

The First Complete **Weissenborn**

Bassoon Method and Studies,
Op. 8, Vols. 1 and 2

Ludwig Milde

25 Scale and Chord Studies, Op. 24

Edited by

Frank Morelli

CARL FISCHER®



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Julius Weissenborn's *Praktische Fagott-Schule* and *Fagott-Studien*, Op. 8, Volumes 1 and 2: History and Evolution

The Original Weissenborn Editions

Julius Weissenborn (1837–1888), a renowned German bassoonist, played and taught primarily in Leipzig. His *Praktische Fagott-Schule*, now widely known as his Method for Bassoon, was published in 1887, around the same time that his *Fagott-Studien* (Bassoon Studies) Op. 8, Vol. 1, *Für Anfänger* (For Beginners), and Vol. 2, *Für Vortgeschrittene* (For Advanced Pupils) were published. These works have never been combined into one volume, or into a complete system of coordinated lessons and exercises, until now.

The Carl Schaefer Edition

In the 1920s, a revised version of the *Fagott-Schule* appeared, prepared by Weissenborn's successor in Leipzig, Carl Schaefer. He shortened the *Einleitung* (Introduction) and made significant changes to the *Praktische Übungen* (Lessons) and the *Anhang* (Supplement).

The Carl Fischer "Bettoney Edition"

Born in England, Fred Bettoney (1884–1933) was a bassoonist in the Philadelphia Orchestra and later, the Boston Symphony. His 1930 edition was based on Schaefer's version, but included new material, most importantly, Weissenborn's Op. 8, Vol. 2, mentioned above, widely known as "Fifty Advanced Studies" and Ludwig Milde's *Studien über Tonleiter und Akkordzerlegungen für Fagott* (Scale and Chord Studies for Bassoon) Op. 24. The Bettoney version, entitled "Method for Bassoon by Julius Weissenborn," was later published by Carl Fischer, and remained in print for more than eighty-five years.

Notes from the Editor

Acknowledgements

In June of 2014, Carl Fischer Music offered me the opportunity to revise and expand the Weissenborn *Method for Bassoon*, which grew into *The First Complete Weissenborn Method and Studies*, Op. 8, Vols. 1 and 2. I am grateful to Sonya Kim, Nicholas Hopkins and Andy Dowty of Carl Fischer for bringing this expanded version to completion. Friends, colleagues and students generously offered feedback along the way. Among those to whom I am especially grateful are Dr. Gina Cuffari, Dr. Michele Fiala, Dr. James B. Kopp, Tara Helen O'Connor, Harry Searing and my wife, Bethany Morelli. Finally, a tip of the hat to Julius Weissenborn whose "users manual 1.0" remains an invaluable resource well into its second century.

—Frank Morelli (Thanksgiving, 2018)

The First Complete Weissenborn Method and Studies (The Carl Fischer "Morelli Edition")

This new edition, supplanting the Bettoney version, is based upon Weissenborn's original versions. For the first time, the Method and the contents of Op. 8, Volumes 1 and 2 are presented in one book. Milde's *Scale and Chord Studies* remain. Very little has been removed from the previous Bettoney edition.

Opus 8, Vol. 1 has been integrated into this new edition as follows:

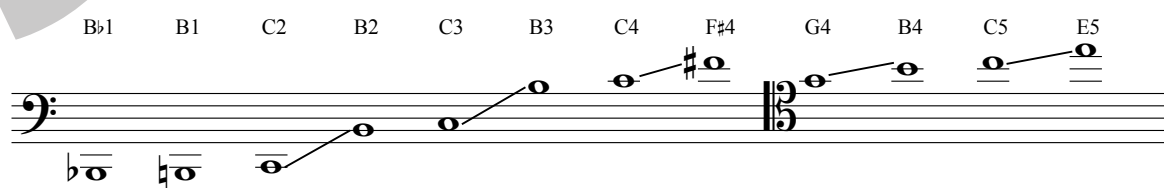
- Exercises in Part I (Essential Kinds of Expression) have been revised so that they are now incorporated into the first 20 lessons of the original Method.
- Exercises in Part II (Tenor Clef) are now introduced within the Method, starting with Lesson XXI A.
- The contents of Parts III (Scale Exercises in all Keys), IV (Arpeggios, Chord Exercises), V (Chromatic scales) and VI (Progressions in thirds, fourths, sixths, octaves and tenths) have been redistributed into the *Anhang* (Supplement to the Practical Exercises), as well as into two new sections entitled “Advanced Methods for Improving Intonation, Tone Production, Tonguing and Finger Technique” and “Intermediate Studies from Op. 8, Vol. 1.”
- Part VII (Embellishments) has been integrated into the section “Ornamentation Studies”

Other improvements in *The First Complete Weissenborn Method and Studies* include:

- Revised, modernized and expanded Introduction with modern illustrations.
- Frank Morelli’s “The Basics of Bassoon Playing” and “Advanced Methods for Improving Intonation, Tone Production, Tonguing and Finger Technique” offer comprehensive basic and advanced pedagogical instruction.
- For the first time, a Comprehensive Study Key has been included, linking each lesson in the method to other parts of the book appropriate for study at that lesson’s level of advancement. This allows the student and teacher to coordinate the entirety of the book’s contents into a fully integrated method.
- A new section, “Intermediate Studies,” from Op. 8, Vol. 1, provides an important bridge to the more advanced studies that follow.
- Newly added lessons introduce all of the notes (from high B to high E), used by Weissenborn in his *Fifty Advanced Studies* (Op. 8, Vol. 2), but not introduced in his *Fagott-Schule*.
- The tenor clef, introduced in Lesson XXIA, is then included in subsequent lessons, so that the student gains mastery of this clef while learning the notes for which it is most often used.
- Bonus Duets have been added to each lesson, beginning with Lesson II. These thirty-six duets, designed to enhance the learning experience, are based upon popular themes and many of the most important bassoon solos from the orchestral repertoire.
- Newly added “Fun Facts,” offer welcoming and tantalizing information while encouraging greater musical appreciation and curiosity.
- Modernized fingering and trill charts
- A revised and expanded glossary of definitions of musical terms found in this volume.

IPN (International Pitch Notation)

International Pitch Notation is a way to identify pitches, both by name and octave, using letters and numbers. This notation is used throughout:



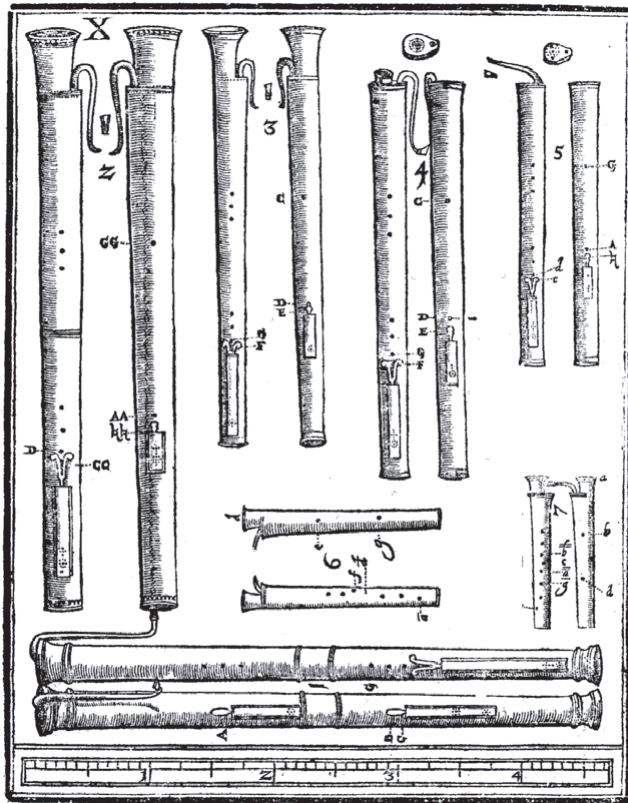


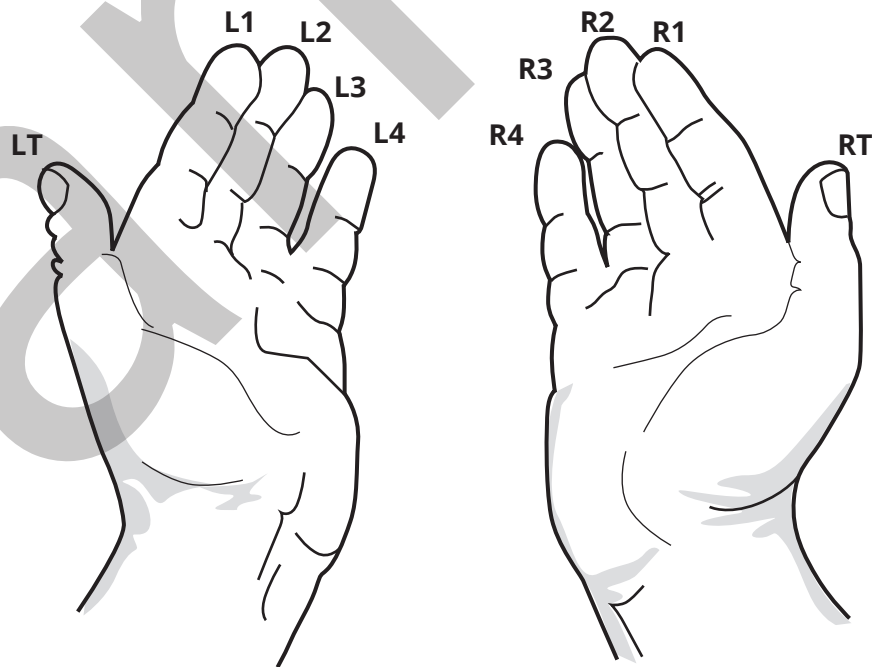
Fig. 1 from *Syntagma musicum* 1614-1620
Michael Praetorius



Fig. 2 Bassoon from: *Essai sur la Musique ancienne et moderne* (1780) by Jean-Benjamin de La Borde 1734-1794

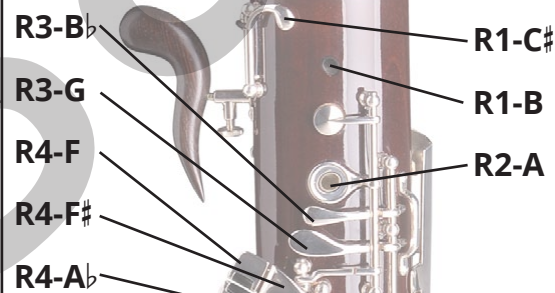
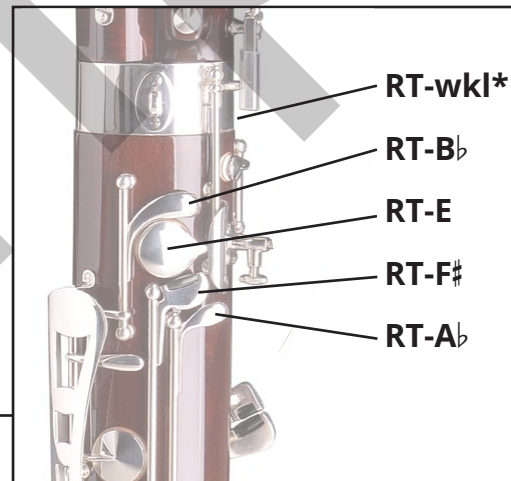
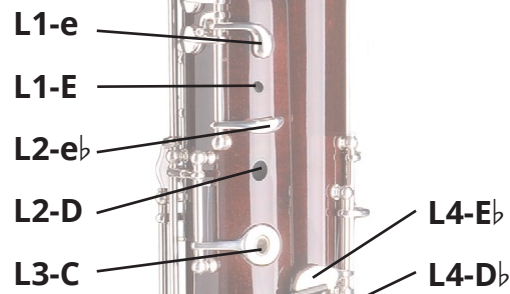
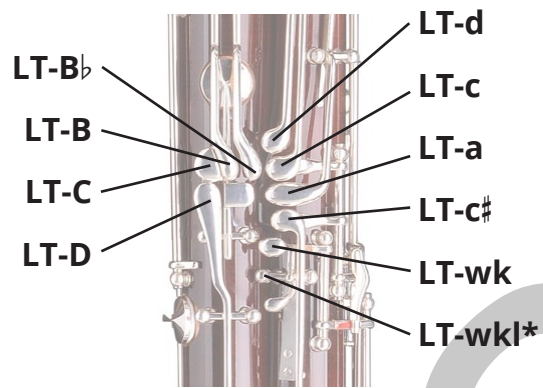
Symbols Used To Identify Each Finger

The following illustration shows the system by which letters and numbers are employed throughout this book to refer to each finger.



The following illustration presents a system of symbols that combines those for each finger (shown above) with note names (A, B♭ etc.), and “wk” and “wkl” for whisper key and whisper key lock. In this way, the diagram illustrates which finger covers the bassoon’s open holes and/or operates its keys.

Symbols Used to Identify Keys on the Bassoon



* There may be a whisper key lock (**wkl**) operated by LT, RT or R1. The contact point for R-1 when operating the wkl is near the mid-point of the upper side of the finger.

Introduction

The Bassoon: Predecessors and Development

The bassoon (Italian: *il fagotto*, French *le basson*, German *der Fagott*) is the direct descendant of the *dulcian*. The dulcian evolved from its predecessor, the *pommer*, in the mid-sixteenth century. The dulcian's distinguishing features were its reed, which required an embouchure similar to that employed on the modern bassoon, and its conical bore, which was constructed from two holes drilled through the length of the block of wood that formed its body. These holes were connected at the bottom end. This created a continuous bore approximately eight feet in length, but folded in half, making it much easier to play.

The bassoon probably evolved from the dulcian around the mid-seventeenth century. Due to advances in design and technology, its distinguishing feature was that it was now made of four parts (excluding the bocal and reed), affording the instrument maker greater control of the shape of the bore and tone holes. This instrument had three or four keys and eight open holes. The unwieldy precursors of the *contrabassoon*, or *double bassoon*, had a range approximately one octave lower than their smaller relatives, and followed similar evolutionary paths.

In the eighteenth century, the bassoon's family tree developed two major branches, the German *Fagott* and French *basson*. Carl Almenröder (1786–1843) was chiefly responsible for the development of the *fagott*, or German system bassoon, in the first half of the nineteenth century. He collaborated with Johann Adam Heckel in making the improvements that have resulted in the instrument we know today. In his *Method*, Weissenborn extolled the virtues of the Almenröder/Heckel bassoon. The instrument has undergone further advancements, and today there are several makers producing fine German bassoons. Almenröder's French counterpart was Eugène Jancourt (1815–1901). His innovations and collaborations with French makers in the second half of the nineteenth century led to the *basson* in use today.

The Parts of the Bassoon

Leaving the reed aside for the moment, the bassoon is made up of five parts. Each of them must be handled with care.

1. Looking at the top end of the **boot joint** (or *butt joint*) you will notice that it has a double bore. The bottom ends (*tenons*) of the tenor and long joints fit into these holes (*sockets*). There is a *u-tube* underneath the cap at the bottom end connecting these two lengths of bore. In this way the bassoon's bore is folded upon itself. At the bottom of the cap there is often a hole to which the **seat strap** is attached. There is also a **ring** attached near the top end of this joint that is used when supporting the bassoon with a **neck strap** or **harness**. There is often a **hand rest** (or *crutch*) located at the top end of the boot joint.
2. Weissenborn wrote that the **tenor joint** (or *wing joint*) was perhaps the most important part of the bassoon and stressed that it must be protected from harm.
3. The tenon at the bottom end of the **long joint** fits snugly into the larger hole in the top of the boot joint.
4. The bottom end of the **bell** fits snugly onto the top tenon of the long joint.
5. The delicate **bocal** (or *crook*) is made of metal, with cork at the wide end, intended to fit snugly into the top of the tenor joint. Its shape and dimensions are crucial to the instrument's response, intonation and tone quality. It is important to have at least two bocals, often of different lengths, to aid intonation and to ensure that you have a replacement on hand in case one is damaged. Bocals are stamped with a number, usually 1, 2 or 3. The higher the number, the longer the bocal, and consequently, the lower the pitch.

Parts of the Bassoon

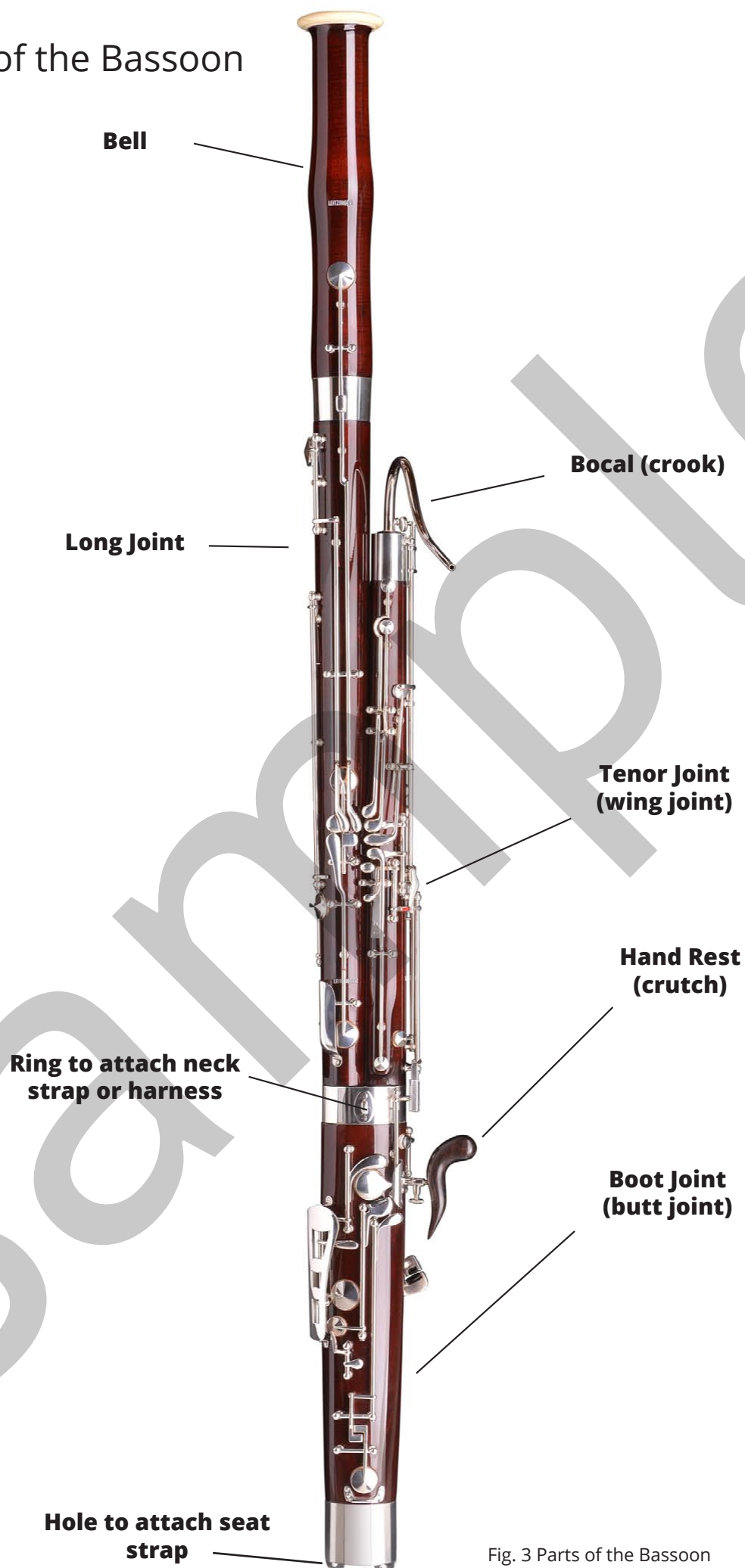


Fig. 3 Parts of the Bassoon

Photo courtesy of Stephan Leitzinger Bassoons

Acquiring a Good Instrument

At the outset of his Introduction, Weissenborn indicated that an adolescent, even if possessed of a sound respiratory system, adequate strength and a musical ear, must be of sufficient size to study the bassoon. Fortunately, today there are instrument makers who offer bassoons with keywork designed for people with smaller hands and a shorter reach. In addition, excellent, smaller *tenorboons* (pitched a fourth above the bassoon) are being produced that allow pre-adolescent children to begin playing prior to switching to the full-sized bassoon.

All too often beginning students of any age are saddled with substandard instruments. There are several bassoon makers selling affordable student instruments of excellent quality, but even these must be in playable condition. No doubt, there are instruments brands that should be avoided. Whenever possible, seek the help and advice of a qualified teacher or professional bassoonist when selecting an instrument. This extra effort will help the student to get a good start.

Care and Maintenance of the Bassoon

Handle with care.

The bassoon is a big, but fragile instrument. As with any valuable and sensitive piece of equipment, it must be treated with care:

- When not being played, store the instrument safely in its case, and always at room temperature.
- Do not leave the instrument in direct sunlight or in the trunk of a car.
- Do not prop the instrument in a corner or against a piece of furniture.
- Always keep the bassoon upright when the bore is moist. The bore of the tenor joint and that of the boot joint that is connected to the tenor joint are lined with hard rubber or plastic. Every effort should be made to keep moisture from coming into contact with the pads or with the unlined side of the bore.
- Always keep the pads dry and undisturbed. Each pad is designed and installed to create the best possible seal on the tone hole it covers.
- Never hold the bassoon by grasping only the long joint or bell. There is a significant risk that these joints could separate from the boot, and the rest of the instrument will crash to the floor!
- Store your reeds in a safe, ventilated reed case. An airtight reed case will cause the reeds to become moldy. Do not moisten the reed in your mouth or carry it around that way. Always soak your reed in fresh water. Using saliva to moisten a dry reed causes it to deteriorate more quickly and carrying it around in your mouth creates a much greater risk of cracking the tip.

Putting the Bassoon Together

To avoid mishap, put the bassoon together while seated, with the case on the floor next to you, or perhaps securely placed on a chair or table. It is best to have your teacher demonstrate this process and then supervise as you learn to assemble and disassemble the instrument. Put the pieces together as follows:

1. If you are using a **seat strap**, place the strap on the seat of your chair, under your legs near the front edge, before putting the bassoon together. The part of the strap that will connect to the bassoon must be on the right. (If you are using a **neck strap** or **harness**, it is best to put it on before putting the instrument together.)
2. Holding the **boot joint** near the top, place it in front of you on your chair or on your knee, with the thumb side of the joint facing you. (Fig. 4).
3. Grasp the **tenor joint** near to the top of its widest part. Be careful not to press too hard on the keywork. Insert the tenon carefully into the smaller hole, or socket on the top of the boot. Gently press down on the tenor joint until the tenon is fully inserted. The use of a slight, twisting motion, a little in each direction, will help with this. There are three basic ways to make sure the

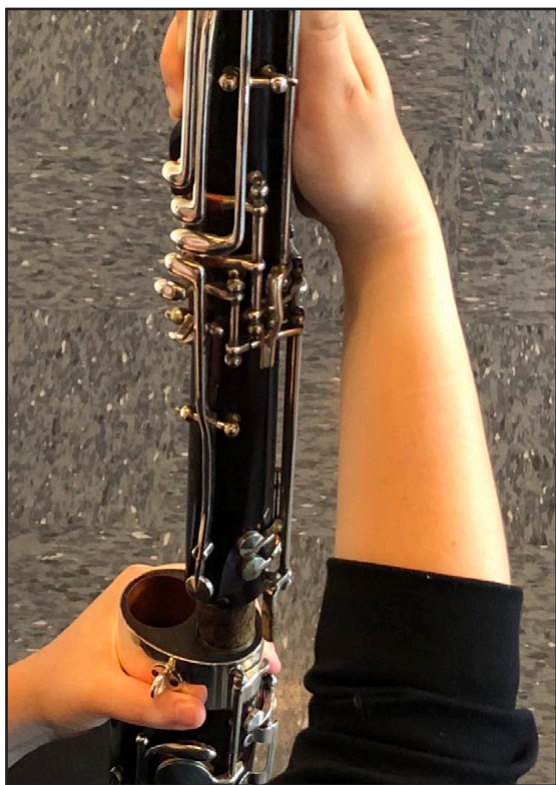


Fig. 4. Holding the boot joint while inserting the tenor joint



Fig. 5. The interior curve of tenor joint must be concentric with the adjacent socket.



Fig. 6. Aligning the tenor joint: linkage from tenor to boot joint

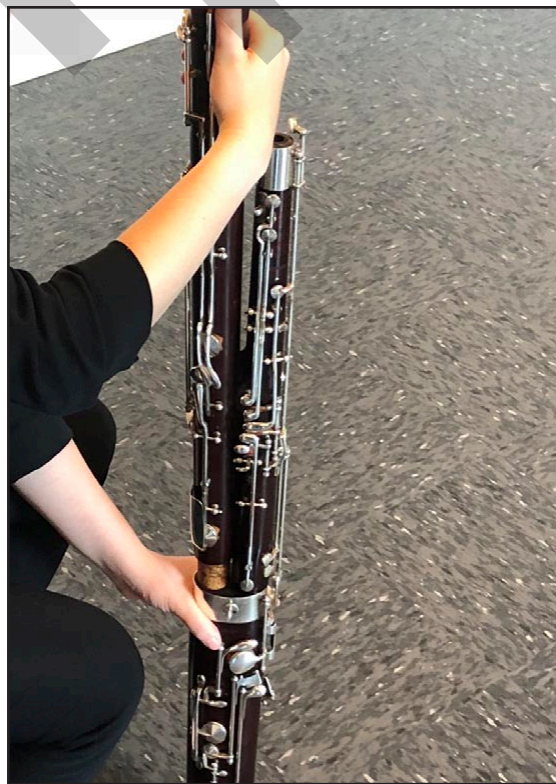


Fig. 7. Adding the long joint



Fig. 8. Attaching the bell

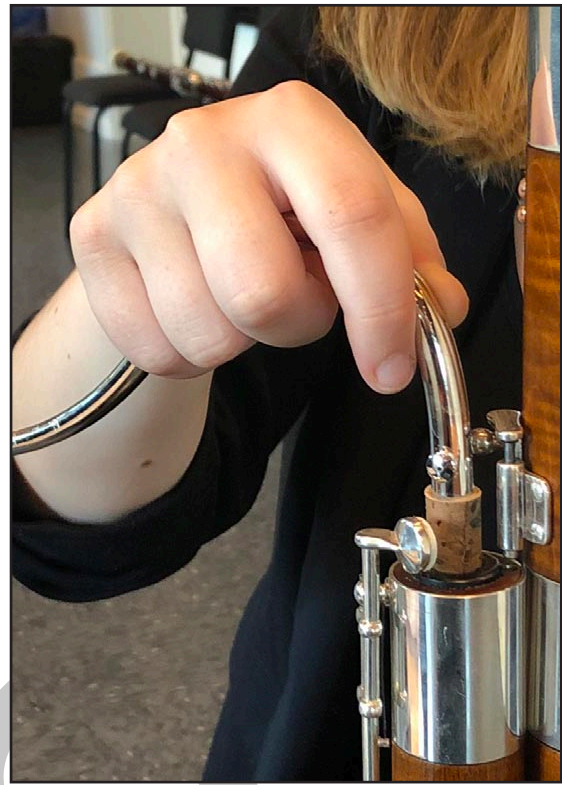


Fig. 9. Inserting the bocal

tenor joint is properly aligned: **a.** the interior curve of the tenor joint should be concentric with the remaining open socket; **b.** the linkage of the whisper key mechanism must line up with its counterpart on the boot; **c.** often there are marks inscribed on the metal band at the top of the boot and in the wood at the bottom of the tenor joint that indicate the desired positioning. Be sure they are aligned. (Figs. 4, 5 and 6)

4. Hold the **long joint** with your left hand, just below the top two pads at the wider end of the joint and hold the boot joint with your right hand near the top of that joint. If there is a **body lock** on the long joint to connect it to the tenor joint, be sure it is in the unlocked position. With the thumb keys facing toward you, insert the smaller end into the remaining socket in the same manner you inserted the tenor joint. The thumb keys on the tenor and long joints should be close to each other, but not touching. Often there is a small metal plate on the long joint that will come into contact with the tenor joint, which should indicate that the joints are properly aligned. Engage the body lock, if there is one. (Fig. 7).
5. Place the butt end of the bassoon gently on the floor in front of you, holding the partly assembled instrument by the boot joint in one hand and the tenor and long joints in the other hand. *Never hold the bassoon by grasping only the long joint. There is a significant risk that the long joint could separate from the boot, and the rest of the instrument will crash to the floor!* Grasp the **bell** with the B \flat pad facing you and hold the pad closed. Place the bell onto the long joint and push down in the same manner previously employed, making sure that the key linkage between the joints is aligned. (Fig. 8).
6. Hold the **bocal** with one hand along the upper bend with as many fingers as possible. Gently place the cork end into the top of the tenor joint, using the now familiar gentle, twisting motion. It is quite easy to rip or even dislodge the whisper-key pad when inserting the bocal. To avoid this, be sure that the whisper key is in the open position. Once the bocal is in place, press the low E key with your right thumb to ensure that the whisper key closes the hole on the bocal properly. You may need to realign the tenor and long joints slightly if the pad doesn't seal properly. If realigning the joints does not create a proper seal, it is likely that this mechanism will need to be adjusted by a repair technician. *Never force the bocal into the socket.* (Fig. 9).
7. Place the **reed** (which should have been soaked properly) onto the bocal.