

## Tips from the Workbench Ozwinds Brisbane

### Tip #1 – Clarinet A-key Adjustment

This tip relates to a problem that happens to many clarinets that are adjusted too finely in the wrong places. This can cause the instrument to mysteriously stop playing in the middle of a practice session.

On the clarinet there is a small adjusting screw sitting just above the "throat" A and Ab keys (top of the instrument).

**Here is the tip:** *Undo the adjusting screw so that there is a tiny bit of movement in the A-key before it begins to lift up the Ab key.*

It is very important that this screw is adjusted correctly, because the wrong adjustment can make the instrument unplayable.

Many times, I see the screw adjusted perfectly so that the both keys lift at the moment that the A-key is depressed. There is meant to be a slight amount of movement in the A-key before the Ab key lifts.

#### **When is this a problem?**

If you have a clarinet that doesn't play, and you cannot find the cause - this is often the answer.

In most cases, the story is: "I can play the clarinet for 10mins and then it stops playing."

#### **Why does this happen?**

10 mins of playing is enough to fill the A-key tone-hole with water. When this happens, it lifts the A-key pad.

If the screw is adjusted without any wiggle-room, then the Ab key also opens...

... just enough for it to leak. This stops the instrument from playing.

#### **What can you do?**

Get used to looking for this on your students' clarinets. It is good to keep it in mind because it is a common problem.

At the next lesson(s), just have a very quick gander at how these keys are set up.

#### **How to fix it**

If there is no extra movement, just give the adjusting screw a slight turn -

anti-clockwise - enough for the A-key pad to lift just a fraction from the tone-hole.

(if the A-key has a huge whopping amount of movement, you might be able to turn that screw back in - clockwise - to close the gap just a little.)



### **Future Tips**

If there is anything that you would like to know, and are looking for an answer, please let me know. I might be able to include it in some tips for teachers.

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