

## How to Care for Your New Musique Morneaux Wooden Instrument

During the finishing phase the Tung oil does not penetrate deeply enough to protect the instrument from moisture fully – some woods allow deeper penetration of the Tung oil than others. Although each wooden instrument deserves tender, loving care, exotic woods require a bit more consideration.

**Periodically:** Before playing on your wooden instrument, apply woodwind bore oil or almond or even sunflower seed oil to a small patch of clean, lint-free cloth and swab the inside and wipe the outside with this. You will find that your instrument will play and respond better. After playing, remove remaining moisture by swabbing the bore with a recorder brush; just as good is a soft, lint-free cloth or quality paper towel on a slotted stick or flute cleaning rod. Always look inside the mortise (socket) to be sure that there is no moisture or foreign matter left there. **Always keep the instrument disassembled when not in use** to preserve the fit of the tenons (“peg” part of the joints) and to allow for the instrument to breathe a bit more.

If your instrument has key-work, avoid getting the oil on the pads as it might remain sticky on the contact and interfere with clean playability – you might place little square of wax paper between the key pad and the wood before oiling the wood. Key pads are better treated with small amounts of Neatsfoot oil, which is *not* as effective for the wood. If you feel inclined, you might undertake to mix your own oil for the wood – from a health food store purchase some almond oil and mix it 50/50 with virgin olive oil, then squirt in the contents of a vitamin E capsule to retard spoilage. Do not apply alcoholic beverages as a treatment or leave behind any starchy/sugary liquid or residue in the bore or the instrument or in the windway of whistles! Make a solution of 2 parts warm water and 1 part dishwashing liquid and periodically soak the fipple of your whistle in this (not the whole whistle head, mind you!) for a few minutes and then shake it out of the instrument, then let it air dry; this will reduce the clogging of your saliva in the fipple and thus make it easier to play.

Keep the tenons greased with moderate amounts of cork grease (or lip balm or petroleum jelly). If the fit between tenon and mortise become loose over time, they can be built up with conservative amounts of white plumber’s tape or re-corking or re-wrapping by an instrument repairman. **Important – excessive wrapping, making the fit too tight, acts like a wedge, and can cause cracking!**

**Storage and Transporting:** **Do not** use a chair as an instrument stand; chairs are for sitting, and sooner or later someone is going to sit on an instrument left on a chair. Extremes of temperature and humidity cause tremendous stress in the wood; avoid prolonged exposure to hot sun and the rain and **never** leave your instrument in a hot car! In dry climates or during the heating season it is very good to keep a humidifier running nearby if possible. More directly of use would be to keep a “violinist’s humidifier” (a moistened wick inside a perforated rubber hose). This should be enclosed in the same case with the instrument. These measures will help to prevent over-drying and shrinkage, helping to avoid cracking. This is essential when you have an instrument with a barrel joint on flutes that have a metal tuning slide *within* the wood, for wood wants to shrink around the unyielding metal tube and thus the fibers will stretch and split = cracking. If you have performances in the bitter chill of winter, moderate changes in temperature and humidity; keep your instrument in its case until inside and let it acclimate to the warmer environment while still in its case for 15 – 30 minutes before taking it out to play.

**Take care of your instrument and it will reward you with many years of trouble-free performance!**