

There are three important points that determine the proper and pure playing on Cornamuse:

1. Reed.

Reed is very easy to damage, especially at first contact with the instrument. When aspiring musicians damage the reed, it loses color and good intonation. How can you “ruin” the reed? Very easy!

- When removing cap (or head), it is very easy to strike the reed, so you need to do it very slowly and carefully;
- When musicians want to change something or adjusting the reed, it’s dangerous and unnecessary, because the best thing that you can do is to rely on the basic settings (just as I gave you). Then you are sure that the reed will play well.
- When musicians put the reed inside the corps or pull it, it is very easy to change the parameters or damage the reed, so never catch the wood, just try to pull the reed holding it’s tube.
- The most important factor for the intonation is, if the reed is closed or open and how much
 - If it is too closed – intonation will be too high and the sound will be collapsing and anemic
 - If it is too open – blast will be hard, heavy, and intonation will be too low

Good opening of the reed affects not only the correct intonation but also the breadth of the intervals in the scale of the instrument. If the reed is properly open, the sound that you hear will be in right relation to other sounds and will create pure intervals with them.

Reed - plastic or wooden?

Plastic reeds are not significantly different in tone from the wooden reeds. An important advantage of plastic reeds is their “life”, but you

have to remember that plastic reeds are much more delicate than wooden reeds. The superiority of the plastic reed is that it works (if not damaged) and can play for many years. Moreover, during the practising, when the instrument gets a lot of moisture, reed does not change the parameters. Wooden reeds are not very stable and we can see that during the play when the wood has more and more moisture, reed automatically opens, and that is why blast is getting heavier and intonation is getting lower.

Reed is assigned to the instrument!

A characteristic feature of this instrument is that the reed is assigned instrument, which means that each reed is made for a particular instrument. If you change the reed to another, you have to reckon with the fact that the intonation will no longer be perfect. Although someone may think that he will do a very similar reed, with the same dimensions, the instrument will falsify. This is a big drawbacks of this instrument, and many makers have met with it, but the problem has not been solved yet. That is why it is good to return the instrument to the maker, who can do the correction of intonation for the new reed.

How to clean the reed?

If you want to have your plastic reed in a good condition so that it can simply play for many years, you have to remember that from time to time the reed must also be cleaned inside, in the middle. During exercising some particles and other contaminants may get inside the reed what affects sound quality. Reed plastic can be cleaned by letting through the tube strong stream of warm water. We do it very carefully so as not to change the parameters of the reed.

2. The place where we embed the reed (inside the corps)

Another way to adjust the intonation is to embed a reed in the body of the instrument.

If we extend the tube (on which is the reed embedded) from the body, then we lower the intonation. If we insert it deeper, then we raise the intonation.

1. Temperature and humidity.

Temperature and humidity have a great impact on the intonation and sound quality of the instrument. Please note that at temperatures below 18 degrees Celsius intonation of the instrument will be too low. The higher the temperature is, the higher intonation will be. This rule applies to all wind instruments.

Because of humidity the channel of the instrument is getting more and more narrow. Instruments like cornamuse have a very narrow conical channel. Usually it is from 5-7 mm. Through this narrow channel passes liquefied air, which has a large impact on the wood parameters. Because of the water canal narrows and when it is dry, then it expands, which greatly affects the tone and intonation.

If cornamuse has not been used for a long time, the wood is desiccated and some sounds (especially the first sounds - the lowest in the scale of the instrument) may be too high. How to solve this problem?

Professional musicians play the instruments for at least 15 minutes before the concert or let some water directly into the channel. Thanks to the moisture after 5 minutes the channel stabilizes. Sometimes you also need to blow holes under the fingers, if the water gets there.

Do it yourself!

Every musicians after a long time of playing the cornamuse can easily learn how to easily tune this instrument on their own. You can do it by using a small amount of wax, so that you can paste the holes under your fingers. For example, if the sound "d" in cornamusie in C is too high, you can do up the first hole (the lowest) a little wax - then you make the intonation lower. This rule also applies to other sounds.

How to protect your instrument

It is very important to remember, that once in a while the instrument needs to be maintained by olive almond, especially in the middle, inside the channel. Remember not to let the oil get on the pillow, because it can harden and become leaking. After such actions you must carefully blow holes under the fingers if the oil got there, because it can also affect the intonation of the instrument.

First steps - what to look for?

If you want to become a master of this instrument first you have to breathe properly (f.ex. diaphragmatic breathing - it really helps!). Then you can be sure that the whole time you let air into the instrument at the same pressure. Cornamuse is not such a simple instrument because *ambitus* of this instrument within a single sound is very large. It means that when you play the same sound slightly or strongly you can get different heights of this sound.

The muscles of mouth has a big impact on the proper playing. If your mouth is weak and air-permeable, the quality of intonation will be disappointing.

Firstly I recommend practicing long tones using the tuner and controlling the correct intonation. You should do it every day. It's a long but necessary way to play purely on this instrument.