

















PLASTIC SOPRANO RECORDER SURVEY

Table 1: PLAYERS INSTRUMENTS

BRAND NAME	PRICE	STYLE	CONSTRUCTION	RANGE	WINDWAY	STONE QUALITY	INTONATION	RESPONSE	STONE EXPANSION	EASE OF PLAYING	PHYSICAL FEEL	VERSATILITY (rep)	CRAFTSMANSHIP	ACCESSORIES	PROS	CONS	COMMENTS	SCORE
 Yamaha YRS-312B	\$22-25	Baroque boxwood color with ivory color trim	3 Piece, Abs with double holes. Ecodear is a plant based plastic. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Curved	Focused, clear and bright. Light and fast. 3rd harmonic easy to play	√+ One of the finest instruments in tune. Rank = 20	Excellent. Flies fast and clear. Very easy to play	Little	Excellent	Light, but a little slippery	√√√ Can play any genre	Superb. Appealing boxwood appearance	Cloth case, cleaning rod, cork grease, fingering chart, address card	Light, full tone, remarkable intonation, versatile, very even and super easy to play. Solid tone makes for good solo focused instrument, uniform tone quality	Expensive	Solid in sound. A very easy instrument to play. True solo quality. Flies with ease and is worth the money. Choice for the environmentally conscious. (Bach). ★★★	59
 Lyons Premium.	\$4-5	Baroque Translucent blue	3 piece ABS with double holes. Conical 7-13 mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Light, focused, and centered. allows for lengthy phrasing	√ impressive. Rank = 20	√ Very good. Easy to get around the notes	Some	√ Smooth transitions from lower to upper octave.	Good	√√√ Stupendous results. Can play any genre with ease	√ excellent	Well designed plastic case, fingering chart, cleaning rod	Easy to play. fast response, impressive intonation, price		Inspirational instrument brings the best out of the player. Highly recommended. There are a lot of decent instruments out there, but this instrument connects the notes so seamlessly. That's why it's super easy to play (any genre, Bach or Jazz). ★★	53
 Pluma Suzuki SRE 530.	\$16.27-\$37.60	Baroque ivory finish	3 piece ABS with double holes. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Light to medium. Full focused refined tone. Sweet sounding articulation in the upper octave. Offers longer phrasing possibilities. Doesn't sound like plastic.	Nicely tuned. 2nd harmonic range requires more air to reach pitch. G# ^{tr} almost reaches spill point. Keys that use G# ^{tr} don't always line up. Rank = 19	√ lightning fast	Little	√ Pretty easy	Good. Nicely weighted. Feels more like ivory than plastic.	√√√ Can do it all.	√ impressive ivory finish. Fine construction inside	Case, cleaning rod, joint grease, fingering chart	Exceptional craftsmanship. Convincing ivory look, solid tone	Availability	Impressive to look at and voiced for the soloist, it's overall qualities will impress the pro and the listener. (Bach). ★	47
 Mie Consort Series 2903BX	\$3.75	Baroque, ebony color	3 Piece, Abs with double holes. Conical 7-13mm.	2 octaves +	Curved	Light, focused. Exceptional tone.	√ Rank =14	Excellent	Very good	√	Excellent and light	√√√	Exceptional appearance. Beautiful ebony look	Black plastic zipper case, cleaning rod, fingering chart	Attractive appearance. Superb tone. Low price quick response		Highly recommended. It does it all. Not as full as a good wood recorder, but plays quite well in the upper register with ease. (Bach). ★★★	46
 Yamaha YRS-24B.	\$4.70-6	Baroque ivory color	3 piece ABS with double holes. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Light to medium, well focused open with a bright pointed sound. Good articulation.	√+ impressive from top to bottom. One of the finest tuned instruments. Rank = 21	√ lightning fast	Some	Very good	Good. a little slippery.	√√√ Can play any genre	Excellent, shiny plastic look	Cloth case & fingering chart	Bright, focused, well in tune, easy to play	Shiny plastic look, no cleaning rod	Yamaha's low-budget entry is a worthy solo instrument. If you want something light in tone and bright in its voicing, this instrument will do the job, especially outdoors (folk).	44
 Tribert Soprano.	\$10.50	Baroque with black matte finish	3 piece abs with double holes. Conical 8-13mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	√ Well focused. Tends to be on the edgy side of sound. Seamless in both registers. Capable of long phrasing.	√+ Impressive. Rank = 22	√ very good. Speaks well	Little	√ Super easy	Very nice	√√√. It does everything well.	Good	Cleaning rod, fingering instructions and leatherette case	Great intonation. Super easy response	Availability, slightly edgy tone quality	This amazing instrument may not be the best sounding one, but it can do anything quite well.	43
 Yamaha YRS-20B.	\$5.65-8.50	Baroque in translucent blue, green & rose	3 piece translucent ABS in 3 colors with double holes. Conical 7-13mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Light, focused, consistent throughout	√+ One of the finest instruments in tune. Rank = 21	Excellent	Good	√ Super	Very good	√√√ Can play any genre	Excellent, exciting colors	Plastic sleeve, fingering instructions	Price, lovely uniform sound, easy to play		An inspirational instrument for any kind of player. You can't go wrong with this model (folk or jazz).	43
 Zen-On Stanesby Jr.	\$40.00	Baroque with ivory color trim (plus ivory color thumbhole)	3 piece ABS with double holes. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Curved	Light. Easy to play. Well focused and even throughout the registers. Good voicing allows for extended phrasing. Some may or may not like the pointed sound quality, but for the ease of playing it's justified	Excellent lower register. All the notes play in tune. The only glaring note is a 1/4 flat C# ^{tr} which can be fixed with alternate fingering. Rank = 19	√ Excellent	Little	√ As easy as it gets	Good	√√√ In Am the upper A ^{tr} has to be pushed, otherwise this instrument is a joy to play no matter the style.	Good	Plastic case, cleaning rod, joint grease	Solid well voiced instrument, easy to play. Articulates easy	Price, availability use alternate fingering for C ^{tr}	Steady as a rock. After nearly 5 decades this model has outlived many other brands. If you can get a hold of one, preferably new, you'll see why today's new plastics have greatly improved. (jazz) ★	42

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 Mollenhauer Adria's Dream Recorder 0119R	\$42.00	Middle age/ contemporary with red sparkle and gold color trim	2 piece glitter red ABS. Wide bore with double holes, right handers only. Slightly conical 13-14mm.	2 octaves +	Curved	Dark. Focused. Dark and strong. Consistent sound from bottom to the upper range	√+ Rank = 13	Very good. Decent response from a ^{'''} -c ^{'''} . Articulates from hard to soft.	Good	√ Very good	Very good	√√√√ At home with Renaissance music	Excellent design Red glitter with gold head and foot joints nicely done. Tapered beak for good lip position.	Black cotton bag, cleaning rod, fingering chart	Tapered beak Fine strong tone. Thicker construction. Excellent feel in the hands	Top notes have to be played forcefully to avoid spillage. price, Requires more breath to phrase. Right handers only	Plays like a dream. A fine solo instrument that can find a place with other strong instruments. If you can't afford wood and want the darker sound characteristics of one versus lighter plastics, this is the model to choose (prae). ★★	40
 Lyons R49BB	\$3.00	Baroque in translucent blue, green & rose and clear colors	3 piece ABS with double holes. Conical 7-13 mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Light, bright and focused. The upper register requires more air but does not lose tone quality at the expense of long phrasing	Maybe all the notes don't always line up for a beginner, but in the hands of a pro with a good ear, it's doable. Rank = 17	Very good	Some	√+ Fast runs are easy and fun. Consistent from top to bottom	√	√√√ GM upper register has to be pushed up a little. All the other keys play well. Can play it all.	√ Very good	Plastic case, cleaning rod, fingering instructions	Easy to play, price	Requires more breath in the upper register to play in tune	A successful lightweight. The Premium model is better but this instrument is more than worthy especially if you're looking for the cheapest thing around. ★	40
 Yamaha YRS-302B III.	\$16-18	Baroque with ivory color trim	3 piece ABS with double holes. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Curved	Light, focused. Bright open sound	Flat C [#] . Sharp notes g ^{'''} Bb ^{'''} b ^{'''} & C ^{'''} Rank = 18	Excellent, plays real fast with ease	Some	Excellent	Very good	√√√√ A joy to play in any genre	Very good	Cloth case and fingering chart	Light full tone, easy to play. Spot on articulation	Price, Some sharp notes in the upper register	Making the player feel good with appealing tone and on spot articulation justifies the price (jazz)	39
 Yamaha YRS-312B III	\$16-35	Baroque rosewood finish with ivory colored trim	3 piece ABS with double holes. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Curved	Light, focused, loudly bright and a little edgy in the upper register. However well voiced for lengthy phrasing capabilities	A decently tuned instrument, however hard to precisely land on various pitches if one plays in its sweet spot. Rank = 19	ood, pinpoint articulation. C ^{'''} requires some skill to land cleanly.	A little	Good. Easy to play	Good	√√√√. Properly voiced for long phrasing and the low chromatic notes.	Very good . Attractive rosewood ivory finish.	Cloth zipper case, cleaning rod, cork grease and fingering chart	Beautiful finish, pinpoint articulation. Strong in the lower register.	Price, C ^{'''} requires skill to land without piercing tone quality	More soloistic in sound rather than ensemblish. To master the intonation issues will require practice. For players with adept tuning skills. It's very bright solo tone quality would be better in the hands of a pro than a beginner. (jazz or folk) ★	38
 Zen-On ZE-150BN	\$39.50	Baroque with ivory color trim	3 piece abs with double holes. Conical 8-12 mm.	2 octaves +	Slightly curved	Well focused and pleasant sound	Good all around. Rank=19	√ Excellent	Little	√	Very good	√√√√ A joy to play in any genre	Good	Carrying pouch, thumb rest, joint grease, cleaning rod and fingering chart	Versatile, lovely tone, well in tune.	Price	A joy to play. Pricy but it's a great instrument	37
 Aulos 903.	\$4.60	Baroque ivory color	3 piece ABS with double holes. Conical 8-15mm.	2 octaves +	Curved	Light, focused but edgy and raw overall. Capable of pinpoint articulation	√√+ Impressive dead-on intonation in the lower & upper register. Best tuned instrument of all tested. Rank = 23	Good	Some	√ Super easy to play	Good	√√√√. Although it can handle all the genres, its tone quality lessens the pleasure. Best suited for outdoor use.	Excellent	Plastic case with fingering chart, no cleaning rod	Excellent intonation, easy to play	Raw tone quality, no cleaning rod	One of the widest bores measured. Objectively, one of the finest instruments tested. Subjectively, one of the least impressive soundwise (folk) ★	37
 MPI Chorale #211233.	\$2.95	Baroque, ivory color. German fingering.	3 piece abs with double holes. Conical 8-13mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Light, clear, but thin treble-edged sound. Voicing is focused to the player's advantage offering longer phrasing capabilities	Well tuned in the lower register. Upper register more problematic. Ab ^{'''} fingering is incorrectly shown. Eb ^{'''} is hard to obtain. Rank =16	Good and fast	Very good	Easy to play. Some keys easy to play are (CM,FM) and some keys are harder to play in the German system (upper DM & EM)	√ Good, a little slippery.	√√√. FM & CM are easy to play. DM & EM aren't. Stick to the keys it plays well in. Works for a lot of genres.	Ok, seams show a little	Vinyl zipper case, fingering chart, cleaning rod	Ease of playing, capable of long phrasing, some tone expansion, 3 piece construction, excellent response, price	Thin edgy tone quality, tuning issues in the upper register. DM & GM will be hard for amateur and student players.	Tone quality more appealing to the listener and less to the player. Not the most beautiful tone quality, but it's well built for a lot of tasks. If you insist on buying German fingering, this is the best one tested. ★★★	35
 Mollenhauer Adria's Dream Recorder wood 4117	\$156.00	Middle age/ Renaissance pearwood	2 piece pear wood, for right handers only. Wide bore with single holes, slightly conical 12-14mm.	2 octaves +	Slightly curved	Dark, focused. Dark and strong. Consistent sound throughout. Bright articulation possible	√ d ^{'''} needs to be pushed a little. Single holes make C [#] , Eb ^{'''} & G [#] harder to land. Rank = 14	Excellent. Flies fast and clear.	Good	√ Super	Excellent	√√√√ At home with Renaissance music and anything else	Excellent design. Very fine voicing.	Black zippered bag. With green trim. Microfiber mop, joint grease, fingering chart	Price. Fine sound strong throughout in both resisters. Pearwood	Single hole model require more skill to play C [#] , Eb & A. Right handers only.	You get what you pay for. Double hole model available for a few dollars more. Can play solo or ensemble (prae) ★	33

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 Hohner 9509.	\$13-20	20th century, boxwood color, baroque fingering	1 piece abs with double holes. Conical. Bore ends at 9mm. For right handed players only.	2 octaves +	Straight with 4 drain canals	Light and focused. Very good tone quality	√ Tuned at A=442 but is comfortable @ A=440. Instrument in tune with itself and notes line up very well. One of the finest tuned instruments. Rank= 21	Fast	Good, expressive	Good	Ok	√√√√. Can play any genre. C ^{'''} after extended use and saliva, a little edgy, otherwise quite impressive in everything it plays	Strange and unsuited. Visible seams	Fingering chart, cleaning rod with sponge, forest green plastic case.	Effective thumb rest area.	Odd plastic look, Strange design, sponge must be washed after use, price	This ugly duck plays like a swan. Forget about the outside. The beauty is skin deep. It's playing quality warrants the price. The best of the 1 piece instruments (folk or jazz)	33
 Canto CR101.	\$3.69	Baroque with ivory colored trim	1 piece abs with double holes. For right handers only. Conical 6mm at bell.	2 octaves +	Slightly curved	Light, bright, but a little thin and edgy in the upper register. However, voicing is well focused for long phrasing	Impressive lower register is spot on. Region of C ^{'''} -D ^{'''} off. C ^{'''} is 1/4 tone flat. Otherwise well tuned all over. Rank = 20	√ Lightning fast. Good articulation	Some	√	Good, slightly slippery	√√√√. Capable of any kind of repertory, but that trebly upper register.	Mostly good	Plastic case, cleaning rod and fingering instructions	Easy to read fingering chart, excellent response, good phrasing capabilities, finely tuned. Price	One piece construction. Right handers only. Edgy tone makes ears ring	Can't deny this instrument is well made. If only the tone color was less piercing	32

Table 2: ACCEPTABLE

BRAND NAME	PRICE	STYLE	CONSTRUCTION	RANGE	WINDWAY	TONE QUALITY	INTONATION	RESPONSE	TONE EXPANSION	EASE OF PLAYING	PHYSICAL FEEL	VERSATILITY	CRAFTSMANSHIP	ACCESSORIES	PROS	CONS	COMMENTS	SCORE
 MIE 24	\$2.50	Baroque ivory color	3 Piece, Abs with double holes. Conical 7-13mm with flared bell (14mm).	2 octaves +	Straight	Light, & good. Lower octave is on the thin side where the upper octave is more focused and pleasing	√ rank =12	Fast	Some	√	Very good	Good √√√√	Ok	Clear plastic case, cleaning rod, fingering chart	Decent tone fast response easy to play, price		Good all around instrument for all playing situations. ★	28
 MIE Renaissance	\$4.95	Renaissance style boxwood color abs	2 piece, ABS with gold ring and double holes. For right handers only. Conical 8-12mm.	2 octaves	Curved	Medium, focused. Good, strong tone. Has personality. Smooth throughout both octaves. d ^{'''} is louder than the other notes	c ^{'''} ,c# ^{'''} flat. Rank=10	Good	Good	√	Very nice. Good feel in the hands. Feels like a wood instrument. Has weight.	√√√√ Suitable for outdoor playing. Holds its own in an ensemble. Should be able to handle most repertory.	Exceptional appearance	Green plastic zipper case, cleaning rod, fingering chart	Strong tone. Best for solo or ensemble use. Excellent finish. Looks like boxwood.	d ^{'''} loudly sticks out	Would fit nicely with a consort of renaissance instruments in appearance and sound. The d ^{'''} issue can be remedied by slurring into the note.	28
 Aulos 303A-E	\$7.72	Baroque in ebony or ivory color	3 piece ABS with double holes. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Light, bright, focused	Mostly in tune. C ^{'''} has to be pushed close to the breaking point. C# ^{'''} & Eb ^{'''} are 1/4 tone flat in relation to the other notes and hard to land in tune. Rank =18	√ Lightning fast, speaks easily in the upper register	None	√	Good	√√√√ However FM, GM, EM has to be pushed in the upper register, hence shortens breath phrasing length	Excellent	Adjustable thumb rest, cloth bag, fingering instructions with trill chart, cleaning rod	Plays easy, unique trill chart, fine appearance and craftsmanship, excellent response	Some essential pitches don't always line up. Upper register leaves the sweet spot so not to play flat.	Aside from the pushing issues, this instrument is still impressive despite some intonation challenges	26
 Susato wide bore soprano recorder.	\$58.00	Modern renaissance in black/brown.	2 piece, ABS with single holes. For right handed players. Cylindrical 14.43-46.	2 octaves	Curved	Medium, full and strong, especially in the lower register. Pushed and near shrill in the upper.	√ Requires some skill to play C# ^{'''} ,Eb ^{'''} by half-holing. Well tuned lower register Rank = 21	Fast. Large right hand holes require more skill to play quickly	Little	√	Good, slightly slippery	√√ Not recommended for baroque due to the 3rd register, but would be at home with jazz and rock Can play early and folk music. Not recommended for the classroom.	Good	Fingering chart, cork grease, vinyl pouch, removable thumbrest	Finely tuned. Character in articulation. Strong dominant sound. Would suit well for rock concerts.	Expensive, shiny plastic look, single holes, requires more air than baroque-style recorders, hence shorter phrasing. would stick out in an ensemble. Shrrill 3rd register.	If Ethel Merman was a recorder... If you're looking for a powerful sound that sticks out, this qualifies. If you're looking for something that can play sweeter, look elsewhere.	25
 MPI Prism.	\$2.89	Baroque Translucent blue, green, purple, red, gold	2 piece, ABS with double holes. Right handed players only. Conical 8-12mm.	2 octaves +	Slightly curved	Light	C ^{'''} is slightly sharp and hard to land. All F#s ^{'''} are sharp by a half step. Employ German fingering to reduce the sharpness. Otherwise this is a well tuned instrument in the lower & upper register. Rank =15	Very good	Little	Good, however thumb hole is not even and can block the fingernail from half holing. Allows for super light quiet playing	Good	√√√. GM, DM & Em will require more practice with the altered F# fingerings.	Ok. Seams show and thumbhole needs to be sanded down	Vinyl zipper case, cleaning rod and fingering chart	Unique light and quiet sound for a soprano, price, plays well and easy in both registers	F# in both octaves out of tune by a 1/2 step.	This nicely sounding and easy to play instrument shows a lot of promise but the F#s have to be fixed. If you're a school teacher and want a recorder that plays successfully at a quieter level, and limit yourself to the flat keys, this is clearly your best option	24
 MPI Sapphire	\$2.39	Baroque Translucent blue	2 piece, ABS with double holes. Right handed players only. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Light, glassy, strident and thin. However well focused to provide amazing phrasing capabilities	Well tuned in the lower register, upper register is another story. C# ^{'''} 1/4 flat and F# ^{'''} & F# ^{'''} 1/2 sharp, but can be remedied using alternate fingerings. Plays well in keys Ab, Am, Bb, C, Dm F, G, Gm. Plays poorly in keys A,B,D,E, Em, Rank = 13	√ Very good. Excellent articulation.	Some	√+. A light touch Easy to reach the high notes.	Good	√√√ Fine in keys F, G, C, easy to get around. Difficult in keys D & Em	Fair, seams show, good construction inside	Cleaning rod, plastic case	Plays well and super easy, Amazing articulation, price	2 piece construction. thin tone, Crucial out of tune notes	One of the easiest instruments to play. If only those out of tune notes were fixed. Wear earplugs when practicing, learn the alternate fingerings for the F#s and C#, stay away from the bad keys and you're in business.	21

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Harmony H147G 	\$3.29	Baroque Translucent green	2 piece, ABS with double holes. Right handed only. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Slightly curved	Light and glassy. Some will find it thin. Others will find it clear. Long phrasing is possible through its light playability.	Bottom register is flat from C#-E", hard to bring in tune without cracking. 1/4 tone Sharp F#" and F#" can be remedied with additional finger covering. C#" is also flat, hence has to be pushed. Rank = 11	Super fast. Lower notes have a tendency to crack. Once you get past g" the instrument speaks well, especially in the upper register	Some	Good, however thumb hole is not even and can block the fingernail from half holing. Lightness is its virtue.	Good	√√ GM can be remedied by adding fingers on the F#. Plays well in CM. Doesn't play well in DM or Em	Good on the inside fair on the outside. Seams show. Thumb hole needs to be sanded down	Clear plastic zipper case, cleaning rod, fingering chart	Quick and nimble. Plays great in upper register. Price	Thumbhole stops the thumbnail. F# issues create playing issues for DM & EM	Never completely zip the case to avoid bacteria buildup. Pinky hole could be an issue with a beginning player. Lots of good things to say about this model. Sand down the thumbhole for this agreeable lightweight.	11
MIE 180PR 	\$2.50-2.75	Baroque Translucent red, blue, green, purple.	2 piece, ABS with double holes. Right handed players only. Conical 8-13mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Medium acceptable, thin. Clear, but raw sound in the upper register	G", C", F" slightly flat, F" high. Rank =10	Fast	Limited	√	Good	Ok	Good	Clear plastic case, cleaning rod, fingering chart	Inexpensive. Fun colors Fast response	Thin sound. Less expressive. Foot joint cannot be adjusted	Flat notes can be played in tune. On the thin side but gets the job done	10
Aulos 323E 	\$10.00	Baroque ivory color	3 piece ABS with double holes. Conical 10-12mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Light and focused., acceptable tone quality. Not a tone killer but ok. Articulation is good overall but slow in the lower three notes.	Instrument is mostly in tune with itself, however the lower register (c"-d") is significantly flat. Mid register is fine some flat issues in the 3rd harmonic. The most glaring intonation issue is the flat middle C which is a sore point. However the more you play it, the better the notes fall in line. Rank=7	√ very good.	√ Pretty good. Good opportunities for expression in middle and upper register	√	Nice	√√ Despite its expansion properties the overall sound edges toward the shrill due to flat notes that need more air to play in tune. It also shortens phrasing possibilities like the high g", forcing the player to play out of the sweet spot and blow harder which makes the tone quality harsher. The 3rd register when played in tune is the harshest. More at home in Renaissance music and jazz. In folk it doesn't play well in DM or Em	Good	Plastic carrying pouch, thumb rest, and fingering chart. No cleaning rod	Nice feel, easy to play, expressive qualities	Intonation problems in significant places	An instrument that represents the good and the not so good. If your standards are not high, this instrument is acceptable. However there are cheaper alternatives which play and sound better. But it is easy and fun to play if you ignore the fine points of playing in tune, or better yet, spend half as much and get the Autos 903.	10
MPI Classic #211202. 	\$4.95-8.75	Baroque with ivory color trim	2 piece, ABS with double holes. Right handed players only. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Light, but slightly thin requiring more air to complete a phrase. Can be brittle in the 3rd harmonic. Mostly focused. C" is shrill and brittle.	Some fingering can be improved by changing fingerings (Eb" & F"). Although nearly all notes play in tune against a tuner, some keys don't sound too good like FM. Rank = 9	Very good	Limited	√	Good	√√ Can play all kinds of music but questionable intonation requires more skill and breath on the player. Best for jazz.	Good	Plastic zipper case, cleaning rod, fingering instructions	Nimble, good looking well constructed design, good price.	Tuning issues, thinner tone requiring more breath	A pro can make this instrument sound good, but the intonation issues will create more challenges for the beginner.	9

Table 3: THE DRAWING BOARD

BRAND NAME	PRICE	STYLE	CONSTRUCTION	RANGE	WINDWAY	TONE QUALITY	INTONATION	RESPONSE	TONE EXPANSION	EASE OF PLAYING	PHYSICAL FEEL	VERSATILITY	CRAFTSMANSHIP	ACCESSORIES	PROS	CONS	COMMENTS	SCORE
NUVO soprano recorder 	\$8-10	Modern: white/green, white/blue, white/pink, and black/grey	3 piece, ABS with rubber rings on the foot joint, Conical 7-13mm.	2 octaves +	straight	Varied open thin sound. Shrill from F#" to C"	Uneven. Lower register mostly in tune. Upper register mostly flat from f" on up. Rank = 9	Good	Narrow. Weak upper register. In order to play in tune, instrument has to be pushed forcing tone spill	Good	Very good. Grooved holes on bottom 2 notes provide for comfortable playing	Intonation problems force it to play music successfully only in the lower register.	√√. Many good ideas	Clear plastic case and fingering chart	Inventive styling attractive to the eye. Good feel, subtle thumb rest area. Excellent easy-to read fingering chart. Reward rings removable plugs for low C#, D#	Tone quality. Intonation flat in the upper register. Rubber rings should be removed before washing in a dishwasher.	Stylish and attractive in appearance, hence the 1 star ranking. Tone quality needs to be improved. In order for it to play in tune, instrument has to be pushed beyond the sweet spot to shrillville. ★	10
Grover Trophy Cambridge II 	\$5.50-8.40	Baroque ebony color	3 Piece. Abs with double holes. Conical 7-12 mm.	1 Octave + 7th	Curved	Light to medium. A little unfocused and breathy. Slightly stuffy sound. Also has to be pushed slightly outside the sweet spot to play in tune. Gets more stuffy towards the end of the second harmonic as tone quality deteriorates with saliva buildup.	Bb" on fingering chart incorrect-sharp- but can be remedied. Impressive lower register. B" breaks (flat). Forget about C" Rank =15	Good. Nice articulation	None	√	Very good	√√. More successful in renaissance and jazz. Less successful in folk (fiddle tunes) and medium level baroque music due to notes cracking in the 3rd harmonic.	Ok	Adjustable thumb rest, plastic case, fingering chart, (cleaning rod, cork grease shown in advertisements)	Nice feel, good appearance and articulation	Stuffy sound, can't hit high C". Sound deteriorates with saliva buildup. Has to play beyond sweet spot to stay in tune. Cheap hard to use plastic case	If you stay in the lower octave this instrument is as good as any. A decent instrument but there are better ones for less money. X	9

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BRAND NAME	PRICE	STYLE	CONSTRUCTION	RANGE	WINDWAY	TOPE QUALITY	INTONATION	RESPONSE	TOPE EXPANSION	EASE OF PLAYING	PHYSICAL FEEL	VERSATILITY	CRAFTSMANSHIP	ACCESSORIES	PROS	CONS	COMMENTS	SCORE
MIE 175W 	\$2.29	Baroque ivory color	1 piece, ABS. For right handers only. Conical 6mm at bell.	2 octaves +	Curved	Light, focused & nimble	F ¹ , F ² , C ³ B ³ sharp. Rank=2	Super fast	Expressive however must be lightly blown.	✓ Speed demon	Feather light	Doable however. Intonation problems	Rough in some spots but overall ok	Brown plastic zipper case, cleaning rod, fingering chart	Super fast low price	Upper register & lower register vary widely in pitch. Not for left handed players.	Light as a feather and fun to play, however intonation needs to be improved. If only the head joint was adjustable the problem could be minimized. X	7
Schreiber Selecta 1964. 	(\$27.00)	Modern German baroque fingerings hardwood	2 piece, wood with double holes. Right handed players only. Conical 6-11mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Medium, fair, decent quality, 3rd harmonic is a little shrill. A tad unfocused, otherwise pleasant overall	Some notes can be fixed using alternate fingerings, (G ² , B ² for example), but there are a number of them. Flat notes Eb ² , F ² , A ² , Bb ² . Sharp notes E ² , G ² B ² . 3rd harmonic is flat overall. Rank =13	Very good	None	Good and fast	Wood is good	✓ Doable. Can play FM using alternate fingerings. however pitch is an issue in keys such as GM, AM & Em due to a flat notes in the 2nd octave. Best in CM.	Ok	N/A	Sound of wood, good response, easy to play	Average tone, doesn't play well enough in tune	A 60 year old vintage wood instrument that has held its own. Plastics have made major inroads in pitch however. x rating is based on price. X	7
D'Luca Student 	\$7.00	Baroque ivory color. German system.	3 piece with double holes. Conical 8-12mm.	2 octaves +	Straight	Decent, on the slightly bright side in the upper register	Head joint has to be pulled out 2.5mm to lower the pitch on a sharp c ³ . Up to 15 tones out of relationship, resulting in over and underblowing. If joint is left in, the following notes are out: sharp C ³ , F ³ , F ³ Bb ³ , Flat G ³ , A ³ , B ³ . Notes completely out are B ³ , C ³ , C ³ , D ³ , Eb ³ , G ³ . Fingerings on the chart: G ³ , Bb ³ , D ³ G ³ are incorrect. Rank = 5	Fast	Good	✓ If you don't care about intonation	Good, a little slippery	✓ Difficult to play serious repertory. Problematic and out of tune unless you change a lot of fingerings. Doesn't play in FM, DM or Am. Upper register starts to irritate the player after a while. However, close enough for jazz.	Good exterior, poorly designed interior	Cleaning rod, plastic bag, fingering chart	Nimble	Many notes out of tune with itself. Can't play most repertory in tune. Upper register can be shrill after a while.	German system recorders always have intonation issues and this one is typical of the problems therein. You can get a good well tuned instrument for half the price of this one.	7
Angel Soprano 101 	\$3.12-8.00	Baroque with ivory colored head	1 piece abs with double holes. Conical. Bore ends at 7mm. For right handed players only.	2 octaves +	Curved	Light > Medium. Bright and focused sound. To play in tune the volume has to be pushed which produces a less attractive shriller quality. A ² & D ² reaches spill area. Has an edge to it whether played in tune or slightly below pitch	Instrument is in tune with itself, however, it has to be pushed to the limit to play at A=440 in the lower harmonic (C ³ , D ³ & Eb ³) which were forced into their breaking points. Aside from that, the instrument is well set up for a 1-piece. Bb ³ & B ³ are sharp in relation to the other notes. Only C ³ is way flat. Rank =16	Super fast, very good, however notes can crack from C ³ -Eb ³ .	Some	✓	Good	FM has to be pushed into a shriller area, but doable. This takes more air and limits the instrument's refinement and phrasing. GM is more successful and very impressive in the 3rd harmonic region. CM. DM & Em are doable. The note D ³ tends to wear on the ear and hard to do clean articulations in the C ³ -Eb ³ region where breaking tones occur. Can it play the repertory? Yes, but not the prettiest or inspirational instrument to play.	Ok. Seams show at the foot joint	Plastic case, cleaning rod, fingering chart ✓	Nice tone, easy to play. Well laid out fingering chart. Well tuned	One piece, cannot move the foot joint to accommodate the pinky position. Instrument has to be pushed to play in tune creating a less favorable tone	In spite of the shrill issues, the intonation and voicing are its most impressive points. Good tone quality can be obtained if not pushed. Not up to professional standards.	6
MPI Antiqua soprano Recorder #211219. 	\$3.65	Pseudo Renaissance, boxwood/maple color, which harkens back to German recorder designs post WWII. Baroque fingering	2 piece, ABS with gold ring and double holes. Right handed players only. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +	Curved	✓ Excellent	Instrument must be warmed up for at least 5 minutes before playing and blown loudly to reach A=440. Although the pitch relationships are good, the overall instrument plays below A=440 requiring it to blow beyond its sweet spot into near-shrill territory making it unpleasant to hear. Major flat notes are C-Eb ³ , G ³ , A ³ B ³ -D ³ , E ³ -G ³ . Rank = 10	Very good. Quick and easy	Some	✓ Very good. Fast and easy in the lower and middle harmonic register, but difficult to articulate in the 3rd harmonic without tone break	Good	Flat, can only be pushed close to A=440. FM is not achievable. GM has problems in the 3rd harmonic and is barely in tune. CM has breaking tones at Eb ³ , E ³ , F. DM is flat. Em is the closest to playing in tune. In order to play in tune, loud is the only option. Not recommended for ensemble playing	Nice appearance	Cleaning rod, black zipper case, fingering chart	Fun to play, easy fast response, good tone quality, nice appearance	Flat, unable to play at A=440. Difficulty playing in the 3rd harmonic	A potentially great instrument undermined by being flat overall. Not suitable for ensembles despite its ease of playing. For solo use only.	0





PLASTIC SOPRANO RECORDER SURVEY

BRAND NAME	PRICE	STYLE	CONSTRUCTION	RANGE	WINDWAY	TONE QUALITY	INTONATION	RESPONSE	TONE EXPANSION	EASE OF PLAYING	PHYSICAL FEEL	VERSATILITY	CRAFTSMANSHIP	ACCESSORIES	PROS	CONS	COMMENTS	SCORE
Gibson Tonette	\$13-20 used	WWII styling. Ebony matte finish with raised holes.	2 piece Abs, for right handed players only. Closed end conical bore @15mm.	C ⁴ -d ⁵	Straight	Breathy, full of air	Mostly diatonic. Instrument not in tune with itself. Can't play C# ⁴ . However the other chromatic tones can be found with some creative alternate fingerings. F# ⁴ & Bb ⁴ are 1/2 flat. Rank = 3	Fair	None	Raised holes either ease playing or prevents swift dexterity.	Good. Matte surface does not come into play	x √ Cannot play challenging repertory a recorder can. However the songbook enclosed has 20 tunes and 30 exercise/motifs to play upon. And if you're willing to put the time in it's capable of jazz.	Good	Instruction book with 50 claimed tunes	Cute, appealing, unique funky ocarina-like sound, fun to play. Helpful instructions with tune book	Intonation. Tune book has some racist titles and illustrations (Oriental Dance)	It is what it is and does not pretend to be too serious an instrument. If you want to travel back in time and hunt for this piece of bygone Americana, go for it. However you'll have to work the chromatics out on your own. Could it be improved? Yes. Is it easier to play than a recorder and worthy as an educational tool? Hard to say since it's time has come and gone not to mention challenging to find.	0

Table 4: TOYS or The Landfill

BRAND NAME	PRICE	STYLE	CONSTRUCTION	RANGE	WINDWAY	TONE QUALITY	INTONATION	RESPONSE	TONE EXPANSION	EASE OF PLAYING	PHYSICAL FEEL	VERSATILITY	CRAFTSMANSHIP	ACCESSORIES	PROS	CONS	COMMENTS	SCORE
Harmony H-30S.	\$4.00	Baroque ebony color with ivory color trim. Baroque fingering.	3 Piece, Abs with double holes. Conical 7-12 mm.	c ⁴ -b ⁵ . C ⁵ chokes	Curved. Looks uneven	x Nice lower register, starts to get reedy in the upper. Overall glassy sound and with condensation tone starts to get thin and wispy before it disappears altogether. Instrument plays in tune when pushed out of its sweet spot producing a shrill quality. Sucks a fair amount of air out of the player producing shortened phrasing. An ear ringer	Well tuned lower register. Upper register is another story. Eb ⁵ can sound 1/2 flat but can be fixed with alternate fingering. G# ⁵ , A ⁵ are 1/4 sharp but can be played in tune by someone with a good ear. Forget C ⁵ . Rank = 14	Articulates well. Upper register tends to choke. Plays well for an octave and 1/2. Otherwise fast and easy.	Some	Good, for a while	Very good	√ FM works but tone quality does not. More successful in CM, DM, Em as long as the condensation does not choke off the sound. Close enough for jazz.	√ Beautiful baroque look	Plastic zipper case, cleaning rod, fingering chart	Attractive looking finish, good physical feel	Voicing Unable to play 2 octaves. Tone quality deteriorates the more you play it, especially going up the range	Looks aren't everything. Fix the voicing. Worse 3 piece entry. XX	0
NUVO Recorder +	\$15.00	Contemporary white/red,blue,green keys and black/red,blue,green, black keys	2 piece ABS with rubber rings on the foot joint, green/blue/red band and silicon keys on all holes. Right handed players only. Conical 7-12mm.	c ⁴ -a ⁵ . Removable plugs for low C#, Eb	Straight	x Below average. Shriill and flat	xx Bad. Flat from g ⁴ on up. Rank = 1	Good	x	Good	Very good	x limited to the lower register. Cannot play serious repertory	Excellent √. Excellent exterior, poorly designed interior	Sturdy black plastic instrument case with open hole and identity tag. Excellent fingering chart	Silicon keys for easy right hand playing, adjustable thumb rest, reward rings dynamic styling beautifully designed easy-to-read fingering chart, removable plugs for C# & Eb.	Out of tune poor sound quality, cannot play a 2 octave range, price	Designed for beginners, especially those with physical or learning disabilities it is pleasing to the eye rather than the ear. Silicon pads are very close to the holes which may lower pitch. Could be used as a training instrument for the lower right hand. XXXX	-2
Trophy Flutophone.	\$3.00	1940s, black- or red with white colored trim	2 piece open-ended, ABS and double hole. For right handers only. Conical 4-23mm with flared bell (46mm) diatonic fingering.	1 octave (9th)	Straight	Good, chifty	Groundtone C ⁴ is sharp. Head joint must be pulled out 1mm so instrument can play in tune. However, instrument is not in tune with itself. Different notes require different breath pressures. Advertised as a "full chromatic scale" can be achieved by a combination of cross fingerings and different breath pressures on Eb ⁴ , F# ⁴ , G# ⁴ , Bb ⁴ . There is no C# ⁴ , D ⁴ is very flat and some notes above it exist by alternate fingerings or not at all like C# ⁴ . No fingering chart means a lot of guesswork as how to play pitches in the lower and upper octave. More successful in the lower octave. Upper octave is mostly guesswork. Rank = 6	Delightful chaffy sound. Not as fast as most recorders, but good response.	None	Pinkeys are recommended when playing c ⁴ , d ⁴ . Raised holes are effective. Permanent thumb rest can either be a an aide or hindrance.	Good	X Can't play the repertory tested. You'll have to find your own music	Shoddy outside and inside. Seams show everywhere	x None. Note even a fingering chart. Box is your instrument case	Funky sound and look. Can be useful great chaffy articulation. Sounds closer to an ocarina making it unique in its sound, raised holes. Easy response	Bad intonation. Overall dimensions are off. Poor quality. Loses tone quality the higher you go. Cannot play beyond the octave. Limited repertory. Below average craftsmanship	Has a unique sound, so don't write it off. Lots of problems keep it from playing in tune. Cannot compete with the new models on the block. However, it's fun to play and can be effective in the hands of a professional. Not recommended for student education as it introduces kids to bad intonation habits. Needs a serious update. XX	-14

PLASTIC SOPRANO RECORDER SURVEY

BRAND NAME	PRICE	STYLE	CONSTRUCTION	RANGE	WINDWAY	STONE QUALITY	INTONATION	RESPONSE	STONE EXPANSION	EASE OF PLAYING	PHYSICAL FEEL	VERSATILITY	CRAFTSMANSHIP	ACCESSORIES	PROS	CONS	COMMENTS	SCORE
Trophy Tudor TD185 	\$3.50-4.25	Baroque with ivory color trim	2 piece, ABS with double holes. Right handed players only. Conical 8-12mm.	2 octaves +	Crooked	Open. Slightly out of focus, whipsy sound. Long phrasing is possible at the expense of tone quality. D ^m especially can grate on the ear	Jeckle & Hyde. While the Jeckle lower register is doable and mostly in tune, the Hyde comes out in the upper register producing tones that have to be pushed outside or held back creating an edgy intonation minefield. Rank = 4	√ Very good, fast	None	√. If you ignore the intonation issues, it's easy to get around the notes	Good	√ Cannot play the serious repertory because of the intonation and tone quality produced in the upper register. DM & Em are bad keys. Stick to repertory in the lower register.	Nice appearance on the outside, poor on the inside	Plastic case, cleaning rod, fingering instructions	Good response, nice outside appearance	Intonation issues, flat upper octave, tone quality, difficulty in the 3rd harmonic, cheap plastic case, price	Not for professional use. Tone quality and uneven intonation in the registers make for a difficult instrument to love. In need of a serious makeover.	-17
MPI Prelude #211204B. 	\$1.85	Baroque ebony color	1 piece, ABS with double holes. For right handers only. Conical bore ends at 6mm.	2 octaves +	Curved & straight	Light, Very good	xx One piece construction prevents instrument from playing in tune. Overall sharp. Some notes are up to a 1/4-1/2 step above pitch. Sharp in the lower octave. Way sharp in the upper. Some notes can be remedied by finding alternate fingerings not illustrated in the fingering chart like F [#] , G [#] , Bb [#] and C ^m . Upper register is a lost cause. Notes D ^m , Eb ^m , E ^m , G ^m , B ^m & C ^m play a half step too high. Rank = -14	Super fast. Pinpoint articulation.	A little	√ Excellent	Good and light	√√. Bad intonation forces it to play below its sweet spot into a shy tone. Had it been in tune it would have met all requirements for versatility. Manageable keys are CM & GM, problematic keys are FM, AM & Em. Below professional standards.	Acceptable appearance outside, questionable windway execution, however voices well. Questionable interior construction.	Cleaning rod, plastic bag, fingering chart	Light and fast response, very easy to play. Good tone, price	Plastic carrying case can create bacteria buildup. Instrument plays too sharp for serious playing. One piece construction. Not for left handed players.	Another 1 piece casualty. Great tone quality and response are undermined by major intonation problems. Not for professional use or ensemble playing. Needs to be in 3 pieces with major intonation fixes. Students can find something better. Not junk but all those sharp notes and their alternative fingerings not listed on the fingering chart will stop you from playing well. X	-20
Harmony HR-304P 	\$4.00	20th century translucent purple with gold ring	2 piece, ABS with double holes. Right handed players only. Conical 7-12mm.	2 octaves +. High C ^m is problematic can be obtained by slurring up from B ^m , or pushing the envelope when instrument is warmed up.	Slightly curved	Medium. Below average tone quality. Slightly edgy throughout. D ^m sticks out from the other lower register notes. That D ^m 's tone quality reappears in the upper register at G ^m . A ^m can get stuffy. C ^m is hit or miss.	x Poor: Instrument is in tune with itself in the lower register. Unfortunately flat in the lower register from C ^m -F [#] . Instrument not always in tune with itself in the upper register and has to be pushed to avoid being flat. Rank = 3	Very good	Some	Good	Good	√√ FM is possible but has to be pushed in the upper register which decreases tone quality. Lower register starting at g ^m has to be pushed to the breaking point to play in tune. GM is more successful, Am less so. Not all the notes line up. Works in CM. Can play jazz. DM has a breaking D ^m and a flat A ^m to deal with. Em suffers from the A ^m as well.	Ok, very sturdy. Aesthetically pleasing design	Clear plastic case, cleaning rod, fingering instructions	Beautiful sturdy purple design. Good response	Edgy poor tone quality varies and hard to play a full two octaves, cheap plastic case	Good response cancelled by poor tone quality and bad intonation make this instrument hard to love. Fix the voicing and intonation. X	-22
Dollar Recorder 	\$1.00	Translucent colors red blue green orange	1 Piece, Abs. For right handers only. Cylindrical bore 10mm with flared bell (17mm).	1 octave + 5th	Straight	x Breathly and unfocused	xx Poor: Flat notes c,d,e,f,g Ranking unnecessary	Difficult to play even for a professional	None	Difficult	Good	x	x Windway is too large to obtain a reasonable tone. Visually an eyesore	None		Too numerous to mention	Save your dollar XXXXXXXX	-26

Notes: 1. Ivory = white plastic
 2. Dimensions read from the bell of the instrument to the top. Example 7-12mm means the bottom of the foot joint (bell) is smaller than the end of the middle joint that joins with the head joint