

Concert Pitch Through the Ages

In modern times, just before the concert begins, the oboist or keyboard player usually plays an "A" to which all other musicians tune their instruments. It's easy to take our modern, standardized concert "A" pitch for granted, but as you can see from this chart, things were not always so uniform. (*Listings are in ascending order of pitch*)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Authority</i>
1648	403	M. Mersenne: spinet
1762	408	J. Mattheson
1740	415	G. Silberman: tuning fork
1751	423	G. Fr. Handel: tuning fork
1619	424	M. Praetorius: 'church pitch'
1823	428	Opera Comique, Paris
1880	432	Italian Congress, Milan
1859	435	French Government Commission Standard Pitch
1885	435	Vienna. International Conference Standard Pitch
1939	440	Official U.S. American Federation of Music Pitch
1834	440	J.H. Scheibler, Stuttgart
1878	447	Vienna Opera
1879	452	British Army
1874	455	Old Philharmonic Pitch, London
1859	456	Viennese 'high pitch'
1880	460	Old Austrian Military Pitch
<i>Special Standards</i>		
1511	504	A Schlick 'high pitch'
1636	504	M. Mersene 'church pitch'
1636	563	M. Mersenne 'chamber pitch'
1619	567	M. Praetorius 'church pitch'

Source: *MANUAL OF GUITAR TECHNOLOGY, The history and Technology of Plucked Instruments* by Franz Jahnel.

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Pitches determined from old organs and tuning forks.