

Some thoughts for Making Bassoon Reeds
Compiled by George Sakakeeny

-Both blades must always look and measure the same.

-The collar, always, should be the thickest part of your reed's blade.

-The rails should be thickest in the back and should smoothly taper through the middle and tip sections to the very tip.

-The scraping must be even, leaving no bumps or ridges. All sections of the blades must blend together and appear smooth to the eye.

-The center line of the blade (spine) should always be equal to or thicker than any point to its right or left.

-When clipping the tip of your reed, clip the smallest amount possible, one or two 10ths of a millimeter. You can always shorten your reed again if needed but you can never make it longer.

-When adjusting the wires of your reed, adjust a tiny bit at a time, then try playing it again. It is inadvisable to make wire adjustments that go beyond what is required for the desired change. You can always do a bit more, but going back is not as simple as it may seem.

-Overall good response does not come from one part of the reed alone, but rather from all its parts being in proper balance.

-We must design and adjust our reeds to both respond well and sound beautiful. These two traits are not mutually exclusive.

-There is very little improvisation in consistent reed making. Know what you are making and make what you know.

-It is not how much or how little scraping you do that is important, but rather the end result.

QUOTES

"Without craftsmanship, inspiration is a mere reed shaken in the wind."
- Johannes Brahms

"Works of art make rules; rules do not make works of art."
- Claude Debussy

"To achieve great things, two things are needed; a plan, and not quite enough time."
- Leonard Bernstein

"Competitions are for horses, not artists."
- Bela Bartók

"I am hitting my head against the walls, but the walls are giving way."
- Gustav Mahler

"Lesser artists borrow, great artists steal."
- Igor Stravinsky

"I was obliged to be industrious. Whoever is equally industrious will succeed equally well."
- J. S. Bach

"I may not be a first-rate composer, but I am a first-class second-rate composer."
- Richard Strauss

"Form follows function - that has been misunderstood. Form and function should be one, joined in a spiritual union."
- Frank Lloyd Wright

"Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works."
- Steve Jobs

"Regard it as just as desirable to build a chicken house as to build a cathedral."
- Frank Lloyd Wright

"A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away."
- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

"The marble not yet carved can hold the form of every thought the greatest artist has."
-Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni

"I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free."
-Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni

"If people knew how hard I worked to get my mastery, it wouldn't seem so wonderful at all."
-Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni

"The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark."
-Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni

"A man paints with his brains and not with his hands."
-Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni