

# Achieving Good Intonation

Richard Parkes

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Reed selection

Reed weighting uniform (within reason)

Selecting the pitch (considering everything, including environmental)

Try to eliminate as many variables as possible

- Try and have everyone do the same thing with their reeds before practice

Balancing the start point or points

Setting the chanters in unison-my method (given good conditions)

- Ensure pipes are blown to achieve stabilisation
  - Give each player time to blow naturally
- Tune two or three at a time (depending how much time you spend on each)
  - Use a tune or tunes with as many notes on the scale as possible
- Allow all pipers to blow again to get back to stability
  - Tuners need to hold back a bit to allow to settle
- Keep going round until all are tuned
- Use rest of time to find single note problems
- Keep pipes at pitch until performance
  - Remember not to over blow and leave best sound in tuning park

Drones may be tuned individually with each instrument, fine tuning where necessary in combined group to achieve best overall sound

- Remember band is one grand instrument, if you need to stop drones don't think twice about it. One or two drones within a band will never be noticed

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## Discuss Strategies for Poorer Conditions

- Wet /humid
- Hot
- Positioning of the pipers in the circle
- Positioning of the pipers in the competition conditions

# Achieving Good Intonation

Once unison is achieved, steady blowing (consistent air pressure) is essential for sustaining sound

- Note: Sympathetic blowing or modifying of blowing pressure may be required at times to maintain good intonation, depending on length of performance or conditions. This requires great skill and is not easily mastered.

P/M must be helped by his players

- Good practice regime
- Consistent blowing of pipe (10 minutes a night is better than one or two sessions of an hour)
- Good maintenance of instrument
- Ensuring pipes will strike in and maintain steadiness for length of performance

# Band Practice Strategy (slide from Band Practice Strategies)

## Later Off Season (three four months before 1<sup>st</sup> competition)

- New reeds selected and being blown in
  - Ensuring reeds are optimised to peak in competition performance
- Players doing home practice to eliminate any mistakes
- Practicing starts, breaks, expression etc at band practice
  - P/M, L/D doing one on ones as necessary with relevant players

## Approx 1 Month Before Competition Season

- Start working on sound at every practice
- Try and ensure band has been well tuned at practice
- The less you play on competition day the better (within reason)
- Know every player and how long you will get from everyones pipes

## Competition Day

- Don't go to competition to practice – go to produce your best sound
- Use methods discussed to produce your best sound
- Don't tire players out before your performance
- Keep your best performance for the circle not the practice field

## Good Luck

- PP&PPPP