

# Fowler MS Falcon Band

## Care and Feeding of the Piston Valve Instrument

- Your instrument case is to protect your instrument from slight scratches and minor bumps. It will NOT protect your instrument from damage if you drop the case or sit on top of the case.
- Your instrument has some type of Brand-Name/Logo Decal on the side of the case. This side must be "UP" when you open the case. Always open your case on a flat surface like the ground or a table, not on your lap.
- Always keep one hand on your instrument. If you need to set it down, put it under your chair and NOT on your seat where it can be bumped off accidentally.
- Never use abrasive cleaners on ANY part of your instrument!  
(NO Brasso, NO Comet, etc.) If your instrument is "gold" in color, then it is covered in a professionally baked-on Lacquer finish! According to the repair man, you may wipe off the exterior with an extra soft cloth (clean cloth diapers work great) with a spray furniture cleaner like "Pledge" or "Behold."

### **There are two procedures that must be maintained on your instrument WEEKLY:**

(1) **Oiling the valves:** Every week you should oil your valves. You must use industry standard valve oil purchased from a music company, **do not** substitute other types of lubricants such as sewing machine oil, WD-40, etc. This is corrosive to the instrument.

**Procedure:** Work with only ONE VALVE at a time. The valves are NOT interchangeable, they will only work in their assigned valve. If you look closely, they have tiny engraved numbers on the top.  
(A) Unscrew ONE valve. Be VERY, VERY careful with the valve! It is metal against metal with only an invisible coating of oil. The slightest BUMP will dent the valve causing a required trip to the instrument repair shop. Treat the valve like it was an expensive blown-glass figurine.

(B) With a paper towel or clean, lint-free rag wipe the old oil off of the valve and from inside the valve casing (the place where the valve came out of).

(C) Squirt liberal amounts of oil onto the silver exterior of the valve (not INTO the holes or the valve casing). Be careful, the oil can be messy and can stain clothes.

(D) If you look down into the valve casing, you can see a very small "channel" Carefully slide the valve back INTO the casing making sure that the NUB from the valve slides down the "channel". You can also "turn" the valve until it "clicks" down the channel. If you CAN keep turning the valve inside the valve casing, then it is NOT yet in the channel.

(E) Be sure that when you screw the cap back on to the valve, go slowly and be sure that you

do not FORCE it! These valve caps tend to strip easily.

(F) Repeat the above procedure with the other valves.

(2) **Greasing the slides**: Every week you should grease your slides. If you do not, they will FREEZE and be VERY hard to remove. There are two types of Slide Grease available at a music store: The “chap stick” type and the Selmer Square bottle “pink goo”. The goo works better, but is messy! Do NOT use Vaseline, or any other non-approved lubricant.

(A) Holding the valves down when you pull out a slide will make it easier to remove. Remove the slide and wipe off the old grease with an old rag. The slide may have weird colors due to the oxidization of the brass. This is not any big deal unless you have crusty, rust type material, if so, then you should take it to a repair shop. If you clean and grease the slide each week, then this should never happen!

(B) Spread the grease over all sides of the slide and slowly put it back in. Once you get the slide back in you may need to wipe off the excess grease with the rag. Note: If the excess grease you wipe off is discolored (black or green), then you may need to start over again because the slide is still dirty with old grease/corrosion.

(C) **DO NOT** “Buff the slide” with ANY commercial agent such as a Brillo Pad, Comet, sand paper, belt sander, etc. as this will RUIN the slide and it will never fit in snugly and often “fall out”. Many a parent has ruined a slide trying to be a bit too helpful in cleaning the oxidization off of the slide!!

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## **EVERY 5-6 months, give your instrument a Bath!**

(1) Run a LUKE-WARM bath, full enough to cover the instrument. IF THE WATER IS TOO HOT FOR YOUR HAND IT IS TOO HOT FOR YOUR INSTRUMENT! Be careful! If the lacquer melts off, then your instrument will look rusty and will never shine again!

(2) Remove all the valves and slides and carefully place them in order on a FOLDED SOFT TOWEL. Remember that the valves are numbered on the top of the cylinder.

Clean the valves and slides as detailed earlier in this paper.

(3) You can use an liquid dish soap or, better, use an old tooth brush (one that you will never use in your mouth again!) and a GEL type tooth paste (non abrasive, don't use the “gritty” toothpaste like some Colgate products). Scrub the INSIDE of the valve casings and slides as far as you can without getting the tooth brush stuck inside the horn. You can also use a long , coiled “snake” brush purchased from a music company to get in farther than the tooth brush will allow.

(4) Drain. Be sure that the tooth paste/soap is totally washed out of the horn before putting the valves and slide back in. Clean your mouthpiece the same way as your instrument.