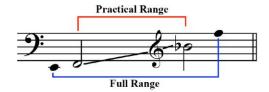
## **Ophicleide**

A conical brass instrument of the keyed-bugle family, the ophicleide is the direct predecessor of the euphonium and tuba (and quite possibly the saxophone). The name of the instrument literally translates to "keyed serpent." It is constructed with nine, ten, eleven or even twelve keys (rather than valves) and is available in a variety of sizes. As with all brass instruments, the actual range of the instrument varies, depending upon the abilities of the player.

Alto ophicleides are generally built in either F or E flat; bass ophicleides are normally built in either C or B flat; and double bass ophicleides are usually built in either F or E flat. Since the number of keys may vary from instrument to instrument, no definitive, standardized fingering system exists. The players are responsible for determining the appropriate fingering for a given pitch based upon the configuration of their instruments. The timbre of the ophicleide is similar to that of the euphonium or tuba (depending upon the size of the instrument).

Ophicleides are non-transposing instruments written in bass clef. However, it is acceptable to write an alto ophicleide part in treble clef, should the number of ledger lines required become cumbersome. While no longer considered part of the standard orchestral palette, the instrument continues to retain a loyal following.

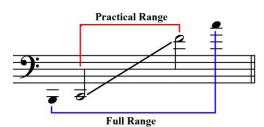
Alto ophicleide in F



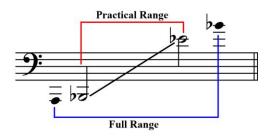
Alto ophicleide in E flat



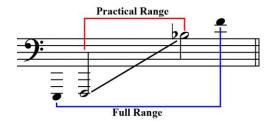
Bass ophicleide in C



Bass ophicleide in B flat



Double bass ophicleide in F



Double bass ophicleide in E flat

