Emergency Fix

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I have a simple, low tech, concert saving tip: before every concert put several small rubber bands in your pocket/purse. Murphy’s Law states that when a woodwind instrument spring breaks, it will always break (or the student will actually tell you it has broken) about ten minutes before the concert starts. There are very few springs on any woodwind instrument that can’t be temporarily fixed with a rubber band. It may not look pretty, but at least the student can play the concert. Every spring location is different, so you’ll have to use some ingenuity to see how to use the rubber band to lift or close the errant key. This is usually quite easy to do. Having different sizes of rubber bands helps, since a rubber band that is too strong or weak could cause another problem with the mechanism working properly.

I stress that this is a “**temporary**” fix. Rubber bands have acid that will eat through lacquer and even plating (plated flutes, for example) if left on long enough. If this “fix” is used, be sure to tell the student to take the rubber band off after the concert and take the instrument to a repairperson. Damage from the rubber band takes quite a while to occur, but if it is left on over the summer after the concert there could be some cosmetic damage.