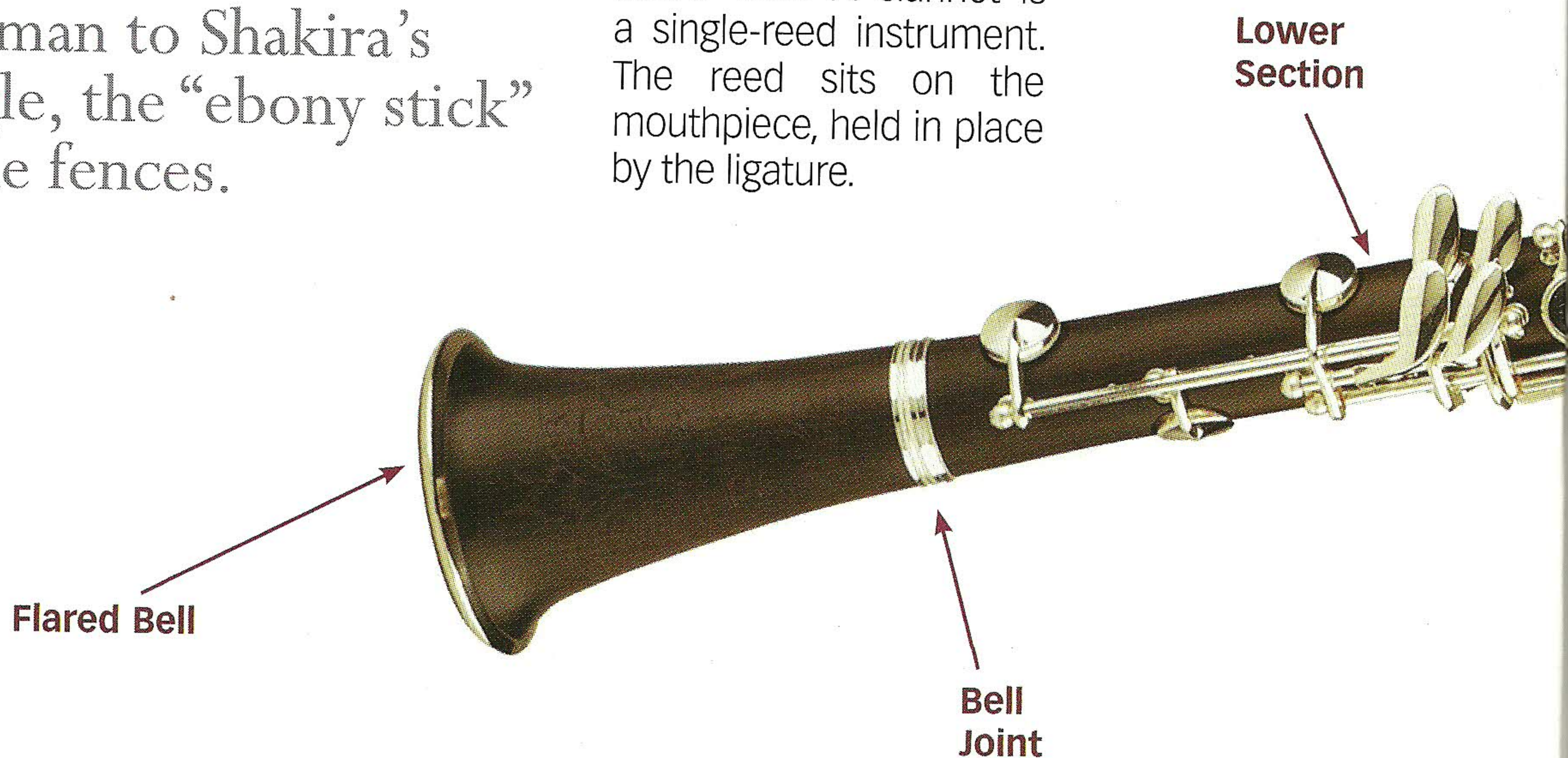


Anatomy of

The clarinet's roots go all the way back to ancient Egypt, yet it's still among the most versatile of all woodwind instruments. From Mozart to Benny Goodman to Shakira's hot new single, the "ebony stick" swings for the fences.

Reed this: A clarinet is a single-reed instrument. The reed sits on the mouthpiece, held in place by the ligature.



It's the co-star in what many people consider the greatest piece of music ever composed by an American, George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." The clarinet, with its woody, sinewy tone, is often the most prominent of all woodwind instruments in a classical orchestra, and one of the most distinctive and expressive in folk and jazz. Clarinets have an impressive range and come in many different shapes and sizes. You could almost have an entire orchestra of clarinets.

Early examples

Like a lot of modern wind instruments, the clarinet traces its history to ancient times. Different versions of the "vertical flute" developed in ancient Egypt and East India. The most common of these are double clarinets—two pieces of cane fused together and played at once. Examples date back to as early as 2700 BC.

Part of the woodwind family, the modern clarinet was

developed in Europe in the early 1700s, a descendent of an instrument called the *chalumeau*, a word that's still used to refer to the clarinet's lower pitch range. The chalumeau did not have keys, and had a deeper tone and lower range than the modern clarinet. The two instruments were both used in classical music, but the chalumeau eventually disappeared in favor of the bass clarinet, one of many variations of the instrument still used today.

The extended family

A clarinet is a single-reed instrument, like its relative, the saxophone, but different from other woodwinds like the double-reed oboe and bassoon. The reed sits on the mouthpiece and is held in place by a metal band called the ligature. Although there is such a thing as a C clarinet, for which music is written in concert pitch, it can be very difficult to play when the music

