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Phillip O. Pagilalonga's "Squeak Big: Practical Fundamentals for the Successful Clarinetist" David Yandl

Phillip O. Pagilalonga's *Squeak Big: Practical Fundamentals for the Successful Clarinetist* is a welcome addition to any clarinetist's library. Undoubtedly, private instructors, university professors, and clarinetists of all ages will find it a constant companion. However, *Squeak Big* is also a much-needed resource for the elementary, middle, and high school band classroom, especially for educators who aren't clarinetists.

Squeak Big focuses on the often elusive fundamentals of clarinet playing: embouchure, tone quality, finger technique, legato, and articulation. The power of this book lies in its clarity: techniques are explained succinctly, in a no-nonsense tone. Step-by-step instructions and photos elucidate "do's" and "don'ts" of embouchure and hand position, provide a clear model, and make it easy for the classroom educator to diagnose and correct common problems. Of particular utility is the embouchure troubleshooting table, which offers simple solutions to all-too-common tone production problems. This chart makes an excellent quick reference during rehearsal or posted on a classroom wall.

While *Squeak Big* is replete with quick fixes and basics, it offers more. High school educators can use sections such as "Beyond Forming a Basic Embouchure" and "Finding More Resonance" to refine their clarinet sections. Quite simply, this is information that you didn't learn in your undergraduate methods course. Fortunately, all of these refinements are explained in the same clear prose as the earlier chapters. The practical exercises included give opportunity for older students to develop greater control and sensitivity. Armed with this chapter, any educator can help an advanced student, especially when private instruction isn't available.

Although there are many existing resources that address clarinet technique, they typically present a single approach. One of the strengths of *Squeak Big* is the way it explains how the body

interacts with the clarinet, rather than just stating what to do. Through this important distinction, *Squeak Big* encourages the player (and educator) to approach the instrument artistically rather than technically and allows one to develop an individualized approach. For example, on page six the author states, "Depending on the exact type of sound you would like to achieve you may roll in less lower lip than is suggested here. For example, if you prefer to play with a more vibrant sound, like that of Robert Marcelus, you may find you need to roll in less lower lip." This type of instruction is revolutionary in contrast to the "one-size-fits-all" philosophy often encountered in instrumental pedagogy.

The range, clarity, and accessibility of *Squeak Big* make it an essential resource for all instrumental music educators. Beginning band teachers will love the step-by-step instructions on fundamentals. Middle and high school band teachers will find practical ways to help their advancing students and find useful enrichment material, including warm-up exercises and technical studies. Furthermore, all of this material is delivered with artistry as the final goal. As a result, having *Squeak Big* in your classroom is like having an expert clinician available at any time. *Squeak Big* is published by Imagine Music and available from <http://www.squeakbig.com/>

Pagilalonga, Phillip O. *Squeak Big: Practical Fundamentals for the Successful Clarinetist*. Medina, NY: Imagine Music, 2015.



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