

GEAR LIST:

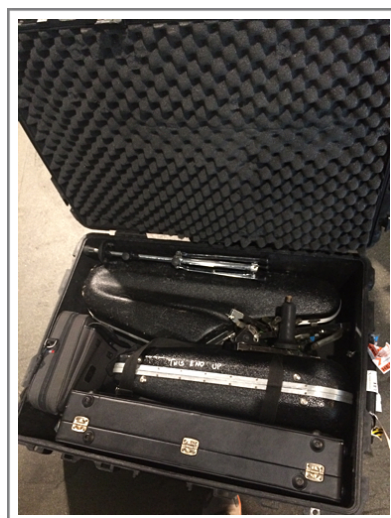
Equipment:

SKB 3019-12 Flight Trunk. You can find them at camera supply stores or from SKB directly. This carries all of the horns I take on the road. My tenor, alto, soprano and clarinet in their individual cases. And I can fit my Hercules (tenor-alto-soprano -clarinet) horn stand that I use in our dressing rooms, and even Alex's trombone stand fits.



I used a heavy plywood, "anvil" style, case for about 15 years, it was rebuilt a few times and always took a beating. Eventually all of the metal corners and flashing fell off or crushed. I've had this case for 3-4 years and it's lasting quite well so far. I've witnessed the baggage "handlers" on many occasions dropping cases from

shoulder height. Slamming cases together, letting cases fall off ramps over and over. Pelicans seem to really take a beating. And I have a feeling this case will be around for quite a while. It takes a bit of Tetris to fit everything in but it's snug and safe. The alto and tenor cases are "Walt Johnson" case and I highly recommend them. They are a bit heavy, but do a great job protecting my horns which are what a cases are supposed to do, right? I've had these same Walt Johnson cases for 25 years, and they've obviously experienced a whole lot of road in that time. I had Andy, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's Baritone Sax player, fix my Walt Johnson cases as Andy surfs and knows how to repair holes in Fiberglass surfboards and apparently cases. All in all those "Walt Johnson" cases have been a great investment.



Horns:

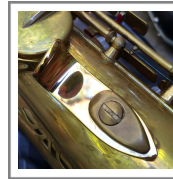
Tenor set up:

YTS-82z UL (Yamaha Custom un-lacquered) with YAC-TC1AG "Sterling Silver Neck"



The sterling silver neck really focuses the horns sound And opens up the palm keys and altissimo range. I ordered both my Tenor and alto un-lacquered as I prefer the more vibrant, resonant sound. Plus they immediately develop an awesome patina. This horn is barely a year old in this photo.

The Alto and tenor have metal thumb rests (both right and left hand), and a custom "Jeff Peterson", billet aluminum, neck screw "So, a special screw", "big deal" you might be thinking. "How could that possibly make any difference. I "A-B" tested the horn before and after adding each new metal thumb rest. And it makes a marked difference. The horn vibrates more with the metal thumb-rests as the plastic-thumb rests deaden the vibration.



Using the same (A/B) test I tested the billet neck screw. and the billet neck screw makes an enormous difference. Suddenly the lows and mids are more focused. And the altissimo range pops more. It's hard to believe that a few small part changes would make a big difference but they absolutely do.

Theo Wanne" Metal "Ambika" 7* and 8* and 9 mouthpieces.



The Theo Wanne pieces are great. And they are a really good match for my Yamaha tenor. I use the "**Ambika**" model which I believe is the darkest & most traditional model they make.

They have built in ligatures with interchangeable metal plates (the part that holds the reed down) they come with a couple of different brass thicknesses, a platinum version, an aged brass version and the one I ended up liking the most: the silver one. (It projected the best.) Like the thumb-rests and neck screw it seems like the metal the ligature plate is made out of, wouldn't make any difference, but it in fact does. I recorded the same passage using the different plates and they all sounded a bit different. Go figure. The amazing folks at Theo Wanne have sent me updates to the Ambika mouthpieces so I have each new version. I'm playing the Ambika IV

now after playing the 1,2, and Ambika 3 models. I've also over time gravitated towards the larger tip openings and I'm playing a 9 tip opening, I find the larger opening opens up the altissimo range but also provides some flexibility . The combination of the YTS-82z horn and the Theo Wanne mouthpieces, which are very good at slotting pitch, work really well together, and the bigger tip openings help provide some of the flexibility that I want by having the room to adjust my sound using my air and throat positions when playing.

Rico Jazz Select filed, Tenor reeds. #3 soft

I've been using Rico or as they've been officially called for quite a while, "D'Addario Jazz selects", for many years. Lately I've been trying Rigotti and Boston Sax shop reeds and really like them.



Alto set up:

YAS-82z UL (Yamaha custom 82Z alto un-lacquered) with YAC-SN-AC1AG (sterling silver neck) Again with metal thumb rests, (both left and right hand) And a custom Jeff Peterson, billet aluminum, neck screw.

Theo Wanne Meyer Brothers 9 Alto mouthpiece. After searching for an alto mouthpiece for a long time, I've found what I've been looking for I've always wanted to use Cannonball Adderly's sound and tone as a template for what I was trying to achieve on Alto, and this mouthpiece delivers. I first tried a size 6 Theo Wanne Meyers Brothers mouthpiece but I found it didn't project like a vintage 6 New York Meyer that I got the opportunity to play. I'm certainly not an expert but the hearsay I've heard was that the hard rubber in the hard rubber pieces of that vintage era, was more dense, and therefore projected more. And that because of modern day environmental concerns they can't replicate the density of the mouthpieces of that era. When I tried out the new Theo Wanne "Meyers Bros" pieces I felt like the wider tip opening of 9 helped bridge that gap. Cannonball always had this huge window of projection, from very soft to very loud but always with a great tone. This Theo Wanne mouthpiece delivers on that front. I think since I'm playing a 9 tip opening on my Tenor having the 9 opening on Alto makes sense from an embouchure comfort level as well.



D'Addario (Rico) Jazz Select filed #3 soft.



Soprano set up:

YSS-82Z R silver plated Yamaha Custom Z soprano with bent neck.

Regular plastic thumb rests and standard neck screw.

On Alto and Tenor I'm always searching for more resonance, hence the Un-lacquered horns. On soprano however, I'm searching for focus and warmth. Soprano can sound very nasal. A lot of folks don't like the soprano sax since it typically sounds pinched and bright. That's the reason I went for the bent neck soprano as it is warmer and also why I went for the Silver plating. Silver plating focuses the sound. Typically on alto or tenor silver will also add a brightness. But for whatever reason on soprano it seems to warm things up. Also the reason I kept the plastic thumb-rests on soprano is to mellow it out and create warmth. I love this horn. It's by far, the best soprano I've ever played.



Theo Wanne Ambika 3 Soprano Mouthpiece 6

I played a Selmer E* for many years on soprano as I was seeking a really warm sound, like Branford Marsalis as opposed to the mark VI soprano sound of Coltrane. (which is great, but just not the sound I'm looking for.)

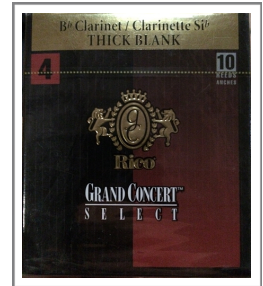


When I finally tried the Theo Wanne Ambika mouthpiece I was very pleased with how much control I had but also with the additional core to the sound that it provided, while still achieving that warm Branford like soprano sound I was looking for.

D'Addario (Rico) "Grand Concert Select" Thick blank (red box) clarinet reeds. #4

I've heard that Lenny Picket plays bass clarinet reeds on Tenor sax, so perhaps I'm not alone in preferring reeds designed for another instrument. (Heck, if it's good enough for Lenny!...)

I've always preferred clarinet reeds on soprano. Soprano reeds in comparison, seem too "reed-y" and they're harder (for me at least,) to control. I play clarinet and soprano a few times each on a typical Big Bad Voodoo Daddy gig, but play primarily alto and tenor. So I like having thick #4 reeds on clarinet and soprano. That way I'm not having to contort my embouchure to get them to play in tune. I can just use a ton of air and a thick reed to place the pitch exactly where I want it.



Clarinet set up:

Yamaha YCL-CSVR

I love this clarinet! It really plays easily and well, is open and free in the throat tones, and like all Yamaha instruments, it's pitch and scale are terrific.

Theo Wanne Gaia 2 and Gaia 3 Clarinet mouthpieces



I have both a Theo Wanne Gaia 2 and a Gaia 3 clarinet mouthpiece and I love them both. The Gaia 3 projects very well and is very open on the clarion and the altissimo ranges. The Gaia 2 is a little more traditional sounding. The 3 is perfect for loud stage volumes as it really cuts without sounding shrill.



D'Addario (Rico) "Grand Concert Select" traditional blank (blue box) clarinet reeds #4

Again I like the #4 reeds on clarinet as they're a no nonsense way to pick up the clarinet a few times a night and play in tune by using a lot of air. I don't have much call for warm Chalumeau and throat tones as it's hard to be heard in those ranges on a loud stage, but when I do play in those ranges the combination of the Theo Wanne mouthpiece and a 4 reed are warm enough as to sound good. If I were to play clarinet all night, I would probably opt for a lighter reed for more tone flexibility, however for the few bars here and there that I play, it's not worth the time in long tones and practice to achieve the tone I would be searching for.



The other horns I use in the recording studio with the band are:

YBS-62 Yamaha Baritone sax, my very first horn :-)

I Bought my first sax in High School partly with money earned from my paper route. How antiquated does that sound now!?! That yamaha 62 Bari still plays great.

I've played it on BBVD solos for: "Please Baby", "Jingle Bells (Cha-cha and the slow version) "Merry Christmas baby" & "That's a plenty"



Theo Wanne Durga 4 Baritone Sax (9 tip opening,) mouthpiece

I have played the same Berg Larson mouthpiece for literally decades and when I received a Theo Wanne Durga 4 Bari mouthpiece, I couldn't stop playing my horn I loved it so much. Literally hours went by before I stopped playing due to exhaustion! Like all of Theo's mouthpieces It's refreshingly open on the palm keys and has enough power in the low end as a Bari should, while not sacrificing any warmth. I absolutely love this mouthpiece!



Selmer "low C" Bass Clarinet:

Played on "Who's that creepin' and "Spooky Madness" and countless home studio projects.



Other random accessories deserving mention:

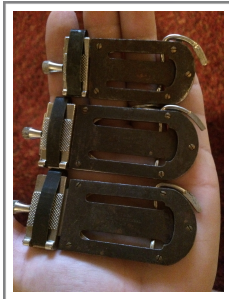
Boston Sax shop saxophone harness

My chiropractor mandated I stop using a regular neck strap after discovering the degenerative effects that a regular neck strap had done to my neck vertebrae after all of these years. I've tried many harnesses and straps over the years but by far my favorite is the BSS harness. It's comfortable and it looks great, including with a suit. And the weight of the horn is distributed onto your shoulders. my neck is very grateful.



Reed Geek

This little machined block of aluminum is the best tool to fine-tune reeds I've ever used. The "reed geek" is super easy to use and it's very effective. Unlike most reed knives, I can bring it on a plane. An important feature for any traveling woodwind player. Reeds will tend to warp after a few plays and this tool is amazing for revitalizing warped reeds by evening out the table. It's got another edge that you can adjust the vamp of the reed as desired and a small edge to adjust the tip rails.



"Cordier" reed Clippers

From top to bottom: a clarinet reed clipper, an alto reed clipper and a tenor reed clipper. These three things are life savers. Or at least reed savers. Let's face it, reeds can be a real pain in the arse. While the reed geek is great at leveling out a reeds and making them even. The reed clippers are more like an EKG machine for nearly dead reeds. Every great reed can only last so long. They lose their resistance over time and eventually end up getting soft, and become much more difficult to play in tune. But you can "shock" your reeds back to life by clipping off little slivers from the end of the reed.

There is of course. What I like to call the "Frankenstein effect"

Each time you clip the reed you lose a bit of the reeds vibrancy and character. Eventually it will become "monstrously" non-cooperative. At which point it's time to move on and find a new reed. But you may be able to clip a reed and animate it to live on. If only for a few gigs before it just gets too weird. "It's alive!!!!"

Sandpaper:

The last "trick" accessory is just plain ol' 1000 grit sandpaper. It's very effective with sticky pads. The 1000 grit surface is smooth enough not to take off any metal when you slide it in between the pad and the tone hole. There's nothing more annoying than a pad that sticks during a show. I've tried all of the talcum powder products and they only cover up what is making the pad sticky in the first place. The sandpaper removes the "deposits" so that the cause of the sticky pad is eliminated. Some might want to apply sandpaper to their beloved horn, however if you use the right grit sandpaper you don't need to worry about removing any metal from the edge of the tone hole.

