Shawms by John Hanchet

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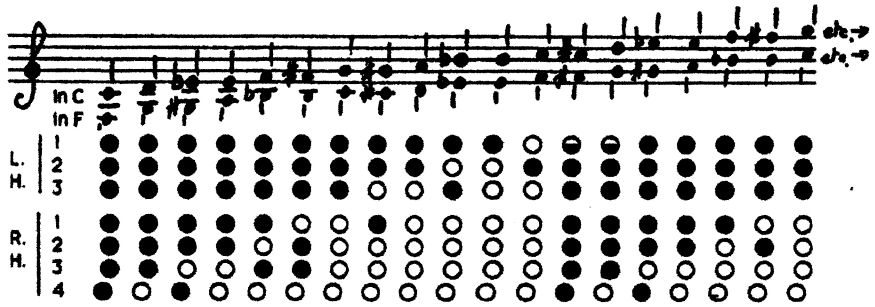
Fingering Chart and Notes

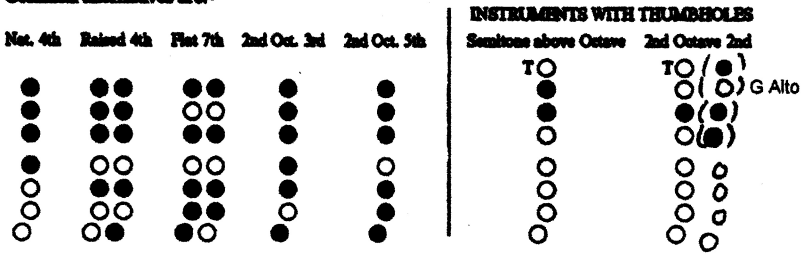
Basic Fingerings for F & C Instruments



Alternative Fingerings

The usual alternative fingerings may, of course, be experimented with and some reeds and instruments render their use essential.

Common alternatives are:-



N.B. a) The 2nd. 8ve. 2nd. (the 9th.) is often sensitive to how much hole 1 is 'leaked'.
b) The minor 3rd. is often a 'difficult' note requiring 'lipping'.

Thumb Holes

Renaissance shawms do not have thumb holes. There are no surviving Mediaeval Shawms but many folk and oriental shawms (out of which our tradition grew) do have them. I have seen no paintings or sculptures etc. showing the back of the shawm and I therefore provide a thumb hole on the Early Shawms only. It is very convenient to be able to use Renaiss. Recorder fingerings in mid range but if you choose not to do so the standard, late Renaiss. Shawm fingerings can still be used, or the thumb hole filled with wax.

The Pirouette

The pirouette is directly involved in the formation of a suitable embouchure. Contact with the reed at the right part of the heart will aid control without deadening the sound. I make two part pirouettes and believe that this gives my shawms certain important advantages and the old problem of having to put the reed on by holding the blades is fully taken away. The pirouette helps with so many problems, for 'shawming' is hard work, particularly with the smaller sizes. All those red cheeks and strained faces in the contemporary artwork mean something.

Reeds

These are still the nerve centre of the instrument, but problems with shawm reeds are not as great as in former years. I feel a duty to have reeds available for players of my instruments who won't or can't make their own. Please see my catalogue for details.