

PICCOLO Pointers
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Pitched in C or Db, the piccolo is the smallest member of the flute family serving as an extension to the flute range.

The range is from D5, 4th line on the staff, to C8 three octaves higher, sounding an octave higher than written.

Piccolos are made of various materials, including wood (professional models), plastic or metal. Most piccolos are conical bore. Cylindrical piccolos are best for beginners (metal Emersons and Jupiters). Keep a look out for old Haynes cylindrical piccolos. Burkart, Keefe, Haynes, and Powell are fine professional brands. Gemeinhart, Weisman and Yamaha make fine student level piccolos.

When purchasing a piccolo, check the highest B fingering to make sure it is playable. Experiment with the RH pinkie if the note doesn't come out. (True for other high register notes as well).

Play it like a little flute with a faster, narrower vibrato, appropriate for its range. Place the piccolo higher on the lip. Remember to place the flute lower on the lip when returning to the flute. Use breath as if playing the flute, don't pinch with lips.

Pitch is a sensitive issue for piccolo players. Every instrument has different tendencies which usually are different for those of the flute. Experiment with alternate fingerings. There are many fine piccolo fingering charts available. (Burkart, Krell, Tanzer)

Piccolo players should be encouraged to warm down on the flute after playing the piccolo for any substantial amount of time.

Students with an excellent ear for pitch, more narrow lips who are risk takers make fine piccolo players, although any fine flute player is a candidate!

Use slow movements of baroque sonatas, the Maquarre Daily Studies, Drouet etudes, and adapt other fine flute methods for the piccolo. Check out the Tulou Piccolo Method and Learning to Play the Piccolo by Clement Barone. Use the Wellbaum Orchestral Excerpts and the Patricia Morris Piccolo Excerpts Books.

Marching Band tip: keep a plastic baggie handy for rain protection.