

# Oxford Music Online

Grove Music Online

## Clavicorn

article url: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/05910>

### Clavicorn.

A valved brasswind instrument of tenor pitch invented in Paris by Danays in 1837 and made by the firm of Guichard (see [illustration](#)). It was built in various pitches from from 6½' E♭ down to 9' B♭; a smaller instrument, the *néocor* (pitched in 6' F with crooks for lower tonalities), was seen as a member of a family comprising *cornet à pistons*, *néocor* and clavicorn, undermining the claim of Adolphe Sax to have been the first to introduce a homologous brasswind family. The clavicorn, also sometimes known as the **ALTHORN**, had three valves, two of them operated by the right hand and one by the left, but from about 1840 all three were operated by the right hand. Its bore was narrow compared with modern saxhorns; the instrument was held up vertically in front of the performer.



Clavicorn in C by Guichard, Paris, after 1838 (Horniman Museum, London)  
Horniman Museum, London

The clavicorn provided a tenor voice in bands. Although its active life ceased long before the turn of the century, since it was supplanted by the E♭ tenor horn, it was commemorated for some considerable time in Italian military-band nomenclature, in which the E♭ tenor horn part used to be called *clavicorno in mi♭*. In England clavicons were made by Pace, and a part for 'E♭ clavicorn solo' is included in some brass-band journals issued in the 1850s.

## Bibliography

M.A. Soyer: 'Des instruments à vent', *EMDC*, II/iii (1927) [incl. drawings of a family of clavicons]

**Anthony C. Baines/Arnold Myers**

Copyright © Oxford University Press 2007 — 2009.