

THE LITTLE MOECK

Practical and Worthwhile Tips
for Recorder Players



A Handbook by

MOECK

Musikinstrumente + Verlag GmbH

www.moeck.com



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Looking for answers?
You'll find them here!



Editorial

We often are asked the same questions about the recorder. Usually, they are about basic knowledge and of course sometimes about more detailed information. It is not uncommon that queries are about advice on the daily handling of your instruments and the care involved. Questions like these need an answer – and not just on websites.

At Moeck's, we have tried to answer the most FAQs as clearly and simply as we can and also to compile the most important elements of looking after your instruments, so that both older and younger players find out more about their instruments and to help you all to keep the condition of your recorders or even improve their sound.

Even if some of this information is familiar, it is often helpful to look things up again. This is what this handbook is for.

Have fun reading!

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE RECORDER



The Recorder – an Instrument for Beginners and Professionals

The recorder is particularly suitable as an instrument for beginners. Playing the recorder has much in common with singing, due to the sound being produced by breathing. It offers an initial introduction to music and promotes learning how to read music. Right from the beginning, it is a lot easier to produce a sound with a recorder that is much more pleasant to the ear compared to the first attempts on a trumpet, clarinet or the violin. It is relatively robust, easy to look after and there are no transport problems: you can quickly pack it into your bag and play over at friends or at your music lessons or on holiday. Soprano recorders are small which allows children as young as five or six to manage the fingering even if initially a few tones may sound a bit squeaky because a tone hole is not completely covered.

But there is more to the recorder than that: the more basic models are very good value for money, they do not need electricity and they are made of wood – a natural raw material. The method of playing is also easily understood as the finger movements (either you uncover or cover the holes with your fingers) is followed

by an immediate audible result (the tone is either higher or lower).

Due to its advantages, the recorder is frequently regarded only as a beginner instrument that is mastered after two years and before moving on to a “proper” instrument. This is not entirely untrue due to the fact that it offers the opportunity to learn how to make music relatively easily but that is not the whole story. In fact, the recorder has a lot more to offer. It takes a great deal of practice to reach a professional level and it usually requires studying at a music academy to master the comprehensive breathing, tongue and fingering skills and techniques required.

The recorder has a long history. You have to study in depth, many styles of music and master playing a wide variety of recorders to be able to play the music of different eras successfully. Most of them require particular fingering and special handling. So, it is an option not to change instruments but to make the recorder your instrument of choice and to discover further just how versatile it is.



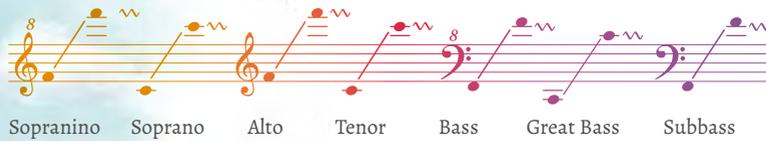
The Recorder Family – from the Soprano to the Subbass

The members of the recorder family are of different sizes. You can see this clearly in the “family photo” (on pg. 9) where the Renaissance Consort is illustrated. The family ranges from the subbass (lowest note F) to the soprano (lowest note f²). There also is the huge double bass with its deep and airy sound and the tiny “Garkleinflötlein” with its high twittering sound.

The illustration also shows the connection between the length, the frequency and pitch of recorders. As a general rule, the longer the recorder, the lower it sounds and the lower the frequency. There are consistent connections between the length, pitch and frequency of the different instruments. With the instruments tuned to c, the tenor (lowest c¹) is exactly an octave lower than the soprano (c²). At the same time, it is twice as long, making the tone frequency only half (261.6 Hz) compared to 523.2 Hz of the soprano. The great bass (c) is twice the length of the tenor but again has only half the tone frequency (130.8 Hz).

The same principle applies to the instruments tuned to f: soprano (f²), alto (f¹), bass (f), subbass (F).

The range of the instruments



i Prove you are good at puzzles!

The Moeck puzzle:

- » the Recorder Family
- » the Different Parts of the Recorder

37.4 x 29.3 cm, 72 parts

Available from Moeck's



Ein Produkt von Ravensburger

Instrument	Lowest tone	Frequency (Hz)	Length in cm
Sopranino	f ²	698.5	24 cm
Soprano	c ²	523.2	32 cm
Concert pitch	a ¹	440.0	
Alto	f ¹	349.2	48 cm
Tenor	c ¹	261.6	64 cm
Bass	f	174.6	96 cm
Great Bass	c	130.8	128 cm
Subbass	F	87.3	192 cm



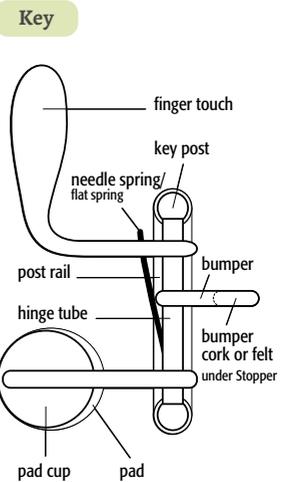
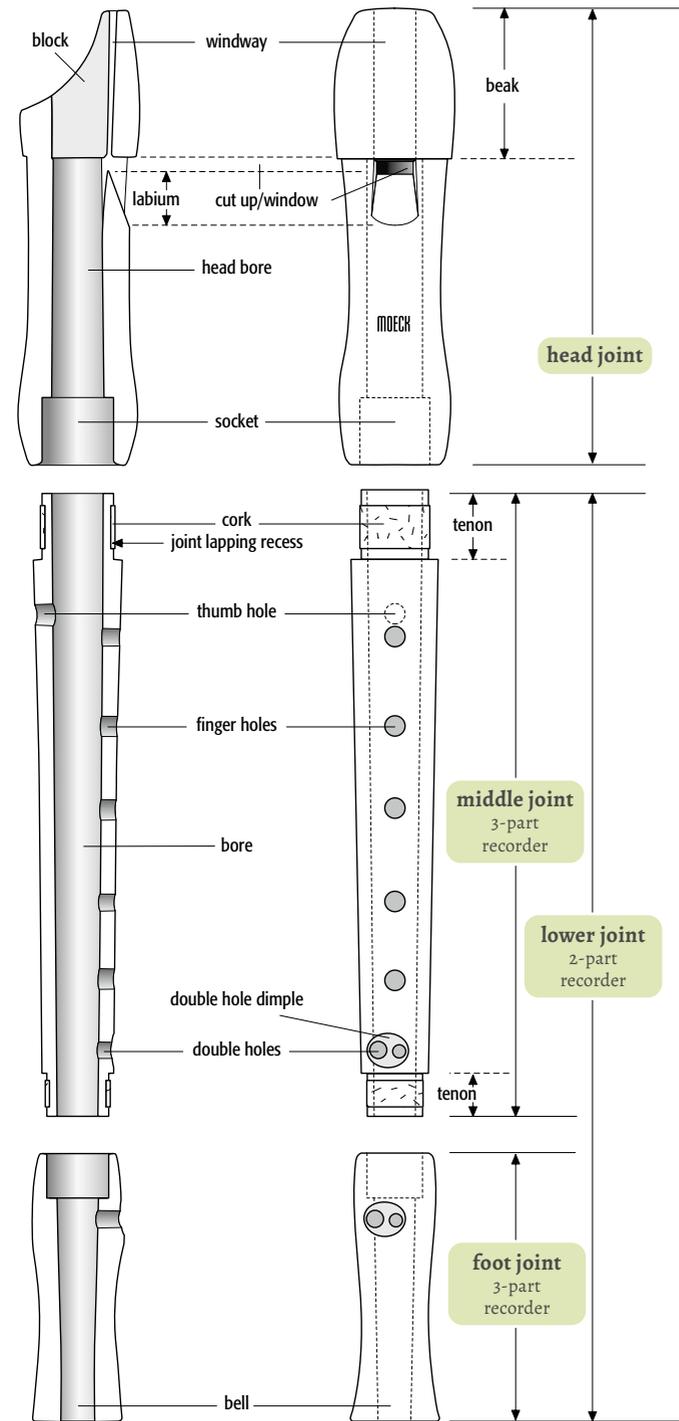
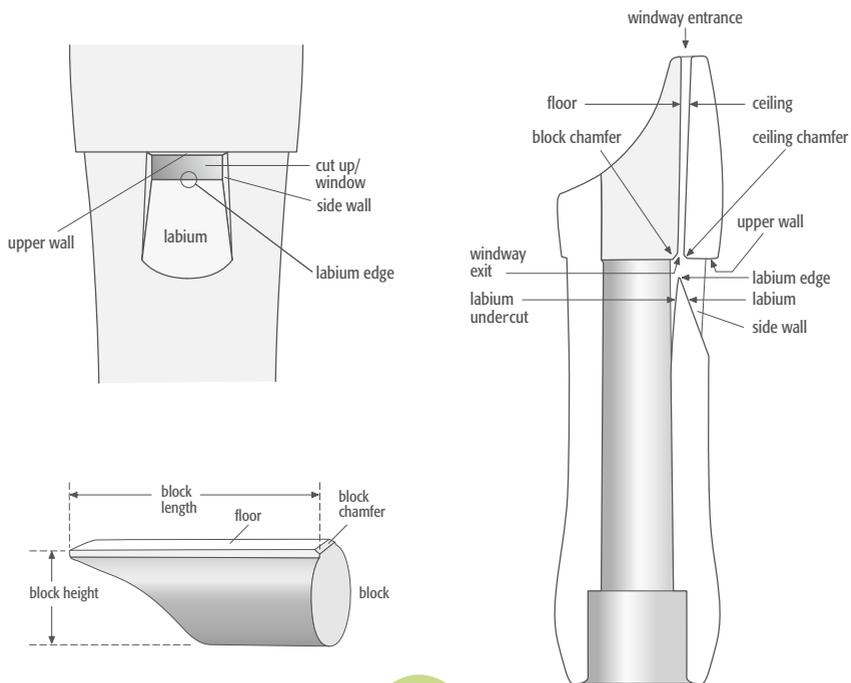
RENAISSANCE
CONSORT

Recorder Terminology – from A to Z

Any one who comes into conversation with experts or is asked to describe a recorder during a lesson quickly realises that the recorder is not the humble instrument it is made out to be.

When turning to specialised literature or the internet for advice, it also becomes clear that the terminology is anything but standardised. It is not always clear what is meant by a particular term. Sometimes, if you do not know a particular term, it is difficult to find what you are looking for. Often enough, there are several terms for the same thing for example, the beak is an alternative word for the mouthpiece.

For the sake of clarity, we have used “our” terms for the illustrations on these pages. They are intended as an aid to identifying and naming the component parts of a recorder so you can become better acquainted with your instrument. They are all used in current literature.



The Moeck Workshop ...



First simple wooden blocks are produced out of well selected seasoned wood. The blocks are turned into a round shape, drilled through their entire length and then left to further dry.



Then the pieces of softer woods, for example, maple and pear wood are impregnated with paraffin in a heated pressure boiler. This procedure stabilizes the wood and prevents it from expanding and shrinking later. In the next step, the blocks are turned on modern CNC machines to give them the required outer contour.

i You can see what the inside of the recorder looks like from the longitudinal section. The shape of the bore which is partly conical and

the exact measurement of the windway and labium are of the essence for the quality of the recorder.



... from Raw Timber to a Well-Tuned Instrument



Then the finger holes are drilled and a piece of cork is glued to the tenon. The window, windway and the labium are then cut respectively planed and carved and the block made of cedar wood is inserted.



Subsequently, the beak is sawn out and each individual recorder is then precisely tuned.

Our Own Produced Keys

Moeck has its own key manufacture. From the brass casting, to soldering to the final polish, the keys, accurately and finely adjusted, are all made by hand.

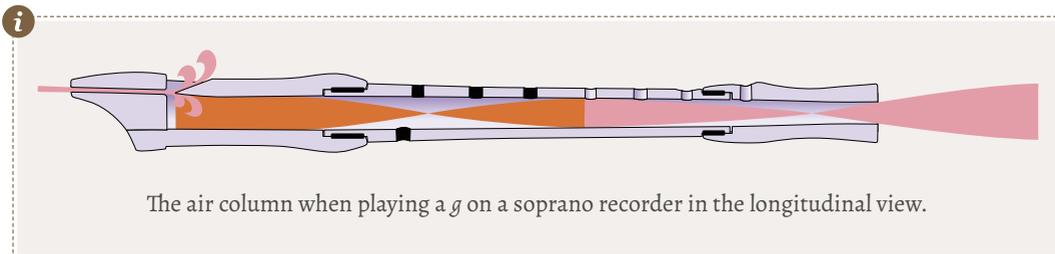


How a Tone is Produced on the Recorder

The windway runs between the floor of the block and the ceiling. The player blows into the windway entrance, which forms the stream of air into a “band” and is projected directly on to the labium. The stream of air is divided into swirls of air moving quickly up and down against the sharp edge. The rapid change in air pressure stimulates the air in the bore, the so-called air column, to resonate. A tone becomes audible. This cut edge principle is used in other wind instruments but the block is the defining constructive feature of the

recorder (which gives it its name in German – die Blockflöte – which directly translates to “Block-Flute”).

The frequency, i.e. the pitch depends on the length of the bore or rather the “acoustic length”. This length is essentially correlated with which finger holes are covered or not. This results in the fingering allowing players to produce the tones they want.



The air column when playing a *g* on a soprano recorder in the longitudinal view.

Wood or Plastic?

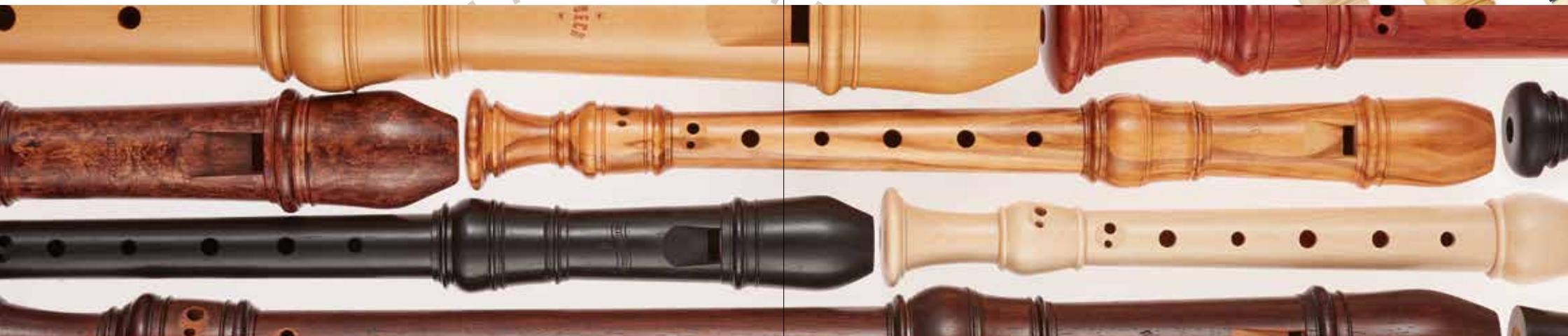
There is no adequate alternative to wood, a natural material, even today, for making high quality recorders. Wood not only looks special, but offers many attributes which makes it the material of choice fulfilling the highest requirements when making recorders.

This includes it being easy to shape, the ability to absorb moisture and its outstanding characteristics shaping the sound. For this reason, wood is without doubt superior to all other materials. It is also sustainable and many different kinds are available, the differing characteristics of which naturally influence the sound that is produced.

Nevertheless, most recorders world wide are made of plastic, the reason being that it is more robust than wood and lowers production costs. The disadvantage is that there is a lot of “leeway” allowed during the production

process of cheaper recorders. As a result, the sound they make is not attractive, they do not respond in the upper register and the sound is generally unsatisfactory.

Some recorders are made of plastic with a more complicated production process, requiring the expertise of an instrument maker. These instruments can be of decent quality which is reflected in the considerable difference in price.





The Influence of Wood on the Sound

We make our recorders for beginners (school instruments and the lower parts of the Flauto 1 Plus) mainly from maple wood. School instruments are also available in pear wood. Both types of wood have the distinguishing feature of a soft, well-balanced and warm sound.

These characteristics are also ideally suited to our ensemble instruments, the Rondo series and the Renaissance Consort, as they harmonise so well. When playing ensemble, an even and warm sound is produced which is captivating for listeners.

“Our” different types of wood are clearly illustrated on the chart. As a rough guide, the softer the wood of the instruments, the more suitable they are for ensemble playing. The sound produced with harder types of wood with higher density, for example palisander and grenadilla is of exceptional clarity and radiance. The instruments made of these types of wood are naturally predestined for solo playing. This rule of thumb is of course simplified, but then the decisive factor of their suitability is the construction of the recorder.

Types of wood of medium density such as boxwood, also have their advantages: it gives players flexibility and allows an “allrounder” to shine as a soloist or to blend in when playing in an ensemble. This should be an important criterium if you wish to remain flexible.



Please turn

An extensive choice of fine woods and their characteristics



Rosewood

Grenadilla

Olive

Palisander

Boxwood

Pear wood stained

Pear wood

Maple stained

Maple

Type of Wood Botanical name	Properties	Density	Origin
Maple acer pseudoplatanus	stable, fine pores, flexible warm, well-balanced sound	0.63 g/cm ³	Austria
Pear wood pyrus communis	stable, regular denseness fine texture warm, well-balanced sound	0.65 g/cm ³	Austria
Plum wood prunus domestica	hard and dense warm, resonant tone	0.75 g/cm ³	South Germany
Boxwood calycophyllum multiflorum, phyllostylon rhamnoides	hard and dense warm, clear tone	0.80 g/cm ³	South America
Olive olea europaea	hard and dense warm, clear tone	0.85 g/cm ³	Southwest-Europe, Morocco
Rosewood dalbergia decipularis	hard and very dense warm, resonant tone	1.0 g/cm ³	South America
Palisander dalbergia stevensonii	hard and very dense rich in overtones brilliant tone	1.05 g/cm ³	Middle America
Grenadilla dalbergia melanoxylon	very hard, dense brilliant, resonant sound	1.2 g/cm ³	Central and East Africa



f² with German fingering



f² with Baroque fingering

German or Baroque Fingering?

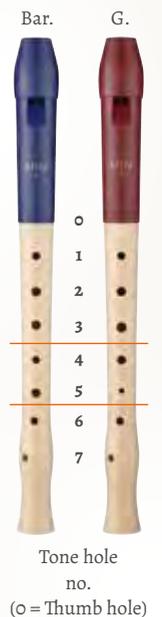
The German fingering appears initially at least, to be the easier option to some new player: if you cover all the holes and then, beginning from the bottom, take one finger after the other away, then you can play a basic scale. If you move on to more advanced pieces where half tones have to be played, you quickly realise that the result is not perfect. The German fingering has its limitations.

It is a better idea to start right away with the Baroque fingering if you want to play more than some folksongs and not limit your repertoire from the start. At first it appears to be more complicated, as just playing a basic scale involves using forked fingering (for the note f) but it allows you to play two full octaves easily with all the half notes in between. Having mastered the Baroque fingering, nothing prevents you from learning to play sonatas and concertos.



How can I recognise the fingering on a recorder?

It is easy to find out which fingering is required on a recorder by simply taking a closer look at the holes: If the fourth hole is large and the fifth is small, as illustrated on the right, then it is the German fingering. It is the other way round with the Baroque fingering: the fourth hole is smaller than the fifth one.





Single or Double Holes?

There is no reliable fingering for the next higher half note for the lowest notes on the recorder, although it does not matter which fingering the instrument has. Double rather than single holes are helpful in this case, as it allows for “partially” opening and closing the original hole by just the right amount. You can play all the chromatic notes in tune with double holes and Baroque fingering.



To play lower c on the soprano recorder, all the holes have to be covered. For the lower c sharp, you uncover the smaller of the lower double holes and can reliably play the right note. The same applies for the interval d/d sharp. The same again for recorders of differing pitches: f/f sharp and g/g sharp for the alto recorder, c/c sharp and d/d sharp for the tenor recorder and so on. For the lower pitched instruments from tenor recorders downwards, the function of the double holes are replaced by double keys.



How Useful are Left-Handed Recorders?

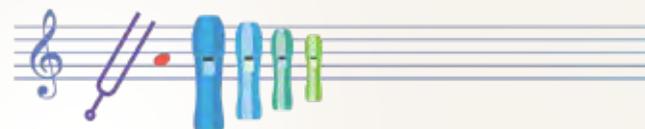
Nowadays there are many objects used in daily life adapted for left-handed people, but do left-handed players really need adapted instruments? We think not, as both hands have to perform similarly complicated functions. The recorder is more an instrument for the “ambidextrous”. Left-handed recorders therefore are a rarity.



Pitch Tone a¹ = 442 Hz

Moeck recorders are tuned to a¹ = 442 Hz. The reason for this is the pitch at which pianos are tuned nowadays which is generally between 443 and 445 Hz. If our recorders are well warmed, they can also reach this pitch but at the same time remain compatible with the older recorder models (and other instruments) which are often enough pitched at 440 Hz. The slight difference of 2 Hz in the lower register can be compensated by slightly loosening the tenon connections, without the intonation noticeably being affected. Loosening the connections too far can negatively impact on the precision of the intervals and ruin the intonation!

Over the course of time, as not just piano tuning but also the modern professional orchestras have continually raised the pitch, we have decided on a good compromise of a pitch of a¹ = 442Hz compared to the effective pitch valid since 1939 of a¹ = 440 Hz. This pitch is still used by amateur musicians and in church.



Heinrich Rudolf Hertz (1857 – 1894), German physicist, born in Hamburg, studied at the University of Berlin. The unit of frequency-oscillations per second was named after him: the hertz (Hz).

→ If you do decide to buy a left handed instrument, there are disadvantages involved:

- The choice of instruments is relatively small.
- There are virtually none on the second-hand market.
- When playing in an ensemble, it is difficult to adapt to different line ups unless you have a variety of instruments.

Taking these disadvantages into account is an individual decision, but we advise against instruments for left-handers for the above reasons.





Tuning in an Ensemble

The lowest pitched instrument gives the orientation when tuning together in an ensemble. Tuning forks or other tools for tuning can be helpful, although it must be said that there are limitations when tuning a recorder: tuning it to a higher pitch requires warming it to body temperature and a strong airflow and a deeper pitch, at least up to about two Hz, can be achieved by slightly loosening the parts of the recorder. But be careful: loosening them too much results in impairing the intonation and response.

Book tip:
Bart Spanhove,
*The Finishing
Touch of Ensemble
Playing.*
A guide by the
*Flanders Recorder
Quartet* for recorder
players and
teachers. Moeck
4065, 23 Euro.



Instruments that Complement the Recorder

The recorder has a clear and often radiant and rich tone in the upper register, but it is not particularly loud and does not carry the tone as well in the lower registers. Its sound harmonises not only with other recorders but also with keyboard instruments like the harpsichord and organ, which when complemented by the cello or viola da gamba are ideal for playing the many solo sonatas and -suites of the Baroque era.

The lute and the theorbo share their quieter and quickly fading sound with the recorder. The violin and all other string instruments as well as wind instruments like the oboe and bassoon harmonise superbly when being played together in a larger group. However, they should be copies of Baroque instruments or – depending on the music – of even older instruments, as they are quieter and rich in overtones compared to their more common “romantic” descendants of the present day. And last but not least, choral works with recorder accompaniment is also an effective combination.



DIFFERENT TYPES OF RECORDERS

Allround Recorders

INSTRUMENTS FOR BEGINNERS

Our soprano recorders for beginners are made in the Baroque style. This affords children and beginners a considerable advantage: relatively little air pressure is required and the fingering is easier with the small tone holes. Besides which we ensure that the instruments have the same warm sound and can harmonise well with other recorders as they are rarely used in a solo setting.

These allrounders are recorders which fulfill precisely the current needs of their players. Due to the continual model maintenance, we ensure that evolving conceptions of sound can be accommodated and that our instruments are always being updated. For example, the sound today is much fuller and ever present than ten years ago.

The Moeck School Recorder offers a serious introduction into the world of music not just for this reason. It is available with single or double holes and with German and Baroque fingering. For more information see pg. 19 and the following pages.



FLAUTO PENTA
The Pentatonic Recorder



FLAUTO 1
The Easiest to Look After



FLAUTO 1 PLUS
The Reliable Instrument for Beginners



SCHOOL RECORDER
Fine Classics Made of Wood

Allround Recorders

FLAUTO RONDO – THE IDEAL INSTRUMENT FOR ENSEMBLE PLAYING

Our Flauto Rondo is intended for players who have passed the beginners' stage and who wish to develop a more supple tone and a greater dynamic potential. These instruments are comfortable to handle and the fingering is easy.

The Flauto Rondo has a balanced and warm tone in all registers which can be achieved without perfect breathing technique and which blends in well in an ensemble. The wood of choice is either maple or pear wood. Flauto Rondo recorders are available in all sizes from sopranino to great bass in c. All instruments with Baroque fingering have double holes or double keys – they are the guarantee for perfectly pitched chromatic playing.

Our Flauto Rondo is the suitable instrument for those looking for an inexpensive and reliable recorder, and who enjoy making music with other recorder players. However, it does not mean that their owners should shy away from playing solo repertoire.



Allround Recorders: Rottenburgh

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE MASTER CLASS

The Rottenburgh is the instrument of choice for those who wish to play music at an advanced level. It is a reliable instrument with a carrying tone, whether played in small or large ensembles. It also lends itself perfectly for solo pieces, e. g. for sonatas with basso continuo.

The Rottenburgh is the ideal allrounder: reliable, balanced and with a full sound. Depending on the wood it has a warm and full sound for ensemble playing and is beautifully clear and expressive as a solo instrument.

All Rottenburgh recorders have double holes or double keys and are played with Baroque fingering. With the exception of the sopranino, almost all models are available in three parts. This means that the foot joint can be turned so that the lowest tone hole can easily be adapted to suit each player's hand.



1

In the 1960s, the recorder maker **Friedrich v. Huene (1)** designed the Rottenburgh series based on historical models. In 2003, he was awarded the Curt-Sachs prize by the American Instrument Society (AMIS) for his life's work. In 2007, the recorder maker **Ralf Ehlert (2)** undertook a cautious "general overhaul" by implementing state of the art knowledge in recorder making.



2

Moeck offers the following Rottenburgh recorders:

- Sopranino
- Soprano
- Alto
- Tenor
- Bass

MOECK



Renaissance Recorders

Renaissance recorders can be recognised by their unpretentious appearance. The smaller instruments were originally made in one piece. Today, they are often constructed in two parts so that when playing in an ensemble it is easier to tune the instruments together (by pulling the parts slightly apart).

The Renaissance recorders have a relatively wide bore and large tone holes. They demand a large lung capacity from the player but reward him with a sonorous sound which blends in well especially in the lower register. These instruments have a range of an octave and a sixth.

The Renaissance recorders are available with the fingering of the same name. The Renaissance fingering has a bore that is tailored perfectly and guarantees a very pure intonation. Alternatively, this model can also be acquired with the modern Baroque fingering. There is a slight difference between the two. You can download the corresponding charts on our website www.moeck.com.

Moeck offers the following Renaissance Consort recorders:

- Sopranino
- Soprano
- Alto in g
- Alto in f
- Tenor
- Bass
- Great Bass
- Subbass



Renaissance recorders are ideal for the extensive repertoire of polyphonic Renaissance music, but not for the often faster and more versatile pieces from other eras. The music by e.g. **Palestrina, Willaert, Obrecht, Sweelinck, Byrd, Dowland, Josquin, di Lasso** resonates particularly well with this type of recorder. A complete Consort covers an impressive range from F – d⁴.

Early Baroque Recorders

The first appearance of an ornamental exterior can be seen on recorders from the early Baroque period. The contour of our early Baroque recorders after Hieronimus Franciscus Kynseker (Nuremberg 1636 – 1686) is discreet in this respect but nevertheless can be ascribed to the early Baroque period.

Another difference to the Renaissance recorders is the more conical form of the inner bore, that means it narrows towards the lower end. The range is more extensive, more than 2 octaves. Their sound is not as powerful as that of the Renaissance recorders, but finer and more flexible, lending them themselves well for the music of Jakob van Eycks (1590 – 1657) and his contemporaries.

Early Baroque recorders are played with what is known as the “Baroque fingering” but otherwise differ considerably from the later Baroque recorders, which surpass the earlier instruments with their agility and elegance.



Moeck offers the following Kynseker recorders:

- Soprano
- Alto

Baroque Recorders For Professional Playing

Instruments of this period are striking in their optic: beautifully formed and with a delicate profile, fine wood staining and other noble and extravagant details, which are very rarely found with the replicas made today (e.g. **filigree carving** or **applications of ivory**).

The conical shape of the inner bore of the Baroque recorders is far more pronounced. These instruments are essentially for solo playing. Their sound is sophisticated and slender and markedly more focussed compared to the Renaissance and early Baroque recorders. They possess a radiance of sound which carries well for solo playing yet the necessary breathing pressure is relatively low. The Baroque recorders cover a range of over two octaves.

They are generally made of three parts and by individual adjustment, the foot joint enables a comfortable positioning of the lowest tone holes according to the player's needs.

Moeck has the following professional Baroque recorders on offer:

- Steenbergen Soprano
- Denner Alto
- Stanesby Alto
- Hotteterre Tenor
- Our recorders with a lower pitch



Why only wood carving or applications of ivory? Why not both?



In Baroque terms, the more the better: An alto recorder made of ivory and with carved ornamentations made by Johann Benedikt Gahn, ca. 1700; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City



Recorders at low pitch

$a^1 = 415 \text{ Hz}$

Many players prefer instruments with a lower pitch to play Baroque music more “authentically”. In fact, there is no historical norm for the standard pitch known for Baroque music, but the various commonly used tuning notes were all below the contemporary standard pitch of $a^1 = 440 \text{ Hz}$. Recorders at low pitch of $a^1 = 415 \text{ Hz}$ are a semitone lower than their higher “sister instruments”.

Moeck offers the following Baroque recorders at low pitch i.e. $a^1 = 415 \text{ Hz}$:

- Steenberg Soprano
- Hotteterre Tenor
- Denner Alto
- Rottenburgh Bass
- Stanesby Alto

Recorders with Long Diapason

Recorders with long diapason have always existed and many models with long diapason were made at the beginning of 20th century at the time of the rediscovery of recorders. In practical terms, making recorders with the so called short diapason has prevailed. Instruments made in this way have a full and brilliant sound in the upper register but in the lower register the sound is relatively delicate. A further advantage is that the tone holes for the right hand are spaced closer together which makes for easier fingering. Perhaps that is the reason why these instruments are more popular.

The properties of the sound of the recorders with long diapason is a warm basic tone, the lower register has remarkable strength and stability. A high f sharp (flutes pitched in f) can also be played without covering the bore at the bottom. Keys are essential on these instruments as the finger holes for the right hand are spaced wider apart.



Tenor

Tenor with Long Diapason



A special variation of the recorders with long diapason is the modern instrument, developed by Ralf Ehlert for Moeck. He drew together the wisdom from previous eras of recorder making into one instrument which distinguishes itself with an exceptional strength of sound and dynamics without losing the characteristic sound of a recorder.

Moeck offers the following recorders with a long diapason:

- Ehlert recorders
- Rondo Bass & Great Bass
- Hotteterre Tenor
- Subbass
- Rottenburgh Bass



Large Recorders



All about keys ...

Not every one who wishes to play the recorder can manage the required fingering. Some players' hands are too small to be able to cover all the tone holes. Others have a problem with agility or other difficulties which makes playing the recorder more complicated or even impossible. In this case, adding on extra keys can be a considerable help.

It is usually the tenor recorders which are difficult to handle. Especially the small finger of the right hand to reach the lower tones but there is the option of a double key c and c sharp which makes fingering easier. There are also g and f keys which can be attached without much effort, which reduces spreading of the hands to a comfortable level.

In many cases we can find individual solutions – also for recorders of other ranges. The lower and therefore larger instruments as a standard feature high quality sophisticated key sets and allow (almost) any one to play them comfortably and without any tension.



for Small Hands

All about bends

Not all problems can be solved by keys (alone). It is not unusual that the basic posture when playing is what causes difficulties. Players are often confronted with ergonomic challenges especially when playing the larger instruments. Sometimes tension develops in other areas of the body away from the fingers, but can still hinder their agility.

The solution in this case can be an instrument with a bent neck. The bend between the head and middle joint reduces the distance from the shoulder joints to the intended position of the hand, so the arms are not so stretched. Strain relief on the wrists enables a free hand movement and suddenly covering the tone holes is much easier and without tension.

Our instruments with a bent neck are available in the ranges from tenor to great bass. Our subbass has a **bow** instead of a bend as it would not be playable just with a **bend** due to its size.

Whether with a bend or bow, from bass to subbass, both constructions have acoustic advantages, as the instruments can be played directly and are consequently more variable and offer manifold possibilities for articulation. A bocal is not necessary and its associated delay is avoided.



Are the finger holes too far apart?

Our PLUS tenor recorders have keys for c/c sharp, f and g. The player's fingers can lie relaxed on their instrument.

Is your tenor recorder too long for you?

Our tenor recorders with a bent neck ease the players' posture as they can be played closer to the body compared to the straight instruments.

Is your tenor recorder too heavy?

All our PLUS tenor recorders are equipped with adjustable thumb rests (A) so that the weight is put on the right thumb. A neck strap (B) is also included in the equipment supplied, which allows the players to hang their instruments around the neck distributing the weight more evenly.



TAKING CARE OF YOUR RECORDER



Basic Tips for Taking Care of Your Recorder

There are a number of rules which should be observed when caring for a recorder, if players want the best from their instruments for as long as possible. Recorders are easily damaged through lack of care. For example, putting an instrument back in its case and then closing the case when the recorder is still moist: this often leads to mould. There are various other issues to be aware of, which we have summarised on the following pages.

6 basic rules for the maintenance of your recorder:



1. Try and avoid dirt – keep things clean! Rinse your mouth before playing. Bits of food in the windway are unhygienic and drastically spoil the sound.



2. Protect your recorder from extreme heat and changes in temperature. Constant temperatures are vital when storing and drying out. Avoid direct sunlight, external sources of warmth and draughts.



3. Check the tenon connections and do not jam the joints when putting them together. The thin-walled sites of the socket and tenon are quickly damaged which is easily avoided. If the connections are too loose, the joints can fall down!



4. Never touch the labium or the wind way with your finger! The labium is particularly sensitive and quickly broken. Often, the instrument is damaged beyond repair!



5. Warm your recorder before playing, either in your hands or under your jumper. Less condensation forms and the sound does not become hoarse. Remember rule 2!



6. Your recorder must dry out completely after playing! Do not put it straight back in its case. It dries best in the (room) air and should only be packed away when it is completely dry.

Playing in Your New Recorder

Concerning: recorders made of wood

The wood of a new recorder easily absorbs moisture, especially around the windway and labium. If it becomes too much, the wood swells and becomes warped. Therefore, when the instrument is new, it should only be played for a brief time in the first few weeks to allow it to adapt to the moisture exposure from playing.

The times given below are a guide on this behalf. If the sound of your instrument changes sooner, then stop playing. Your recorder must dry out completely after playing (more on pg. 39) and it is important that your recorder is completely dry before playing again.

Your recorder also has to adapt to varying degrees of breathing pressure so it is advisable to begin with long notes and slow runs in the lower register and to extend week by week the scope of notes and ways of playing.

This is not as complicated as it sounds. If you listen carefully to your recorder, you will learn quickly how to handle it and notice that your recorder adapts itself to you.

Even children are capable of playing in their instruments. Either on their own or with the help of their teacher: getting the feel of their instruments helps promote a connection and children gain valuable experience from doing so.

The teacher's support may be useful when children cannot adequately control their flow of saliva. Borrowed instruments (perhaps made of plastic) from the teacher are helpful, in order not to have to break off lessons if an instrument becomes too moist.

If your recorder clogs up quickly or the sound changes despite playing it in carefully, then we advise sending it back to its maker. An experienced recorder maker can easily solve the problem which unfortunately can always crop up again.

For the first 6 weeks, playing time should not be exceeded:

1st week
c. 5 minutes
a day

2nd Week
c. 10 minutes
a day

3rd Week
c. 15 minutes
a day

**From the
4th week on**
c. 30 minutes a day

Daily Care – Before, During and After Playing

Warming up before playing

Before playing you should warm your recorder or at least the head joint by holding it near your body or in your hands. Far less condensation forms from the warmth and your recorder will not sound hoarse so quickly.

While playing: blowing out moisture

If too much moisture collects in the windway, your recorder will sound congested. Then you have to blow out the moisture. Take off the head joint and cover the bore with your hand. Blow into the labium to tip the moisture back through the windway and then wipe off the drops of moisture on the beak. We strongly recommend doing it this way as it is effective and protects your instrument from damage. Whilst playing it can be less complicated and quicker to suck back the moisture forcefully. Which ever method you use, never touch the labium with your fingers!

Using Antikondens

If a hoarse sound becomes a frequent problem, trickling a few drops of “Antikondens” into the windway from the labium can be helpful. Hold the head joint with the beak downwards. Blow into the labium so that the Antikondens is spread evenly in the windway. Then allow your instrument to dry out thoroughly. Antikondens is only to be used when your recorder is dry and as seldom as possible. It is not a long term solution. If your recorder repeatedly sounds hoarse, send it back to the manufacturer.



After Playing: How to Dry Your Recorder

Your recorder needs to dry out thoroughly after being played. It is best to use the cloth supplied but you can use other soft cotton cloths e. g. from old t-shirts or tea towels or anything similar. It must not be fluffy. Cut a piece of cloth and thread it through the cleaning rod (illustr. 1-3). Then insert it carefully into the bore and wipe it dry (illustr. 4-6). The cloths should be frequently changed or washed for hygienic reasons.



1. Pull the cloth (the one supplied or of cotton) to the width of two fingers through the cleaning rod.



2. Wrap the cloth round the cleaning rod ...



3. ... and form a soft tuft of material to fit the bore of the recorder (practice makes perfect).



4. The end of the cleaning rod should also be wrapped in the cloth.



5. Insert the rod carefully into the bore of the joints ...



6. ... dry the bore by twisting it round .

Always allow your instrument to be well ventilated to dry completely after playing (see pg. 36, rule 6), to avoid damage and mould. **As a matter of interest:** some players think that drying with the cleaning rod is unnecessary as important parts like the windway cannot be directly accessed.

Oiling Wooden Recorders

Recorders are exposed to a rather large amount of moisture from breathing. We would advise our customers to oil their instruments regularly for protection by impregnating the inner bore. Oiling your instrument also helps prevent cracks in the wood and helps to preserve the sound quality.

Which recorders require oiling?

Our recorders made from boxwood, ebony, grenadilla wood, olive wood, palisander, plum and rose wood all have to be oiled regularly. Our instruments made of maplewood or pear wood that are already impregnated with paraffin require no extra oiling.

How often should you oil your recorder?

As a basic rule, the bore should always be slightly greasy to ensure continuous protection. If the wood looks dull and pale and it feels dry, then it needs to be oiled.

Which sections of the recorder need oiling?

The varnished areas do not need to be oiled. Otherwise, all parts can be oiled except the windway. To ensure that the oil does not trickle down to where it should not be, avoid the block and parts of the labium.

Which oil should you use?

We particularly recommend sweet almond oil. It is virtually unscented, runny and can be distributed evenly. It also does not leave residue stickiness. It is absorbed into the wood and forms a film on the surface of the wood which protects your recorder from moisture.



i Be careful with linseed oil!

Some players and instrument makers use linseed oil but we do not recommend it. It can leave sticky patches which are difficult to remove. Apart from which it becomes rancid rather quickly. **Above all it is spontaneously inflammable and self-igniting! Any clothes or utensils used must on no account be left unattended.** It is best not to use linseed oil at all.



Moeck maintenance kit

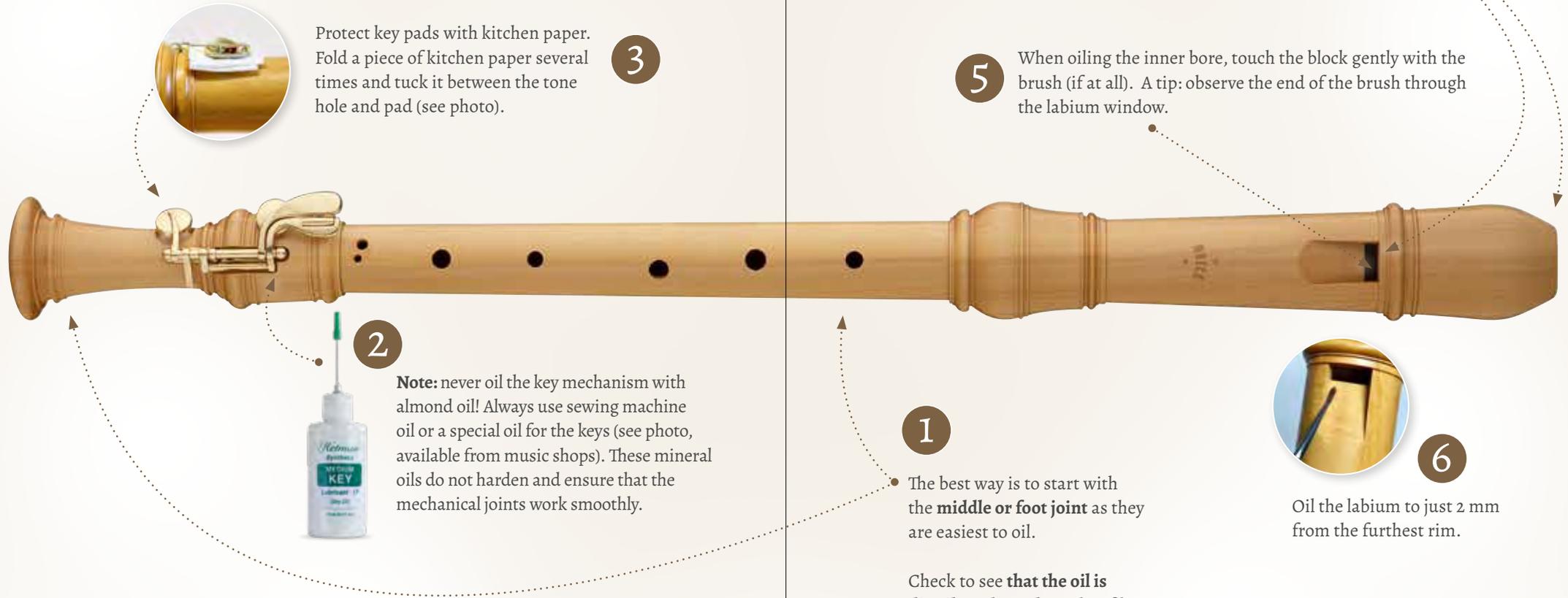
What you need to oil your instrument

- Oil for recorders – almond oil, available singly or with the Moeck maintenance kit.
- A brush – as fine and soft as possible.
- A cotton cloth.
- Oil brushes made of either pig or synthetic hairs, also available separately or with the maintenance kit. Not to be confused with the fluffy wipes which were commonly used to dry recorders.
- A clean leak proof work space and appropriate clothes e.g. an apron.



How to oil your recorder correctly

Before you start: your instrument must be absolutely dry.
Never oil it directly after playing!



Protect key pads with kitchen paper. Fold a piece of kitchen paper several times and tuck it between the tone hole and pad (see photo).

3

2

Note: never oil the key mechanism with almond oil! Always use sewing machine oil or a special oil for the keys (see photo, available from music shops). These mineral oils do not harden and ensure that the mechanical joints work smoothly.

4

Particular care must be taken with the head joint:

- Do not oil the block and windway!
- Always hold the head joint and beak upwards when oiling so that no oil trickles into the wind way!

5

When oiling the inner bore, touch the block gently with the brush (if at all). A tip: observe the end of the brush through the labium window.

1

The best way is to start with the **middle or foot joint** as they are easiest to oil.

Check to see **that the oil is distributed evenly**. A thin film on the surface is enough. Repeat the process if required.

6

Oil the labium to just 2 mm from the furthest rim.

Oiling your recorder step-by-step:



1. Trickle a few drops of oil on to the inner rim.



2. Twist the oil brush in and distribute the oil evenly. Then extract the brush with a twisting movement.



3. Wipe off any excess oil from the brush cap before starting to oil the head joint.



4. Twist the oil brush in carefully until the cap gently (!) touches the block.



5. Never put oil in the windway, only on to the labium: always hold the head joint with the beak facing upwards.



6. Carefully brush the labium with oil and leave the different joints upright to dry.

Further tips about oiling your instrument:

Your recorder needs adequate time to absorb the oil well. Stand the sections upright on a plate for example and ideally leave them out in the room over night.

Finally, remove any possible smudges of oil from the wood so that they do not smear. You can wipe any small amounts of oil residue on to the surface of your instrument to give it a light sheen.

Almond oil trickles easily, so be careful to ensure that it only reaches the areas where it is needed. A positive side effect: when oiling the labium, it reaches its side walls of its own accord.

The Tenon Cork and Thread Winding

There are various methods of making the tenon connection. The traditional method is by winding with thread. This method is very flexible as you can unwind or wind on as much thread as you need depending on how tight or loose the connections are.

The alternative is a cork connection which meanwhile is the most commonly used. A strip of cork is used instead of thread, which is glued to the cork recess. Special rubber seals can also be used for beginner instruments which fulfil their function reliably and are easily replaced.



Taking care of the tenon cork

The cork ensures the frictional resistance which holds the sections together. In order to fulfil this function in the long run, the cork needs the chance to regain its original shape. For this reason, you have to disconnect the joints after playing. Otherwise, the cork strip becomes too thin and cannot fulfil its function.

There is the widespread notion that the cork has to be greased with cork grease at regular intervals. Not true! It should only be greased when really necessary, i. e. when the connection becomes too stiff. You apply the grease with your finger but very sparingly. If too much grease is used it can be absorbed right through the cork and can damage the glue underneath. If the cork strip becomes detached it has to be replaced.

Thread connections also have to be greased every now and then, so as to impregnate the thread from moisture and prevent it becoming wet.



Originally developed at Moeck's: **tenon-and-socket-connections made of felt**. Instead of a connection of cork or thread, we have started using a special form of felt for our Great Bass and Sub-bass. This connection requires virtually no maintenance and its connecting strength is always consistent. However, these felt connections are only suitable for the really large instruments.

Maintenance and Repairs

If your recorder needs repairing

Wood as a natural material is generally speaking eminently suitable for making recorders. The only drawback is that it tends to change its shape and can become warped. This is particularly the case when moisture and warmth are involved. Deformation of this kind can have a detrimental effect and can develop even if the instrument has been properly played in and is otherwise well cared for. This is apparent when the response or the tone deteriorate, it quickly sounds hoarse or other unwanted effects spoil the fun of playing. The only solution is to send the instrument back to the manufacturer or to a qualified recorder maker. With the necessary expertise, the vast majority of problems can be solved.

When sending your instrument for repair, please send a description of any problems you have encountered and also include your name and address, telephone number and email address. This enables us to sort out queries quickly and without complication.

As a general rule, most problems can be resolved, for example when ...



... a crack has appeared



Moeck recorders come with a 2-year warranty. All repairs are free of charge during that time provided the instrument has been cared for properly.



... the cork strip has come off



If required: keys can subsequently be attached at any time.



... the thumb hole has developed a notch



Note on hygiene: all instruments are thoroughly disinfected after the repair is finished.



... the block has to be replaced



... the key pads do not cover properly



We recommend to have your recorder maintained at regular intervals to ensure it keeps its quality.



... the intonation and response are impaired



Not sure whether your instrument can be repaired? **We are happy to help!**



... you need a thumb rest

After your instrument reached us, it is examined carefully and a repair plan is drawn up. If further problems and more extended repairs are required, we then send out an estimate. You can then decide whether the repairs should be undertaken. Depending on your decision, we either take on the repairs or return your instrument.

Recorders generally last for a long time if cared for properly but many players are unaware of the necessity of maintenance every now and then. It is almost always worthwhile and restores the fresh sound of your instrument.

Fingering Chart for a Recorder in c

8

	c	c sharp d flat	d	d sharp e flat	e	f	f sharp g flat	g	g sharp a flat	a	a sharp b flat	b
thumb	0	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
left hand	1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○
	3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
right hand	4	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	5	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	6	●●	●●	●●	●●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	7	●●	●●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

d flat¹
c sharp¹
e flat¹
d sharp¹
g flat¹
f sharp¹
a flat¹
g sharp¹
b flat¹
a sharp¹

c¹ | d¹ | e¹ | f¹ | g¹ | a¹ | b¹

	c	c sharp d flat	d	d sharp e flat	e	f	f sharp g flat	g	g sharp a flat	a	a sharp b flat	b	c
	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	[○]	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

d flat²
c sharp²
e flat²
d sharp²
g flat²
f sharp²
a flat²
g sharp²
b flat²
a sharp²

c² | d² | e² | f² | g² | a² | b² | c³



THE LITTLE MOECK

A handbook by Moeck



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