

Double Reeds, Not Double Trouble

Dr. Cayla Bellamy

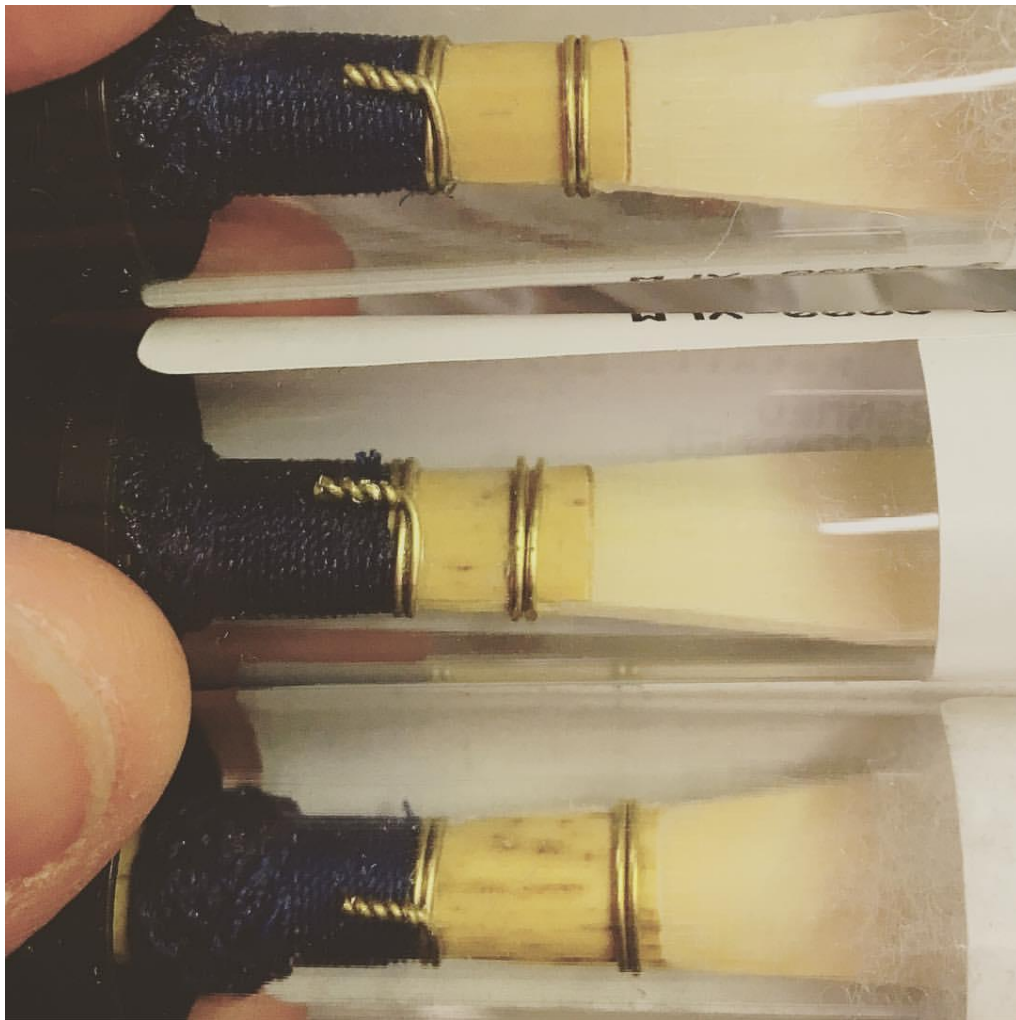
www.caylabellamy.com

Part One

“If it looks like a reed...”

Visual assessment:

- ★ Cane - color, consistency
- ★ Shape
 - Wires - roundness, tightness
 - Tip - symmetry, curvature



Store-Bought Reeds:

Purchased May 2017 from West Music in Cedar Falls.

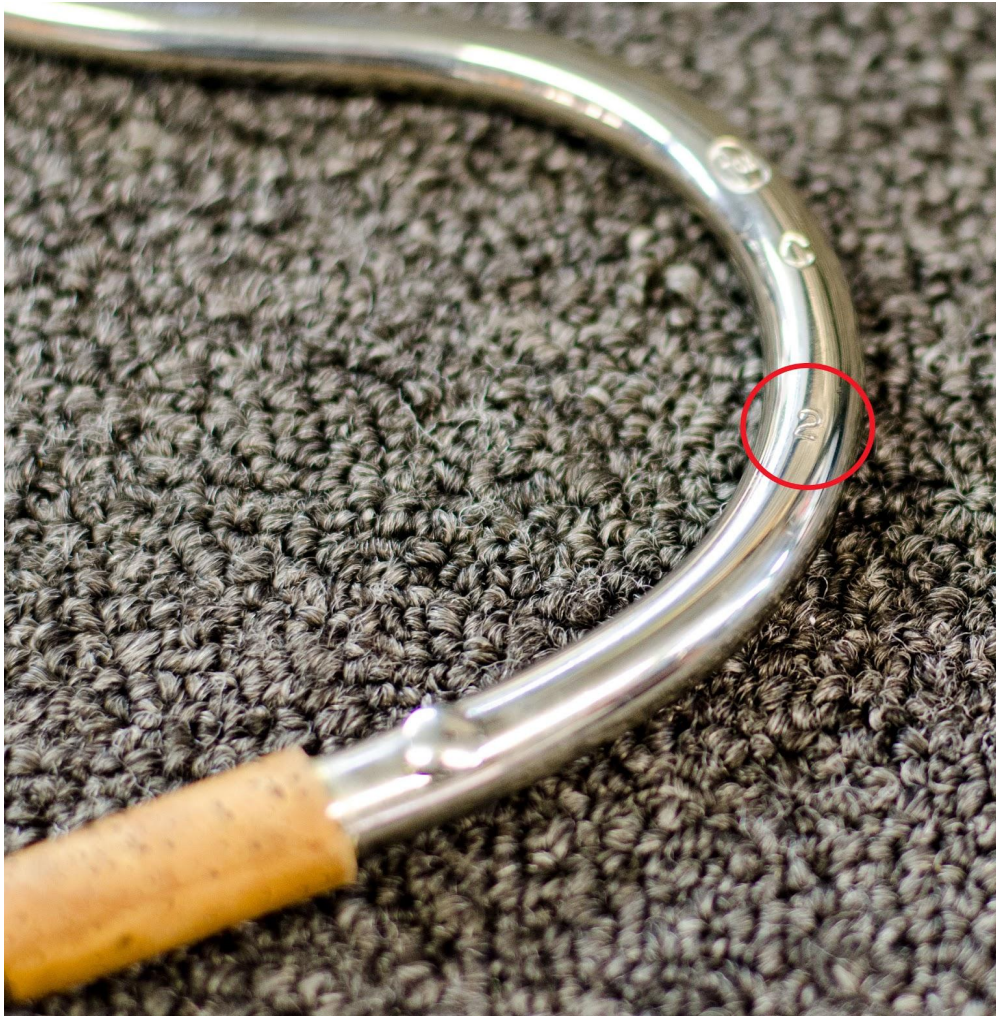
- ★ Cane - consistent
- ★ Shape
 - Wires - vastly different dimensions, loose (wrapping unwinding)
 - Tip - unable to analyze

Part Two

“... and it sounds like a reed...”

Quick Tests:

- ★ Reed
 - Peep - response
 - Crow - intonation
 - Overblow - flexibility
 - ★ Bocal
 - Middle C - Intonation
 - ★ Bassoon
 - Sag - Intonation/Flexibility
 - Scale - tone
-



Bocal Intonation:

Your program may have multiple bocal options.

- ★ Preferred Brand:
 - Fox C/CVX/CTX
- ★ Preferred Length
 - 2 - pitched at A440
 - 3 - will be flat and encourage biting
 - Do NOT select a longer bocal to solve pitch problems with young players!

Part Three

“... it must be a reed!”

To harden:

- ★ Strengthen spine
 - Round wires
 - Sand rails
 - ★ Strengthen cane
 - Sand blade interior
-

To soften:

- ★ Weaken spine
 - Flatten wires
 - Sand back third
 - ★ Weaken cane
 - Sand blade length
-

Part Four

“But beware...”

The single most common pitfall is over-prioritizing a dark or “pretty” tone in developing students.

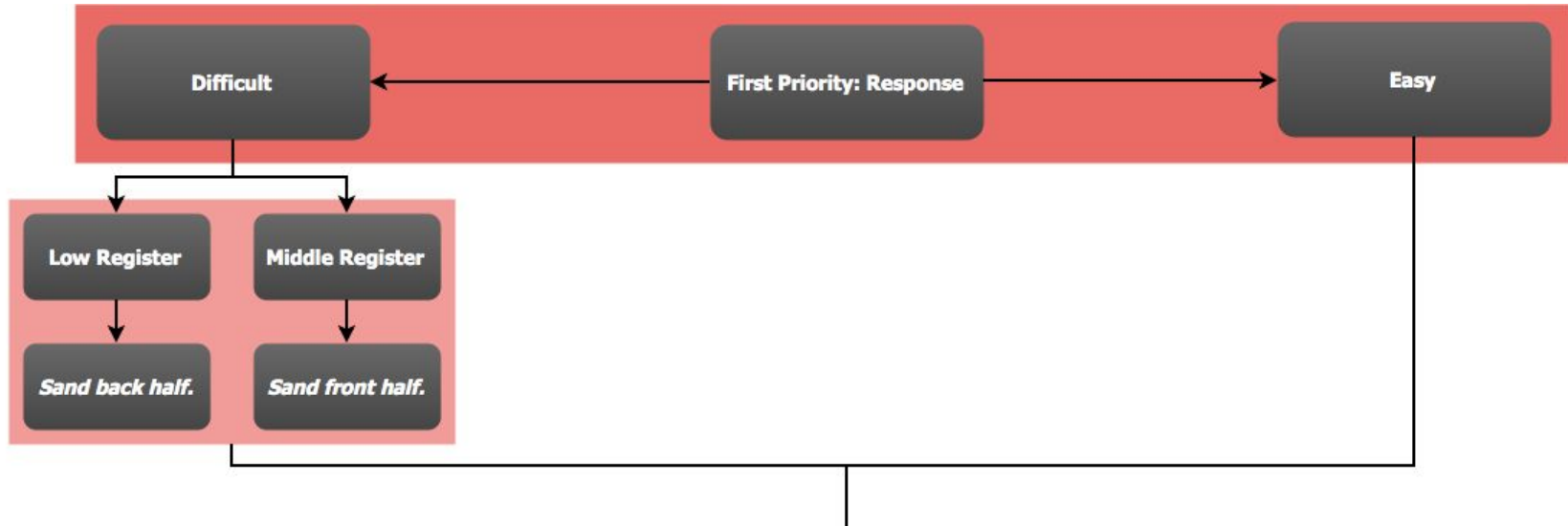
Your bassoonist will have a good tone when playing on a system that is responsive, in tune, and flexible.

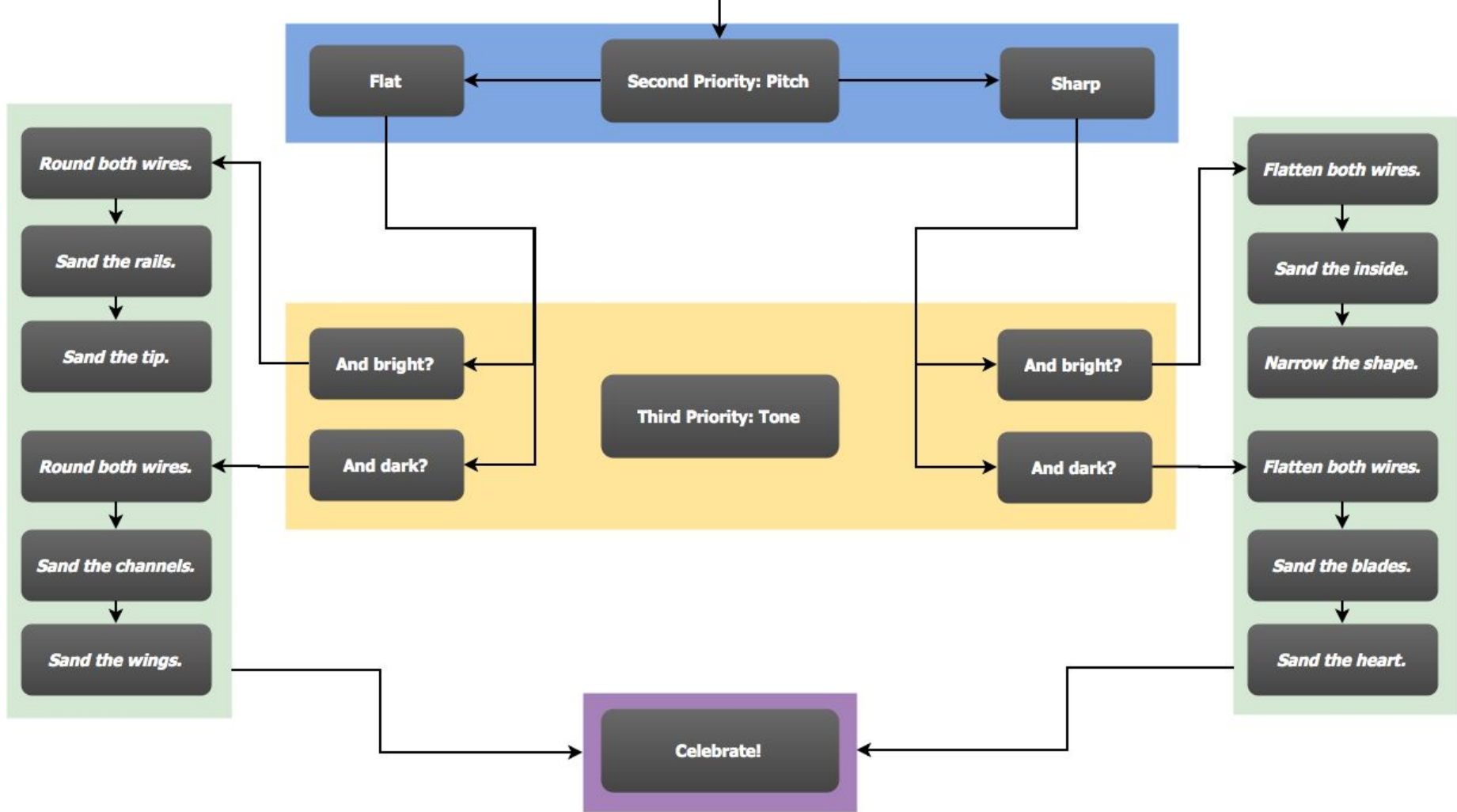
Your bassoonist will **not** play reliably on command, be in tune, or make adjustments if all reeds are selected solely based on how dark the natural tone color is.

Adjustment Flow Chart

Always remember:

Response
Intonation
Flexibility
Tone





Questions?

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