

De-Mystifying Reeds, Mouthpieces, & Other Equipment

Kristen Sheridan, D'Addario Woodwind Method Artist

REEDS

CANE

Cane, which is a wild grass/weed (*Arundo donax*), grows in tube form.

- Mediterranean climates are ideal for growing cane
- D'Addario owns and operates two cane plantations: one in the South of France and one in Mendoza, Argentina

Cane is harvested by hand, dried, de-husked, sunned, sorted into sizes and cut into splits at the plantation. It's then shipped to our facility in Burbank, CA where it is produced into reeds. D'Addario's state-of-the-art digital reed machines can produce 2 clarinet reeds every 5-7 seconds and 2 saxophone reeds every 7-9 seconds. The old Franke "key cutting"-style machines could only make one reed every 25-35 seconds and produced uneven results.

Reed strengths (2.5, 3, 3.5) refer to the stiffness of the cane, not the thickness of the finished product. A higher reed strength = a better or more advanced player. The reed must be a good fit for the student's mouthpiece.

ANATOMY OF A REED

The different parts of the reed correlate to different aspects of sound and articulation.

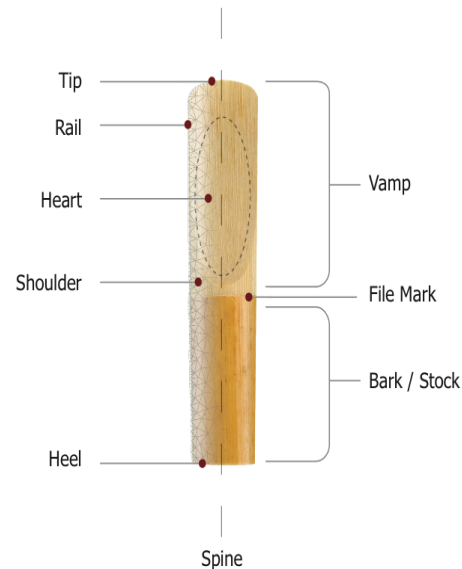
Blank: the entire reed before being shaped by machines. Different tapers & shapes can change response and articulation.

Vamp: the top half of reed, the part that goes over the opening of the mouthpiece

Tip: top edge of reed, affects articulation

Rails: edges of reed, affects the response (how the reed reacts when played)

Heart: the center of the reed, producing greatest tone and providing stability



FILED OR UNFILED?

This refers to whether or not the bark is cut in a straight line at the bottom of the vamp.

Filed reeds (Reserve reeds - blue banner box) will be a bit more resistant

Unfiled (Reserve Classic - purple banner box) reeds offer a little more brilliance.

TRADITIONAL OR THICK BLANK?

Traditional (thinner) blank reeds are cut closer to the bark of the cane and typically result in added tonal clarity and brilliance, whereas thick blank reeds are cut further away from the bark of the cane and typically result in added tonal complexity and cover.

Traditional blanks tend to feel a bit harder than thick blanks of the same strength.

REED CARE

Break in reeds gradually, over a period of a few days. It is generally recommended to limit reed use to 10-20 minutes in the first few days of a reed's life. Once reeds are broken in, reeds should be rotated. Break-in and rotation will prolong lifespan and keep reeds sounding great.

Proper storage is important for maintaining stable, well-functioning reeds. Avoid using the plastic holders that reeds come in as a permanent storage solution. D'Addario color reed guards promote quicker and more even drying, protect the tip of the reed, and are affordable.

Everyone should use a mouthpiece cap when the reed is still on the mouthpiece but not in use. This prevents reed damage and keeps the reed from drying out. Do not store the reed on the mouthpiece. Label mouthpiece caps! They get lost easily.

MOUTHPIECES

FACINGS

The reed lies flat on the table and side rails of the mouthpiece.

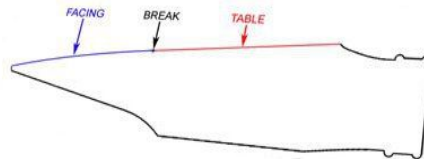
The facing is the entire curve of the mouthpiece *away* from the reed (not just the tip opening!).

The facing begins at the bottom of the window (referred to as "the break" of the mouthpiece)), and ends at the tip opening.

While the mouthpiece curves away, the reed remains straight, creating space for the air to go through and for the reed to vibrate.

TIP OPENING

The distance between the mouthpiece and the tip of the reed.



Close Facing

- smaller tip opening + less pronounced curve
- reed travels a shorter distance when vibrating
- less resistance
- generally, higher strength reeds are recommended on closer facings

Open Facing

- larger tip opening + more pronounced curve
- reed travels a longer distance when vibrating
- more resistance
- generally, lower strength reeds are recommended on more open facings

Less Resistance **More Resistance**
Typically requires harder reeds Typically requires softer reeds



Tip Opening: Smaller Larger
Facing Length: Longer Shorter
Curve: Less Pronounced More Pronounced

D'Addario Woodwinds mouthpiece comparison & reed strength guide

Brand													
	Reserve	X0 A=441	X5 A=441		X10 A=441		X10E A=442		X15E A=442		X25E A=442		
Vandoren	M13 / M13 Lyre	M15	5RV Lyre		5RV	M30 Lyre		B05	B40 Lyre		M30	B40	B45 Lyre/B45
Backun	CRT	LRT	TRT		ORT	P1.10		PRT+		ORT+	PRT/ART2		ART
Fobes	CF/CWF	Debut/CF+	2M		2L	3L		4L					
Gigliotti	P34	2	3		4								
Hawkins	B	R											
Hite		41	Pr		41J								
Lomax	A1	S2/O2	A2/S3/O4		A3	A3+		S4	A4				AM
PlayEasy								M1	B2	B1	B3		
Pomarico		Emerald	Nigun		Ruby				Sapphire			Diamond	
Selmer	B	B*	C/C*/Focus					Concept					
Smith	1*	1+	1++		CH1								
Yamaha		4C	2M		5C								

LIGATURES, NECK STRAPS

Ligatures can affect playability, response, articulation, and sound. While anything can be used in a pinch (shoelaces, duct tape, etc), students beyond the first year or two of playing will hear and feel benefits of an upgraded ligature.

Neck straps can be used by anyone who needs it: those experiencing arm problems, particularly small kids, etc. However, it's ideal if students can develop the muscles to play clarinet without it.



KRISTEN SHERIDAN

D'ADDARIO WOODWINDS METHOD CLINICIAN
TERRITORY: NORTHERN VIRGINIA

BIOGRAPHY

Kristen Grattan Sheridan is a prolific teacher to precollege clarinetists in Northern Virginia. She maintains a private teaching schedule of 55 students and is the weekly sectional instructor/clarinet specialist at 10 middle & high schools in Fairfax County, VA. She is a Backun Musical Services Artist and is a sought-after adjudicator, guest clinician, lecturer, freelance orchestral & chamber musician and recitalist in the DC area.

Kristen has Clarinet Performance degrees from the University of Michigan, where she studied with Fred Ormand, and the Manhattan School of Music, studying with Ricardo Morales. She attended many summer festivals, including the Sewanee and Aspen Music Festivals.

CLINIC PHILOSOPHY

Kristen's clinics focus on increasing students' confidence and ability through the development of beautiful tone, strong technique, rhythm, and equipment information. She teaches kids HOW to practice, makes "being great" something that everyone can achieve, and how to get the most out of their time with their instruments. She is fun, relatable, and gets students excited about doing their best.

To book a complimentary clinic with Kristen Sheridan or for more information, e-mail KSHERIDAN.DADDARIO@GMAIL.COM

THE D'ADDARIO WOODWINDS METHOD PROGRAM

The D'Addario Woodwinds Method Program creates a more enjoyable music-making experience for single-reed players through exploring equipment and pedagogy. Available throughout the United States and Europe, free presentations and product trials are available for schools, woodwind days, festivals, conservatory meetings, and retail events.

In addition to woodwinds educational material, our trained experts are skilled in speaking on behalf of the woodwind products industry – providing information on how reeds and mouthpieces are made, storage, innovations in manufacturing, and how to choose the right accessories to meet one's personal needs.

Each event attendee will be given free reed samples and an opportunity to test the latest mouthpieces and ligature models from D'Addario Woodwinds. 🎷