

Simple  
Instructions  
and  
Songs  
for  
Bamboo Flute

*By Rod & Ginger Baird*

## History

The bamboo flute is one of mankind's oldest musical instruments. All cultures have developed some form of the flute. Where cane reeds, or bamboo were not present, wood was hollowed out or clay or bone was used. The simple construction and beautiful tones of the wooden flute have fascinated people throughout the ages.

In Europe after the dark ages, the flute took the form of a six-holed wooden instrument of various sizes and pitches. They resemble the flutes that I make. Later, during the eighteenth century, additional holes and keys were added, resulting in the modern flute.

The reason for the additions was to facilitate the playing of the chromatic scale. The music of the times was becoming more complex. Musicians could play the new music with the older instruments. However, it was fashionable for every educated person to play an instrument. Flutemakers responded by making flutes that played the sharps and flats of the Baroque music with greater ease.

I believe that the six-holed flute is a better beginner's flute. It helps the student to learn how a flute actually works. The open holed flute is quite capable of playing the most complex music and of challenging even a master musician.

## Care of your Flute

Your flute has been treated with hot sesame seed oil. This keeps it from cracking if you get a little saliva into the blow hole. However excessive moisture is not good.

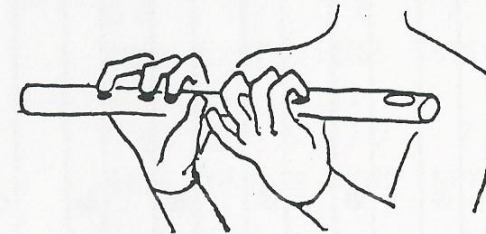
One of the worst enemies of your flute is heat! Every time it gets really hot (leaving it in the window of your car on a summer day) some of the oil will come out. If this happens don't wipe it off! Let the flute cool down and some of the oil will be reabsorbed.

It is easy to make a case for your flute. Basically your flute likes conditions much the same as we do, not too hot or cold and not too wet. We use clothes to stay comfortable and a case serves the same purpose for your flute. It can be as simple as a large sock slipped over and knotted at the end or as elaborate as you can imagine. It gives you the opportunity to put some of your creativity into the flute .

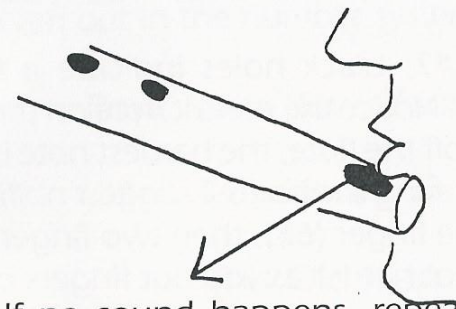
I sign each one of the flutes near the blow hole. It looks somewhat like an arrow and is on the side that you blow from. It is also a mark of fine craftsmanship. If you take care of your flute it will repay you with years of enjoyment.

## Hands and Lips

The flute extends out to your right. The hand position is as below. Notice the hands are not on the same side of the flute.

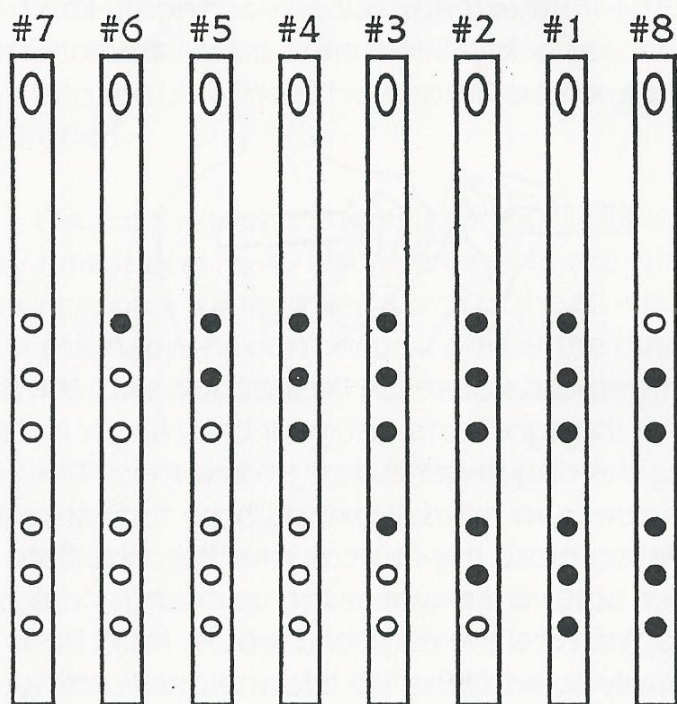


If you can not reach the last hole with the third finger of the right hand, use your baby finger instead, leaving the ring finger to rest on the space between the bottom two holes. Next, with no fingers on the flute holes, place the flute to your lips. The flute sits on your bottom lip, where the lip changes color, so that you can feel the edge of the blow hole. Press the flute firmly against your Up. Now, blow directly out...



If no sound happens, repeat the procedure, only as you blow tip the flute in or out slowly until you get a sound. This is similar to blowing across a bottle and getting a "toot".

## Fingering



Start with #7, black holes indicate a finger covering the hole. Notice the easiest note on the flute is with all fingers off the flute, the hardest note is with all the fingers covering the holes. I suggest no fingers (#7) first, then one finger (6#), then two fingers (#5) etc. Blow softer not harder as you put fingers on the holes. Also make -sure each finger covers the hole completely. To get (#8) high "do" the fingers cover all the holes except the top one.

## Learning to Play Songs

7 6 5 6 7 7 7  
Mary had a little lamb.

6 6 6 7 7 7  
little lamb, little lamb.

7 6 5 6 7 7 7  
Mary had a little lamb.

7 6 6 7 6 5  
Whose fleece was white as snow.

The numbers above the words are the fingering positions for the flute. See the chart on the previous page. If you wish to read regular staff notation then read #1 as C, #2 as D, #3 as E, #4 as F, #5 as G, #6 as A, #7 as B and #8 as high C. The following song is written out in the number system for simplicity.

### Row, Row, Row, Your Boat

11 123 32345 88 55 33 11 54321

### This Old Man

535 535 6543234 34 51 123 32345

5224321

### Doe A Deer

123 1313 2344324 345 3535 4566546  
5 123456 6 234567 7 345678  
77 6 4 7 5 8

### Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

11 55 66 5 44 33 22 1  
55 44 33 2 55 44 33 2  
11 55 66 5 44 33 22 1

### Are You Sleeping?

1231 1231 345 345 565431  
565431 151 151

### Jingle Bells

333 333 35123  
444 44 33 333 22 325  
333 333 35123  
444 4433 33 55421

### Joy To The World

8765 4321 56 67 78  
88765543 88765543  
333345 43 22234  
3218 6543 4321

### Kum Ba Yah

135 55 665 135 55 432  
135 55 665 443 1 221

### Scotland The Brave

11 23 135 88 88531  
4 6 43531 2 5 65432  
11 23 135 88 88531  
4 643531 21 21

### Sweet Hour of Prayer

1345 5678 6533213 42  
1345 5678 6533213 21

## Amazing Grace

14 646 5 4 2 1  
 14 646 5 8 686864  
 1 2 44 21 14 646 5 4

## Ode to Joy

3345 54321 11 233 22  
 33 45 5432 11 232 11  
 22 31 23431 234321 52  
 33 45 5432 11 232 11

## Brahm's Lullaby

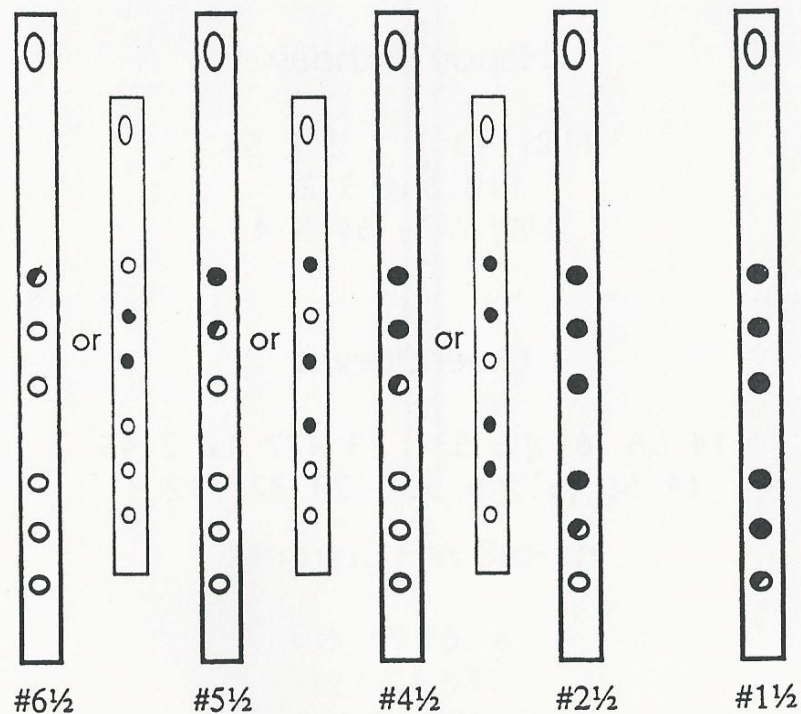
113 113 1387 665 2342 234  
 24 76578 11 8 645 3145 65  
 11 8 645 314321

## When The Saints Go Marching In

1345 1345 1345 3 132  
 3321 13554 665 3 221

## The Half Note

In some songs a half note is needed. The half note is a note between two whole notes. The half notes would be the black notes on a piano. Below are the fingerings for these half notes. Your finger covers half the hole indicated.



## Songs With Half Notes

### Yankee Doodle Dandy

4456 465 4456 4 3  
4456 (6<sup>1/2</sup>) 6543  
12344

### Happy Birthday

1121 43 1 1 2 1 54  
118 6 4 3 2  
(6<sup>1/2</sup>) (6<sup>1/2</sup>) 64 5 4

### Greensleeves

14 56 (6<sup>1/2</sup>) 6 531 23 422 12 3 45  
14 56 (6<sup>1/2</sup>) 6 53 1 23 322 12 1

## Upper Octave

Eventually you will want to have use of the upper octave. In order to get the high notes you blow harder and make your lips tighter. This takes time and lip control so don't rush it. The fingering is the same as in the lower octave. Begin with #9 and proceed up the scale.

#9



### Morning Has Broken

135 8 9 765 6 5  
123 5 6 5312  
535 8 6 5311 2  
323 5 6 2321

The method of using numbers equated with finger positions is called 'tablature'. Our bamboo flutes finger the same as the Irish Tin Whistle (penny whistle). Books are available for the Tin Whistle in tablature form at most major music stores.

It is beyond the scope of this book to teach standard musical notation. However, learning to read music opens up an unlimited variety of songs.

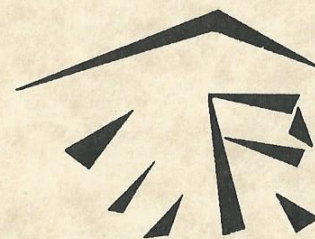
Perhaps the greatest personal satisfaction may be had by playing 'by ear'. The reward of playing a song all the way through after working each part out slowly from memory is well worth the time.

Take your time learning. I recommend learning by yourself. Later you can surprise your friends with a beautiful tune.

Good Luck!

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