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baroque transverse flutes and Andean flutes

Maintenance instructions

Good advice to start your baroque flute

A wooden flute is sensitive to weather and temperature changes, and humidity, this throughout its life. At its completion it has been stabilized and oiled by the maker, however, it is essential that you respect a "running" period and you realize a regular maintenance throughout its use. Then you can use the best of your flute.

1- Getting Started

When you receive your flute, I suggest you first read this page before assembling and playing it.

If you note that the inside bore is « dry » start with a complete oiling.

Spare a little your flute at starting by increasing regularly the playing period during the first month.

After each use, disassemble all parts of your flute, and let stand upright.

Making an oiling all parts of the flute two days after delivery, repeat oiling after 2 days and again after 2 days, then weekly for one or two months. Then an oiling each month is sufficient.

Respect with more vigilance the care instructions during this period.

2- Maintenance

Cleaning :

After playing, wipe your flute outside with a soft rag. Take care particularly to clean the mouth hole, without "wounding it", using a cotton stem soaked with sweet almond oil, to pass on the internal walls.

Independently wipe the inside bore of each part of your flute with a fine wooden rod on which you will roll up a dry cotton rag. You can use sticks and rags sold for modern flutes.

Oiling :

The oiling must be made when the instrument is dry. **Never oil just after playing the flute !**
For boxwood flutes as well as grenadilla or rosewood flutes, use almond oil (the best for me) or grape seed or olive oils, never never use linseed oil, because this oil is a hardening oil that leave skin drying.
Use almond oil with vitamin E (tocopherol) that is an antioxidant, to prevent rancidity of the oil.

Oil the inside bore of each part of the flute, after having disassembled, with a fine wooden rod on which you will roll up a dry cotton rag soaked in almond oil.

After oiling, let the flute at rest for three or four hours minimum, then wipe the excess oil with a soft cloth, leaving the bore look "wet".

The oiling must be done about every month, every fortnight for the head of the flute. You need oiling when the bore is no longer "wet".

Oil also outside of the flute with a soft cloth moistened with vasoline, but also almond, grape-seed or olive oils, without excess.

Always oil with the same oil that you have chosen at the beginning.

For flutes made of not stained boxwood, you can wax from time to time outside with beeswax colourless liquid, which helps protect the wood acidity left by the fingers.

Care of the tenons :

When your flute is delivered to you, the tenons have a sufficient amount of thread to ensure assembly and waterproofing.

Do not add more thread, just add grease according to need.

The grease I use is a mixture that I make myself (a little tin of this grease is given with each of my flutes) :

- beeswax : approximately 1/3 volume,
- pure vasoline : about 2/3 in volume

You can easily make it yourself : put in a small tin vasoline and wax as indicated above, and heat in double boiler, stirring until a homogeneous liquid, then let this mixture cool.

This mixture has the advantage of being very flexible.

For the wax, use plates embossed for beekeepers, who are easily manipulated.

Cut out chips of grease, crush them with the inch on the periphery of the tenon, eliminate grease of surplus, then **fit together the two parts by rotation, without forcing.**

When fitting a small amount of grease will be "pushed" out, just eliminate it with a soft cloth.

Caution : the warranty does not cover cracks in the sockets. Be careful when fitting the tenons and sockets of your flute.

Lubrication of tuning slides (on foot and head joints) and cork :

Use only pure vasoline, without adding grease or thread.

3- Adjusting the cork position

The cork is the "soul" of the flute (Quantz), its reinstallation with its correct position is thus essential.

The provided wooden rod comprises a reference mark. Push the cork for this reference mark building in the center of the mouth. This position may vary slightly depending on your own technique of playing.

4- Maintenance of the key

To revive its upper surface, use a commercial liquid product for the silver, and copper for brass keys to move, after having disassembled, with a soft cloth.

The frequency of that maintenance may be only a year, every six months for brass keys.

Be careful not damage the leather pad of the key, and not putting oil so that it continues to ensure a perfect functioning. You can put talc a little on the leather to prevent it sticks to the wood.

The spring which is crimped onto the key does not in principle be affected, to ensure his protection when removing the key. Perhaps it expands slightly over time, in this case, after removal the key, the retightening taking care not to give him a rotation around its point of crimping.

5- After having played

To evacuate the excess of moisture after playing, it is preferable to disassemble each part of your flute, and let stand upright, until the following play.

Use the protective soft case delivered with the flute only for periods of transport or periods of more than one month without use.

After one or two months without use, partially remake a « runing » period, while starting with a complete oiling.

Not expose the instrument to the strong temperature variations (direct exposure to the sun, near to a source of heat, cold,...), nor with a too low humidity.

6- The pitch

My flutes are scheduled to play at the correct pitch when the head is pulled out from about 1 mm.

This value may vary depending on your style of play (more or less covering the mouth hole, more or less power), and depending on the temperature (summer, winter, warm room, church, ...) until to 2 or 3mm, but not beyond because the balance of the instrument would be distorted.

I noticed that this procedure was satisfactory for many flutists.

However, if you have already experienced, and know that you have a particularity, it is better that you indicate it to me, and I will modify the instrument for you.