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R O Y A L  
C O L L E G E  
O F M U S I C  
*London*

# Royal College of Music Museum

Western Classical Music - KS3 & 4  
Recorder Pack

## Baroque recorders

The recorder is an instrument in the woodwind family.

They have looked the same way for hundreds of years. They come in lots of different sizes and can be played together as a recorder group or consort.



Baroque orchestras were much smaller than orchestras we see today.

Recorders are an important part of the woodwind section in a baroque orchestra, along with instruments like the oboe.

In a concerto grosso, a recorder player often plays as part of the small group of soloists (called the concertino). The music is passed back and forth between the concertino and the full orchestra (called the ripieno).

You can also spot recorders in J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, six very famous 'concerto grossi'.

# Recorder by Johann Wilhelm Oberlender (Nürnberg, mid-1700s)



This recorder was made in the Baroque period and is on display in the Royal College of Music Museum.

Recorders make an expressive sound, with performers able to play lots of notes, very quickly. This makes them perfect as solo instruments, as well as being used in orchestras.

Composers in the Baroque period (1600 – 1750) like Antonio Vivaldi used recorders as solo instruments in concertos. Vivaldi wrote virtuosic melody lines for them, which means the recorder players had to have very good technical skill to play his complicated music.

Sometimes Baroque composers like J.S. Bach and Henry Purcell used the recorder to imitate birds in their music, because the sound of the recorder is similar to birdsong.

Recorders would have been made out of natural materials wood or even precious materials like ivory or tusks. Some of them were carved to look very ornate, like this one which has the head of a bearded man carved into the mouthpiece at the top.



WATCH: RCM Baroque Orchestra: Ashley Solomon performs Telemann Concerto for Recorder and Gamba in A minor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1d2UYupe82o>



J.S. Bach



Henry Purcell



Antonio Vivaldi