

LEARN TO PLAY THE ALFRED WAY

RECORDER

by Morton Manus

The Recorder Family

There are six members of the recorder family: the Sopranino, the Soprano, the Alto, the Tenor, the Bass and the Big Bass. Of these, four are more popular and in general use:

THE SOPRANO (or Descant) is about 12½ inches long and is the leading melody instrument. It is pitched in C and the notes are written an octave (eight notes) lower than they sound.

THE ALTO (sometimes called the Treble) is about 18½ inches long and is the principal instrument of the entire family. It is an F instrument with the notes written as they sound. It is considered the traditional instrument for which many of the great masters (Bach, Handel, Purcell, etc.) wrote their Sonatas.

THE TENOR is pitched in C and is about 25½ inches long. The notes are written as they sound. It is a melody instrument that is often used in ensemble playing.

THE BASS is pitched in F and is about 36 inches long. It is primarily an ensemble instrument. The notes are written as they sound and the range is an octave lower than the Alto.

The two lesser used instruments are the:

BIG BASS, pitched in C, sounds an octave lower than the Tenor. It is about 49 inches long, is wider than the Bass and has a larger and richer tone.

THE SOPRANINO, 9 inches long, is the smallest in size and highest in pitch. It is an F instrument and the notes, like the Soprano, are written one octave lower than they sound.

