

For beginner up to advanced recorder

KIWICORDER

teaching notes

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illustrations by Andy Knopp



INTRODUCTION

Kiwicorder is a set of thirteen New Zealand compositions for beginner to more advanced recorder players.

Each piece in this series has at least one easy descant recorder part (called "Descant Recorder 1"), as well as other parts for more experienced players in your group. Most pieces will sound fine with just one descant recorder part plus the backing track (or piano accompaniment).

The dynamics are an indication only, setting a mood for each piece, but since intonation can easily be compromised with dynamic variation, always err on the side of good intonation with minimal dynamic contrast if needed.

Each piece has detailed learning outcomes including technique and genre-specific stylistic playing.

The compositions range from duets and trios through to full ensemble including descant/soprano, treble/alto, tenor and bass recorders! All extra parts are available for free download, along with many piano accompaniments and scores. Please note that descant/soprano recorders, and treble/alto recorders reflect British and American usage of recorder names respectively.

I hope you enjoy using the video play-alongs or audio recordings as demos and backing tracks. The purposes of these are for ease of teaching and practising, listening, and also to provide a variety of grooves to play along with.

We are grateful to MENZA (Music Education NZ, Aotearoa) for funding this project so it can be a free resource to all schools.

Thank you also to Alison Caldwell for drawing attention to the need for a resource like this. Thanks to the session musicians Celia Stewart and Roger Buckton (recorders), Sam Jones (drums), Michael Bell (bass and piano), Heather Webb (guitar), Katherine Jones (piano), Willie McArthur (bodhran), Jonathan Tanner (fiddle), David McGregor (clarinet), Amy McMurdo (cello) and Mahina-Ira Kingi-Kaui (taonga puoro). Thank you to Thom O'connor (Orange Studio recording engineer) and Hamish Oliver (the 8-Bit engineer). Thank you to Andy Knopp for the artwork. Thank you to Michael Bell for contributing two of the compositions and for being production advisor. Thank you to Heather Libeau-Dow and Pieta Hextall, teachers who helped trial and evaluate the pieces with students.

We hope you enjoy playing and performing the music. You can find the sheet music and backings on the MENZA website and KIWICORDER YouTube channel.



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KIWICORDER

Teaching notes

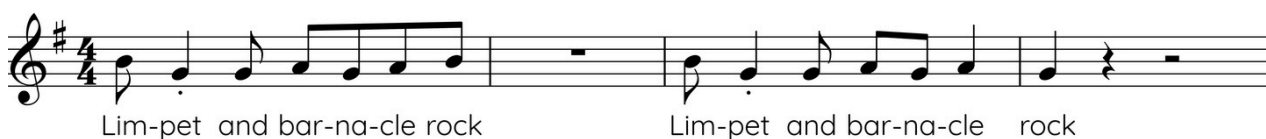


1

Limpet and Barnacle Rock

- for 3 descants, optional alto, tenor and bass recorders.

This melody just has three notes, B, A and G. The rhythm of the melody matches the title “Limpet and Barnacle Rock” so hopefully makes it easier to remember both the title and the syncopated motive. Keep the second note with the staccato short!



Note that the answering phrase finishes on beat one of the following bar.

The tune can work with just the 3-note descant part with accompaniment, or it can include any or all of other recorder parts. The alto part is an exact double of the lower descant harmony part so you can use whatever suits your group best. The alto part could also be played on a tenor. The very top advanced part is optional, but a fun additional part for any more advanced descant musicians.

“Limpet and Barnacle Rock” is about discovering marine life as we explore a rocky shoreline. I was imagining the times I spent with my children at Cave Rock when they were little. The word rock in the title is a play on both coastal rock and the rock genre.

The theme popped into my head as Room 7 came over for a class recorder lesson at Chisnallwood with Pieta Hextall at the end of 2022, which is why it is dedicated to them.

There is also a slow rehearsal audio and video version available of this piece.

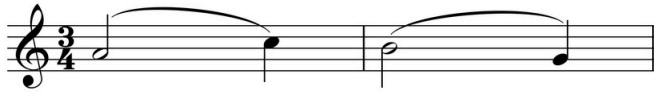
2

Breezes Road Waltz

- for three descant recorders.

A pretty waltz with three clear sections and three descant parts. A waltz is a flowing dance that has three beats per bar, so this is a chance to count in three time and to learn a little about waltzes.

The easy part for this introduces C, using a smooth A to C transition to encourage keeping the A finger down while changing.



The **B** section develops alternating finger muscle memory.



The **C** section introduces repeated staccato notes in a contrasting theme. Be careful not to rush the staccato, tongued quavers.



Recorder part 2 has the main melody, and its range encompasses low E to high D with no F's, so is quite achievable for students with that note range. The 3rd (advanced) harmony completes Breezes Road Waltz using D-D and including low F.

There is some lydian mode feel with the B natural often being used in the F harmony.

The gentle waltz reminded me of flowers swaying in a breeze, so I named it after Breezes Road where Chisnallwood Intermediate School is, and where I taught recorder ensembles for many years.

TranzAlpine Blues

for up to three descants, alto, tenor and bass recorders.

TranzAlpine Blues focuses on the low E-F# fingering for the main recorder part, where the middle finger should be kept down and used much like the middle of a see-saw.



The 2nd recorder part has a C# to C natural fingering focus.



The tune reinforces the major 12-bar blues form.

Note that the backing track changes from a swing feel to a faster straight feel the second time through, then ends with a slow swung feel the third time before going to the coda. The different tempos relate to different speeds the train may travel at as it goes up to Arthur's Pass and then down back to the ocean and slows for the station arrival.

The slurred tritone bar represents the train whistle and needs to be slurred.



The different feels or grooves are valuable for students to learn to identify, and to adjust their playing to match. The swung sections divide the crotchets into uneven quavers that take $\frac{2}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ each of the crotchet beat, and the straight sections divide the beats into even quavers that take half a crotchet each. The swing sections are played with a slightly heavier last quaver than the first, which differentiates it from being a jig feel! You will hear the feel in the backing track.

There is opportunity for improvisation, either by a soloist filling in the gaps in both sections, or by just playing along to the backing track and making it all up. You could try going around the groups giving each student 4 bars each in a "trading" style. There are two options for starting idea notes to choose from. One option is based on notes from the piece and uses notes from the major blues scale, and the other offers the A minor blues scale.

TranzAlpine Blues was inspired by the beautiful Kiwirail TranzAlpine train trip through the Southern Alps between Christchurch and Greymouth.

4

Go E'sy Blues

for three descant recorders, alto, and bass. Tenor can be included by playing the descant 1 part (the melody) on tenor.

This piece is all about the minor blues (in E) in a laid back swing style, and only uses 4 notes, E, G, A and B, for the melody and improvisation.



The first section is in unison where the two focuses are the laid back feel, giving a little more weight (rather than thinking too much of an accent) to the last two quavers of beats 3 and 4. It also has a strong focus on improvisation.

In the second section (letter **B**), the melody is played in harmony by the other recorder parts (like a recorder "big band").

Each section has demo improvisations the first time to give ideas, and leaves those bars blank the second time for you, the player, to try your own ideas. In a group you may like to have different students take a turn in each 2 bar gap, or have one student improvise for a whole time through. The advanced recorder part is a notation of the solo ideas on the recording demo.

There is also a more up-tempo backing version of this.

5

Gecko Echo

for two descants, two altos, two tenors, and a bass recorder.



This can equally be done with just one descant part or any combination.

If you are playing just one descant part, there is an echo in bar one between beats 1-2 and 3-4. If you are using the second part (gecko two) you will hear a more pronounced echo between the parts in the A section! The range of the easy descant part is between low D and high C with no Fs.

The goal in this one is to introduce the tremolo and also right hand D. As the tremolo is used between G and low D it is a good way to reinforce muscle memory for those lower three fingers as they alternate quickly back and forth between G and D.



The **B** section is a good counting challenge to avoid playing in the rests! Keep this section light, like a little gecko. The **B** section can be played simply as is, or it could include an **A** section melody (or improvised variation) played over the top by a soloist the second time though.

The backing track and demo structure is:

Intro **A** **A** **B** **B** **A** **A** **B** **B** **A** Coda

The demo recording shows descant 1 solo, then a duet with alto 2, then tutti (all in).

On a Stroll by Michael Bell

for two descant recorders

The title says it all. Don't rush, and enjoy the journey with the backing track, while watching not to trip on the silent first beats. There's slower rehearsal play-along on offer as well.

The descant 1 easy part uses the notes E G A B.

A challenge in this piece is remembering the rest on beat one of the **A** theme.



The more advanced part includes Bb and high D. It also includes a new effect of flutter tonguing on the Bb! This is done by rolling an R while softly blowing the recorder. A few students may be able to do this, but many will probably struggle. We hope at least it will be interesting to learn about the effect and enjoy discovering who can roll their R's while playing! Please note that it is perfectly fine for the Bb to be played normally without any flutter tongue!

When the Bb note is introduced in the second section, it will sound a little antiphonal, with the two parts sounding a question and answer until they come together. It will work well if the parts are on different sides (left and right).

The **A** theme is played in unison by both recorder parts.





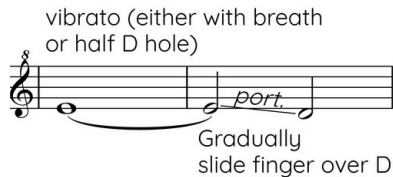
Whenua

for descant or tenor or alto recorder. Other recorders and taonga puoro can be used too.

Whenua creates an opportunity to pause and think about our precious land and nature in Aotearoa, and to experience and play recorder in the style of, and with, the masterful taonga puoro playing by Mahina-Ira Kingi-Kaui.

“Whenua” calls for the recorder to be played in different ways.

- soloists play small written melodies, or these could be swapped for a taonga puoro player improvisation.
- a second soloist chooses just a few notes to play with thoughtful breath using vibrato and finger slides (portamento), to answer and interplay with the backing track, melodic ideas and nature. This also could be played on your own taonga puoro.
- a group of recorder players are called to breathe through the recorder to create a sea or wind sound (without using the mouthpiece).
- a group is called to play rhythms by holding down B and tapping down and up on any other notes without any breath so a popping, percussive sound is achieved.
- there is a short passage for multiple recorders to play low E with vibrato, then slide down to low D.



The score for this is in the form of a play-along video to emphasise the image of our land, although there are also backing tracks and sheet music available.

Please feel free to use this in your own way: you could create your own whenua backing slideshow, have soloists spaced around the room, make up your own melodic themes, or use it with storytelling and drama.

The taonga puoro on the recording include a range of kōauau, poratiti, pūtātara, pūtōrino, hue puruhau, and shells.

Memories

duet for descant recorder and treble/tenor/flute.

Memories is a gentle piece written for descant recorder with a duet part that can be played on a flute, treble recorder, or tenor recorder.

The accompaniment track has piano, cello and clarinet, but it can easily be performed live with just the piano accompaniment.

A focus in this piece is to enjoy the long G's, listening to the intonation (tuning) and harmonies and countermelodies underneath. These will require big breaths to sustain the gentle but long phrases.

The other challenge in this piece is the chance to aim for a smooth change between B and C and throughout the opening phrases that engage B-C-B-G and landing on low E or D smoothly.



Remember to breathe before each long phrase - we don't want anyone fainting!

Someone described this piece as sounding like a farewell. Whatever memories or pictures this piece might make come to mind, I hope you enjoy the major 7th harmonies (typically a dreamy sound), enjoy the changes of harmonic centre underneath, and are able to add your own expression.



Lyttelton

written primarily for one decant melody, but there are also optionally available an easy descant part, easy and advanced alto parts, a tenor and a bass part.

The range of the melody is low D to high D with no Fs. This is a fairly fast jig.

Beginners who want to jump into the melody may like to start by learning the 4th bar in each phrase, then learning the DEG pattern.



The grace notes are optional so don't worry about leaving those out. But it's also a chance to discuss grace notes and how ornaments are used freely in this style of music. Extra for experts: if any students are able to do a double grace note to the first high, please go ahead!



The easy alto part is very easy and could be played on alto or tenor recorder and is a great alternative to the easy descant part if you have the instruments.

There is an optional easy descant part for any beginners who would rather not gradually join in the melody. Please ask these players to keep the dotted crotchets short and detached in this part. The absence of staccatos or shorter written notes is to create a simpler accessible-looking part.

If you are playing this with a live backing rather than the recorded backing track, note the backing rhythms at letter **B**.



Lyttelton is Ōtautahi Christchurch's local port and is where European ships arrived in 1850 with settlers and migrants, bringing with them their musical heritages and tunes like this Celtic sounding jig. One of the passengers was my great, great grand father from Scotland.



Journey into the Void

for two descants, alto, tenor and bass recorders.

The main melody only uses G A B and C and can work with just the melody and backing track, but will shine with the extra parts written (extra descant, alto, tenor and bass).

The [A] theme sits comfortably in 7 beats per bar. While this may be a new challenge, I included this because firstly it's a comfortable 7-beat theme, and secondly it's good to be exposed to playing, performing and composing in different time signatures.



Conducting is another challenge for this piece. The key is to give a strong upbeat to lead into the following bar's downbeat where needed.

Most of section [A] can be conducted: down, up (for the first two crotchets) then triangle (123 for the last three quavers) ie. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7. However bars 7 and 12 are "triangle, down, up" where the last "up" crotchet is the upbeat to the melody again ie. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7. Bar 12 is different: triangle, triangle, down, up, (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10) where the last two crotchets (down, up) are the important set up for the 4/4 [B] section, and later lead into the CODA.

The middle [B] section is a contrasting chorale-like section that finishes with a chime-like last 2 bars with descending recorder entries. This section is smooth and in 4 time, so it is a more serene contrast to the adventurous and lively [A] theme.

The structure of the whole piece is Intro [A] [A] [B] [A] Coda.



5-4 Dance

is a duet for just two descant recorders (and piano, or backing track).

A catchy offbeat little dance for 2 recorders.

The easy part just has the notes G A B with an optional, additional, preferred low D in a couple of places.

The other melody part has a range mainly within the D-D octave with C sharp, C natural and Fsharp.

Although it is mainly to be played lightly, watch out not to make the crotchets on beats 4 and 5 too short - lean on them slightly.



It is a little 5-4 dance where the two recorders dance together at times, but then in the middle section they dance separately before joining back together ready for the **A** section again.

The rhythm of the build up 3-4 section is the same as the start of the 5-4 bars.



Watch out for the surprises in the 2-4 bars - especially the rest at the start of the final bar!

The structure is: play right through to the 1st time bar; repeat back from letter **A** to the end, skipping the 1st time bar and playing the 2nd time bar instead to finish.



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8-Bit
for 3 descant recorders (one easy and two semi-advanced) , easy alto, tenor and bass.

The title of this piece has two meanings - it is based on the old 8-bit electro gaming style of music, and it also has 8-bit binary coded messages in the advanced recorder part and the opening drum solo.

With the 8-bit gaming style music, listen out in the backing track for looping, build up, extra bass at letter **D** and breakdown at letter **E**.

Because the advanced part is so repetitive, students could take turns playing the 8 bar section.

Each bar in the advanced part is a code for a letter.

Binary representation is part of the NZ digital technologies curriculum, and a key and worksheet are on the advanced descant pages to aid decoding!

In this piece the low unaccented notes are representing 0's and the higher accented notes are representing 1s.

For example, the second bar (bar 9) would be 00000101. The last 5 quavers (all we need) are shown by a bracket in the example below and represent 16, 8, 4, 2, 1.

In this example (00101) only the 4 and the 1 digits have a 1 (a higher note).

This adds up to 5, which represents E, the 5th letter of the alphabet. (See the chart example).

letter	number	16	8	4	2	1
	5	0	0	1	0	1

1	A	10	J	19	S
2	B	11	K	20	T
3	C	12	L	21	U
4	D	13	M	22	V
5	E	14	N	23	W
6	F	15	O	24	X
7	G	16	P	25	Y
8	H	17	Q	26	Z
9	I	18	R		

You can find more detail on how this works on the CS Unplugged website, with the general idea of binary numbers and coding messages (for primary school students) explained at <https://www.csunplugged.org/en/topics/binary-numbers/>, and some more detail on using it in music at <https://www.csunplugged.org/en/topics/binary-numbers/integrations/binary-tunes/>.

Kiwicorder Descant 1 - note glossary

