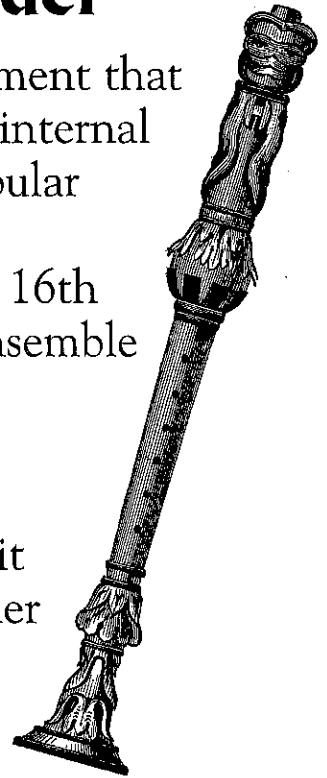
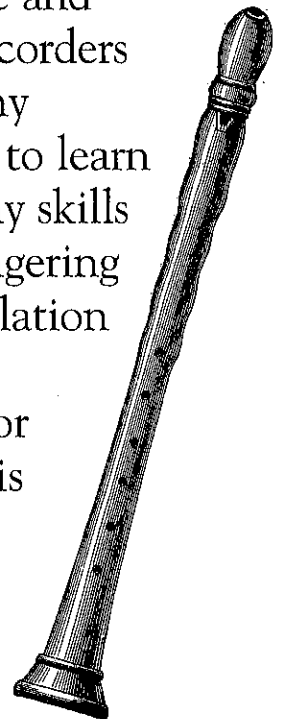

The History Of The Recorder

The recorder is a whistle-type woodwind instrument that is from an ancient family of instruments called the internal duct flutes. For many centuries, it was the most popular woodwind instrument. It was being used as a folk instrument as early as the 12th century. During the 16th century, several composers were writing solo and ensemble music for the recorder. Two of these were Bach and Handel, probably the best known composers of the Baroque Era. The transverse (side-blown) flute had replaced the recorder by the 18th century, because it had a much broader dynamic range than the recorder and could blend better with the larger, louder orchestras of the day.

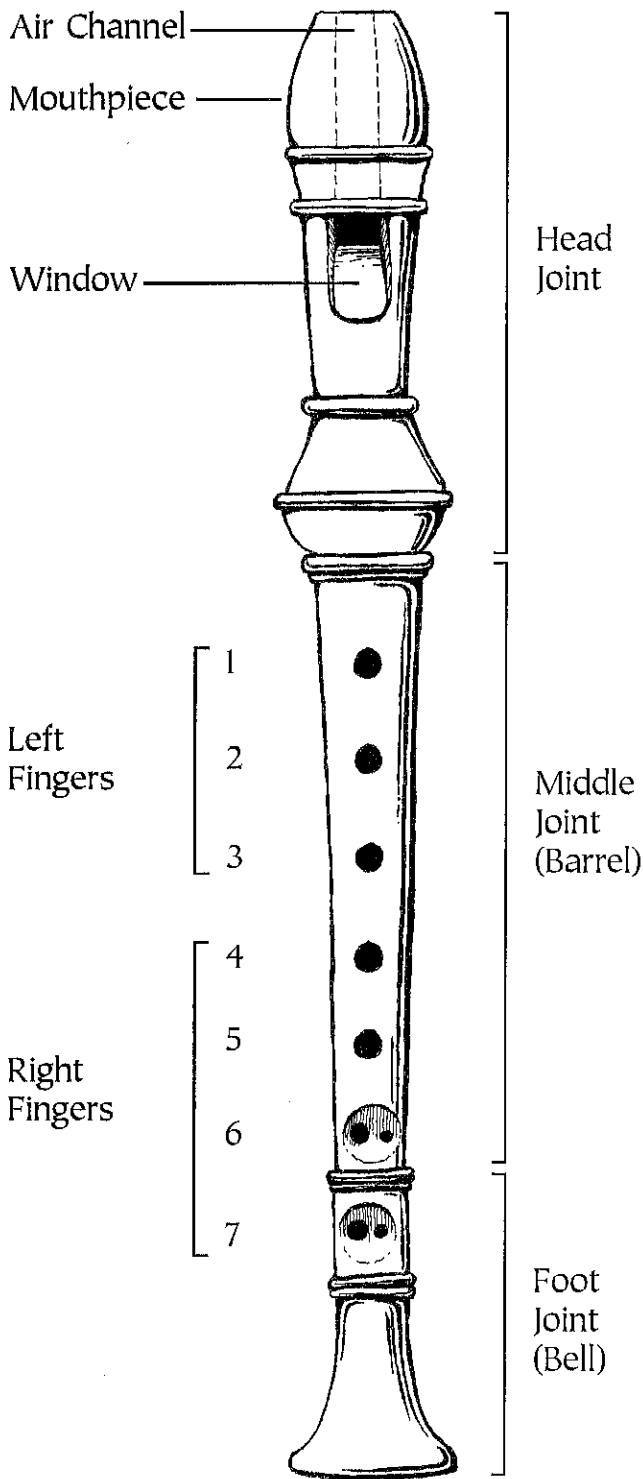


Recorders probably came to America with some of the first settlers. There are as many as 26 recorders listed in the inventories of various plantations in the 1600s. Around 1925, the recorder began to make a comeback in popularity because of a renewed interest in Renaissance and Baroque music. Today, more than 3.5 million plastic recorders are manufactured per year. Recorders are played in many elementary schools and can be a wonderful instrument to learn on its own or as an introductory band instrument. Many skills are learned from the playing of the recorder, such as fingering skills, embouchure development, breath support, articulation skills, and development of the inner ear.



The five most common recorders are: sopranino (or descant), soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. The smallest is the Garklein recorder, which is only four inches long. The largest recorder is called a sub-contra bass and is about ten feet long. The soprano is the recorder that is most often played by beginners. All of these recorders can play together just like a choir. This group is called a consort.

How To Hold The Recorder



- All recorders have a thumb hole in the back and seven holes down the front. Some recorders have double holes on the bottom two holes.

- The left hand is placed at the top of the recorder, which is by the mouthpiece. The left hand covers the thumb hole in the back of the recorder and the first three holes. The pinkie finger of the left hand is never used and should be held away from the recorder.

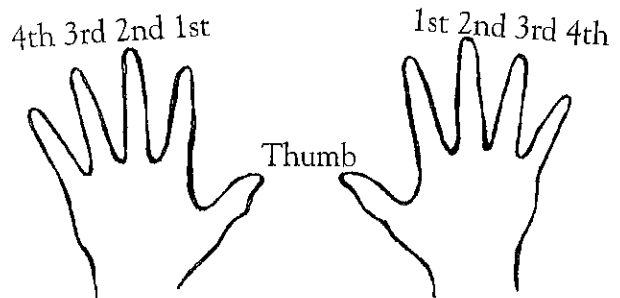
- The right hand is placed at the bottom of the recorder. The right thumb is used to balance the recorder and is placed between the 4th and 5th holes on the back. The right hand fingers cover the four holes near the bottom of the recorder.

- Cover the holes completely with the flat, fleshy pad of your fingers, NOT the fingertips.

- Fingers should be slightly curved.

- Fingers that are not being used to cover holes should be held a little distance above their holes so they are ready to quickly play the next note.

- Hold your recorder at a 45-degree angle. Your elbows should be slightly away from your body. Make sure to sit up straight!



How To Play The Recorder

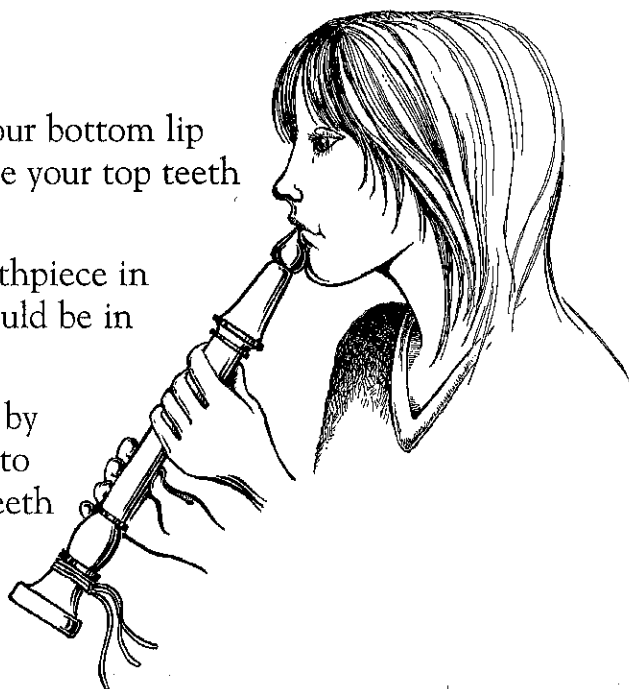
How To Place The Recorder In Your Mouth

- Place the mouthpiece of the recorder on your bottom lip and in front of your bottom teeth. Do NOT close your top teeth down on to the mouthpiece.

- Make sure not to put too much of the mouthpiece in your mouth. Only the tip of the mouthpiece should be in your mouth.

- Press down very gently with your upper lip by whispering “mmm.” This will put your mouth into the correct position. Be careful not to let your teeth or your tongue touch the mouthpiece.

- Make sure that your lips stay firm around the mouthpiece. Don't open and close your mouth on each note. This will avoid air leaks.



Breath/Air Pressure

- Blow softly but with a steady air stream. Little air is required. Blowing too hard produces an obnoxious noise.

Use The “Steamy Window Trick”

- Blow on your hand as if you are steaming up the car window without someone near you hearing. (You don't want them to hear you blow.) The air should be warm and should not be heard. Blow this same way into your recorder.

- As you blow into the recorder, start the breath by whispering “tu.” This is called “tonguing” and your teacher will explain more about this in the future.

Two Main Causes For Squeaks

- If you squeak, you may be blowing too hard. Try to blow with a very steady air stream.

- Another common reason for squeaks is that your fingers may not be covering the holes completely. Remember: **Leaks Cause Squeaks**. Keep trying!

Practice Directions:

1. Clap and count the rhythm (use 1–2–3–4 or rhythm syllables such as “ta” and “ti-ti”).
2. Clap and speak the letter names in rhythm.
3. Finger the notes and speak or sing the letter names in rhythm.
4. Play the notes in rhythm. Start slow and increase in speed later.

How To Care For Your Recorder

1. Label your recorder and the case with a permanent marker. That way, if you leave it somewhere, it can be returned to you.
2. After playing, wipe the moisture from the inside of your recorder with a small piece of cotton cloth tied onto a cleaning rod. Do NOT use tissue or paper towel because these will fall to pieces inside your recorder and would be very difficult to remove.
3. Clean the mouthpiece of your recorder with an old toothbrush or a pipe cleaner. It is important to keep the mouthpiece clean.
4. Plastic recorders can be washed in the dishwasher or in warm, soapy water once in a while.
5. If your recorder is hard to take apart or put back together, you may use a little joint grease or petroleum jelly on the joints.
6. Keep your recorder in its case when you are not playing it.

NOTE: If you are playing a wooden recorder, it will need to be cared for in different ways. Talk to your teacher before doing anything to a wooden recorder.

