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Althorn

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Althorn

(Ger.).

A brass instrument. Usually in E \flat , a 5th below the cornet, with bugle-like bore, it is classified as a trumpet. It is used in brass bands in Germany, Switzerland and eastern Europe to fill the alto register and supply off-beats. It is made in various shapes: 'trumpet-form', with bell to the front; 'tuba-form', upright (see [illustration](#)); and 'oval-form', which is the upright oval shape first seen in instruments of the early 1850s by Červený and is today the favourite form. The circular 'Waldhorn-form' is rarer. The mouthpiece is a deep funnel, wider than that of an orchestral horn. Few details are known of the early althorn, which W.F. Wieprecht was testing in Berlin in 1837 as an alternative to an earlier 'Alt-Kornett'. An early upright example by Moritz, Berlin, is in the Städtisches Sammlung, Munich.



Althorn in C (high pitch) by John Köhler, London, c1840 (Spencer Collection, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery) Royal Pavilion, Libraries and Museums, Brighton and Hove

In Britain around 1845 the lists of Distin and other makers and importers give 'Alt Horn' as an instrument pitched a 4th lower in B \flat , at first with the form of a [CLAVICOR](#), then of a baritone saxhorn (see [BARITONE \(II\)](#)). Mandel's *Treatise on the Instrumentation of Military Bands* (c1859) refers to the 'tenor horn or baryton (Alt horn in B \flat)'. Contemporary military band journals allot it a solo part, which later in the century was renamed 'B \flat Baritone' and performed on that instrument.

In Germany the term 'althorn' refers to the [TENOR HORN](#).

Bibliography

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