

INTONATION

Intonation: Playing an instrument in tune.

In order to play with proper intonation, students must demonstrate listening skills while playing within the ensemble and/or band. Intonation can perhaps be measured more accurately by the use of a tuner. A tuner is an electronic device that accurately determines whether the tone being played is sharp, flat, and/or in tune.

Sharp: If the needle on the tuner registers to the right of “0” then you are sharp or too high. Thus, the pitch needs to become lower in order to register on the tuner as “in tune”. Pulling the mouthpiece, barrel, or tuning slide out will make the instrument longer; thus, making the pitch sound lower.

Flat: If the needle on the tuner registers to the left of “0” then you are flat or too low. The pitch needs to become higher in order to register as “in tune”. Pushing the mouthpiece, barrel, or tuning slide in will make the instrument shorter; thus, making the pitch sound higher.

When tuning always play with proper posture and breath support. Play the pitch with the best possible tone and loud enough to properly register with the tuner. Try to notate mentally where your mouthpiece, barrel, and/or tuning slide need to be in order for you to play with the best possible intonation. Remember to also listen as you play within the ensemble and adjust if you feel you are not playing in tune. Warming up properly is also essential before tuning, as this can greatly affect the way your instrument will sound.

POSTURE:

Proper posture should be used when playing your instrument. Posture affects the tone of your instrument. Playing with poor posture inhibits breath support. Students must use proper breath support and embouchure in order to play in tune and with a proper tone. A large volume of air should go into the instrument and should be supported from the diaphragm. Blow the air through your instrument not just into the instrument. The flow of the air is essential for good tone production.

WARM-UP:

Warm up your instrument and embouchure by playing long tones followed by short periods of rests. It is essential that the instrument be warm before tuning.

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