



# A CONVERSATION...

## Bernard Van Doren discusses the new Flow Packs and other issues.



Bernard Van Doren  
Managing Director

**Michael Skinner:** Bernard, it's always interesting to me to see how new ideas like the Flow Pack started. How did this come about?

**Bernard Van Doren:** It actually started in the

United States. I was on a dealer tour with you and noticed that in many of the stores the dealers were storing reeds in very unfriendly places where heat or the lack of humidity could damage the reed due to warping which will have an adverse affect on its performance. My concern was that the musician could receive reeds with our name on it that would not play like we wanted them to. I knew then I had to design a system that would help the dealers present a higher quality product to our musicians. The Flow Pack is the end result.

**MS:** So what exactly does the Flow Pack do?

**BV:** Cane is very sensitive to hygrometric changes and that is why our factory is regulated. The new packaging maintains the proper hygrometry of the reed during the transportation of the reed from our factory all the way to when the musician opens it. This is the first time this has truly been done. So now if the dealer is not exactly sure where to store his reeds, we can still insure that the reed the musician opens is factory fresh and at its optimum performance level. Remember, the Flow Pack is extra protection. Once opened, the reed will react to their hygrometric environment exactly as before.

**MS:** What has been the response?

**BV:** So far we have heard very positive comments from our musician friends like Jon Manasse, Claude Delange and

many more. The new packaging, of course, is different to accommodate this innovation, but the more you use the new packaging, the more you will appreciate it.

**MS:** Yes, the packaging is larger and looks very different.

**BV:** Yes it does. It is because each reed is now packaged individually in the Flow Pack packaging. We needed to make the box to fit the Flow Packs. We understand the packaging is different, but we think it's worth it to insure that every time you open a Flow Pack you have a reed that is factory fresh.

**MS:** I agree. I've heard from many musicians that the reeds are playing very well. Do you have any concerns regarding the packaging with regard to the environment?

**BV:** This is an interesting question because we are very concerned with our environment. Let me give you a few examples:

**From the beginning** – The cane used to manufacture reeds is a 100% natural plant. We use no fertilizer or pesticide during its growth and no chemical components during its transformation into reeds. Any leftover cane resulting from reed manufacturing is completely reused as either compost in our plantations or fuel for the boiler that heats our factory. Our high performance boiler, gives off only water vapor and CO2 into the atmosphere. It is important to note that this CO2 exhaust is of plant, not fossil origin and that its atmospheric evacuation contributes in no way to the greenhouse effect.

**Inside the new box** – The reed protector is 100% recyclable and has the PP5 mark on the edge of the protector. The film we use to protect the reeds is very important. If we use any other type of packaging or method, the amount of waste is much more. It is a recoverable



From a recent interview by Michael Skinner, President, DANSR, inc., the U.S. importer for Vandoren Products

packaging (in the form of energy recovery as it has a high calorific ratio in incineration).

**The new box** – the paper we use comes from trees planted expressly for paper production and does not contribute to deforestation. Moreover, trees are systematically replanted in each section as they are felled. We have also replaced toxic inks, fixatives, developers and solvents, with others less polluting in nature (for example, the use of offset inks instead of habitual UV inks).

**Inside the factory** – we use electric vehicles to move around our factory and finally I am happy to tell you that I drive a hybrid vehicle.

**MS:** Wow! So it would seem to me that every step of the way, you not only found ways to protect the reeds, but to protect the environment.

**BV:** Yes, it's true.

**MS:** Are there any additional advantages to the new packaging?

**BV:** Yes, in recent years we have seen the increase in counterfeit products that concern us very much. The level of sophistication required to create this packaging and product makes it difficult to copy. Again, our goal here is to create the best product so musicians can continue making the beautiful music for which we are so passionate.

**MS:** Thank you Bernard!

*For more information on Flow Packs or the environment, consult the Vandoren website at [www.vandoren.com](http://www.vandoren.com)*