



Daily Recorder Exercises

by Peter Billam

for Recorder in C

© Peter J Billam, 1995

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The first two pages of these exercises date from 1995, when I was a tutor in the *Recorder '95* festival in Melbourne. Why should recorder players practice in remote keys like F# major ? Because in almost every piece in B minor, and hence even in D major, there is some passage in the dominant, in this case F# major, and unless the player has practised in this key, that passage is always the one which spoils the whole movement.

The third page, of minor arpeggios, was added recently because I noticed that while sight-reading I was playing the major arpeggios with greater fluency than minor ones.

Systematic technical exercises such as these are less used by recorder players than other instrumentalists, but they are very effective in generating a maximum of fluency from a minimum of playing time. They should be used regularly every day; ten minutes a day is far superior to one hour per week.

The goal when practising should be to let each note sing strongly and sweetly right from its very first moment to its very last, and then to change cleanly into the next note, with the tongue and all the fingers moving simultaneously so that no ugly scrunching sounds mar the transition. As the transitions become flawless, the sweet singing line will begin to join up from note to note, and develops into a large thing which has its own identity and beauty.

These exercises should also be of value to other woodwind instruments such as flute, oboe, clarinet or saxophone.

Peter J Billam

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The image displays ten staves of musical notation for recorder exercises. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature. The exercises are as follows:

- Staff 1: C major, starting on middle C (C4).
- Staff 2: D major, starting on D4.
- Staff 3: E-flat major, starting on E4.
- Staff 4: F major, starting on F4.
- Staff 5: G major, starting on G4.
- Staff 6: A major, starting on A4.
- Staff 7: B major, starting on B4.
- Staff 8: C major, starting on C5.
- Staff 9: D major, starting on D5.
- Staff 10: E-flat major, starting on E5.

Each exercise consists of a sequence of notes and rests, typically following a scale-like pattern with some chromaticism. The notes are written as quarter notes, and the rests are indicated by a vertical line with a flag.

- * Ten minutes (or more, of course) per day
- * Legato, tongued, and double- (or triple-) tongued
- * Clean. The tongue and all the fingers must all move at the same instant
- * Beautiful. Every note must sing sweetly from start to finish.

The image displays a musical score for a recorder in C, consisting of 12 staves of music. Each staff contains a sequence of arpeggiated notes, primarily eighth notes, with various accidentals (sharps, flats, and naturals) indicating different keys. The patterns are organized into groups of four staves each, with the first staff of each group starting with a key signature change. The first group (staves 1-4) starts with a key signature of one flat (F major/C minor). The second group (staves 5-8) starts with a key signature of two sharps (D major/A minor). The third group (staves 9-12) starts with a key signature of three flats (E-flat major/B-flat minor). Each staff concludes with a double bar line and a fermata symbol.

Peter Billam was born in London in 1948, studied piano, and lived in Switzerland from 1973 to 1983, where he studied composition, classical guitar, flute and voice, worked as Musical Director of the *Théâtre Populaire Romand*, and as recording engineer, record producer and computer programmer. He moved to Tasmania in 1983, lectured in composition at the Conservatorium, conducted recorder ensembles and choirs, studied recorder, voice and harpsichord. He founded www.pjb.com.au, becoming the first composer to sell scores on-line, with on-line delivery, taking scores from Composer to Performer in one immediate step. *Wwww.pjb.com.au* offers a new approach to music publishing. These pieces are **written to be read, made to be played !**

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Arrangements include: By J. S. Bach: *Trio BWV 655*, piano and flute; *Vor deinen Thron BWV 668*, piano; *Fugue in F minor BWV 689*, SATB recorders; *Flute Sonata BWV 1031* transposed into G major for alto recorder and keyboard; *Flute Sonata BWV 1032* completed by Peter Billam for flute and keyboard, also in C major for alto recorder, and in G major for descant; *Ricercare a 3*, from the *Musikalisches Opfer* for keyboard; *Ricercare a 6*, for sSATBG recorders, or strings, or two keyboards; *Fuga Canonica in Epidiapente* for keyboard and melody instrument; from the *Art of Fugue: Contrapuncti 1* and *4* for keyboard, and *Contrapunctus 14* as completed by D. F. Tovey, for keyboard, or for SATB recorders, or for strings; *Passacaglia and Fugue in c* for piano four hands; *Chorales with Descant* for melody instrument and piano; *Cello Suites I, II* and *III* for flute or alto recorder, *Forty Chorales* for piano, *Der Geist hilft* for SATB-SATB recorders. By Johannes Brahms: *Fugue in Ab minor for organ*, for SATB recorders and gamba, in A minor; *Choralvorspiele for organ* with previous settings by Isaac, Bach, Praetorius, recorders. By Franz Schubert: *Four Songs*, voice and guitar; *Schubert Dances*, recorders and guitar, *Schubert Dances*, piano 4 hands. By G. F. Händel: *Concerto Grosso in A minor* op 6 no 4, harpsichord and recorders; *Recorder Sonata in Bb* no 5, in G for tenor recorder and keyboard. By other composers: *Claudio Monteverdi, Ecco Mormorar l'Onde*, SSATB recorders; *Twelve Italian Songs*, voice and guitar; *John Wilbye, Draw on sweet Night*, SSATTB recorders, and for flute choir; *Telemann, Twelve Flute Fantasias*, recorder; *John Carr, Divisions on an Italian Ground*, flute or recorder and guitar; *Fourteen Folk Dance Tunes*, recorder and guitar; *Easy Classical Pieces*, Bb trumpet and piano.

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