Instrument: Bassoon

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Article Title: Evaluating the Condition of a Used Bassoon

Author: Chip Owen

Summary (Outline form):

* + - A repair technician’s contribution
      * Take bassoon to repair technicians to have it checked before purchasing
    - Ask the private teacher
      * Teacher should play instrument and say how much work it needs
      * Also know which brands are bad
    - Age and provenance
      * Age relates to condition
      * Serial number is import-maker should be able to tell when and where it was made
    - Where has it been used in the past
      * Try to get instrument that has not been in schools and having been used by a pro is preferable
      * In the middle is amateur owners-not always bad
      * Watch out for instruments that are not regularly used
      * Old bassoons might need to be fixed
      * Check history of maintenance
    - First things to check
      * Is case clean? Not moldy? In decent shape? Does case work?
      * Look at instrument-ignore bocal for now
      * Check keys and posts, missing keys, whisper key and bridge key
      * Check all guards
      * Check screws and body locks
    - Keywork
      * Check for evidence of sloppy repair, make sure pads are there and keys are not bent
      * Check for noisy keys
    - Pads
      * Check/replace older pads
      * Clean pads with dry cloths
      * Check vacuum on pads and make sure tone holes close
    - The U-tube
      * Check u tube, by removing boot cap, place boot joint into bowl of water (don’t get on pads!!) close all pads and blow into joint watch for bubbles
      * Make sure it’s clean inside
    - Moisture Damage
      * Inspect boot joint/cap for moisture damage, check for dents on outside and inside (can show improper swabbing)
      * Make sure wood isn’t softer in some parts than in others
    - Tenons and Sockets
      * Tenons could be in thread or cork-either is fine
      * Watch out to make sure they have not been replaced with metal or plastic
      * Make sure tenons fit in sockets well and do not wiggle
    - General body condition
      * Look at wood in bore
      * Needs to be oiled periodically
      * Check for loose bands on the bell
      * Make sure bell ring is fine
      * Check for dents
      * Make sure tone hole facings are smooth
    - Plating
      * Nickel may be dull but silver can be worked with and polished
      * Not important to function of instrument
    - Bocals
      * Don’t worry if brands don’t match.
      * Make sure it does agree with instrument and that the fig is good and the cork is not ragged