

The instrument has a tendency for a slow response, which can be appropriated easily with a solid player. This somewhat sluggish response, in my opinion, can be quite charming and effective, if used and manipulated correctly. To maximize the tonal response of the tube, Jelle has designed high guide rails that are set to each side of the embouchure hole. Your lips are never very close to the tone opening, so once again the possibilities are endless, though your air supply is not! Through experimentation and persistence, one can produce a superb buzz on the tone, seriously comparable to a double string bass. I have been practicing the opening of Mahler One, third movement, and I am absolutely convinced with the correct air supply, you will sound just like a double bass. Try it, you will hear.

As an ensemble instrument, its vibrating power and tonal gravity (if you will), have the ability to make all the flutes in the ensemble sit up, and let's face that cannot be a bad thing. When a skilled player starts pumping out those fundamentals, all take notice, and the ensemble tuning improves by say 50-70 percent in my opinion. That is a pretty good statistic to go on. Though not many works have been composed to support this giant in an ensemble setting, a handful have and even Jelle himself has made a few fine arrangements which include all the low flutes. Also check fluteworld.com, under flute ensemble compositions.

As a solo instrument it is excellent for the rock or jazz styles, and is equipped with a strong pick-up microphone for amplification. It is up to the player to work out the tonguing, because it can be done, it just takes practice and a bit of rethinking. Work the diaphragm in coordination with the point of the tongue, and you will notice an enormous accurate sound that can be substituted for any guitar or baritone saxophone solo. The instrument can also greatly supplement motet arrangements, and adds a new texture to most four part settings, whether it be hymns or flute quartets. Complete with minor problems the key noise can be rather distracting for a recording or live performance though is hidden within the flute choir or popular band sonority. I have struggled a bit with the tuning and will experiment more with the length of the head piece. The best part is, it is plastic, so you could take out a bit of sand paper and begin to whittle like an oboist. Take care if you do, and phone Jelle first! Key response is a bit slow, but this takes a bit of time to retrain the fingers to advance before the sound. The fine open-ring type keys make this process more bearable.

I must admit though, it is the enormous quantities of air that are required to complete a musical phrase that thrill me the most. I have had to re-negotiate how my air supply works and how I can expand it further. This is excellent for a flute player of some 20 plus years! I mean it. Never mind bag and tube apparatus for breathing practice, get one of Jelle's instruments and your personal breathing mechanism will change overnight. The end result of sound that follows these breaths are more than worth the effort. This process of reworking air capacity, has greatly improved my Contrabass flute playing, and that instrument now feels like an alto flute. Size does matter, imagine that!

I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know my Sub-Contra bass flute and highly recommend its sound to those interested in the low flutes. An obvious must for the serious Flute Choir, this instrument can produce tones that would excite and inspire any capable ensemble, conductor or audience. I posted sound samples listed on my website: Lowflutes.com, under the heading music, so you can decide for yourself. Thanks Jelle for your marvellous invention of sonic tubing, you have changed my understanding of the term Low Flute!