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A STRETCHED SOPRANINO RECORDER

There are many players past and present, who never came to terms with playing the soprano recorder. There were a number of problems, two in particular being quite common. First, players with large hands found that there is simply not enough room on the instrument for the fingers to be safely and comfortably accommodated. Moving one finger often dislodged another, generally causing intrusive sounds! Second, was the very small diameter thumbhole. Players sometimes found this dangerous, particularly in rapid arpeggio passages where the thumbhole is fully shut, fully open or partly open in rapidly changing sequences. Many players found the margin of error too small.

I therefore set about designing a longer instrument with a wider than usual bore. The extra length would enable the finger holes to be more widely spaced. The bigger bore made for larger diameter tone holes, including of course the thumbhole.

Many makers today use as their starting point an original soprano recorder by Denner. It's an ivory instrument in Basel, Switzerland. I know the instrument quite well. The instrument I'm sending you is a little over 5mm longer than a typical Denner copy. That doesn't sound very much. But when the total finger hole spacings are stretched by 5mm the effect is considerable. Even wide fingers feel they have space of their own! And the increase in size of the thumbhole is considerable. A typical Denner copy has a thumbhole diameter of about 3.4mm. The new model has a diameter of about 4.7mm. Again, this doesn't sound much, but players find it enough to offer many advantages - it's not only safer, but it's big enough to control the intonation, tone and dynamics using good thumb technique.

Making this longer soprano results in two minor fingering changes -

- 1] The octave of 012345**6** is either Ø123456 or 2345**6**
- 2] The trill from 2 to Ø12345 normally fingered 1234567 with 5 doing the trilling, is instead
- 3] Ø123456**7** with 5 doing the trilling

NB Larger figures in **bold** indicate a partially closed hole.

