



ADVANCED CLARINET STUDIES:

THE ART OF CHUNKING

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PHYLLIS AVIDAN LOUKE**



**Clarinet edition by
ROB PATTERSON**



**THEODORE
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COMPANY**

HOW AND WHY TO USE THIS BOOK

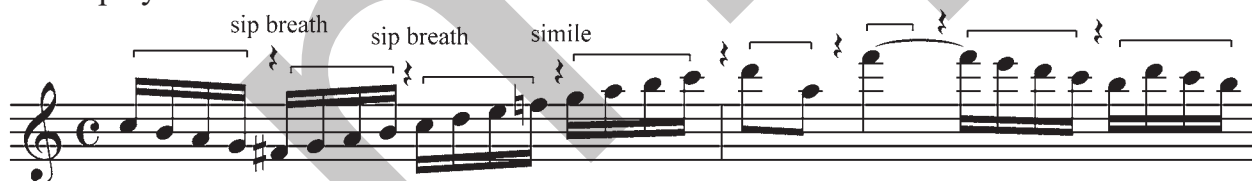
ADVANCED CLARINET STUDIES: THE ART OF CHUNKING

- Is designed to follow any intermediate method.
 - Is suitable for high school, college, and adult clarinetists.
 - Presents a comprehensive daily warm-up, followed by 48 lessons in major and minor keys.
 - Explores “chunking” in technical studies, etudes, preludes, and cadenzas to develop a fluid technique.
 - Includes orchestral excerpts for practice and understanding.
 - Includes exercises to help the clarinetist with specific areas of performance.
 - Includes exercises to increase agility and familiarity in the altissimo register.
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ADVANCED CLARINET STUDIES: THE ART OF CHUNKING is a unique resource, using “chunking” techniques for learning, practicing, and performing the material in this book. This process begins with mastering *The Art of Chunking*. While this book may be studied and practiced in the traditional manner, the optimum results are obtained by using the chunking process when learning and practicing this material.

What is Chunking?

Chunking is a practice method in which the clarinetist plays approximately one inch of notes followed by a rest. A *sip breath* is taken in the rest. A sip breath is a quick inhale like a conversational breath or taking a small sip of soda from a straw. This unit is called a chunk and is played slurred on one even blow of air.



When rhythms vary from the suggested chunking pattern, chunk by beat or by beamed notes, as shown above.

There are directions at the beginning of each exercise which suggest the number of notes for each chunk and the duration of the rest. Generally, the length of each chunk is four 16th-notes in simple meter followed by a ♩, six 16th-notes in compound meter followed by a ♩, and sometimes even one complete measure of music followed by a rest. The first note of each chunk is the loudest, and the following notes are softer. The first time through the book, follow these instructions before proceeding to **Advanced Chunking Techniques** on pages 148-149, where chunking larger numbers of notes will be discussed.

CHUNKING PRACTICE OFFERS MANY BENEFITS TO THE CLARINETIST:

- Coordinates what the eye sees/reads with short-term memory; so when reading music, the clarinetist does not read ahead, but stays in real time. For more information, see *The Musical Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music* by John Sloboda, Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Improves the sound quality by breathing in each rest, separating the vocal folds (vocal cords). This type of breathing is called taking a *sip breath* or *panting*.
- Helps the clarinetist learn music quickly, with an improved level of proficiency and confidence.
- Helps the clarinetist discover intervallic patterns in the music.
- Improves musicianship as the clarinetist learns to differentiate chunking as either *coming away from the beat* or *flowing towards the beat*, in **Advanced Chunking Techniques** on pages 148-149.
- Develops the skill of playing ON the beat by subdividing the rest between each chunk. Subdividing heightens the awareness of the first beat and avoids the tendency to play before the beat.
- Improves the quality of each attack by repeatedly subdividing in the rest.
- Improves fingering coordination. Repeated chunking places the series of fingering combinations into short-term memory. After continued repetition, this information is transferred to long-term memory.

Clarinetists may be tempted to learn these exercises by omitting the chunking process. However, **ADVANCED CLARINET STUDIES: THE ART OF CHUNKING** was written for clarinetists to explore and master *The Art of Chunking* and to reap the benefits this new practice technique brings. Only after the clarinetist has explored basic chunking and advanced chunking techniques should the studies be played in a traditional manner.

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LESSON AND PRACTICE CURRICULUM

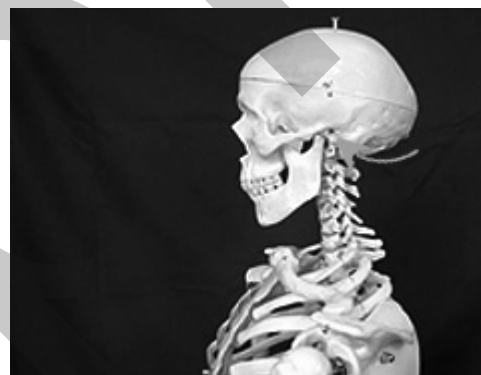
DAILY WARM-UP: Before each practice session, begin with the **Daily Warm-Up** on pages 8-9.

LESSONS: The 48 lessons explore *The Art of Chunking* in technical studies, etudes, preludes, and cadenzas. Exercises are presented periodically throughout the book for tone and articulation development. Orchestral excerpts for chunking practice and understanding are also included. These may be practiced for several lessons or for a longer period of time. Great care has been taken to avoid page turns in the middle of exercises and excerpts.

CLARINET ALIGNMENT: Always take care to align the clarinet the same way each time. Special care should be taken to make sure the bridge key, connecting the two center joints of the clarinet, is properly aligned.

POSTURE: It is advisable to practice both sitting and standing. In either position, bring the clarinet up to you. Do not lower and extend your head to meet the clarinet. The head should balance easily and neutrally on top of the spine. (*see photo on right*)

The angle of the clarinet will vary slightly for each person, but 45 degrees is a good starting point.



Balance the head on the spine.

Photo by Vanesa Abajo Perez,
used with permission
www.espressomedia.nl
www.violinistbalance.nl

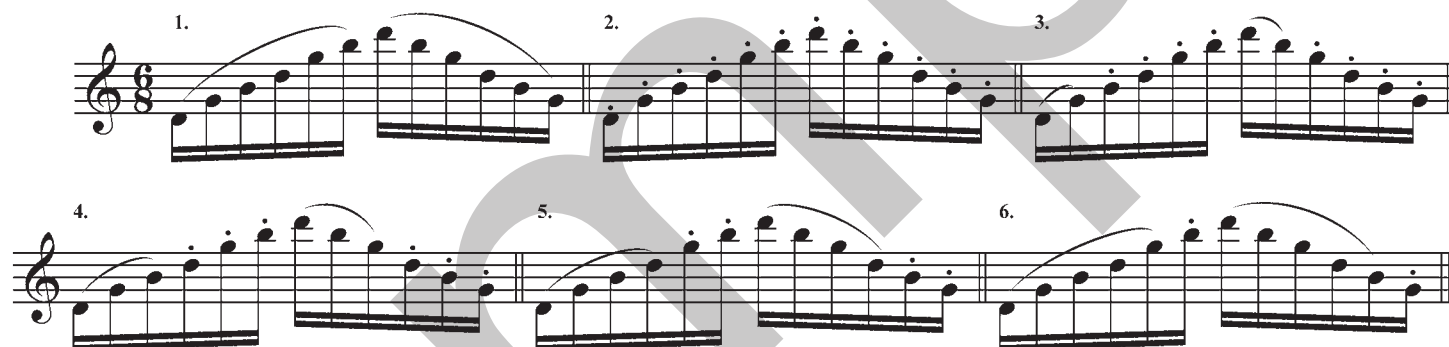
ARTICULATION: When articulating properly, there should be minimal jaw movement. Imagine being a ventriloquist to help achieve this. Only the tip of the tongue should touch the tip of the reed. Many articulation problems can be solved by using less tongue, putting the entire tongue in a higher position, and keeping the rest of the embouchure and jaw steady.

Rotate through the following articulations in your chunking practice of the scale and pattern exercises at the beginning of each lesson:

Groups of two or four beamed notes:



Groups of six beamed notes:



PHRASING GESTURES: The ▣ icon (downbow) indicates this chunk should be played by using a down/up or strong/weak musical gesture. This means that the first note of the chunk is played the strongest, and the subsequent notes softer. The chunk is played on the beat followed by a small *sip breath*. Chunks may be four 16th-notes in simple meter or six 16th-notes in compound meter. Chunking instructions are found at the beginning of each Hugues exercise and at the beginning of each lesson.



To enhance the understanding of the down/up gesture, some musicians employ movement in their playing. If you wish to employ physical movement, pretend you are cueing another musician. Place the chunk of four notes on the bottom of the cue (or *ictus*) as you naturally move from the down to up position followed by a rest. During the rest, breathe and return to the down position. This motion ensures that the clarinetist plays the notes evenly on a single blow of air.

DAILY WARM-UP

With any exercise, it is important to think about what you are trying to achieve. Rote repetition leaves you directionless and allows bad habits to creep into your playing. With these exercises, there are endless variations that can be created in order to hold your interest and attention.

Long Tones: Long tones are an essential part of every clarinetist's tone development. While playing, it is important to maintain an image of the ideal sound you are trying to create while constantly analyzing the sound you are producing. Focus on using the body as a resonance chamber in order to create volume instead of forcing the air. Breathe when necessary by adding a beat of rest.

This exercise develops a homogeneous (uniform) sound throughout the range. In this particular exercise, low E is the reference note. Make it as beautiful as possible and match the timbre of the rest of the notes to it. Use a tuner to check intonation. In addition, here are some suggestions for different ways to play this exercise.

1. Continue the pattern in Line 1 one and two octaves higher.
2. Continue the pattern in Line 2 one and two octaves lower.
3. Play *f* then *p*.
4. Play with ♩ , ♪ , then ♩ .

Slowly $\text{♩} = 50$ (with a metronome)

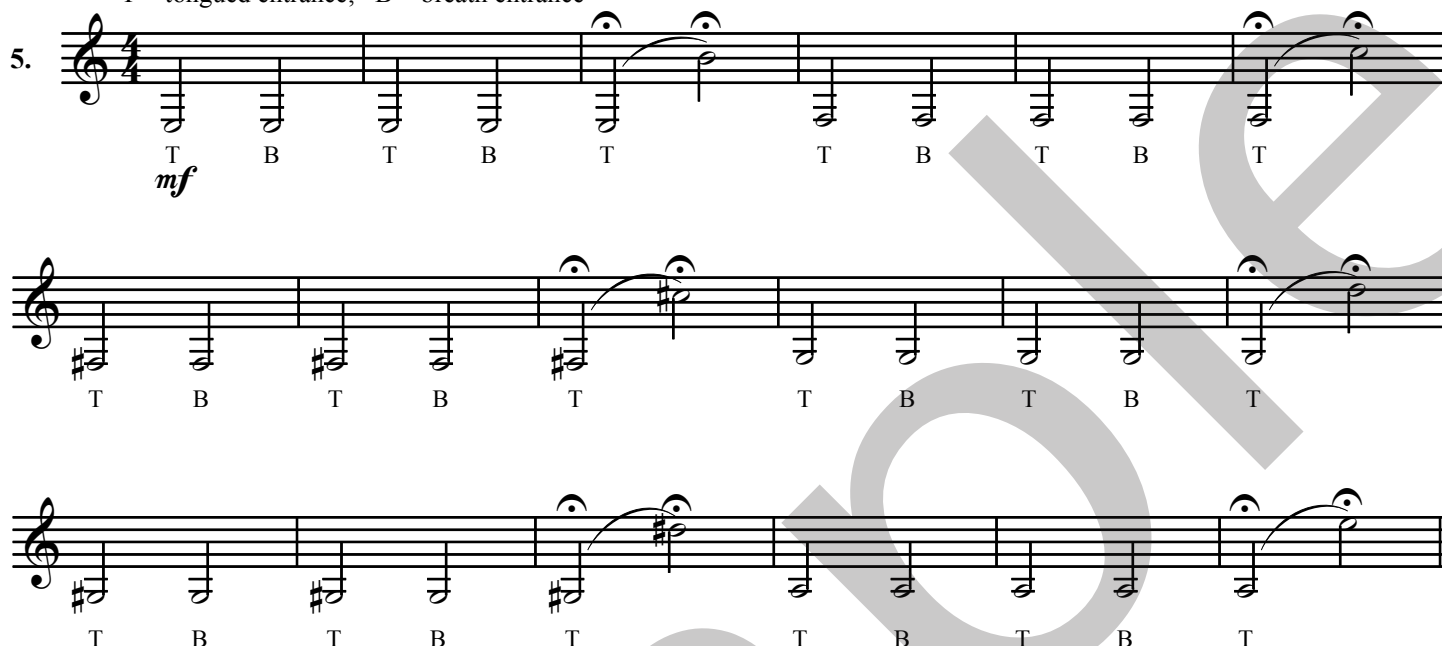
1.

Alternating Breath and Articulated Entrances: This exercise alternates between breath and articulated (tongued) entrances, with the goal of matching the two types of entrances as closely as possible. Use the breath entrances as reference points for what it feels like to have a note begin right away, with immediate air at the desired dynamic level of the note.

- The tongue should only add a small amount of definition to the entrance.
- Avoid scooping into the note or starting it with an accent.
- Upon reaching the final fermata notes, aim for a focused and resonant sound in the lower register.
- Allow the 12th to smoothly release from the lower note, while matching the tone color as closely as possible.

Slowly

T = tongued entrance; B = breath entrance

5. 

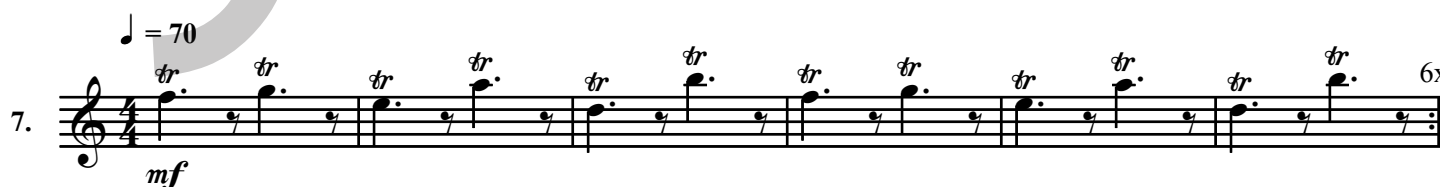
Tabuteau Dynamics: This exercise is based on the dynamic/intensity levels developed by Marcel Tabuteau, legendary oboist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, with 1 being the softest and gentlest and 5 being the loudest and most intense. Maintain embouchure and support throughout the exercise for control of intonation and timbre. Breathe, as necessary, except in the last measure.

Each note should begin simply with tone, avoiding unnecessary tongue noise, accents, and dips in the sound. Tabuteau and Donald Montanaro referred to this concept of starting a note effortlessly *like moving a hot knife through butter*.

Very slowly, with space between each note ♩ = 40

6. 


Balance of Trills: This exercise helps balance the clarinet in the hands. Play with articulate fingers; move fingers from the third knuckle back from the nail. The trill begins and ends on the written note. Keep the fingertips close to the keys. Repeat this exercise many times until your fingers feel warm and coordinated.

7. 

LESSON 1: C Major

Groups of two or four beamed notes: Practice slurred in 4-, 8-, and 16-note chunks followed by a rest. (*see graphic below*)

Groups of six beamed notes: Practice slurred in 3- and 6-note chunks followed by a rest. (*see graphic below*)

Place a  (down-bow) on the first note of each chunk. *For information on Phrasing Gestures, see page 7.*

Practice Options: Reference the chart on page 7 for different articulation options.


Rotate through dynamic levels (*p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *f*).

When playing *p*, keep the embouchure firm and use fast air to support the tone.

When playing *f*, keep the fingers light even as you increase the volume of air.

Five-Note Scale Patterns

Chunk by 4s Chunk by 8s Chunk by 16s



Two-Octave Scale


4. 

Two-Octave Scale in Thirds

5. 

Chromatic Scale

Chunk by 3s Chunk by 6s



Seamless Slurs: ♩ = 60-80

also 8va and 15ma

D. S. Wood
(1872-1930)

7. 

Chunk by 4s



C Major Exercise

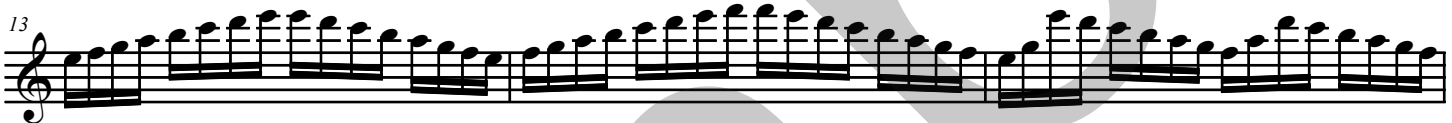
Practice slurred in 4-note chunks followed by a rest.
Place a ▢ (down-bow) on the first note of each chunk.
See **Phrasing Gestures**, page 7.

Luigi Hugues
(1836-1913)

Allegro



Play each chunk on one blow of air. See box in upper left corner for the size of each chunk. Taking a *sip breath* after each chunk uses a type of breathing called *panting*. Panting separates the vocal folds, so the air is not constricted in any way.



THE ART OF PLAYING PRELUDES AND CADENZAS

A prelude is a spontaneous and improvised musical form originating in the 18th century. Performing preludes provided the player with the opportunity to warm-up both himself and his instrument by playing scales, thirds, and arpeggios in a key, often with modulations and added embellishments. While preludes were not previously written down, in 1719, Jacques Hotteterre-le-Romain published *L'Art de Preluder* as a tutorial for his students to learn to improvise preludes. Preluding continued to be popular well into the 19th century. Other improvised forms include caprices and cadenzas.

Ideas for Interpreting Preludes and Cadenzas:

There is no right or wrong way to play a prelude or cadenza. The purpose is to make artistic choices and communicate your ideas with the audience. The preludes and cadenzas in this book are written without a time signature. Learning to play in unmeasured time benefits your phrasing skills when playing with a time signature. The following suggestions, while generalized and simplified, can provide a foundation on which you may build more complex phrasing strategies. The immediate goal is to play “A” way as you strive to find “THE” way.

1. Is there a tempo marking? If there is a tempo marking, this will give you a clue to the style and character of the prelude. If there is no tempo marking, you may decide the tempo. Look up any unfamiliar words in a music dictionary or on the internet.
2. Preludes should be played *a piacere* (at your pleasure). Notice there is no time signature, so you may organize the material as you desire.
3. Check the key signature. Review scales, thirds, and arpeggios in the tonic (I) and dominant (V) keys as these are most frequently used in preludes and cadenzas. Preludes in major keys are more joyous than ones in minor keys.
4. As you are learning the notes, use the *process* of chunking. Practice chunks of notes that are beamed together. In music notation, a beam is a line that connects the stems of notes to indicate rhythmic value (8th-notes, 16th-notes, 32nd-notes, etc.). Chunk each pattern in a sequential passage separately. Chunk notes together that present a technical fingering or slurring challenge. Remember, while most chunks will be about one-inch in span of notes, chunking by smaller and larger groups can be beneficial in later stages of practice.
5. Notice the placement of notes with fermatas. Notes with a fermata indicate the end of a thought much like punctuation does in grammar. Decide upon a hierarchy of the fermatas. Some fermatas will be on whole notes, others on quarter notes. If there are five fermatas in the prelude, number their importance from one to five. You may choose the length of time you wait between the fermata and the next entrance. Silence between phrases adds to the conversational effect of the prelude.
6. Generally, preludes are notated with the quarter-note being rhythmically constant.
7. Notes of shorter value lead to longer notes. Usually these notes should be played softer than the note they lead to.
8. Decay or diminuendo to the dot or tie. Notes played after a dot or tie should be played softer. If you take a breath after a dotted or tied note, enter softly. This will add nuance to your performance.
9. If many notes are beamed together, count back from the final beamed note by 4s to know on which part of the beat to begin the run. Some runs work best if grouped by 3s. If grouping by an uneven group of notes, start with the smallest number of notes first (for an 11-note run, you might group by 2+3+3+3). Once again, it is your