

Applications of Alternate Fingerings in the Alto Flute

by Mariana Gariazzo

Alternate fingerings in the alto can offer several solutions to:

Tough passages: We can select special fingerings (partials) to facilitate difficult passages in a piece. (Play a fast G scale)

Optimize Response: We use them to make a note sound better, have better response, improve articulation, and reduce the chances of cracking the note.

Trills: We use to facilitate trills. (E to F#, Ab to Bb – leave pinky down)

Tremolos: They are surely used for tremolos, to facilitate the rapid change between two distant pitches. (Eb and Gb – leave index down)

Color changes: in contemporary music, composers employ alternate fingerings to explore a wide palette of colors. (G fingering + Off Thumb + 123 RH ad libitum)

Color trills or *bisbigliando*: is a tremolo between different fingerings of the same pitch, often referred to as a timbral (color) trill. Provides a fast and shimmering change of color.

Intonation: alternate fingering must be used to correct intonation on the third register. *The Alto Flute Method* by Christine Potter provides an extensive list of alternate fingerings for the alto and bass flutes.

67 regular fingering This F tends to crack. Add the trill key to stabilize it. If this C is sharp, try these fingerings.

Recommended tuner: *Total Energy*
<https://www.tonalenergy.com/>

shadowspot by Marty Regan (2016)

Response: Use trill keys to enhance the response of E and F in the middle register.

27

sfz *mf*

30

ff *pp sub.* *poco*

Eight Preludes for alto flute or bass by Daniel Kressner (2015)

[Harmonics](#)

V - Scherzando armonico

Andantino, $\text{♩} = 48 - 52 \text{ ca.}$

mp

Nakoda by Ellen Lindquist (2002)

[Color changes](#)

gl. (TP) vib. H.T. rall.
p *mp* *n* *sf mf* senza vib.
p G#

sound produced by air (approximate):

what your fingers are doing: *accel.* *bisbigliando* (color trill) *subito*
pp (increase air to produce overtones) *sffz* *sff* *molto rit.*
 finger movement becomes faster, random and more intense--gradually use all fingers
 lift thumb; continue to use random fingers in a flurry
 (repeat) *n*

Desert Song by Philippe Hersant (2010)

Microtones

9

11

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63

p *mf* *pp* *bisbigliando* *)