

Reed Diagnostics

When testing reeds, it is essential to use the embouchure and air you would normally use on a good, finished reed. Do not adjust.

Ask yourself: Is this reed in tune? Does this reed respond?

Other factors to consider: Is the tip opening too open or too closed? Is this reed too resistant or too free blowing? Is this reed unstable?

If you are not sure what to do to a reed, keep playing on it until you are confident what step to take.

If you dislike the sound of a reed, I want you to think about what qualities of that reed's pitch or response might be affecting the sound. Think about objective criteria because "sound" is subjective.

Over time, the reed will darken, become more resistant, and pitch will stabilize.

Ask yourself: Is this a good piece of cane? The definition of a good piece of cane is a reed that reacts positively to the work that is done to it and the reed does not change back.

A reed is finished when there is no more work to be done without causing any negative consequences regarding intonation, response, or stability.

Scraping Technique

Keep your file parallel to the table and scrape across the grain.

Taper from back to front, center to side, and taper to the four corners of the tip.

The corners of the tip are the thinnest parts of a reed and all four corners should be the same thickness.

Wire Technique

It is imperative that the second wire is tight.

One of my favorite ways to "build in the sound" is by rounding the second wire.

First Wire

Second Wire

Round	Flatten	Round	Flatten
Opens	Closes	Closes	Opens
Darkens	Brightens	Darkens	Brightens
Adds resistance	Lessens resistance	Adds resistance	Lessens resistance
Strengthens	Weakens	Strengthens	Weakens
Sharpens pitch	Flattens pitch	Sharpens pitch	Flattens pitch