

Historical Instruments of Musick

CURTAL FINGERING CHART

BASS

	C	C [#]	D	E ^b	E	F	F [#]	G	A ^b	A	B ^b	B	c	c [#]	d	e ^b	e	f	f [#]	g	a ^b	a	b ^b	b	c'	c [#] '	d'	e ^b '	e'	f'	g'	
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Front key	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	••	•	•	••	•	••	•	•	•	••	••	•	••	•	•	•	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	•
Back key	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	••	•	•	••	•	••	•	•	•	••	••	•	••	•	•	•	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	•
R. thumb	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	••	•	•	••	•	••	•	•	•	••	••	•	••	•	•	•	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	•
L. thumb	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	••	•	•	••	•	••	•	•	•	••	••	•	••	•	•	•	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	•

Alternative fingerings may be found by experiment.

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CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE CURTAL

During the first few months, do not play the instrument for more than about 15 minutes at a time. This period can be lengthened gradually. After playing, allow it to dry out thoroughly before putting it in a closed case. Keep it away from direct heat and protect it against central heating or a very dry atmosphere.

The bore has been lightly sealed and oiled, and will benefit from an occasional wipe with a light vegetable oil (e.g. almond, peanut, "recorder bore oil"). Once every few months should be sufficient. The procedure is as follows: When the instrument is dry, insert a long wooden rod (max. diameter 18 mm) from the bell end and tap out the plug/brass plate at the butt. Tie a piece of cloth firmly to the rod, and use this to swab the wide bore with oil. Use a thinner rod for the narrow bore. Grease the cork on the plug with Vaseline or cork grease and replace it.

The crook may be cleaned with a crook cleaning brush (available from most music shops). The hole in the crook facilitates the high notes but may be closed (e.g. with tape, glue or wax) if not required. Keep the cork well greased.

Key covers may be removed by gently squeezing them, so that they spring away from the mounting nails. This should be done as seldom as possible. All brasswork may be cleaned with brass polish.

Bass curtal No. 16 HJ

This instrument has an outside finish of linseed oil

It may be maintained in good condition by wiping with linseed oil (raw)

The reeds supplied with this instrument are Green: by H.M. St Albans
white: by Adams,

They have been adjusted for and tested on this instrument. Soak them well before playing. (A few minutes of total immersion in luke-warm water is best). Sound production on the curtal is the same as for the bassoon. The development of a good embouchure and correct blowing technique is essential, and comes only with frequent and regular practice. A few lessons on double reed playing from a bassoonist will be very valuable for a beginner.