

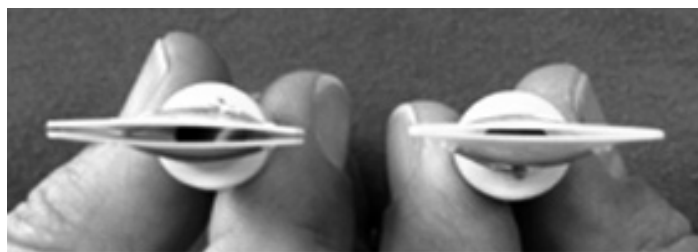
# Adjusting Reeds

The most important part of any double-reed instrument is the reed. The very best player with the finest instrument will still sound only as good as the reed responds to the player's needs. Therefore, treat any reed with great respect and care. Adjusting the reed-tip opening of any reed by squeezing the reed-belt wires side to side, or front to back, requires experience and great caution. A reed will serve many years if not unduly tampered with. When inserting or removing a reed, safest handling of the reed is done at

the thick reed-base section directly below the blades. Squeezing the belt-wires is best done without any tools. Use finger-pressure only. Susato reeds use annealed, tin-coated copper wires. Except for reed-pitch and tip-opening adjustments, any touching of the belt wires or the reed blades should be avoided. The slightest change to the reed-tip opening results in pitch and sound-quality changes. A reed can be cleaned by immersing it for a few seconds into a cup of sterilizing liquid, or mouthwash solution. Carefully remove the cap and reed after playing, to allow the instrument to dry.

Below left, the two reed blades are much too far apart for a good sound.

Below right, the opening of the two reed blades is most likely correct.



Squeezing the reed at the two belt-wire edges will increase the reed blade opening.



Squeezing the belt-wire at the flat surfaces of the reed blades will reduce the reed opening.

## Reed Pitches

Before inserting any Susato reed into your instrument, check the pitch of the reed itself. Place the reed into your mouth and blow into it without touching the vibrating blades. A pitch-range for each reed size is indicated below. This test is only an approximation, but helpful to establish a workable reed-tip opening. If the pitch is within the indicated range, the reed should work well. If not, adjust the reed-tip opening according to the instructions above until the desired pitch is established.

Sopranino reed pitch:  
-C- to -C#-

Soprano reed pitch:  
-B- to -C--

Alto reed pitch:  
-A- to -Bb-

Tenor reed pitch:  
-F- to -F#-

Bass reed pitch:  
-D- to -D#-

Great-Bass reed pitch:  
-C- to -C#-

## Typical Reed Set-Up

