

Learn from whom?

The woodwinds family

In a standard music orchestra there are broadly 4 sections. The strings section, the brass section, the rhythm & percussion section & the woodwinds section.

The woodwinds section can include Recorders, Saxophones, French Horn, the key-concert flute, clarinet, oboe & bassoon. Note that the Saxophone & French-horn while made of “brass” are considered wind instruments and not part of the “brass section” of an orchestra.



In a standard woodwind quartet (top to bottom from the above figure) the flute plays the soprano. The alto is played by the oboe. The tenor is played by the clarinet while the bass part is played by the bassoon.

Other instruments that fall into this section include the S,A,T & B Recorders & the S,A,T & B Saxophones as below.



As a child less than 10 years you would start with a “Soprano” recorder. An adult beginner is better off starting with an “Alto” recorder.



The saxophone is a machine and requires equivalent handling. Usually one starts with an alto sax. Less expensive, smaller and more manageable. Volume of air required – lung power – has to be good.

It is recommend that you learn to play the clarinet first. It uses the same “single-reed”. You would probably get more opportunities to play the clarinet with other instruments and be a

part of groups getting better all the time – then you can switch to the saxophone.

The saxophone typically being a solo instrument, you have to get to be pretty good to take the lead and play in a group or band. No mistakes, playing with some feel and élan takes more time before you can go up-front.

The flute is a lead instrument requiring focus on technique, speed, dexterity and delivery of high quality and is perhaps the most challenging in these areas.

The oboe is a difficult instrument. Especially its double reed blowing and management of reeds. Tone production quality can also be a challenge. The bassoon is also similar to the oboe, more expensive on top of it.

Playing from day-one with other sections of the orchestra is a planned effort at Music International.

To this end the online subscription, digital library, intonation, minus-one, quartets are all a build up towards this ability of your instrument playing from day-one of our programme.

Depending on the instrument you choose you may have to learn the treble OR bass clef or BOTH. Some instruments such as the clarinet is a transposed instrument will sound different from other “C instruments” and the necessary music has to be available to you to play with others. You may have to transpose or re-write music for yourself quite early in your learning.

Genre

Approach 1 : Classical

While the most obvious and systematic way of learning a woodwind instrument is with the western classical music genre and repertoire. The vast amount of music available for your instrument makes it easy to get music. There are also dozens of good instrument methods. If one is not suitable there is always another. Many of them are free and available from and through our subscription.

The goal and aims are to play as a solo instrument, lead instrument, with other instruments especially a woodwinds quartet OR string sections of an orchestra.

Jazz would also fall into this approach as you need to be able to read music and understand Jazz theory to be really effective as a jazz musician.

Approach 2 : By-ear

However ... we encourage the playing of popular songs. Hymns. Simple songs. Each could be accompanied by an interested guitarist or keyboard player – a family member to help you get out there and play more often – the music you like. Each instrument has its own history, folk position in many countries and position in ancient to modern cultures.

Broadly all modern woodwinds playing including popular, blues, rock, electric & ghost instruments can be placed in this category of learning. Play-by-ear is essential.

Teaching method

I am personally a firm believer in that music is a collaborative group activity. Any woodwind instrument is the backbone of any orchestra and good quality music in today's world as much as from year 1600's. It must be learnt together, played

together and enjoyed together. This may be in unison, duets, trios, quartets, woodwinds section, string-section, full-orchestra or air with accompaniment by piano, organ, classical guitar or other.

Learning an instrument implies music notation learning, sight-reading and being able to play continuous ongoing music getting better all the time with practice and constantly expanding your repertoire.

I recommend

That you get started first. Perhaps even with a Recorder. As you get better you can decide on how you would like to focus your further and on-going learning.

Accessories to be added

- A Our annual online subscription digital resources library, practice companion & reference content is mandatory.
- B You should buy a music stand with the full intent of reading music, keeping you song books, chord or lead-sheets. A portable unit to carry to class sometimes becomes a consumable, lasts only for 2-3 years. A heavier more permanent one for home.
- C Keeping your music as a beginner the best available in the market is as in the figure below ...



Figure a : A portable music stand upright, once folded and in a carry bag.



Get about 30 of these sheets and place them in a light-weight folder that holds these. You can even buy 2 folders. Leave one at home. Bring one with the music we are doing at that time, this week sheet music only.

- D You can also pick-up a guitar tuner that shows and helps you tune strings. Some tuners also include a metronome and that can also be useful.
- E Other accessories may be a better or extra reeds, cleaning cloth, polishing accessories, instrument stand (optional) etc.



Put together by ...

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