Fipple Flutes

Fipple flutes are end-blown flutes that produce sound through the use of a constricted mouthpiece. Contained within the mouthpiece is a device, known as a fipple, that splits the air stream and produces the sound. Fipple flutes are generally played in a vertical position and include such instruments as the tin whistle, the recorder and the slide whistle.

Recorder

A popular instrument from the Middle Ages through the Baroque period, the recorder family has enjoyed renewed interest during recent times. The timbre of the recorder is wonderfully pure, clear, and somewhat more innocent sounding than the flute. The instrument has a limited dynamic range and is not capable of producing loud dynamic levels. As such, it is best used in a chamber music or soloistic setting. It is manufactured in a variety of sizes/registers ranging from the sopranino recorder, down to the double contrabass recorder. In addition to its usage in the concert environment, recorders can be quite effective when used in film and television documentary scores, evoking either a genre-specific timbre, or a sense of childhood. For small recorder ensembles, individual parts are not required, as players are comfortable reading from a score. For larger ensembles (a quintet or larger) involving lower bass clef instruments, individual (transposed) parts are required.

Sopranino Recorder

The smallest and highest register member of the recorder family, the sopranino recorder is the piccolo of the recorder family. It does not blend as well as the rest of the recorder family and is best used for accentuating selected melodic lines, obbligato figures, and for "splashes" of color. It can also be used to comfortably cover melodic content that would otherwise require the altissimo register of the descant recorder. However, if not used conservatively, the timbre of the sopranino recorder can dominate that of the other recorders and quickly become tiresome to the ear.

Sopranino Recorder Range



Sopranino Recorder Transposition



Written sopranino recorder parts are transposed down one octave from concert pitch and notated in treble clef.

Descant Recorder

Also known as the soprano recorder, the descant recorder is the instrument to which most are referring when using the generic term *recorder*. It is an instrument closely associated with childhood, as many school children begin their musical experience and instruction on the descant recorder. The soprano voice of the recorder family, the descant is the primary melodic instrument in the recorder ensemble.

Descant Recorder Range



Descant Recorder Transposition



Written descant recorder parts are transposed down one octave from concert pitch and notated in treble clef.

Treble Recorder

Known in the U.S. as the alto recorder, the treble recorder is the alto voice of the recorder family. It is a non-transposing instrument, written at concert pitch and notated in treble clef.

Treble Recorder Range



As the name would imply, the tenor recorder is the tenor voice of the recorder family. It is a non-transposing instrument, written at concert pitch and notated in treble clef. Some tenor recorders are equipped with keywork designed to facilitate fingering the lower holes.

Tenor Recorder Range



Tenor Recorder Transposition

The tenor recorder is a non-transposing instrument notated in treble clef.

Bass Recorder

The bass recorder is the lowest voice the standard recorder quartet (descant, treble, tenor, and bass). It is equipped with keywork designed to facilitate fingering of the lower holes. It is a transposing instrument, sounding an octave below the written pitch.

Bass Recorder Range



Bass Recorder Transposition

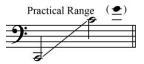


Written bass recorder parts are transposed down one octave from concert pitch and notated in bass clef.

Great Bass Recorder

The great bass recorder is a member of the large recorders designed to expand the lower range of the recorder family. It is a non-transposing instrument, written at concert pitch and notated in bass clef. It is equipped with keywork designed to facilitate fingering of the lower holes.

Great Bass Recorder Range



Great Bass Recorder Transposition



Written great bass recorder parts are transposed down one octave from concert pitch and notated in bass clef.

Contrabass Recorder

The bass recorder is the lowest voice the standard recorder quartet (descant, treble, tenor, and bass). It is equipped with keywork designed to facilitate fingering of the lower holes. It is a transposing instrument, sounding an octave below the written pitch.

Contrabass Recorder Range



Contrabass Recorder Transposition

The contrabass recorder is a non-transposing instrument notated in bass clef.

Contra Great Bass Recorder and Double Contrabass Recorder

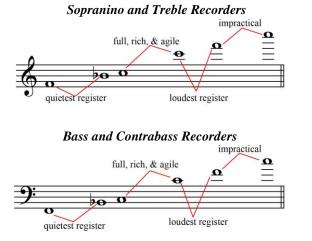
Two additional members of the low recorder family are in extant, but are extremely rare (and quite expensive). One should assume the availability of these instruments. The contra great bass is a non-transposing instrument that is notated in bass clef and plays an octave below the great bass recorder. The double contrabass is also a non-transposing instrument that is notated in bass clef in bass clef and plays contrabass recorder.

Contra Great Bass

Double Contrabass

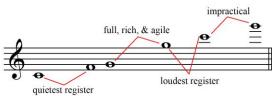




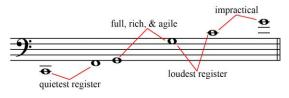


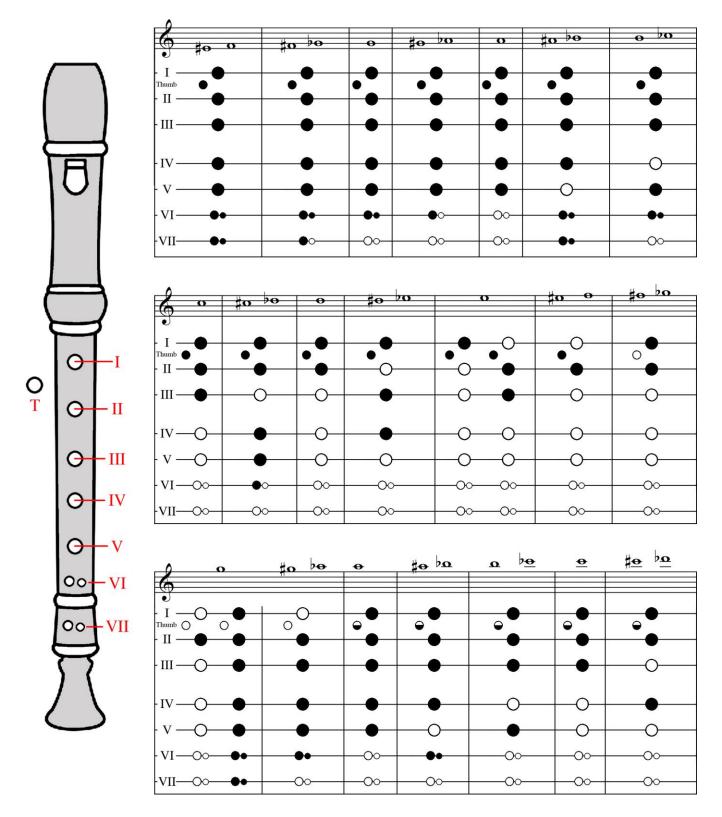
Recorder Range and Register Considerations

Descant and Tenor Recorders



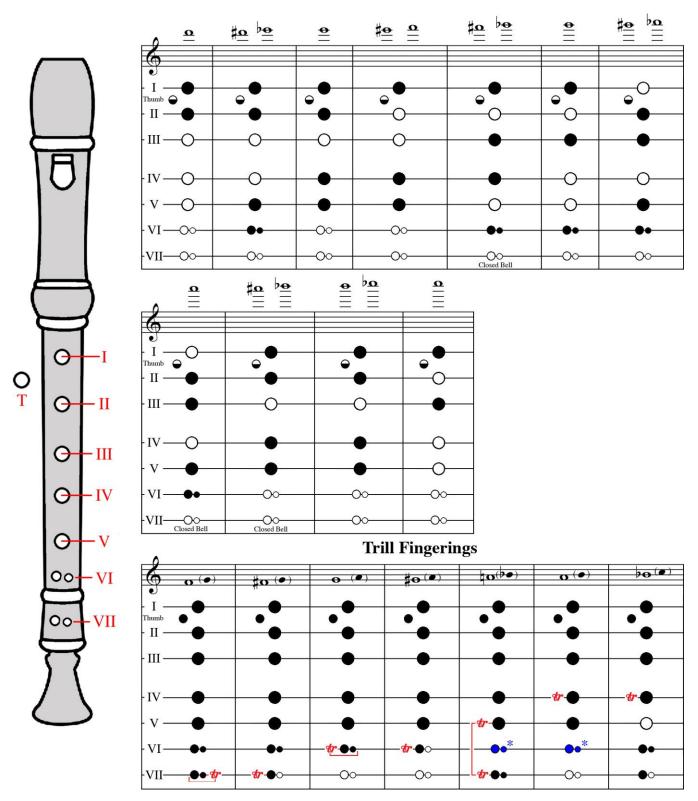
Great Bass and Double Great Bass Recorders

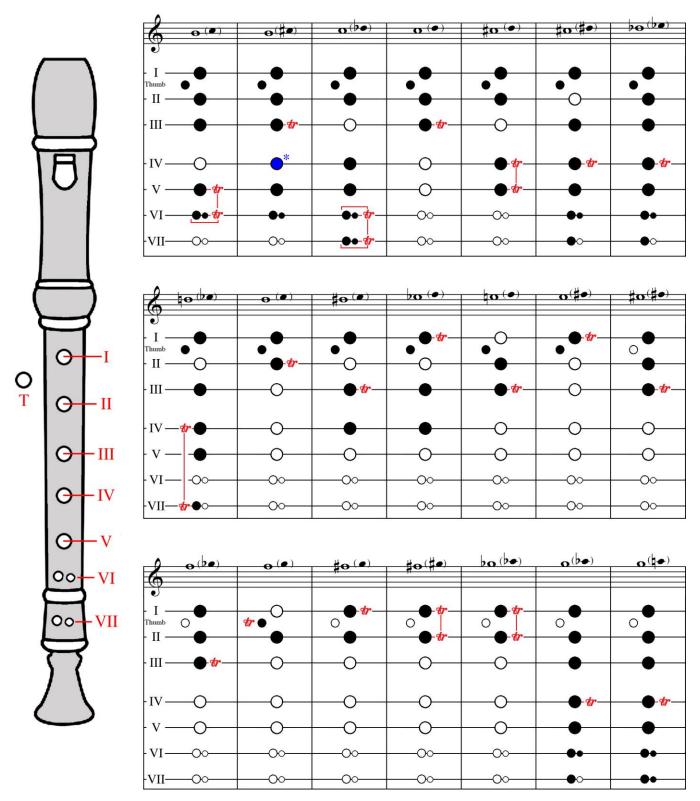




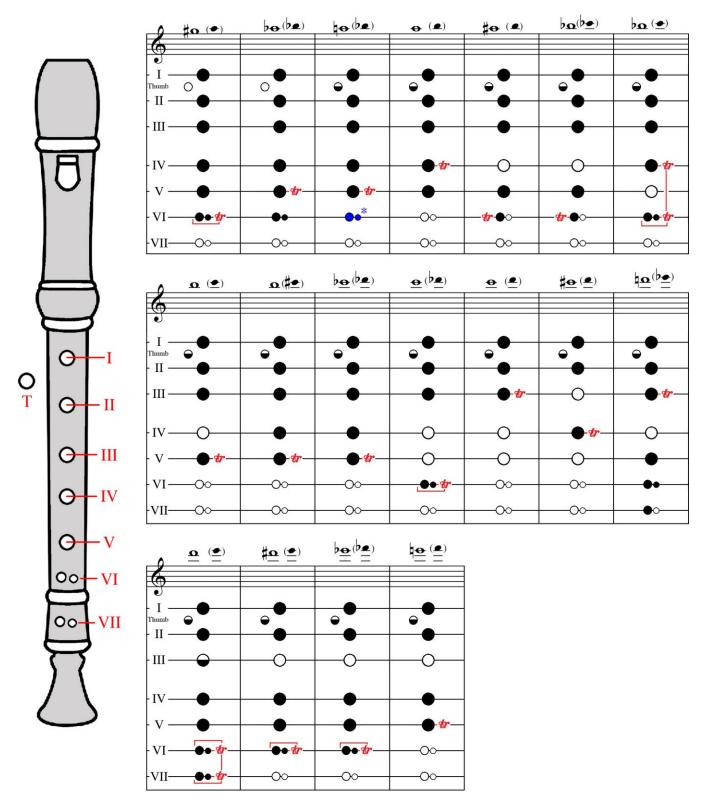
Sopranino and Treble (Alto) Recorder Fingerings

Sopranino and Treble (Alto) Recorder Fingerings (continued)

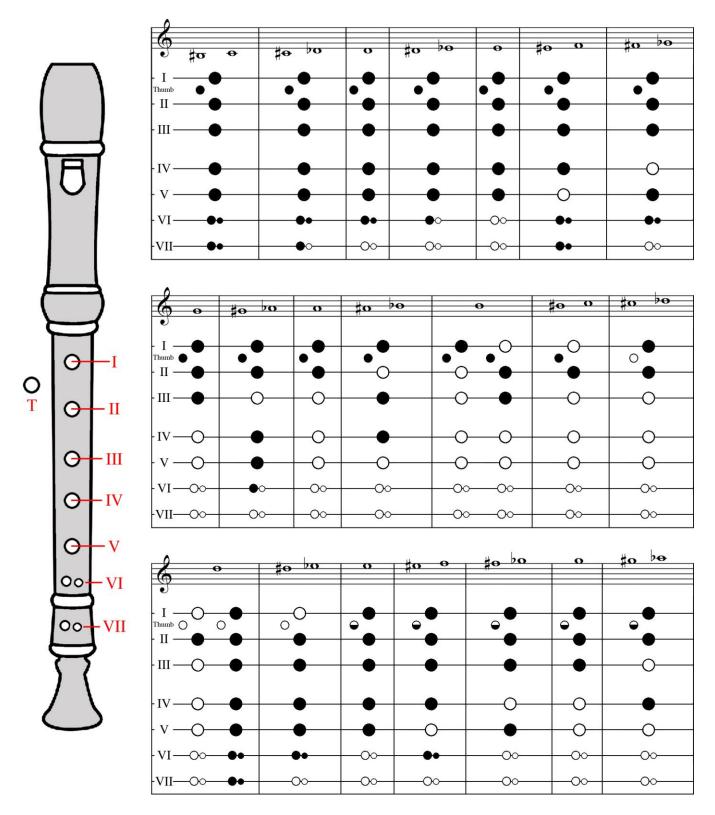




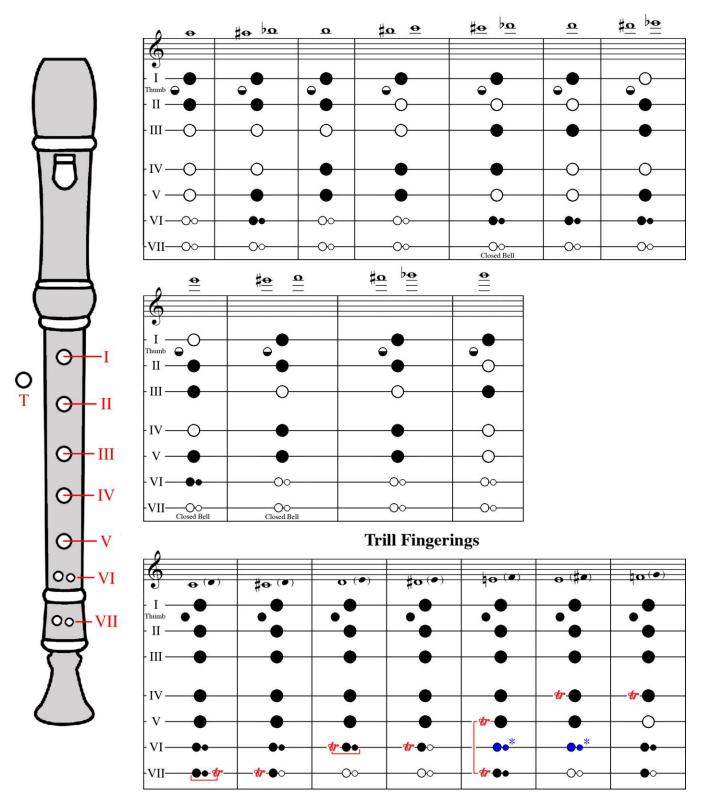
Sopranino and Treble (Alto) Trill Recorder Fingerings (continued)



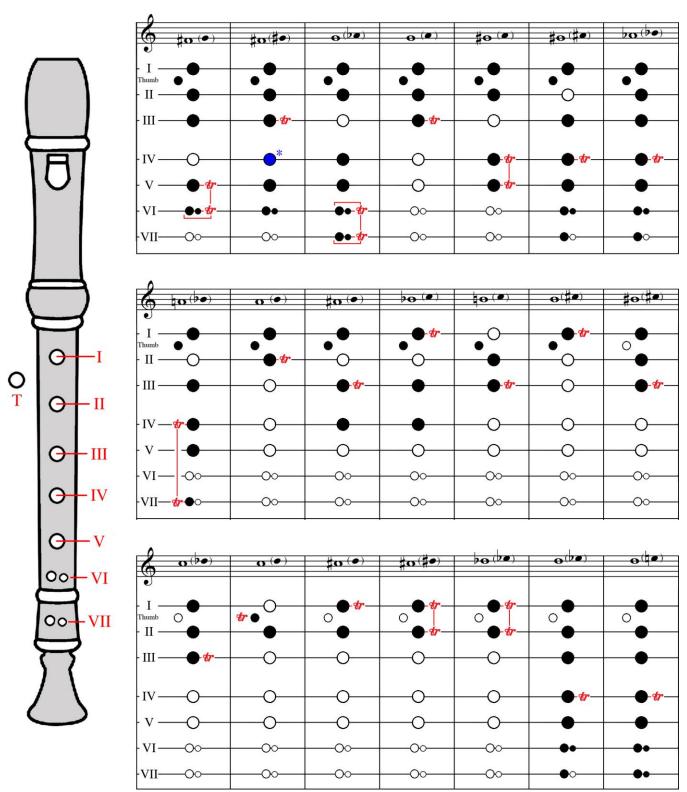
Sopranino and Treble (Alto) Trill Recorder Fingerings (continued)



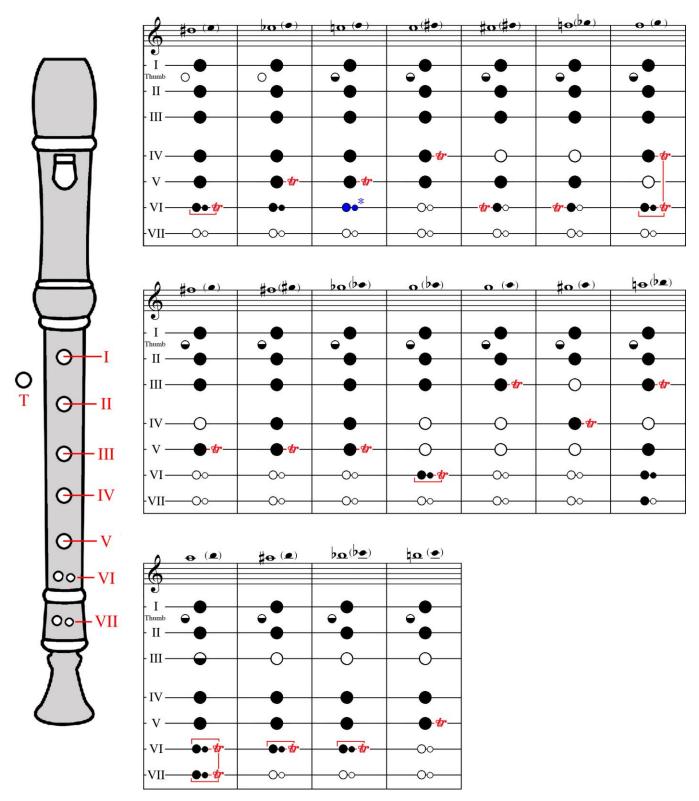
Descant and Tenor Recorder Fingerings



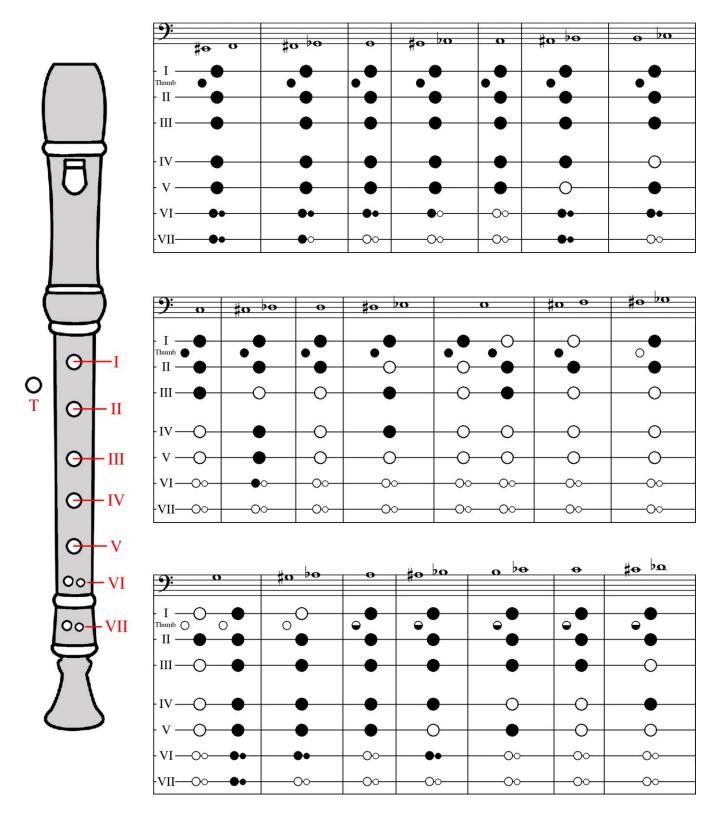
Descant and Tenor Recorder Fingerings (continued)



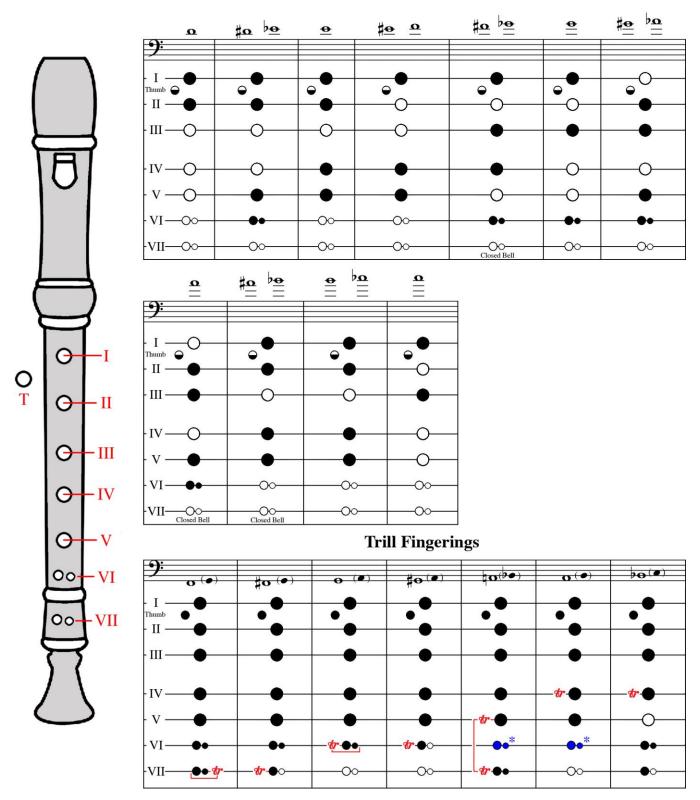
Descant and Tenor Trill Recorder Fingerings (continued)



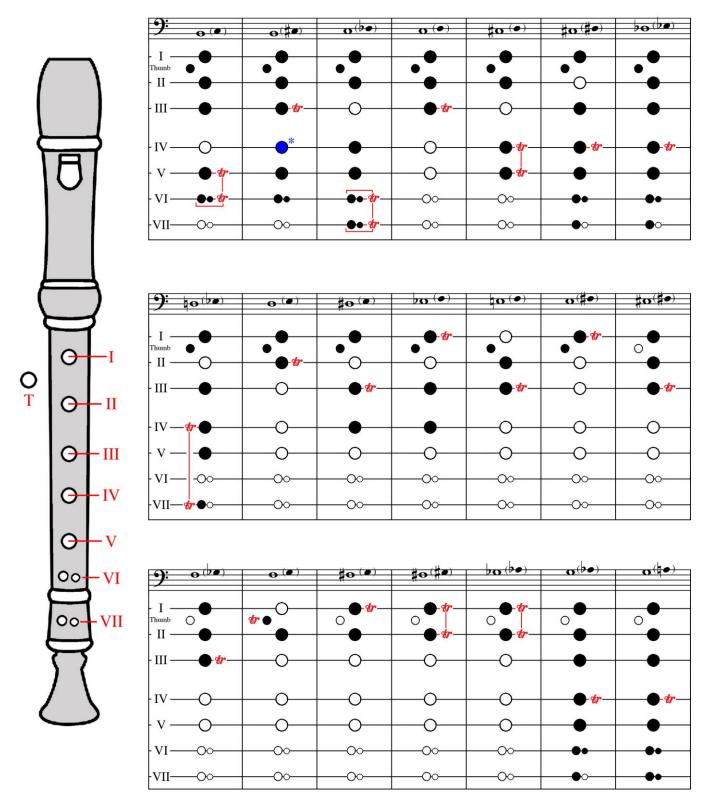
Descant and Tenor Trill Recorder Fingerings (continued)



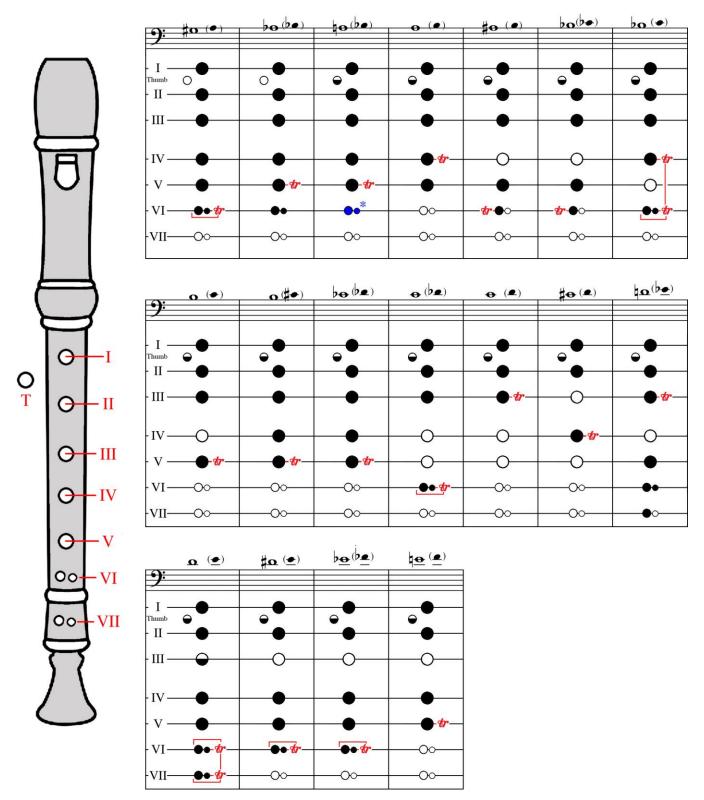
Bass and Contrabass Recorder Fingerings



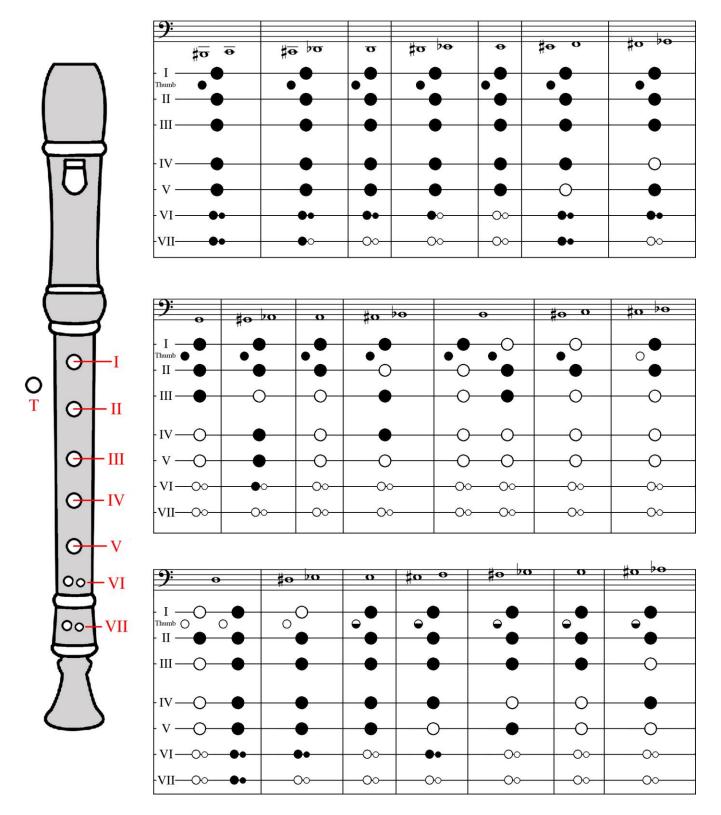
Bass and Contrabass Recorder Fingerings (continued)



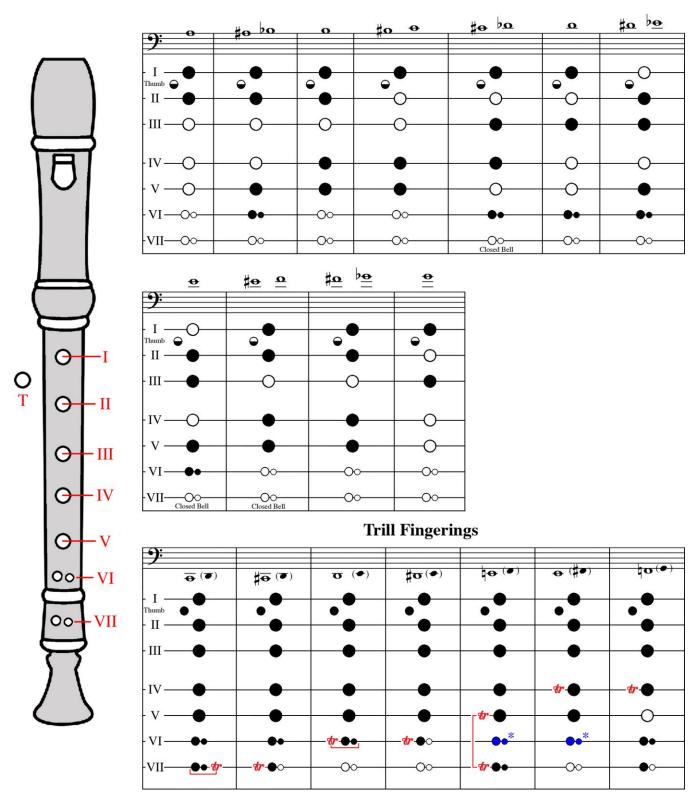
Bass and Contrabass Recorder Trill Fingerings (continued)



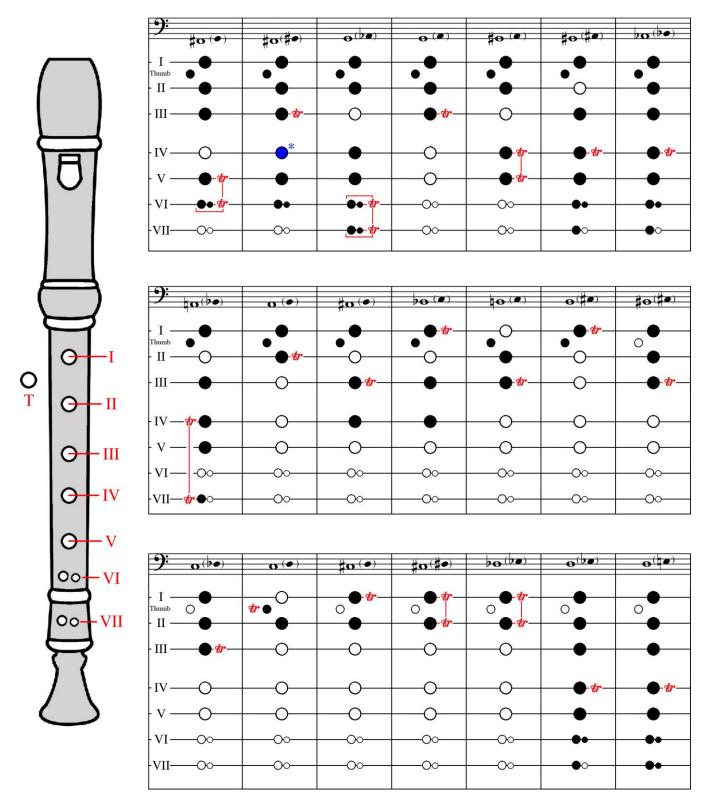
Bass and Contrabass Recorder Trill Fingerings (continued)



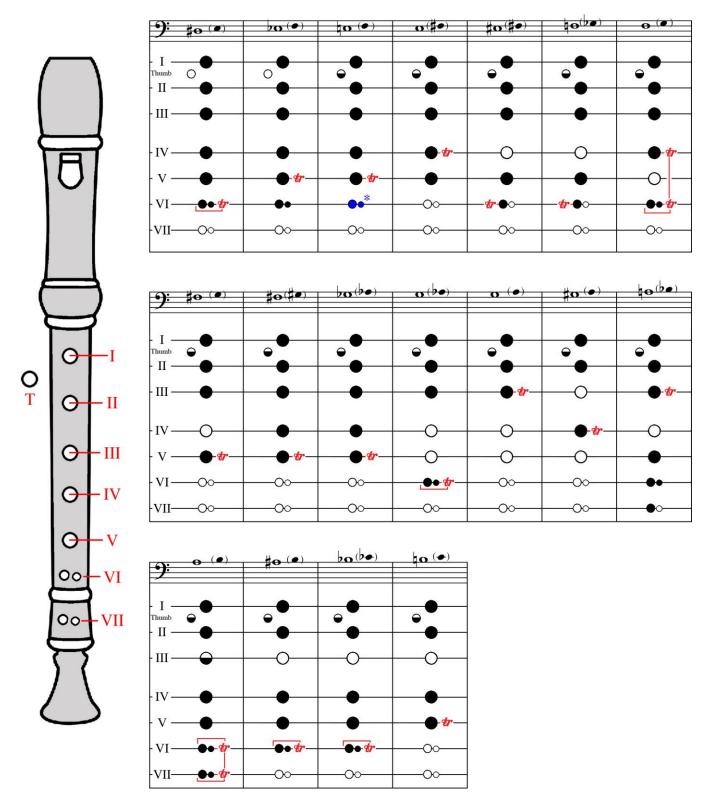
Great Bass and Double Contrabass Recorder Fingerings



Great Bass and Double Contrabass Recorder Fingerings (continued)



Great Bass and Double Contrabass Recorder Trill Fingerings (continued)



Great Bass and Double Contrabass Recorder Trill Fingerings (continued)

Practical Considerations When Scoring for Recorders

- > Fingerings for chromatic passages in the lowest 3rd of the instrument are difficult and should be avoided.
- > The lowest 4th of the range on each instrument is the quietest register.
- > The middle register is the most agile and produces the clearest and richest timbre.
- The lower part of the altissimo register is the loudest register of the instrument and produces a brighter timbre than the other (practical) registers.
- The upper register should be avoided as the tone and pitch is difficult to control, and the fingerings tend to be quite awkward, often requiring the player to close the bell with the knee.

Scoring for Recorder Ensembles

Since many elementary schoolchildren begin their musical experience on recorder, writing simplistic orchestrations geared to the abilities of the young musician affords the student an enjoyable experience, and the teacher the opportunity to discuss the musical content. If scoring for more advanced ensembles, one may present orchestrations of a traditional nature, employing music and techniques common to the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods. Contemporary techniques and tonalities also offer an array of scoring opportunities, as the instruments are suitable for the genre and most players are comfortable with modern tonalities. One need not hesitate writing in a non-traditional manner.

The following examples are but a few of the possible approaches one might employ.

Scoring for young players (with accompaniment) for educational purposes

Franz Schubert, *Deutscher Tanz*, from *Die Blockflöte im Musikunterricht*, mm. 1–18, edited by Ehrenfried Reichelt (concert score).



Scoring as a blended choir with traditional harmonic and melodic content

Johann Pezel, *Sarabande*, mvmt. III from *Suite à 5*, mm. 1–28, arranged and edited by Peter Seibert (concert score). Used by permission of Peter Seibert.



Scoring with counterpoint and contemporary tonalities

Freda Burford, *Footsteps on the Stairs*, mvmt. IV from *Seven Ghostly Fancies*, mm. 1–16 (concert score). PRB Productions Edition No. cco23, Copyright © 1992 PRB Productions. Used by permission.



Tin Whistle

The tin whistle (or pennywhistle) is most commonly associated with Celtic-influenced folk music. However, the instrument's popularity in film and television documentary soundtracks has generated interest in its timbre and texture outside the realm of folk and traditional music. The lowest note the instrument can produce determines the name of the whistle. The most popular (and available) models of tin whistles are the (high) D, (high) C, (low) G, and (low) F whistles. While technically capable of chromatic passages, best results are achieved when treating the tin whistle as a diatonic instrument, restricting oneself to major scales (and their relative minor scales) based on the tonic and subdominant of the key of the instrument. One should avoid writing for the third octave (altissimo octave) as it is difficult to control and produces an extremely piercing timbre.



The D tin whistle is a non-transposing instrument written at concert pitch in the treble clef.



The C tin whistle is a non-transposing instrument written at concert pitch in the treble clef.



The G tin whistle is a non-transposing instrument written at concert pitch in the treble clef.



The F tin whistle is a non-transposing instrument written at concert pitch in the treble clef.

Low Tin Whistles

There are two additional tin whistles in extant. The low D tin whistle plays (and is notated) an octave below the high D instrument, and the low C tin whistle plays (and is notated) an octave below the high CD instrument. These instruments are rare and their availability should not be assumed.

Tin Whistle Fingerings

