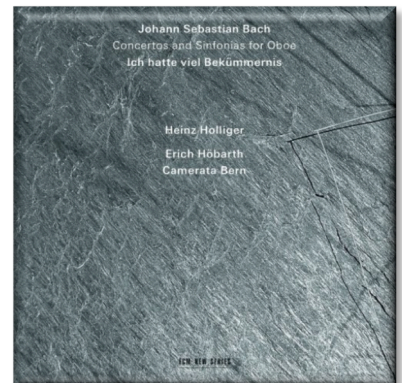
YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Great improvement can be achieved by simply listening to great oboe players and trying to mimic their sound.

Listen to one of the most celebrated oboe players of all time - Heinz Holliger. Heinz is a Swiss oboist who became one of the most famous oboe soloists in Europe.

In the recording on the right, Heinz Holliger performs the Bach oboe sinfonias and concertos.

CHECK IT OUT!!












SINGLE TONGUING



Articulation refers to how the player begins and ends a note. Tonguing is a specific kind of articulation that creates a clear start to each note. There are two primary forces at work in this drill that you must coordinate: your air and your tongue. The air must stay constant throughout the exercise while the tongue gently flicks the reed.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

-  Support your sound at ALL times! Think about increasing your air speed all the way to the last note.
-  Drills must be played with a metronome.
-  The note should start with the articulation then move quickly to a full sound. The tongue just needs to touch the reed - NOT hit the reed.
-  The act of tonguing is a motion DOWN and AWAY from the reed.
-  The top of the tongue close to the tip should touch very close to the tip of the reed. This should be relatively easy if the embouchure and tongue are in the right position. You should not have to do anything extreme in order to make this happen.
-  Perform this drill at many different dynamic levels.



$\text{♩} = 96-144$



$\text{♩} = 80-120$



Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe



$\text{♩} = 80-120$

T T T T

simile...



$\text{♩} = 80-120$

T T T T

simile...



$\text{♩} = 80-120$

T T T T

simile...



$\text{♩} = 80-120$

T T T T

simile...



Joseph Robinson

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

One of the best-known orchestral oboe players is Joseph Robinson. Joseph was the principal oboist of the New York Philharmonic from 1978-2005!

The recording on the right showcases his solo playing and has many pieces from the standard oboe repertoire.

GET THE CD!













MECHANISM DRILLS



Mastering the mechanics of the oboe requires much practice and attention to detail. Oboists are often asked to perform rapid technical passages and leaps with the instrument. The exercises below will help develop that skill.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

-  Support your sound at ALL times!
-  Drills MUST be practiced with a metronome.
-  All repeats should be taken 8-10 times.
-  Only increase the metronome speed when you have played the exercise flawlessly. It is better to spend a little more time at a slower speed and get it right, than try to push the tempo too soon and end up practicing mistakes.
-  Practice quick and precise fingering! Even though these exercises are slurred, the changes between the notes need to be precise. If the fingering requires multiple keys, focus on putting the keys down at the same time.
-  Keep as little movement in the embouchure as possible throughout the drill.
-  STAY RELAXED with great hand position. Stop when you feel tension in the body.
-  * denotes use of alternate F - either forked F or resonance key F.

♩ = 60 -- ♩ = 120

*

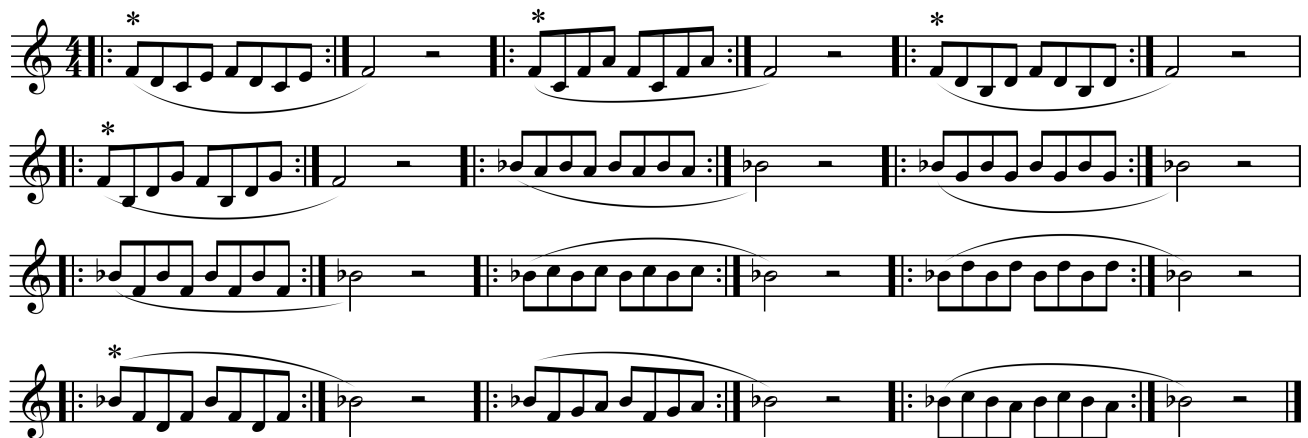


♩ = 60 -- ♩ = 120

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Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe

♩ = 60 -- ♩ = 120



♩ = 60 -- ♩ = 120



♩ = 60 -- ♩ = 120



Eugene Izotov

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Listen to one of the most beautiful oboe sounds out there today - Eugene Izotov. Eugene is the principal oboist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra

The recording on the right, "Sound in Motion," contains some wonderful music that is not in the "traditional" oboe repertoire.

CHECK IT OUT!!



Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe



♩ = 60 -- ♩ = 120



Minnesota Orchestra Oboe Section

Basil Reeve, John Snow, Julie Gramolini Williams, Marni J. Hougham

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Check out the hometown team! You can listen to all the recordings in the world, but there is nothing that compares to hearing great music played live. Take a trip down to Minneapolis and hear the Minnesota Orchestra's wonderful oboe section.

How would these great players perform the drills in this book?










TECHNICAL DRILLS



So far in your routine you have worked the embouchure, tongue and fingers. Now it is time to give the fingers a workout chromatically and within a certain key. Work for relaxed control of your keys. Try to keep tension at a minimum throughout each drill and gradually increase the tempo. Keep the tempo the same for a whole week and then increase it by a small margin. You will be surprised where you are in a few short months!

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

-  Support your sound at ALL times!
-  Drills MUST be practiced with a metronome.
-  Only increase the metronome speed when you have played the exercise flawlessly. It is better to spend a little more time at a slower speed and get it right, than try to push the tempo too soon and end up practicing mistakes.
-  Practice quick and precise fingering! Even though these exercises are slurred, the changes between the notes need to be precise. If the fingering requires multiple keys, focus on putting the keys down at the same time.
-  Keep as little movement in the embouchure as possible throughout the drill.



$\text{♩} = 160 - \text{♩} = 112$

3x's

3x's

simile



Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe



$\text{♩} = 160 - \text{♩} = 112$

3x's

simile



$\text{♩} = 48-90$



Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe

♩ = 84-124



First musical exercise for Oboe, consisting of six staves of music. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 84-124. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The first staff is in 4/4 time, and the subsequent staves are in 2/4 time. The exercise features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

♩ = 84-124



Second musical exercise for Oboe, consisting of seven staves of music. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 84-124. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The first staff is in 4/4 time, and the subsequent staves are in 2/4 time. The exercise features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.



Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe



$\text{♩} = 60-112$

This musical score is for an Oboe Embouchure Boot Camp exercise. It consists of 12 staves, each containing a single melodic line. The staves are arranged in a single column. The first staff begins with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 60-112$. The key signature for the first staff is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The subsequent staves have different key signatures: the second is three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab), the third is three sharps (F#, C#, G#), the fourth is two flats (Bb, Eb), the fifth is four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#), the sixth is one sharp (F#), the seventh is three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab), the eighth is one sharp (F#), the ninth is four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#), the tenth is two flats (Bb, Eb), the eleventh is three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and the twelfth is one sharp (F#). Each staff contains a single melodic line with various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The lines are connected by a long, sweeping slur that spans the entire duration of the exercise. Each staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.









MAJOR SCALE DRILLS



These drills are the final challenge for your daily routine. Without exercising your abilities in every musical language (key), you will be limited in what you can accomplish as a musician. Scales are the building blocks of all of the music that we play. If you know these scales, everything becomes easier. Music will become easier to play because you have seen the notes before. Basically, when you practice scales, you are traveling into the future. You are making it easier to play music that you will see later. Cool!

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

-  Support your sound at ALL times!
-  Practice all scales with a metronome marking that you are comfortable with and gradually increase the tempo.
-  Practice 2 scales a day for 6 days. This way you can get through all 12 in a week! (Gb Major and F# Major are enharmonic scales, meaning that they are spelled differently but sound the same and have the same fingerings. So even though there are 13 scales listed, there are technically only 12 different pitch levels.)
-  Practice your least favorite scales the most! Chances are that you will have your favorite and least favorite scales. Chances are even better that your least favorite scales are the ones that need the most practice. Don't just practice the scales that make you feel good, practice the scales that will make you a better musician.

C Major Scale



F Major Scale



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G Major Scale



Bb Major Scale



D Major Scale



Eb Major Scale



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A Major Scale



Ab Major Scale



E Major Scale



Db Major Scale



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B Major Scale



Gb Major Scale



F# Major Scale





MINOR SCALE DRILLS



Many students get around to practicing their major scales; many choose to forget about the minor scales. Once again, without exercising your abilities in every musical language (key), you will be limited in what you can accomplish as a musician. The minor scales drills below utilize the melodic version of the minor scale. This means that there is a raised 6th and 7th tone ascending and the entire natural minor scale descending. Since the natural minor scale is just the major scale starting on the 6th note, you have already practiced the natural minor scale. It is the most efficient use of time to drill the melodic minor scale in these studies.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

- ✈ Support your sound at ALL times!
- ✈ Practice all scales with a metronome marking that you are comfortable with and gradually increase the tempo.
- ✈ Practice 2 scales a day for 6 days. This way you can get through all 12 in a week! (E^b Minor and D[#] Minor are enharmonic scales, meaning that they are spelled differently but sound the same and have the same fingerings. So even though there are 13 scales listed, there are technically only 12 different pitch levels.)
- ✈ Once again, practice your least favorite scales more than your favorite scales.
- ✈ Focus on centering your tone on each note. These scales are more unfamiliar than the major scales so effort must be made to get them "in your ear."

A Minor Scale



D Minor Scale



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E Minor Scale



G Minor Scale



B Minor Scale



C Minor Scale



Embouchure Boot Camp - Oboe

F# Minor Scale



F Minor Scale



C# Minor Scale



Bb Minor Scale



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G# Minor Scale



Eb Minor Scale



D# Minor Scale





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Very few of the exercises contained in this book are completely original. Most have been compiled and adapted from proven exercise books from the entire spectrum of wind playing and from the many clinics and supplementary material from the American Band College Summers of 2010, 2011 and 2012. Effort was made to pick the most necessary exercises and adapt them to each instrument in the series. The following resources proved immensely helpful:

Advanced Method Vol.1 for Oboe - Rubank

The American Band College Summer 2010 Notebook and Clinics
William Woodworth

The American Band College Summer 2011 Notebook and Clinics
Louie Hall

The American Band College Summer 2012 Notebook and Clinics
Andrea Mather-Stow

Complete Conservatory Method for Cornet - J.B. Arban

Six Days "Daily Routines for Trombone" - Scott Moore

Technical Studies for Cornet - H.L. Clarke

Technical Studies Book 1 - Allen Vizzutti

