

Recorders for All

'Between Courses'

Amuse-bouche



WHO AM I?

JAN RAN PIPE TEAMS

A ROSIER HUM

KNIT BANGLE? NAH!

LOAD RIBBON

OH KNEEL, HERO

LASER CELL KEY

DIVA'S MODES

GRUB HID TUBER

U NEED JAIL

ROMAN REJOICED

ROOMY BRAIN SENSOR

JON SEES FARM

LONELY SWAIN

EEK! INNER ANIMAL

HIP-HOP TRILBY

CHOIR SNORT

HOW'S MY REHEARSAL?

CALL WANDERER NIGH

Welcome to our first 'Between Courses' newsletter!

On the left are anagrams of tutors' names; no prizes, apart from self-satisfaction, but do let me know if you get all of them.

There are lots of online resources at the moment - those listed on p2 & 4 will get you started. Also, a friend of mine, Neil, has been producing consorts to play alone and has made the first four available to us. They are accompanied by an interesting article on tuning.

Keep your questions coming in and if any of you have some photos you'd like to share, please send me a jpeg. Also, any short articles on something you think may be of interest or reminiscences of your course highlights. Thank you to all for your contributions. Pam x pspamsmith@gmail.com

SuRF stats 2015-19

- 48% of all repertoire chosen by tutors has been modern and less than 25% has been renaissance
- Top 4 composers 1st - John Hawkes
 2nd - J.S. Bach
 3rd - William Byrd/Paul Clark



SuRF 2017 with Dietrich Schnabel and Puss in Boots

Tutors' Links & Resources

Zoom with Annabel

Annabel is offering to do a zoom session for us on anything we want - from top technical tips to working on a particular piece. Please send me (Pam) any special requests by the end of June and I will pass them to Annabel. In the meantime, if you haven't seen Fontanella's Teddy Bears' Picnic, here's the link



Fontanella's Teddy Bears Picnic

<https://youtu.be/LGDuSXjD2xY>

Julie has been running online sessions for her recorder groups and is pleased to offer these to other players. There are a wide range of options including: one-off webinars, playing/coaching sessions, short courses such as: 'I love scales' and her recorder maintenance presentation. All sessions take place via Zoom and you can find more information or book sessions from a new page on her website <https://www.recordershoplondon.co.uk/>

Helen has been busy preparing a series of downloads for recorder consort and all are available on her website: <https://www.helenhooker.co.uk/downloads>.

Although these are free, there is a button at the bottom of the screen for donations, which seems only fair, considering the amount of time involved in putting them together :)

Tutor Spotlight: Annemarie Klein



The start of the current movement restrictions unfortunately coincided with the end of my maternity leave. I had just started to fill my diary with concert engagements and course teaching, and the remainder with private pupils. Whilst the loss of most of these is unfortunate, the silver lining is that I get to spend additional time with Clara until her nursery reopens (she will turn one in July).

After an unpromising beginning – she cried passionately when I played the recorder at a wedding – she now listens attentively when I play and enjoys having a go on the harpsichord herself. Needless to say, her improvisatory style is rather atonal.

As a result of ongoing restrictions, I am now preparing a virtual house concert with keyboard player John Kitchen in the summer. We have tailored our virtuosic Italian high Baroque programme to fit the combination of my instruments with his house organ and multiple harpsichords (I will confirm how to watch on my website nearer the

time). In the meantime, I have continued to teach some of my pupils online. I have been surprised by how well this works, provided the internet connection is stable. I find that the biggest disadvantage is that I can't accompany my pupils. I wouldn't be surprised if online teaching remained a part of my private teaching – especially for pupils coming to Edinburgh for their lessons – but I look forward to interacting musically with people in the real world again.

Alexander's First Concert by Alexander's Teacher (aka Janice Ormerod - in the style of Joyce Grenfell)

"My word, we do look smart," says the teacher cheerfully as she surveys the rows of well-scrubbed children.

"Do you like my tie, Miss," yells Alexander from the back row. "It's new. It's on elastic." He pulls his tie as far as it will reach, then, lets it twang back to his neck, making himself cough and splutter.

"My dress is new, too," murmurs a shy, little girl on the front row.

"A bit spotty, isn't it?" says another child dispassionately.

"I like spots," sniffs the little girl tearfully. "It's all right, dear," consoles the teacher, "I think spots are very nice too."

"Now then, there is just enough time to practise the main items on the programme before your Mums and Dads come. Let's start with Pease Pudding Hot. Who is playing the percussion? Anthony, Adam, Lisa, Caroline, oh and Alexander. Right, fetch your instruments."

The players settle down. The right page is found in their books and the teacher issues final instructions.

"Remember, first time recorders only, second time recorders and percussion. Ready - one, two ... Alexander!, I said recorders only first time, why can I hear your drum? Oh I see you were practising. Well, please don't. Ready again, one, two..."

The music proceeds, only to be halted by a loud crash, followed by a fit of giggles from the back row.

"Now what's happened?" demands the teacher. "It's Alexander" volunteers Adam. "He's fallen off his chair".

"Alexander," says the teacher sharply, "What were you doing?"

"I was just being an Indian," mutters Alexander as he picks himself up, "You know, they hold their drums between their knees".

"I know," replies the teacher, "But it isn't that sort of drum". The rehearsal continues.

"We will end the concert with Jingle Bells," says the teacher, "while the bell players are sorting themselves out, we will have a quick practice. Who is playing the first part? Right, now who is playing the second part? Alexander, you can't play both! I see, you played one part last week and another the week before, but which one did I say you had to play in the concert? You've forgotten. Well, play the first part, the tune that is. Oh, you can't do that because you keep forgetting how to play C. Well play the second part then. Ready every one - Jingle bells, jingle bells....."

"Now then," says the teacher, "There isn't time to practise your solos, but you all played them very nicely for me last week. Remember, when it is your turn to play, come out to this music stand and use this book. I will make sure it is on the right page. Look, here come your parents. It is nearly time to start. Just have a short rest, then we will begin".

Alexander slips from his seat and hovers near the door. He hops from one foot to the other, with an anxious look on his face. The rows of chairs begin to fill up. The teacher calls the children back to their seats. With reluctance, Alexander leaves his post and returns to his place. Just then, he spies what he has been waiting for. Waiving violently, he announces "You can start now, My Mum's here."

"Good evening, everyone," says the teacher, and the concert begins.

The children are on their best behaviour and the concert proceeds smoothly. The teacher's worried look begins to fade as item after item is successful.

"Alexander will now play for us," announces the teacher. "Busy Bee, a little tune on the note B". She turns to the stand and begins to open the book at page 5 in preparation for Alexander, when the well-known strain of Busy Bee floats from behind her. She wheels round quickly, to find Alexander standing directly behind her, playing his party piece from memory without waiting for the book or the stand - but the audience clap just the same!

The concert is ended. The parents flock round to congratulate the children and the teacher.

Alexander, looking slightly dishevelled, with his tie under his left ear, smiles brightly at his teacher.

"Thank you for teaching me this term. My Mum thought my playing sounded lovely. Bye, see you again next term".

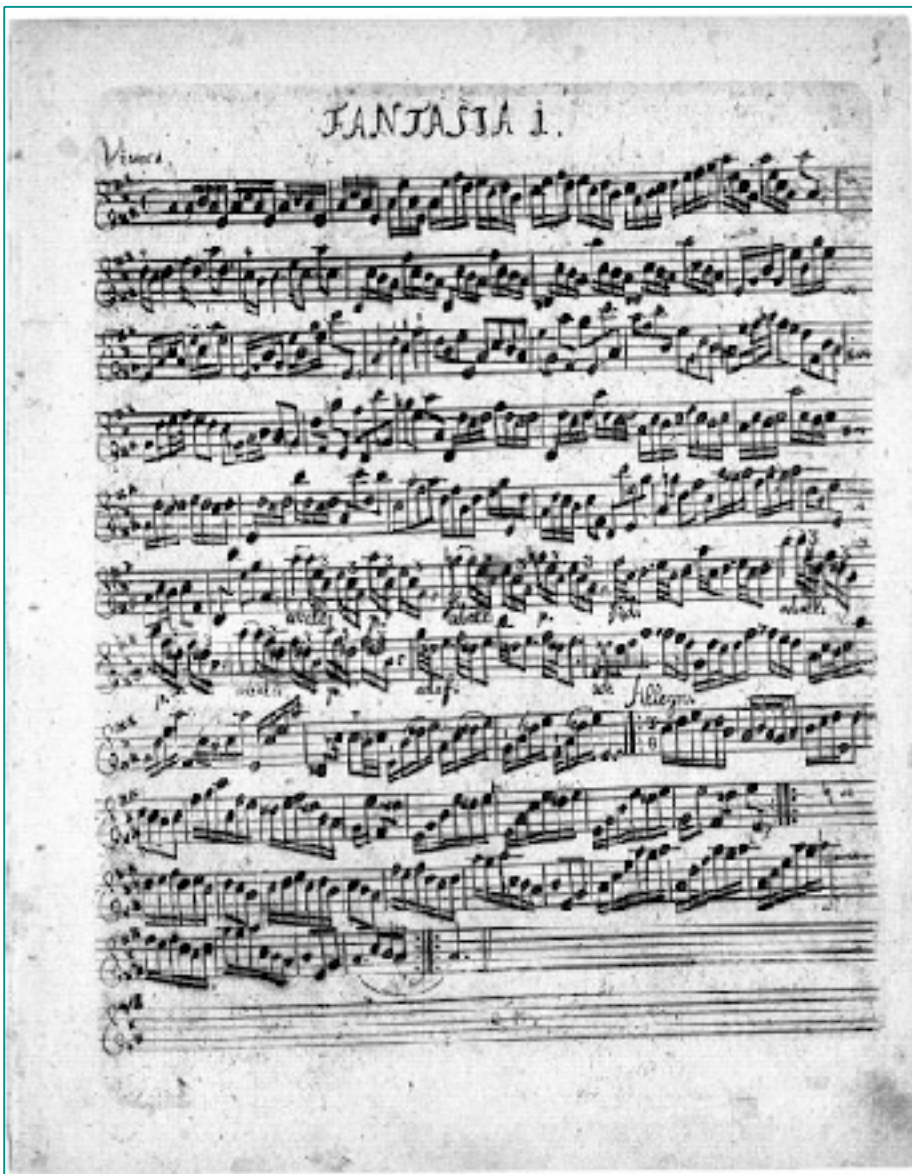
Favourite Lockdown Pieces

Thank you to all those of you who wrote to me to share what you've been playing during lockdown. So many of you also said that you haven't really played at all because you only really like to play ensemble or consort music. I can certainly identify with that! However, maybe the following will inspire you to dig out that volume of long-forgotten solos.

By far the most popular genre is baroque, although it would appear that only Debbie Nicholas likes french baroque! Apart from Debbie's Phillidor, we had Loeillet, Corelli, CPE Bach and of course JS. Both Eric Johnson and Peter Stephenson are getting to grips with his Partita BWV 1013. By far the most popular composer was Telemann (more below).

Going back a little earlier, there is of course Van Eyck and also some fabulous Divisions on various grounds - I know it's a bit clichéd but I love the one on Greensleeves. If you fancy just playing some beautiful tunes why not dig out some folksongs like Helen Whomersley and Sue Norbury?

Good to see some great modern repertoire in your choices too: Colin Hand, Matthias Maute, Nicholas Marshall. The most appropriate perhaps is Linda Dorman's favourite - David Moses's Cooped-up Blues <https://www.srp.org.uk/cooped-up-blues/>



No surprise that the composer who came out on top was Telemann. Handel once said of him that he could write a piece in 8 parts as easily as someone else would write a letter!

His 12 Fantasias for flute (or recorder) are solo but often sound like a duet. They are available in modern editions but you could have a go at playing from the original edition (published by Telemann himself) with the original clef...

Also available on imslp are his Canonic Sonatas:

http://ks4.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/b/b4/IMSLP112003-PMLP54637-telemann_canones_melodic.pdf

You could even record yourself and play as a duet! Or just enjoy practising them so you're ready to play with a friend post-lockdown.

The first Easter Recorder Course in 2015



The 2015 ERC chamber orchestra - conducted by Sophie Middleditch - with Rosemary Robinson on spinet

A Typical Day at the first Easter Recorder Course, The Hayes, Swanwick

My grief it is and wretched am I
Brain only half alive after breakfast
Triplet rhythms catch me out
Can't tune G *sharp* and I jump a line
Can't find the Goldilocks note
The goldfish effect eludes me

Eccles' Sharks chase the little fishes
Wombats eat leaves, slowly, with
chromatic *Maggots*
Illumination!
A whelk in the sun - *Wylkynson's* rebus
The Eton Choirbook opens its pages
And all the angels fly out
Revelation!
Dorian D resolves to a C major chord

We dance Balkan rhythms
7 and 11, 7 8, 2 4, 9 8, 4 4
Peel bells, make brutal staccatos
Or melodiously mellow melismas
Sluggish chuffing or explosive sputa
Sound Tudor fanfares, bring the boar's
head in
Stately but not too slowly
Delicate and precise;
Quiet is neither feeble nor slow

In *Smeltzer* it makes sense to hunt in
packs
Do battle with repeated notes
Play as loud as you can to be in tune
Find the air between the notes

Going to the Chapel and we're going to play *Dufay*
(sung)
Rumba beats in a *Sanctus*? How surprising
Heavenly conversations of descant and treble:
Then, African rhythms of the heart
Repetitive, trance-like, insisting

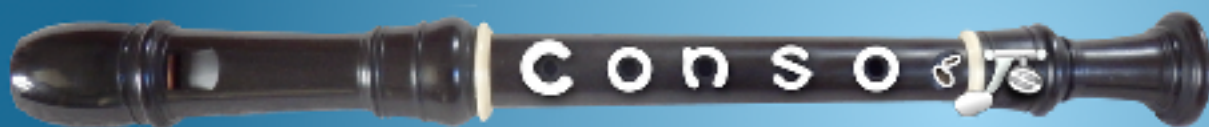
And so to bed and dreams
Tossed on the storms of *Roaring Forties* and digesting
Toblerdrome
Blocks of ice cream melt into crumble
Soft flakes of E breves blur the snowy *Solstice*
landscape
Tomato soup pours over a xylophone of chips

The night is broken open with a she-fox calling
Softened with shuttering of lake ducks
The distant swish of the A38
Swanwick church clock strikes a Hayes-y 7

Across the frosty lawn *Oriana* waits
Attended by goddess-daffodils
Her music is in magpies and crows, *Blackbird* and
heron
Madrigals, *Chaconne*, *Pavan*, *Country Dances* and *Dark*
Tango
She laughs as paper planes fill the air

So, let's all meet at the end of the bar
Sing *The Huntsman's Chorus* and *Song Without Words*
To Pam and Jan raise your glasses high
Your players will return

Judith Railton April 2015



Consorts.co.uk

A New Venture?

In addition to writing about tuning and testing my instruments, I have spent lockdown willing away the days by arranging and recording music for my fellow incarcerated players. I have about 150 pieces currently recorded and by the time you include all the parts and a master copy, it runs to nearly 1000 recordings. I am currently working my way through all 65 Holborne Quintets as well as working on several of my own arrangements. There is also an enormous list of repertoire which could also be added.

I am now considering sharing the content more widely in the form of a subscription web service with possibly a phone App to provide easy access, because it could easily turn into a full time job if I do so. Below are links to 4 complete samples for you to try. When you click, you will be taken to a folder with recordings which are missing one part; so one for each instrument as well as a complete copy for reference. You are very welcome to download and keep them. You will also find, either pdf copies of each part or a link to where they can be collected from. These samples vary in period, style, number of parts and difficulty, so hopefully it will give you an idea of what might become available in due course. The aim is to promote good practice, allow you to prepare pieces in your own time without having to sightread them at a rehearsal and to provide your own personal consort when there are no other players nearby. If you like the pieces and think that it would be worth paying a small monthly subscription to access a library of similar resources, then please do send me some feedback. neil@trainingfortv.com.

If feedback is good, then I will start preparing the website, contact App developers and open negotiations with publishers, composers and arrangers to look at widening the repertoire further still. Hopefully, it will also prove a good way for them to promote and publicise their pieces and promote their libraries.

Hassler

This Intrada is a favourite of mine... renaissance dance music at its best! It is lively and great fun to play. You can decorate and improvise to your hearts content and make an easy piece a lot harder if you so wish. It is intended for a double sextet, however, I have scored it for 9 instruments plus drum, with the bottom three in band one doubling as top 3 in band two. It is scored for 2S Tr T 3B 2Cb although B2, B3 and Cb1 would also fit the Great Bass.

Widman

Some lovely renaissance counterpoint in the form of a Canzon in 5 parts. There are 2 versions.... one for 2S 2Tr B and another for 2Te 2B Cb. Relatively easy to play, although like most renaissance music, the bar lines are an afterthought and often provide little help in working out what is intended. However, playing with 4 other correctly placed parts makes this a whole lot easier! I have included a file with links to the Dolmetsch site as this score and parts reside there.

J.S.Bach

The Ricercar a 6 from the Musical Offering is one of the really great bits of JSB's linear writing... to say 'a work of genius' barely does it justice. This version is my own, tweaked from the original and transcriptions on IMSLP... There are others available and guess what? ... They are basically the same. It is very difficult to improve on perfection... or indeed want to for that matter! This is scored for Sp S Tr T 2B. It sounds relatively easy, but there are tricky bits, but it uses the full range of most instruments, so practice your top notes... As mentioned in the tuning article, remember that a sopranino is a dangerous weapons, so keep it under control!

Tchaikovsky

The Dance of the Merlions must be one of Tchaikovsky's best known pieces. Written as part of the Nutcracker, it features a main line for 3 flutes. In this arrangement, I have scored it for SATTCb. It is not easy and you may well need to practice your arpeggios if you are going to make a fist of it... but it does actually fall under the fingers quite well. For me, I will always associate it with Frank Muir singing 'Everyone's a Fruit and Nutcase' in a timeless advertising gem!

Playing in Tune

by Neil Garner

For many members of the public, the idea of recorder playing conjures horrors of little children playing dreadfully. Much of the problem with beginners is their ability to play in tune and it is actually something which is surprisingly difficult to do, especially when you want to get it spot on.... In this article we will peep under the lid of a **very** complex subject...

Note frequencies from 5th Circles					
	Equal Temp	A	Error (cents)	E ♭	Error (cents)
E ♭	622	626	12,90	622	0,00
B ♭	466	470	13,33	467	4,00
F	698	705	15,56	700	5,56
C	523	529	17,65	525	7,14
G	784	793	18,00	787	7,50
D	587	595	21,05	590	10,00
A	440	440	0,00	443	13,33
E	659	660	2,94	664	11,90
B	494	495	4,00	498	12,90
F#	740	743	7,89	747	14,89
C#	554	557	10,71	560	17,14
G#	831	835	11,63	841	18,52

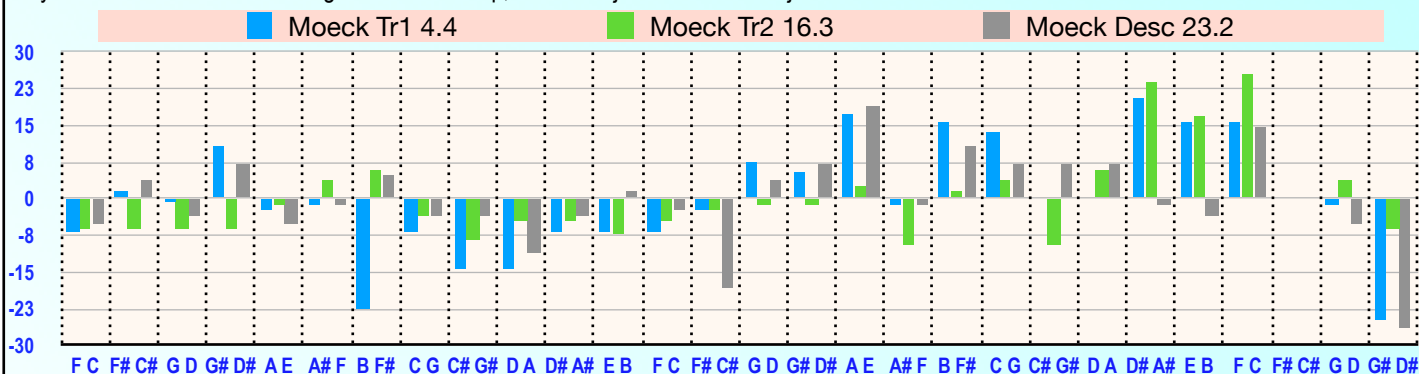
Tuning is a complete science in its own right and as you move around the world, you find many different systems and regimes. Traditionally, Western tuning has its roots in the world of physics and maths... In music we specify a pitch by a repeating pattern of letters, however a physicist will use frequency (the number of sound waves arriving per second). Pitch is regulated by maths... a whole octave will be double or half the frequency depending whether you go up or down and a perfect fifth will be 3 times the original frequency... (or 2x multiples thereof to go up/down an octave...). 5x the original will provide a major third and 7x something approximating to a minor 7th. This is called the harmonic series. So harmonics 1,2,4 and 8 will all share the same letter, as will 3, 6 and 12, etc. However, this only works if we stay in one key.... i.e starting from a specified tonic note. This was a major problem for early musicians who wanted to modulate... If you multiply a tonic frequency by 3 you get the dominant (5th). Keep doing this you will go around the whole circle of fifths and generate all 12 semitones (C,G,D,A,E...) By dividing the higher ones by 2,4,8, etc, you can then get the notes all back down into the same octave. I have done this for 2 different cycles... starting on A, and E ♭. The problem is that in each cycle, the frequencies are not exactly the same... so A is 440 or 443 and C, 523, 525 or 529 depending on the key/tuning you play are playing in!

This problem was partially solved by equal temperament (famously promoted by JS Bach in 'the 48'). It uses the idea of a standard multiple between each note (a bit like an interest rate grows your money) so that things **approximate** to the correct value. It has been the basis of our musical system now for 250 years.

Harmonic Series		
1	110	A
2	220	A
3	330	E
4	440	A
5	550	C#
6	660	E
7	770	G
8	880	A
9	990	B
10	1100	C#
11	1210	D
12	1320	E
13	1430	F#
14	1540	G
15	1650	G#
16	1760	A

How 'In Tune' is a Recorder...?

The recorder can of course adjust tuning by extending the head-joint or blowing in slightly different ways, so in reality, we probably use a bit of both tuning systems as we aim to make it sound as good as possible. But every recorder's design will be a compromise... when making one hole bigger or moving it up/down, it may well affect many notes, not just the primary one we want to adjust. In addition, the tiny in the wood, the exact bore, thickness, stiffness and *many* other parameters will all play their part. As a result all instruments are different even those that are the supposedly the same! Below is a tuning test from three similar Moeck Rottenburgh instruments - all in Grenadilla.... the two Trebles were purchased months apart, the descant some 35 years later. The graph shows all 28 standard notes and the error for each note. The overall tuning adjustment is noted in the key... i.e Treble 1 was on average 4.4 cents sharp, so was adjusted at the headjoint.



Looking after the Cents...

Interestingly, Cents are not equal when it comes to tuning.... There are 100 cents between every note, but the lower notes are physical much closer together... the frequency differences smaller. We hear mis-tuning through the beating of one frequency against another. One note at 440Hz and another at 441Hz will beat once per second, simply because the two waves will phase align only once in every second. Two beats per second is a lovely vibrato.... 10 beats will sound foul.... or will it?



Big is Best...

As you move to bigger instruments, the pitch gets lower and the notes are physically closer together. As a result the cents lose their value! In the table, the difference between the two bottom notes on a contra is only 5Hz. 2 beats per second would require a difference of 2Hz.... which is 40 cents or nearly a quarter tone! At the other end... the top notes on a Sopranino are 166Hz apart, which equates to just a fraction over 1 cent.... which is frighteningly small and therefore much more difficult to control.

	Con	Bass	Tbl	Sop	F (Hz)	F# (Hz)	Difference (Hz)	2 beats per second is...
F/F#2					87,31	92,50	5,19	40 Cents
F/F#3					174,62	185,00	10,38	20 Cents
F/F#4					349,24	370,00	20,76	10 Cents
F/F#5					698,48	740,00	41,52	5 Cents
F/F#6					1396,96	1480,00	83,04	2.5 Cents
F/F#7					2793,92	2960,00	166,08	1 Cent



So what now...?

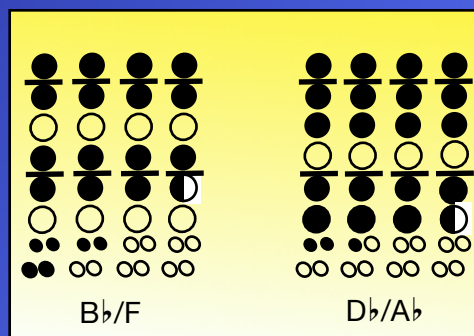
Being flippant... I might suggest that if you struggle with tuning - take up the Contra because tuning doesn't appear to matter too much! Even if not actually offensive, such a statement is a gross oversimplification, and not completely true... you can hear it, but for other more complex reasons... it is just not so objectionable! But the table certainly does explain why most SRP conductors 'have kittens' every time 2 of the little instruments are even seen in the same room, let alone being played! Some might even be happier if such 'beasties' were licensed and kept in a locked steel cabinet along with other dangerous weapons!



Being more serious, the most important thing to do is listen, learn and think. There are lots of free tuning meters available for your smart phone, so download one and try playing each note long and steady.... Can you get it close to in tune....? Remember it will waver, so aim for a rough average. Write down the results and then if there are notes which are a long way out (more than 10 cents?) look at alternative fingerings. I use this with all my instruments when I have issues.... Adjacent are some variations I regularly use....of course there are lots more waiting to be discovered!

N.B. If you want to measure tuning, do it with a warmed up instrument, or your tuning will be constantly on the move even without you trying!

...and if your measurements are all a bit sharp, work out the average error and then retune the head-joint by that same amount and try again.



Finally...

The most important thing is that every instrument is different and often the key of the piece or the chord being played makes a big difference. An A in an A Major triad will need different treatment to the same A in a D major triad or an F Major triad because the other instruments notes will differ in each case and may sharper, flatter or similar with reference to your A.

Of course, when you play in a group, you can all help each other by listening and adjusting even a 'correctly tuned' note a little to help someone who has a note which is a little more wayward. It probably won't be enough to be noticeable as 'out of tune', but it will definitely help get rid of those horrible grating beats, and provide a more worthwhile experience for any poor soul that might be listening!

In addition to studying both recorder and sound engineering at university in the 1980's, Neil has spent his working life teaching at Wood Norton, the BBC's residential training academy and more recently in his own company, Training for TV. As an international trainer, he has demystified complex technical topics for staff at TV stations in more than 30 different countries.

Q & A DIGESTIF

How often should I oil my recorders?

Do I need to 'play-in' my recorders if I haven't played them for several months?

Julie Dean replies:

Oiling - as an approximate rule every 6-12 months is good. The amount the recorder is played, the conditions it's kept in, the type of wood and the type of oil all can be a factor. If the recorder is played daily or even monthly then 6-12 months should be fine. A good indicator of if your recorder needs oil is to feel inside the recorder bore and look down the centre pointing toward some light. If the bore feels dry and looks dull then oil. If the recorder hasn't been played for several months or more (shame on you!) then give it an oil first. If you do hours of intensive practice on a very dry recorder the risk of cracks or changes in the wood is much higher. You should warm the recorder up carefully for the first few times it's played and keep the first few times to around 10-20 mins if it's not been played for some time. Listen to the recorder and if it begins to clog then rest it.

When oiling, remember:-

1. Don't play the recorder for 12-24 hours before or after oiling, the wood needs to be dry.
2. I recommend using a clean scrap of cloth that can be thrown away after oiling. If you use a brush it will be sticky and horrible next time you use it.
3. Brush out the bore and finger holes first or you are oiling and dust into the bore. It's a good idea to use this time to clean off any old joint grease, apply fresh grease. Maybe give the case a wash or a Hoover to get rid of any dust and dirt.
4. Never let oil go near the block or windway. Oil will travel through the wood so keep it at least 1cm away from the block.

Why are so many pieces for solo recorder in flat keys?

There is a long answer to this going back to the three hexachords on C, G and F in the 13th century but that's for another time (if anyone is interested!).

The recorder which is most used for solo repertoire, especially in the baroque, is the treble. This is 'in F' - ie the lowest note is F - and this means that F major (or its relative D minor) is the home key and the most comfortable to play. (The equivalent for the descant or tenor would be C major as they are both recorders 'in C'. If you play the same fingering as you would on the treble for F major, you have a C major scale.) The keys which are closest to F are C (one less flat) and Bflat (one more flat) so they are the next most comfortable ones to play. Many of the pieces written for the baroque flute are transposed up a minor third to fit better on the treble recorder. As the baroque flute was in D, many pieces were written in D and when transposed up a minor third, were then in F. If you want to play them in the original key you could always splash out on a beautiful voice flute - a tenor recorder in D!

Barrett Recorder Repairs:

For Anthony's fab new bass recorder floor spikes, also with spare velcro rings so they can be used with more than one instrument, go to:

<https://www.barrettrecorders.co.uk/product-category/accessories/>

David Moses Downloads:
<https://www.srp.org.uk/david-moses-downloads/>

More 'Playalong' Consort music
<https://www.srp.org.uk/2020/05/21/playalong-consort-music/>

For links to many other recorder sites, in addition to award-winning music theory resources:

<https://www.dolmetsch.com/recorderlinks.htm>