



BASSOON BOCAL

Function

The bocal is a crucial part of the bassoon for controlling resistance, response, intonation, color, and tone quality. If you need to improve your bassoon on a limited budget, a bocal upgrade is an option to explore. There are countless types of bocals available at a wide variety of price points. Typically, a bocal will cost between \$300 and \$1,500. Bocals can be made of nickel, silver, brass, or gold. Most student model bocals are nickel or silver-plated nickel. They can be standard bend or British/flat bend. Most student model bocals are standard bend. They can be thick-walled or thin-walled. This is a matter of taste. Most bassoonists own several bocal options to switch between.

Sizes

Bocals are numbered according to their length (0-4) with 0 being the shortest and 4 being the longest. If you or a student is consistently flat or sharp, you can switch to a shorter or longer bocal to adjust. However, bocals should always be inserted all the way into the well- pulling the bocal in or out is not an acceptable way to adjust the intonation of the bassoon as it changes its acoustical structure.

Cleaning

Because bocals are metal, they don't need to be swabbed after every use. Running a bocal swab or bocal brush through approximately once a month to remove build-up is sufficient.

Care

Bocals are extremely fragile and easily bent. Most bassoon cases contain storage for two bocals. Bocal cases can also be purchased. Bocals are made by soldering two halves together. As such, bocals should only be held at the curve when inserting and removing. Holding bocals at the flat portion can result in a "split seam"