


# Vandoren® magazine




## CHOOSING A REED

INTERVIEWS : A. CARBONARE, P. CUPER, G. FEIDMAN, C. DELANGLE,  
J.Y. FOURMEAU, M. VILLAFRUELA, D. SANBORN  
VANDOREN NEW PRODUCTS & NEW SCORES


N°3




①  
Joe Tihacek (hon. U.S. Army  
Band) and Dominique Vidal



⑤  
Steve Coleman  
and Jean-Paul Gauvin  
(Vandoren)




②  
Gilles Thomé (Period Clarinets)  
and Giora Feidman (Klezmer)




⑥  
Jean-Marie Paul (Vandoren),  
Craig Bailey, Keith Loftis (Ray Charles Orch.)  
and David Sanchez


## Chance Encounters at 56 rue Lepic




③  
Jean-Noël Crocq  
(bass cl., Opera &  
Paris Conservatory)  
and Franklin Cohen  
(Cleveland Orch.)



⑦  
Python Sax Quartet (Holland) and Ton,  
our distributor of Jic Music



④  
William Street (Canada),  
Jean-Paul Gauvin (Vandoren)  
and Paul Bro (Michigan)



⑧  
Paul Meyer, Shin-Ichiro Ikosaka,  
Yasuko Tanaka (Trouvère Sax Quartet)  
and Shin Okawa (Nonaka, Japan)





What an interminable debate over a little strip of reed that makes us quiver with excitement, doubt or dream! Fragile yet rebellious, a reed is above all a natural and complex product requiring a lot of attention.

In reality, it needs to be understood, cherished and gradually tamed, until a close relationship is built up with the musician. And although a reed has its own language, it also permits artists to express their own sensitivities. However, it is not easy to initiate a dialogue because a reed must be “married” to a good mouthpiece and fit its facing perfectly so that it can reveal the personality of a sound. It is therefore vital for a reed and mouthpiece to be well matched.

Furthermore, the sensitivity of a musician can change over time. After a meal, his lips will not necessarily find the same dominant qualities (resistance, texture). Just as a wine does not have the same “body” when served in different glasses, a reed can respond differently according to the musician’s physical and emotional state. But in the final analysis, all its charm lies in these mysteries.

**Bernard VAN DOREN**

①  
 Dominique Vidal (France, freelance concertist)  
*Mouthpieces : B45, 5RV Lyre standard and 13 Series*  
*Reeds : V.12 # 3.5*  
 Joe Tihacek  
*retired from U.S. Army Band*

②  
 Gilles Thomé (France, period clarinets)  
*Traditional Reeds and V.12*  
 Giora Feidman (klezmer clarinet)  
*Traditional Reeds # 1*

③  
 Jean-Noel Crocq (bass clarinet,  
 Paris Conservatory & Opera)  
*Mouthpieces : Bass clarinet B44*  
*Traditional Reeds # 3.5*  
 Franklin Cohen (soloist, Cleveland Orchestra)  
*Reeds : V.12 # 3.5*

④  
 Paul Bro  
 Vice President of NASA  
 (North America Saxophone Alliance)  
 William Street  
 (saxophone, Univ. of Alberta, Canada)  
*Mouthpiece : alto sax A28*  
*Traditional Reeds # 3*

⑤  
 Steve Coleman (jazz)  
*Mouthpieces : Soprano S25, Alto A55 Java*  
*Reeds : V16 # 2.5 and Java # 3*

⑥  
 Craig Bailey (jazz)  
*Mouthpieces : Alto A35, soprano #3, tenor T75,  
 clarinet B45*  
*Traditional Reeds : soprano #3, tenor #3*  
 Keith Loftis (jazz)  
*Mouthpieces : Soprano S25, tenor T75*  
*Reeds : Soprano #3*  
 David Sanchez (jazz)  
*Traditional Reeds # 3*

⑦  
 Python Sax Quartet (Netherlands)  
*Mouthpieces : V5*  
*Traditional Reeds*

⑧  
 Paul Meyer (clarinet, freelance concertist)  
*Mouthpiece : 5RV Lyre*  
*Reeds : V.12 # 4*  
 Shin Hiro Ikosaka  
 "Trouvere Saxophone Quartet"  
*Traditional Reeds # 4*  
 Y8asuto Tanaka  
 "Trouvere Saxophone Quartet"  
*Traditional Reeds # 3.5*

My students used to say to me, "You always have good reeds", and I would reply, "Yes, they are the same as yours".

Henri DIONET,  
Honorary Clarinet Teacher at Versailles

"Never reject a reed because of its appearance, do not adjust a reed without having tried it (...), do not allow reeds to take over your life (and) do not spend an excessive amount of time on your reeds."

Edward Palanker "  
All you wanted to know  
about reeds, and less",  
The Clarinet, September 1999.

## Choosing a reed

*In addition to the quality of the reed, the principal factors that have an effect on the result produced by a reed are:*

- *material: its marriage with the mouthpiece and ligature.*
- *physical: the embouchure (lips, jaw, cavity of the mouth ,...) and the air column*
- *physiological: the acidity of the saliva, for example.*
- *psychological: the " mental " state of the musician at a given moment, the colour of the cane in certain cases.*
- *climatic and acoustic: the weather, the sound environment in which the musician plays.*
- *mechanical: when wood is wet and then dried, it becomes warped; this applies even more to cane (\*); a ligature that is too tight can prevent a reed from vibrating.*

*In view of these changing parameters, the key word is ADAPTATION at all times. It is very useful to limit subjectivity as much as possible:*

- *by knowing the reactions of one's body and material in different situations,*
- *by asking for advice from musicians who are familiar with your style of playing or by recording yourself (while playing, one perceives sounds through the external and internal ear).*

*The purpose of this file, the outcome of the experience of the artistic advisers of Vandoren and leading musicians, is to succeed in "optimising" one's reeds. It will be continued because the subject is so vast and fascinating. We hope you enjoy reading it!*

Jean-Marie PAUL

(\* ) Do you play? So does wood.

*The Technical Centre for Wood has carried out experiments proving that wood cut several centuries ago continues "to play". The tested pieces had the thickness of the door of a sideboard. The pallet of a reed is only a few hundreds of a millimetre thick. No wood undergoes such heavy treatment as a reed, alternately impregnated with saliva (worse than water) and then dried, and then made to vibrate hundreds, even thousands, of times in one second. As for the thickness, some people believe that the manufacturer produces reeds with a thick tip to obtain hard reeds (and, on the contrary, with a finer tip, for softer reeds). In reality, it is the flexibility of a reed (scientifically controlled at Vandoren) that determines its strength.*

## KLEZMER CLARINET



Anches traditionnelles n°1

Giora Feidman,

## Giora FEIDMAN

## klezmer clarinet

*How do you produce this magic sound with such soft reeds (#1) ?*

*All the items that I have at my disposal : the clarinet, the bell, the mouthpiece, the ligature, the reed,... are there to give the freedom to sing music, not to play the clarinet. I was educated this way. I was never taught to find the ideal material or the ideal sound, but to find the sources of music. If you tell me that I play with soft reeds, for myself I don't know. If you give me a harder reed, I will probably get the same result, but I would use too much energy, that I don't need to use. I just use a few reeds a year ! I practice all the time, but maybe not in the way you think : I don't necessarily need a clarinet or a mouthpiece to practice. You have the sound in your head. The clarinet is for performance. I have just played 31 concerts in 33 days (with the same reed, by the way). I play at 442 Hz, but in Germany it is not sharp enough. I have used VANDOREN for 55 years (I was 9 years old). My father already played Vandoren. I first came to VANDOREN, rue Lepic, in 1957. I descend from four generations of musicians. My father, who was a symphonic clarinet player, but who also played at weddings, never gave me " exercises ". He told me : a scale is a song, a difficult one, but a beautiful sound. Your practice must always have something to do with music. Also the source of music is improvisation. Mozart improvised, and wrote down these improvisations. The interpretation itself is an improvisation. Classical*

*musicians are not taught to improvise, they are afraid to be free.*

*Many musicians ask you how you play so pianissimo....*

*I enjoy the recording, it is a pleasure. The microphone was born to listen to silence. Sound you produce, silence you use... When the sound is in the air, you listen to the silence and not to the sound ; because the sound is temporary, silence is infinite. I don't play pianissimo. It is my inner voice. If you are in the situation of playing for a baby, they ask you to play quietly to allow him to sleep, you will play pianissimo. I am not saying that to get a pianissimo sound is easy...*

*Many people say it is difficult to play klezmer music, to get the right embouchure...*

*I play with the lips, for me, for my sensitivity, to speak music to the reed. There is a fabulous exercise : if you put earphones and you connect this to an amplifier with a microphone, you are listening to your recording instantaneously as you play. This will open up your ears ; because the ears are closed : our ears are accustomed to a kind of sound, a style, an order of staccato, legato, whatever... Everybody has probably experienced this when you listen for the first time to your voice in a recording (even if the microphone is very good), you are astonished by the sound of your voice.*

*I was told : one note is a melody. Also we must take great care, not to transmit our personal problems. At a seminar workshop, I was asked to share my experiences. I don't want to stand as an example, that is why I do not teach. My experience might not be good for you.*

## CLASSICAL CLARINET

## Alessandro CARBONARE,

## Soloist with the Orchestre National de France

*I tell young clarinet players that it is not enough to have a good mouthpiece and a good reed to produce a super sound. Good material helps towards achieving a certain type of tone but the sound is inside you. If I give my material to somebody else, he will not have my tone; after all he may perhaps do better (laughs). It is not something final either. It is the musician who plays the clarinet and not the other way round. I have been playing with V.12 reeds ever since they came out. I had to adapt myself a little at the beginning, but I find they have more sonority, for me at least. In this case too, a musician's judgement should not be final.*

Alessandro Carbonare

Bec B40 13 - Anches V.12 n° 31/2





## Alessandro CARBONARE (suite)

*Are you satisfied with the number of reeds you find in a box? One is never satisfied; one buys a box of ten and would like to have 11 that work! No, seriously, it's all right. The musician and the manufacturer should make constant efforts at improving, each side has a role to play. In a box of 10, I find at least half suitable for playing at a concert. My method is not to throw away the 4 (for example) that do not suit me immediately, except for the weaker ones. In the case of reeds that are a little closed, I use them to practice my scales at home. I do not use reed trimmers.*

*Do you scrape your reeds or do you resurface them?*

*Yes, I resurface them. For several years, I tried to scrape the ones that did not suit me immediately, but I found it was very tricky and I failed to obtain the result I wanted. I ruined a number of reeds in this way! This never happens with resurfacing (speaking for myself, of course), and it enables me to make use of many more reeds.*

*In your view, what factors improve the response of a reed?*

*The acoustics, the temperature, the humidity ... A reed is a piece of living wood. It can change from one room to another; from one day to another. I do not want to ask myself this question because the answer is too complex. If the reed does not play, it is a pity, so I look for another one, that is all. If I started to ask myself why the reed does not play, I would waste time, and it would be time out of my work.*

*What advice do you give to students who want to play stronger reeds, because of acoustics, humidity, etc?*

*First of all, one must have a selection of reeds in the clarinet case, at least 5 or 6 in order to find the right reed to suit the acoustics. If the acoustics are very dry, I use reeds that are a little brighter*

*to help me obtain a good projection of sound. If, on the contrary, the acoustics reverberate, I will choose darker reeds. Secondly, one should not in general concentrate on ONE reed. If a reed is "average", it is the musician who should adapt himself. One cannot hope to find the reed that plays for us ... Some people I know waste an enormous amount of time (and money!) every day in opening new boxes of reeds, or even scraping them. I am wary of a reed that is "great" right from the start. Admittedly, one must find something that works immediately in a trial reed, while bearing in mind that in two or three days it will work as one wishes. It is the musician who must be flexible vis-à-vis the reed.*

*What are your methods for preserving reeds?*

*I do not have any particular method. In the past, I used to wash a reed with water, but I did not find the result convincing. Every time I find a good reed, I leave it in a protector so that it remains flat. Furthermore, I try to rotate my reeds. I never play with the same reed for a whole week. I use two or three reeds every day. This helps me to get used to the small changes there can be found from one reed to another while of course retaining the same ideal tone.*

*What about the importance of the position of the reed on the mouthpiece?*

*When a reed is a little soft, I prefer to place it a little beyond the tip of the mouthpiece as this gives me a slightly darker tone. For a reed that is a bit strong, the reverse is true, it should be placed slightly below the tip rail of the mouthpiece.*

*This shift covers several tenths of a millimetre. Here again, it is a question of completely personal sensations. I am not sure another person would hear the difference, but it helps me a little. Other clarinet players also resort to lateral shifts but I prefer not to burden myself with such complications.*

## Philippe CUPER,

**Super-Soloist with the Opéra de Paris, Guest Solo Clarinet with the Berlin Philharmonic,  
Professor at the Conservatory of Versailles**

*What are your criteria for choosing a reed?*

*It is difficult to dissect the procedures one carries out every day instinctively. I try to play all the reeds in a box, whatever the result: strong, weak (that is to say, a little above or below the average), with or without resonance. I make my choice after a while (it can take several days). I play each reed for 30 seconds to one minute to give me some idea. In the afternoon, or on the following day, I start the same operation again. I play them in turn, I play them a little longer. After two or three days, I make my choice. I do not believe there is ONE remedy, ONE solution. All musicians have their own little habits (the "recipes" do not necessarily apply to everyone). The reed changes, it lives; the climate also changes,*

*as well as the place where one will be playing. Hygrometry and meteorology are parameters that have to be taken into account. Like many of my colleagues, I sometimes use a resurfacer if the reed has warped a little, a trimmer if it is a little too soft for me (or has become soft). If the opposite is true, I use some Dutch rush to scrape it if it is too strong because a blade requires a certain dexterity and daily experience, like oboe or bassoon players (so why not the clarinet?). But above all, I use my reeds in turn. The other applications are only put in practice if the right reeds have not been found after a few days. One should not struggle against these pieces of wood and ebonite in the mouth but be one with them. They are an extension of oneself. Being a perfectionist is not incompatible with knowing how to put any situation into*



Philippe Cuper

Bec B40 - Anches traditionnelles et V.12 n° 31/2

*You travel a lot all over the world. Do you have the impression that certain factors influence the reaction of a reed more than others, for example, acoustics, humidity, altitude, distribution of the fibres of the reed, even the physical and psychological state of the musician?*

*A little of all of this, certainly. What has perhaps bothered me the most is altitude. During summer festivals in the mountains, you play at 1,800 metres, and the reeds selected no longer react so well. The reeds seem to be stronger, you get tired more quickly with the scarcity of air (unless you are a mountain dweller!). One can also be surprised by the acoustics of an unfamiliar concert venue. If you play in a cathedral with a lot of reverberation of sound, there is no point in wearing yourself out with a strong reed, the usual reed will sound just as well. On the other hand, playing a reed that is too soft in acoustics that are too dry can risk altering your musical qualities, this is a well known fact. The psychological factor you mention is also very important, but so is the physiological condition. Blood pressure can vary and slightly modify one's internal auditory perception, and diminish resistance to effort. Temperature affects intonation. An overheated hall will raise the fundamental pitch. A temperature that is too cold will handicap you in a different way, the reed will not "talk", it will no longer respond in the same way. One cannot always do what one wants, but with years of experience and of trial and error, that is to say, the profession, one tries to alleviate these inconveniences to reduce them as much as possible. One must ALWAYS ADAPT, as human beings are capable of doing so well.*

*perspective and to adapt to a material at any moment. We are so lucky in Western countries! There are still a number of students in other parts of the world, and even professionals, who have only one mouthpiece or one reed and sometimes of poor quality. They do with what they have and in spite of this, express a true musical message. If this has not been understood, that the material used is not an end in itself but only a means for expression, then the main point has been missed. In this respect, Louis Cahuzac, who overcame the problem, used to say, "reeds should be treated with scorn".*

## CLASSICAL SAXOPHONE

### Jean-Yves FOURMEAU

Professor, Conservatoire National de Région, Cergy (near Paris)

*"There comes a time when you have to choose between being unhappy all your life because you feel dissatisfied or tell yourself that it has to work because you need to achieve a result. This does not mean that you should play with just about any reed. But one has a lot of responsibility on this particular point. I was able to avoid this dilemma very quickly because an accessory, as its name indicates, is not indispensable "in itself", it is an element that contributes to comfort. What is essential is the self-confidence of the individual and his relationship with the instrument. I have been able to avoid "reed mania" because I have never hoarded reeds (...). I have a natural and instinctive relation with material. I have my reference points. This is my philosophy of life. I do not claim that this is the only path. I know other musicians who frequently change reeds but I myself am an advocate of stability in the choice of reeds."*

J.Y. Fourmeau

Anches traditionnelles n°3







Miguel Villafruela

Becs S15, A27-A17, T27, B35  
Anches traditionnelles 3, 31/2, 4

## Miguel VILLAFRUELA

Professor at the University of Santiago, Chile

*When your students start to play light music or jazz, does their embouchure change?*

No, because they were trained in a classical therefore serious and consistent, and open-minded way. They now therefore how to be flexible without giving themselves away. One of my students who plays alto saxophone in the quartet plays much light music on television. And it is noticeable that he does not produce the same sound

(neither does he use the same mouthpiece)

*What advice would you give your students concerning the choice of reeds?*

When my students open a box, they must note which reeds are good for a concert, those that are more suitable for an exam, those that are too soft and should be re-cut slightly, and those that are too strong and need to be adjusted with a resurfacer. Above all, they must break in the reeds, a different one every day. As for the reed selected for a concert, obviously it should not be played too much before playing at the concert in question. This is why I do not have any reed problems with my students. Of course, there are always students who claim that there are only four playable reeds in a box. But if the above advice is followed, they realise that more can be played.



Claude Delangle

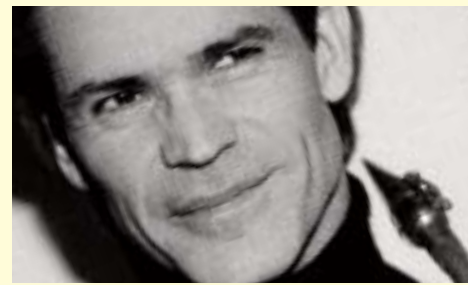
Becs S15, A17- A28, T20, B35  
Anches traditionnelles n°3 1/2

## Claude DELANGLE,

Professor at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris

*"When I was younger, I looked for the "ideal reed". This is not necessarily the right solution. I first try to find a medium strength that suits me (he takes a reed and plays it). This reed is a little too strong for my mouthpiece but I will keep it because I prefer to choose reeds of slightly different strengths so that I can adapt to climatic changes and retain the flexibility of the*

*embouchure. During rehearsals, I rarely use reeds selected for concerts. In this way I can keep my reeds for a fairly long time. To find a concert reed, after dealing with the strength, I concentrate on the sound projection and tone. Obviously, one should not have too much of a preconceived idea about the tone at the time of selection. And then I play a little, not too much, to give it a "patina", without taking away its energy. After having played a new reed, I dry it with my fingers to spread the moisture all over its surface, so that it does not warp so easily. If I have to play a "classic" concerto with an orchestra (the Glazounov-Ibert type), I choose a reed with a lot of "nerve" and harmonics. Even if it difficult to play at the beginning, it will subsequently give me a better result. If I have to play chamber music, for example with the Webern Quartet for the clarinet, violin and piano, with very subtle nuances, I will use a reed that is almost soft for me, but in any event never a new reed. In this way, I will know its reactions, its sound projection. The chemical composition of saliva certainly plays an important role in the strength of the reed. I personally have relatively acid saliva. This is why I usually choose reeds that are slightly above my "ideal" strength. If I take a reed that is a little weak at the beginning, I will not be able to do anything with it at a concert later on. It is therefore possible to have a reed that is a bit strong, even with some "breathyness", with some impurity when producing sound, because a reed that has "substance" can be improved through work.*



Anches V16 31/2

David Sanborn

## David SANBORN

*A good reed can cover a multitude of sins... If you have a good reed, you can sometimes get past a horn\* that leaks, a horn\* that is not in very good shape. That is what is so frustrating in woodwind instruments... But if you think too much about the problems, you become more preoccupied by the limitations than the possibilities. The great thing that the reality of reeds does is that it puts you in touch with nature of life, which is change. Nothing stays the same. If you are a reed player, you are reminded of that every time you pick up your horn\*... A good reed can just make my whole day.*

\* "Horn": saxophone

*I have a very unusual system for preparing reeds that was taught to me by John Purcell. I prepare a lot of reeds. I will take 2 or 3 boxes of reeds and soak them in water in a sealed jar (the jar needs to be small enough in diameter for the reeds to stay upright) for about 2 hours, with approximately 10 reeds (or one box) in each jar. After the soaking process I put them back in the plastic Vandoren reed holders and place them back in the jar- tip down, with only five or six drops of water in the jar. I then clean the reeds daily by running warm (not hot) water over the reed while gently rubbing it, always toward the tip, first one side, then the other. I then thoroughly rinse out the jar, put the reeds back in their plastic cases and replace the five or six drops of water in the jar. The purpose of the small amount of water in the jar is to allow the reeds to retain some moisture so they will not dry out. It usually takes between 1 and 3 weeks for a reed to be ready to play. When I take a reed out of the jar to play, I put it on the mouthpiece and if it is good, I leave it on the mouthpiece until it wears out. Sometimes the weather will accelerate the degeneration of the reed, that's all. If I play in Phoenix Arizona one day and the day after in New York or Florida, I may even use the same reed. Once again, a good reed is a good reed. I keep the reed from drying out by keeping the mouthpiece cap on when not playing. Make sure the mouthpiece cap does not have a hole in the tip end, but if it does, put tape over the tip of the cap to maintain moisture on the reed. Try to play the horn at least twice a day to make sure the reed stays moist and flexible. I normally don't take the reed off the mouthpiece while it is still playing well, but, if I take the reed off to clean it I replace it immediately. Using this process, the reeds usually last at least a week, sometimes two.*



*This column will continue to be a regular feature. You can also see in the former Vandoren magazines the interviews of Ulysse Delécluse and Marcel Mule (#1), Guy Deplus, Lee Konitz, Karl Leister, Fabrice Moretti, Donald Montanaro (#2) The complete interviews will be available on the website <http://www.vandoren.com>*

## Jean Paul GAUVIN

VANDOREN ARTISTIC ADVISOR

*“As a philosophy, it is important to think positively about one’s reeds”*

*Is the reed a fundamental parameter in the creation of sound?*

*No! Although it serves “to make sound”, there is an entire philosophy behind the reed that should be taken into consideration. The preparation of the reed, the way of blowing and of tackling the music are subject to an intense debate, which depends on the personality of each individual and affects one’s innermost self. It is a philosophy of life. To succeed in being positive about one’s reeds is a way of avoiding many worries at the last moment. Then comes the choice of the reed to help achieve comfort and to “reassure” the musician. But there is more than that and one should not expect everything from it. This does not prevent one from having a feeling of confidence in the reed, which is much more than a piece of wood.*

*Is it important to have one or several reference reeds?*

*Yes, but I believe that every musician who wants to produce music and be serious about his profession does not have one reference reed. He has reeds that enable him to find an “ideal”. Furthermore, it is important to rotate the reeds. The more one gets used to playing different reed strengths, the more these reeds end up becoming stable. A layer of tartar can form on the surface of the reed, slightly obstructing the pores of the reed, and this will significantly reduce the penetration of saliva into the fibre. Apart from that, not all musicians have the same attitude towards their material. A young student at a music academy will have a more thorough approach to his material because he is “immersed” in a rigorous environment. During periods of competitions, his state of stress usually prevents him from taking a certain distance in relation to his material. Every year, during the weeks preceding the competitive examinations of the Music Academy of Paris, for example, we have noticed that students suddenly have difficulty in finding “the reed”, or else they lose some of their reference*



*points. After a few years of experience, the same musician becomes mature. Whether he is a teacher or soloist in any part of the world, he exercises his profession and no longer has the same approach, in other words, he makes music. Without being*

*content with just about anything, ten boxes of reeds should be enough to last for two years. In the end, it does not matter. What is important is that musicians find what they want. This means that every reed can find its player.*

*What do you think of the “blind test” method?*

*It is the best because it is the most objective and realistic. However, this method does not necessarily lend itself to the various psychological reactions of musicians. Not everybody is willing to confront himself. It is true that this kind of test makes it possible to advance, to obtain concrete results. It is perhaps a bit brutal to attack a number of certainties that are sometimes necessary and reassuring. In fact, it brings to the forefront the relationship established with the musician and it weaves a web of confidence that is the foundation of our respective developments. The interest that can be shown in all these musicians surrounding us has led us to a better understanding of their needs, which must be based by taking “psycho-acoustics” into account.*

*In other words?*

*It is rather paradoxical but the fragile and sensitive side of an individual, which is responsible for him being an artist in the first place, can also at the same time make him vulnerable enough to allow himself to be influenced by small details, such as visual and tactile aspects. For example, a metal ligature can, for some musicians, evoke a “metal” and brilliant sound, while with a flexible ligature they expect a rounder sound. This is what is implied by psycho-acoustics. But it is precisely these little details that give musicians their own vision, their finesse, which enable them to express their art.*

## Jean Louis RENÉ

VANDOREN ARTISTIC ADVISOR

*“The concert is a place where one cannot cheat, it is thus important for one to “break in” the reeds before a concert to make sure they acquire a reasonable stability”*

*What role does the reed play in producing a sound?*

An instrument should be considered as an accessory; a mouthpiece and a reed are projections or extensions of our voice. They do not “make” the sound on their own but contribute to providing some comfort. After that, what is required is a certain amount of work ...

*Do reeds have their own language?*

Actually, one should talk more of a vocabulary that each person adapts depending on his own sensations. The majority of people, however, tend to bring it close to the language of wine. Admittedly, it conjures up images that are both suggestive and poetic. In my view, more acoustic terms should be used, such as the notions of colour, references to fundamental notes or the richness of harmonics.

*What is a reference reed?*

For me, a reference reed is one that I have already played, a reed that has been carefully “broken in”. In this way, it appears to be stable and gives me confidence. What is more, it is very important to have several references. From a practical point of view, this diversity is necessary. The reason is that it enables musicians to adapt to the environment surrounding them (humidity, heat) as well as their physical condition (fatigue, stress) while giving their best performance. In addition, it prevents them from relying on a single judgement that could turn out to be too simplistic



*Is it important to feel confident with one's reeds?*

It is vital because in actual practice, doubt is omnipresent. This is why it is important to feel confident about one's material. We are nevertheless relatively lucky in being able to transport our own instrument.

Pianists do not have this possibility, which means they must have a great capacity to adapt.

*By taking refuge in one's material in this manner, can it affect music in any way? For instance, spending hours to choose it? A distinction should be made. It is a waste of time to choose it but not to prepare it. The concert is a place where one cannot cheat, it is thus important for one to “break in” the reeds before a concert to make sure they acquire a reasonable stability*

*What does this “breaking in” process entail?*

It entails a daily use of the reed (5 minutes), which can be spread over about ten days, until it becomes stable and does not weaken any longer. In concrete terms, it is rather like a sportsman who needs to develop his “muscles” and warm up before making an effort. Once this phase is over, musicians can express themselves without any resistance. Being free from any concerns about their material, they are then able to devote themselves entirely to music.

*Can this method be used to adapt most reeds to the musician?*

First of all, I advise musicians to play with reeds that are slightly harder than their reference, and to break them in. But if a reed turns out to be too strong, it can be positioned in a different way on the mouthpiece by lowering it or eventually resurfacing it.

## Laurent SULTAN

VANDOREN ARTISTIC ADVISOR

*“The materials as well as the instrumental technique are only there to serve the music.”*

*Is the reed a fundamental parameter in the creation of sound?*

There is no doubt that it is the reed that vibrates, without it nothing would happen. It is an indispensable component in the elaboration of sound (along with



the musician of course).

*Why are there such diverging opinions with respect to its choice? Can one talk of a language of the reed?*

To begin with, we do not have the same references. For



instance, a musician with a narrow mouthpiece will not have the same sensations and, consequently, the same parameters, as a musician playing with an open mouthpiece. What is more, each one has his own notion of what is ideal, and this is why opinions appear to be so different.

The terms used to describe a sound are therefore very important. There are, in particular, certain groups. One can refer to a "dark sound" that is "less resonant" than a "light sound", which could itself be more forceful. However, sound is a complex element that requires several adjectives that are frequently related to the language of wine, which is as sensual and subjective. One can therefore talk of a "fruity sound" with substance or body. The same subtleties can be found in the relationship established with a reed. Thus, using the same mouthpiece, the desired sound can be obtained from one reed or another, while being aware of the fact that the "ideal" is a limit that can only be approximated. The ideal reed would therefore be the one that "responds" to the musician while producing the desired sound according to his criteria.

*Suppose you find it? Can you then use it as a reference?*

Yes. However, it serves as a reference at a time and in a place where

it was perfect. For example, in different conditions of humidity or acoustics, a reed that may have appeared to be ideal the day before can turn out to be mediocre, rather like a human being who does not necessarily have the same reactions from one day to another. This is why life as a couple cannot be based on a single string. The "musician factor", which varies due to fatigue, stress, etc., must also be taken into account. And it should not be forgotten that a reed is a natural product. This is why there is no perfect reed, just as there is no perfect man or woman. A musician will nevertheless develop with his reed. This explains why keeping the same reference reed could prevent him from being objective about his material because it would trap him in a rigid judgement in the face of a natural material that evolves. My professor, Henri DRUART often reminded us that the materials as well as the instrumental technique are only there to serve the music. When a musician seeks to "be one" with his instrument, he in fact requires a palette of reeds, all different from each other but all living up to his ideal. Such a palette would provide him with a significant "opening". It would be futile to look for a perfect reed because this would be almost impossible to find. In the case of a couple, on the other hand, the ideal is to develop together. "Loving does not mean looking at each other but looking in the same direction", according to Saint Exupéry.

## Michael SKINNER,

VANDOREN ARTIST RELATIONS MANAGER FOR NORTH AMERICA

## and Roger STEMEN

VANDOREN ARTIST RELATIONS CONSULTANT, CALIFORNIA

*Is it necessary to have a reed of good quality to get a good sonority ?*

Roger Stemen : Absolutely, the rigorous selection of the cane and the regularity of the manufacturing, determining in the quality of the reed allow to extract the "best" of the sound. Absolutely! The rigorous selection of cane and the consistency of manufacturing and the cut, which determines the quality of the reed, are critical for a musician to create the absolute best sound.



Roger Stemen



Michael Skinner

Michael Skinner : To insist on the virtues of such a method, it is particularly used to "smooth out" the slight differences of resistance between the reeds of a same box and thus to adapt them to the musician's play... it is a kind of "personalization" of the reeds.

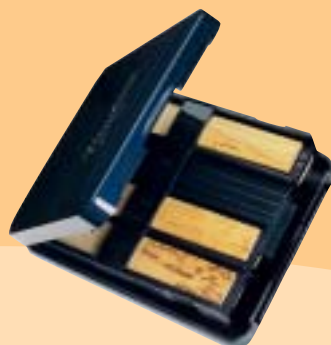
*Does these habits require a certain education?*

M.S. : Yes and unfortunately, too many teachers skip part of this aspect that is nevertheless the basis.

As a matter of fact, many will try to pass on the technical aspects of teaching (how reeds and mouthpieces contribute in creating a good sound) and say little or nothing concerning the choice of a mouthpiece, the choice of the reeds and their rotation. These few key elements can be the secrets that help to sort out many problems young musicians encounter.

*In the scope of your activity with musicians, and in particular in the "workshops", what would you advise to the ones who only play two reeds in a box?*

R.S. : I think that if one takes time to rotate the reeds, they will all give a satisfying answer. Thus, after a few days, the "rebel" reed could have been tamed and will meet with the musician's requirements.



REED CASE  
(8 REEDS)

An elegant blue case designed to hold 8 reeds.

- Numbered compartments keep reeds organized
  - Provides air circulation
  - Convenient size easily fits in a pocket or clarinet case.
- Holds 8 of any Bb, Eb clarinet or soprano saxophone reeds.



M30 Bb CLARINET  
MOUTHPIECE

Designed to provide more flexibility, the M30 incorporates a very long facing and a large tip rail to produce a mouthpiece similar in sonority to the B40, with easier sound production qualities

The M30 is available with the **Profile 88** beak in two different series :

- **Traditional series** with the 442 Hz pitch
- **13 series** (American 440 Hz pitch)

Technical Characteristics :

Opening : 115/100 mm

Facing : Long

Recommended reeds :

- Traditional reeds strengths 3 - 3.5 - 4
- V.12 reeds strengths 3.5 - 4 - 4,



MICROFIBER CLARINET SWABS  
FOR Bb AND BASS CLARINETS

Vandoren's clarinet swab is the perfect choice for your instrument. The gentle fibers are specially designed to thoroughly clean your clarinet while protecting the delicate finish.

- Made of high-quality, specially designed microfibers.
- Strong cord with easy pull-through weight.
- Best humidity and grease absorption available.
- Cleans easily with soap and water.
- Durable and long-lasting for years of reliable use.



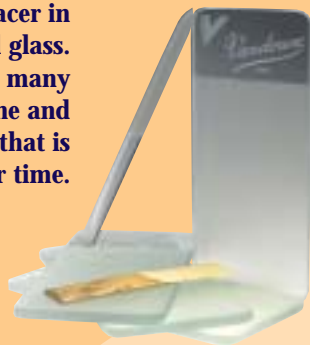
MICROFIBER  
CLEANING CLOTH

Same material and same characteristics as the Vandoren microfiber swab (without a weight).



## REED RESURFACER

A new reed resurfacer in washable tempered glass. Its surface offers many advantages: a fine and even abrasive that is hardwearing over time.



## SAXOPHONE STRAP

Fitted with an innovative hook in coated metal, in a shape specially designed to give a feeling of security and maximum comfort to the musician.



## REED CASE (6 REEDS)

Same design as the new reed-case for 8 Bb, Eb clarinet or soprano sax reeds, it holds 6 alto saxophone reeds.



## OPTIMUM SERIES: A NEW RANGE OF MOUTHPIECES FOR THE CLASSICAL ALTO SAXOPHONE

The design of this series is completely new from the point of view of both the aesthetics as well as the sound.

The newly designed external line echoes certain mouthpieces of the past whilst the shape of the beak provides more comfort.

Its sound concept, dynamics and resonance will satisfy even the most demanding saxophonists.

Two models will soon be available:

- The **OPTIMUM AL3** mouthpiece  
Its easy sound production, owing to its new facing, is the result of collaboration between a team of saxophonists from different backgrounds.
- The **OPTIMUM AL4** mouthpiece  
This mouthpiece is inspired by the A28 in terms of tip opening and length of facing, with the new **OPTIMUM** design.



# Soon available !

## NEW JAZZ SAXOPHONE "ZZ" REEDS

In tests with Jazz saxophonists, the artists found the new ZZ reed to be immediately responsive without sacrificing the brightness required for their style of music.

The free-blowing of the reed converted them immediately.

Frank Catalano, recording artist from Chicago said, "This reed must be from God! It's incredible!"

Soon available for :

- Alto & Tenor saxophone strengths :  
1.5 - 2 - 2.5 - 3 - 3.5 - 4
- Baritone saxophone strengths :  
2 - 2.5 - 3 - 3.5 - 4



# VANDOREN SHEET MUSIC STORE

56 RUE LEPIC – F – 75018 PARIS / TEL 33 1 53 41 83 00 / FAX 33 1 53 41 83 01

EMAIL DIRECT ORDERS : [partitions@vandoren.fr](mailto:partitions@vandoren.fr) / INFORMATION ON SCORES : [jmpaul@vandoren.fr](mailto:jmpaul@vandoren.fr)

*We cannot quote here all the new scores, books and CDs that were published in 2001-2002..  
You will be able to download updates on the Vandoren website (<http://www.vandoren.com> , Sheet Music Page).*

*Jean-Marie PAUL*

## clarinet

### Methods, Studies

- 1CL7223 Carbonare, Alessandro. Clarinetto. Tone, art & technique :100 exercices to improve homogeneity (English/Italian/French text). 2nd edition
- 2CLP75 Crousier, Claude. Voyage musical en clarinette : méthode interactive pour débutants (+CD)
- 1CL8015 Hue, Sylvie. L'apprenti clarinettiste : vol.2 (fin 1er cycle) + English text
- 1CL8449 Maudot,C./ Berrod, Philippe. Doigtés des quarts de ton pour la clarinette (Quarter tones fingerings)
- 1CL8402 Rolin, Etienne. Micro-Ludes (Initiation à la musique contemporaine)
- 1CL8188 Villa Rojo, J. El Clarinete y sus posibilidades: estudio de nuevos procedimientos (armonicos, cuartos de tono,flatt,...) Spanish text only

### E Flat clarinet, Bass clarinet

- 1CL8485 Bok, Henri. Bass Clarinet Manual : New Techniques for the Bass Clarinet (2001 edition, published by the author) + audio CD-R
- 1CL8317 Merrer, Jacques.. Traits d'orchestre cl mib vol.1: Bartok Berlioz Britten Copland Dallapiccola Mahler Berio Janacek Stravinsky... (E flat Orchestral excerpts, first of a series of 10 volumes ; vol.2 forecast for 2003)
- 1CL8718. Richards, E. Michael. The E-flat clar.of the 21st century. Fingerings (183 alternate, 446 micro-tones) 419 multiple sounds, 71multiphonics (already published : Bb clarinet (1CL6070), Bass clarinet (1CL6071)

### Scores with Play-Along CD

- 2CLP158 Naulais, Jérôme. Clar. cocktail vol.1 (clar. score. + CD ; versions with and without clarinet : J.Fr. Verdier, cl.) facile (vol.2, medium difficulty : 2CLP159)
- 2CLP207 Various authors (Dangain, Guy). Invitation musicale au voyage + PlayAlong CD (Schumann Haydn Schubert Bach Naulais

- Mozart +folkl (Bateliers de la Volga, Hatikvah) Orchestration Jérôme Naulais.
- 2CLP211 Verdier, Jean-François. Cartes postales : 32 petites pièces originales et faciles (partitions cl & pno +CD full & playback)
- N.B. " Croc'notes ", complements Jean-Noël Crocq's Method. 15 easy pieces. Music for clar. et piano+CD, réf.2CLP156 (version clarinet quartet, sheet music only. : 1CL8312)

### Clarinet and piano – New editions

- 1CL8495 Bernstein. Sonata (cl & pno) Boosey 2001 (replaces the American original edition 1CL3296)
- 1CL8230 Debussy (Zimmermann). Rhapsody+Petite Piece. URTEXT Peters (Rhapsodie, other editions : original ed. Durand 1CL1885, Southern 1CL223, orchestral score, Durand : 1CL7257)
- 1CL8427 Saint-Saens (Harvey, Paul). Sonata op.167 (Chester) (other editions : original ed. Durand : 1CL1897 ; score clar. alone+piano playback CD with 3 tempi, Dowani : 2CLP103)
- 1CL8439 Weber (Gertsch/Umbreit). Concertino op.26, Henle 2001 (Urtext version of Weber and version of Carl Baermann)
- 1CL8569 Weber (Gertsch/Umbreit). Concerto N°1 op.73 en fa mineur (Henle Urtext, May 2002)

## saxophone

### Pedagogy in France

- 2SAP104 Delangle, Claude / Bois, Christophe. Méthode de saxophone débutants + Play-Along CD (+60 pièces = vol.1, 2000) Vol. 2 is forecast at the end of 2002.
- 2SAP267 Fourmeau, J.-Yves./Martin, Gilles. Saxo-Tempo: Method for beginners + CD (score piano score provided, with pieces de G. Martin) English/French text
- 2SAP227 Guicherd, Yves. Motivations : méthode +CD (personal compositions with rhythms)



- 2SAP264 Ecouter, lire, jouer : vol.2 sax alto +CD (2SAP266 : sax ténor vol.2+CD) (méthode De Haske, Vol. 3 : prévu sept. 2002 ; pour compléter la méthode : les trios pour mib vol.2, 1SA5065)
- 1SA4963 Di Betta, Philippe. Ebauches (sax alto & pno) (4e-5e année, approche de la musique contemporaine)
- 2SAP278 Kientzy, Daniel. Saxologie. Thèse 595 pages.+CD. Pour les 7 sax : modes de jeu (enveloppe, effets spéciaux), acoustique...
- vol.1 & 2 : 2SAP212,2SAP213 ; sib 1 & 2 : 2SAP256/2SAP257) Folk and modern pieces
- 2SAP289 Misc. authors (Michat). Saxofolk : 13 pièces faciles + full & playback CD(sax+piano) From Greensleeves to Tanaka

## Jazz (Sax/Clar)

### France

- Allerme, J.M. : Jazz attitude 2 vol.+CD (clar.2CLP216 & 219 ; sax :2SAP281/282)
- Barret, Eric : 1SA5001 : Solos jazz pour sax alto (10 pièces initiation au jazz) ; 1SA4617 : La Pratique du saxophone vol.1
- Pellegrino, M. : Jouez les grands thèmes du jazz : initiation, 2 vol.+CD (clarinet : 2CLP44/2CLP111 ; alto/tenor sax. : 2SAP155/202) ; and " Jazzy Melo " (2, 3, or 4 clarinets, very easy +CD : 2CLP214)

### U.S.A./G/B (Collections)

Two collections (easy) with numerous titles now : " Guest Spot " (G.B.) et " Take the lead " (USA). The Aebersold series has now more than 100 titles. Vol.102 : Jerry Bergonzi (ref.2SAP279) and vol. 103 : David Sanborn (2SAP280)

### General books

- 1SA4759 Habla, Bernard Solo-Saxophon und Blasorchester (Repertory of works of solo sax and band) et les livres en allemand de Günter Dullat sur la facture instrumentale, les brevets de saxophone (1SA4956/4957/4958)
- 1SA4631 Umble, James (+Street, W.) J.M Londeix Master of the modern saxophone (French/English text + commentary of works : Caplet, Villa-Lobos, Lauba, etc.)
- 1SA4845 Ventzke/Raumberger. Die Saxophone

### Saxophone+CD

- Séjourné/Velluet. Les saxophones parcourent le monde (alto

## First International CAHUZAC Clarinet Competition in Versailles

Organised by Philippe CUPER on 9 June 2002 within the framework of the Clarinet Days of Versailles



D.R.

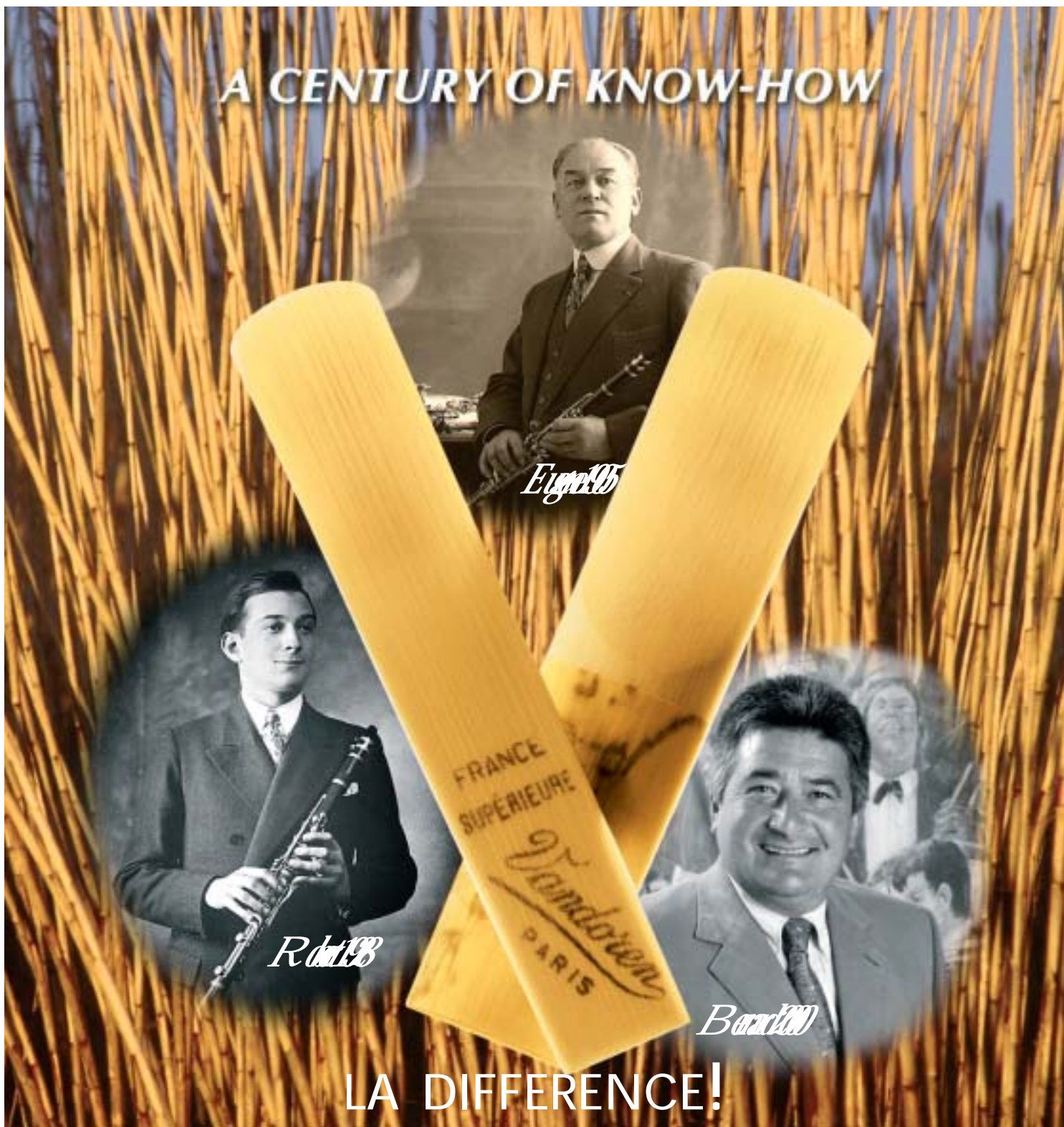
*Philippe CUPER is a professor at the Conservatory of Versailles and a Super-Soloist at the Paris Opera (a competition he won in November ; since 1984 he was First Clarinet). He has been invited to play with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Berlin and has won seven international prizes (Munich, Prague, Vercelli, Geneva, Orvieto, the Slovak Prize and Saint Petersburg). In 2001, Philippe Cuper was behind the initiative of a CD (he wrote the libretto) devoted to Louis Cahuzac (DANTE LYS 366), a record that is now sold out. Philippe CUPER has recorded the complete works of CAHUZAC, after the original manuscripts, but they are not yet available. A book is also in the process of being written.*

The jury was composed of Michel ARRIGNON, Guy DANGAIN, Guy DEPLUS, Max COSTE, Philippe CUPER, Hans-Peter RAAS (Switzerland), Ronald VAN SPAENDONCK (Belgium) and the composers Jean AUBAIN and Paul MEFANO. Three other personalities were unable to participate: Henri DRUART, Hans-Rudolf STALDER and Gilbert VOISIN. Some members of the jury were former students of CAHUZAC: Messrs. COSTE, RAAS, STALDER and VOISIN (the latter having been one of the teachers of Philippe CUPER). The First Prize was awarded unanimously to **Jean-Luc VOTANO** (Belgium), who is now soloist of the Liege Philharmonia Orchestra The Second Prize was awarded to **Vincent CHAIGNET** (France), who already won the 3rd Prize of the Francaix International competition in 1999.

Some of the participants came from Asia and Mexico...

All the details (including those for other recent and future competitions for the clarinet and saxophone) will be published on the site [www.vandoren.com](http://www.vandoren.com)

A CENTURY OF KNOW-HOW



LA DIFFERENCE!

*Vandoren*<sup>®</sup>  
PARIS

MANUFACTURE D'ANCHES ET BECS POUR CLARINETTES ET SAXOPHONES  
FONDEE EN 1905

56 rue Lepic, 75018 PARIS  
Tél. (33) 1 53 41 83 00 • Fax (33) 1 53 41 83 01 • email : [info@vandoren.fr](mailto:info@vandoren.fr)

Registration of Copyright, Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, january 2003  
Publication Manager : Bernard VAN DOREN, Editor : Jean-Marie PAUL.  
With the contribution of : Anne-Sophie VAN DOREN (interviews of Vandoren advisors),  
Jean-Marie PAUL (interviews of musicians, new scores), Nicolas ROUX DIT BUISSON (photos, unless otherwise specified)  
La Maison : (33) 1 40 90 02 20