

In the Baroque Era, pitch levels as high as A-465 (17th century Venice) and as low as A-392 (18th century France) are known to have existed. A few generalizations can be made:

- pitch was high in North Germany and lower in South Germany
- pitch was low in Rome but high in Venice
- pitch in France depended on whether you were playing chamber music, opera or something else.

One of the pitches used during the baroque period was A-415. Since 415 hz. is about a half-step below the modern standard of A-440, the pitch of A-415 was seized on as a convenient modern “baroque pitch” standard, because in the early days of the historical performance movement a harpsichord would sometimes play with groups at A-440 and sometimes at a lower pitch, and if the difference in pitch is a half-step, the keyboard could be made so that it slides over one string so that the A key played a string tuned to 440 hz. in one position and a string tuned to 415 hz. in the other position.

“So when you play baroque music, you tune to a G-sharp,” some people say at this point. Not so! We tune to an A, but we define the A differently depending on what kind of music we’re going to play. A baroque violinist may carry 4 different tuning forks (or one handy iPhone app), and a baroque flutist probably owns two or three different flutes at different pitches.

<http://pbosf.blogspot.com/2010/01/story-of-more-about-baroque-pitch.html>