

RECORDER LEVEL GUIDE

What Level of Recorder Player are YOU? (adapted from Triangle (NC) Recorder Society)

When we fill out the registration form for a recorder workshop, we are asked to write down our playing level. Do you know what yours is? It is reasonable that you might not know exactly what it is because there are so many factors involved and because different teachers or workshop organizers may have varying criteria for level designations.

You may also be at different levels for various aspects of recorder playing: technical ability (fingering, tonguing, breath control for pitch, articulation, tone,), musicianship (reading ability, ensemble playing, responding to the director), musicality (playing with sensitivity to the style of music and to the other players, using nuances of expression). This is especially true for experienced musicians who are new to recorder playing!

Can you place yourself largely in a single category? If not, when filling out a registration form, you might enumerate some specifics about your abilities and about what you would like to get out of your learning experience. This will help workshop or course organizers to place you in sessions that will be the best match for you.

- **Lower Intermediate player:** should know most of the notes on one instrument, and be starting a different fingering and/or clef, or be working on reading alto recorder up an octave. This player is beginning to be able to follow a conductor, count with a half note beat, and get back in when lost in simple music.
- **Intermediate player:** is comfortable with all the notes in both C and F fingering, and should be well along with playing "alto up" or bass. This player is becoming increasingly fluent with cut time and, accompanied by other players on the same part, can keep his place in easy polyphonic music at a moderate tempo. This player, with some practice, can attend to phrasing, articulation, and intonation, and with attention to a conductor can often get back in when lost.
- **Upper Intermediate player:** plays C & F fingerings, reads bass clef and alto up, and may be dabbling in C clefs. Keeping place while alone on a part is not a problem except in complicated music. Good articulation, phrasing, and intonation are becoming more of a habit. Beating large note values is not often a problem.
- **Advanced player:** has reasonably nimble fingers, plays all instruments, reads alto up, may read C clefs, keeps (or quickly finds) his place in nearly all music, and has a sense of appropriate style for both Renaissance and Baroque music.

For those players who wish to improve their playing, see the Berlin/Blaker Self-Rating Chart at www.tibiaduo.com. Members of the American Recorder Society may also download the Personal Study Program at www.americanrecorder.org (click on Members Only under Membership)