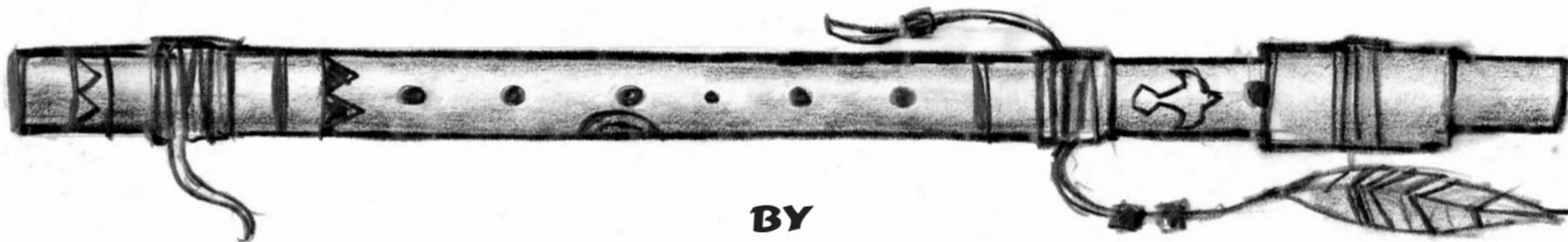


THE SOUND OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN FLUTE: A SELF INSTRUCTION MANUAL



**BY
HAL KACANEK**



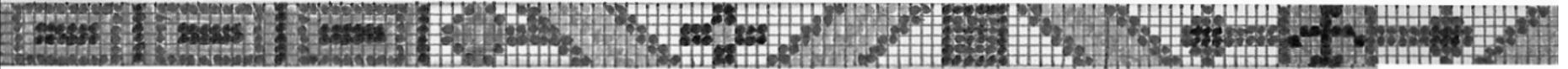
The Sounds We Make

Here is an opportunity for you to explore a unique instrument that produces the warm heartfelt sound that has come to be identified with the spiritual and cultural ethos of the Native American Indian.

According to various legends the flute was given to the Indian people by the Creator for enjoyment, to ease loneliness and for courting. To attract a special woman's interest, a man might play the flute near where she lived. If she was interested in him, she would come outside and sit next to him as he played; thus the origin of the name "courting flute" or "love flute."

Indians neither wrote nor learned music from written manuscript. In much the same way we learned our primary language and songs, native peoples listened, learned and played what they heard. Oral traditions develop great memories and excellent listening skills. It would be good for you to learn the tunes in this book that traditional way too, but then, you would have no need for this book.

Six traditional American folk and six native songs from a variety of Indian tribes are included in this manual. Most of you know and can probably sing the simple folk songs but chances are you may not know the tribal songs. I have included various written devices to help you with the songs. In addition I have produced a supplemental CD that includes my performing each of the tunes in this book. The rhythmic notation will give

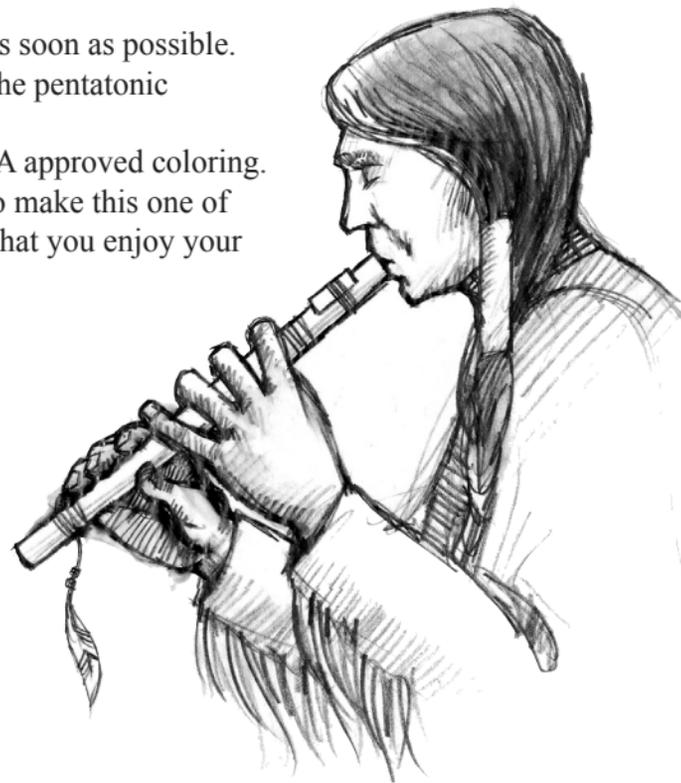


you a sense of the musical phrases and relative lengths of notes. Try to get away from the notation as soon as possible. Focus your attention on producing the sounds as if you were singing them. Best of all, if you learn the pentatonic fingerings on the fingering chart by memory, you will easily be able to make up your own songs.

The flute that accompanies this manual is made of medical grade ABS plastic (not PVC) with FDA approved coloring. I personally oversee the production of each flute and continue to make changes as I feel necessary to make this one of the best musical values on the market. I am interested in your success with this manual and I hope that you enjoy your journey with this flute as much as I have enjoyed the experience of developing it for you.

Do all flutes sound the same?

Not all flutes look or sound the same. They didn't need to because flutes were used exclusively as solo instruments. The size of the instrument and distances between the holes were approximated and songs played on one flute would sound differently played on another. The test of a good flute in the early days was if the player felt he could play something pleasing on it. One of today's great performers and proponent of the Native American Flute, Douglas Spotted Eagle, told me that some flute makers based the length of a flute and distance between holes on finger and



hand widths. Even the number of holes varied from flute to flute. Spacing the distance between holes about a finger's width roughly conforms to a set of pitches that sounds like playing only the black keys on the piano or a pentatonic scale. Your flute is capable of producing all 12 notes of the chromatic scale (see fingering chart on page 12) but covering all the holes and lifting the fingers up in succession from the lowest to highest (keep the little hole covered) will produce a "C" pentatonic scale that starts on "A" and ends on "a."

What about pitch notation?

This manual uses sketches of the flute called icons to indicate pitch. The only place where pitch is indicated using traditional notation is on the fingering chart. The chart shows only some of the various fingerings that allow you to play all 12 notes of a chromatic scale. Experiment and you will be rewarded with alternative fingerings that may take you "beyond the charts."

How do you produce a sound?

It is simple to produce a sound on this flute. Just blow into it. Purse your lips inside the flute not around it. Take in a relaxed breath through your mouth and release it gently through your pursed lips. Eventually you produce a nice sound if you practice a little each day. Sound is really the most important part of all music of any culture. The three parts of the flute that effect the sound most include 1) the body of the flute especially the shaping of the tone hole 2) the clip-on block that contains the air channel that directs air to the tone hole and 3) YOU. The way you control the passage of air through the flute is most important. That takes practice. Practicing is the journey that allows you to experiment and explore.

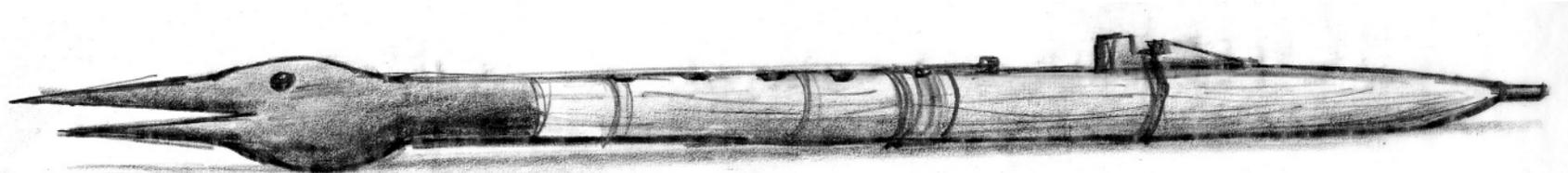
Ultimately you will decide how much air it takes and what you must do with it in order to produce a beautiful sound.

The moisture problem.

Moisture from your breath will condense in the air channel between the air hole and the sound hole. This happens frequently and even more frequently if the flute is cold. To quickly remove moisture, partially cover the sound hole with your finger and blow vigorously. You may also wipe the moisture from the underside of the block and from the flute with a tissue. Replace and readjust the block so that Kokopelli's feet are dancing just above the edge of the sound hole. The flute block conveniently clips back onto the body of your flute. Moisture that collects inside the flute can be removed by grasping the bottom of the flute and shaking it vigorously, directing the head of the flute in a downward direction.

Focus on the beauty of the sound.

Blow into the flute. Find out how much air is needed to produce a loud sound..now a soft quiet sound..now a full sound. The lowest sound with all fingers down is the most difficult to produce. In order to use the sound to express feeling you will need to know how much air is required to get louder and softer. Children who play this flute may find that they are constantly blowing a little too hard. If that is the case you can adjust the clip slightly further away from the sound hole to avoid annoying harmonics. The sound will be airier but will accommodate a stronger air stream.



Decorating your flute

Native American flutes are typically made out of anything that is hollow such as bamboo or river cane found near swamps or anything that can be hollowed or carved out such as wood. One of the flutes displayed at the Wisconsin Museum of Natural History in Madison, Wisconsin, is made from a rifle barrel! Cedar is the preferred wood. Flutes can be plain or decorated with various symbols such as feathers, beads, skins and sinew added in bands around the body. Ornatly carved wooden flutes have woodpecker or loon figures carved out of the front. They refer to creation myths associated with this instrument. By adding your creative energies to painting and decorating the flute it quite mystically becomes part of you. The flute thus takes on a quality that expresses something about you and is visually interesting to others. That is one of the functions of art in many cultures.

Preface to lessons 1 through 7.

Lessons 1 through 7 are as much about pentatonic scale fingerings as they are about learning how to play the flute. When you make up songs on your own use the pentatonic fingerings and you will have an outstanding creative experience. There are only 6 fingerings for you to learn. Good luck.

Lesson 1. Your first sound.

Grip the flute with both hands. Cover the smallest hole with your left hand ring finger. Do not cover any other holes. Purse your lips as if you were about to blow into a straw. Do not wrap your lips around the outside of the flute. Bring the flute to your lips so that it creates a relaxed seal with our lips just inside the opening. Gently release the air. The air travels up through the air hole, through the air channel, then goes across the sound hole. The air going across the sound hole activates the column of air inside the flute, and that produces the sound.

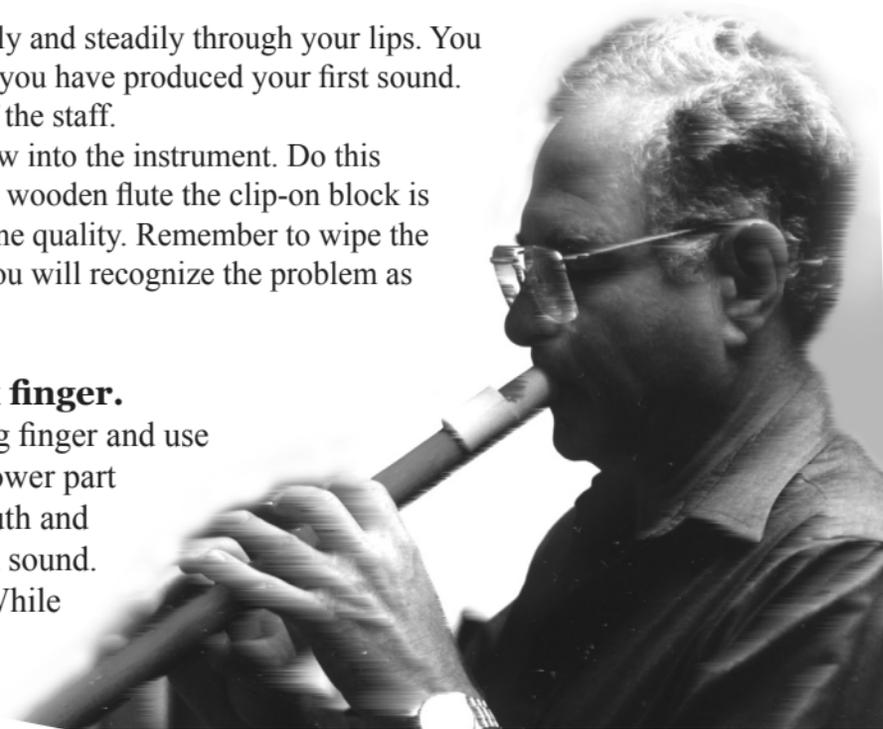
6

Always take a relaxed natural breath in through your mouth and release it gently and steadily through your lips. You need just enough air to bend a candle flame but not blow it out. Congratulations, you have produced your first sound. Look at the fingering chart on page 12. The note is an “a” on the second space of the staff.

Experiment with the quality of the sound by varying the amount of air you blow into the instrument. Do this until you get a sound that is full, comfortable and relaxed. Just as on a traditional wooden flute the clip-on block is adjustable. Sliding it a few millimeters in one direction or the other will affect tone quality. Remember to wipe the underside of the block as condensation from your breath clogs the air channel. You will recognize the problem as soon as the flute starts sounding restricted.

Lesson 2. Adding sounds. The left hand index finger.

Continue to keep the small hole covered with the pad of your left-hand ring finger and use your left-hand index finger to cover the uppermost finger hole. Support the lower part of the flute with your right thumb. Take a relaxed breath in through your mouth and blow out through your lips. Congratulations, you have produced your second sound. Look at the fingering chart, the note is a “g” on the second line of the staff. While blowing into the instrument, move your left-hand index finger up and down slowly and with control. Make sure that the finger completely covers the



hole on the soft part of the finger each time it comes down. Listen carefully as you play. Experiment with the amount of air it takes to get a full sound. Concentrate on the lovely sounds those two notes make. Imagine a bird fluttering its wings. Use that image to make your finger go up and down, alternately opening and closing the hole. Take your time and practice just that for a few minutes. Enjoy the sounds you are able to make.

Lesson 3. Add the left hand middle finger.

Cover the first 3 holes with the first 3 fingers of your left hand. Blow air into the flute. Congratulations, you have produced your third sound, an “e”. Look at the fingering chart. Notice that an “e” is located on the first line of the staff. While blowing into the instrument, move your left-hand middle finger up and down slowly at first while the index and ring finger stay down. Make sure that the soft pads of the fingers completely cover the holes each time they come down. Now experiment with the three notes that you know. If these three notes were the only notes in the universe, what kind of music could you create with them?

Lesson 4. Add the right-hand index finger

Cover the first 3 holes with your left hand. Cover the hole below the small hole with the index finger of your right hand. The side of the right hand thumb can be comfortably placed under the flute to help support it. Take a relaxed natural breath in through your mouth and blow out gently. Congratulations, you have produced your fifth sound, a “d”. While blowing into the instrument and with three fingers of your left hand covering the upper three holes get used to controlling your right hand index finger by moving it up and down. Moving your right hand index finger up and **8** down should be fairly easy to do. Experiment with the four notes of the pentatonic scale that you know. Try this exercise. Play all the notes

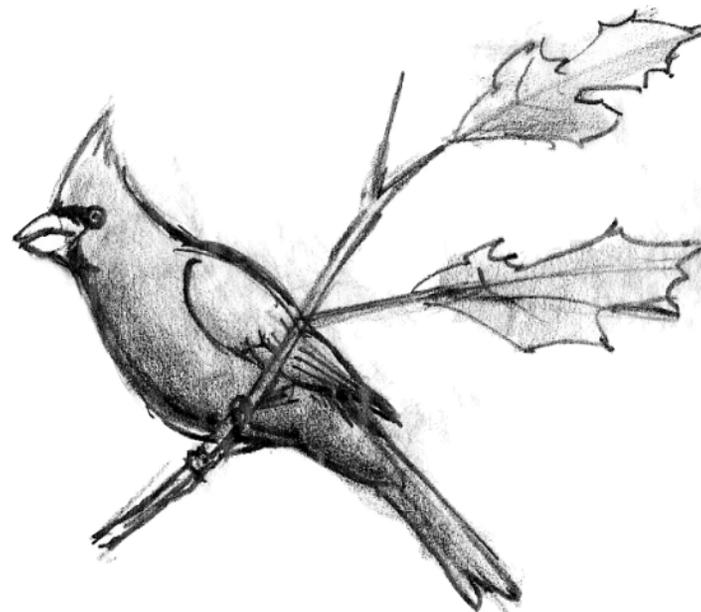
slowly in one breath starting from the top one to the bottom and back up. A, G, E, D, E, G, A etc. Try to create a melody on just those 4 notes.

Lesson 5. Add the right-hand middle finger

Cover the first 3 holes (1, 2 & 3) with your left hand, hole number 4 with your right hand index finger and hole number 5 with the middle finger of your right hand. The flute is supported by both thumbs. Blow gently through your lips into the flute. Congratulations, you have produced your fifth sound, “c” and now you can produce an entire pentatonic scale. Look at the fingering chart on page 12, notice that “c” is located on a small line below the staff called a ledger line. Play the exercise suggested in lesson 4 but now include the note “C”. If you start with the C and go up (C, D, E, G, A), you will be playing a C major pentatonic scale. It will sound Do, Re, Mi, Sol, La.

Lesson 6. Add the right-hand ring finger

Now that you are familiar with the routine add the right hand ring finger to produce the lowest note on this flute; “A”. The fingering chart on page 12 indicates that the low “A” is located two ledger lines below the staff. That note is the same sound as the first “a” you played only one octave lower. This note may take some extra special control to get. Blowing too hard will produce a note one octave higher called an overtone. With all the holes covered, experiment with the sound by moving your right hand ring finger up and down evenly. Listen carefully as you play. Now experiment with the six notes that you know. Try playing all the notes you know slowly in



one breath starting from the top one to the bottom and back up. Play each note for at least one second in length and remember to focus on making beautiful sounds.

When you become proficient at making a sound and moving your fingers up and down easily, start practicing some of the songs in this manual.

Lesson 7. The pentatonic scale.

If the fingers are moved in succession up and down the flute with the fourth finger of the left hand always covering the little hole, you will experience the sound of a pentatonic scale. Although the low note on this flute is an A, the actual scale I am referring to is C major pentatonic. It has the notes C, D, E, G, A in it. Just about any sequence of notes that includes these pitches will sound good as long as you apply some basic composition principles. Have fun making up pentatonic songs. You are now ready to play the songs in this book. Try playing Zuni Sunrise, it is a beautiful song that I learned from Douglas Spotted Eagle. Then visit his website.

Lesson 8. - Special Techniques – Ornaments

Up to now you have learned to get your fingers up and down the flute. Now try a special technique that I call a flip. Cover all six holes. While producing a sound, lift the first finger of your left hand up and back down quickly, like a bird flapping its wing only once. It looks and sounds like your finger is doing a flip. Now do the same with five holes covered...etc. Practice this up and down the pentatonic scale. This flip technique produces an expressive quality that we often associate with the Native American Indian flute. Ornaments add interest to songs. Experiment with them and add them where they seem to be appropriate.



Lesson 9. Special Techniques – Vibrato

Vibrato, the controlled pulsating manipulation of the pitch up and down, adds a feeling of warmth to the sound. It is often most noticeable in violinists and opera singers. It is not something you hear on a piano. In some cultures it is considered the life and soul of the sound. With a little practice you will be able to produce a vibrato that will be under your complete control. The technique requires that you blow the air out and add little pulses to the breath that come from your tummy, (4 or 5 a second), almost like an owl saying who-oo-oo-oo etc. To get a sense of what producing a vibrato is like hold the flute to your mouth with your left hand. Push on your tummy several times a second with your right hand while blowing into the flute. That will produce a vibrato. Now practice doing that without the benefit of your hand. A good vibrato may take a long time to perfect. Good luck.

Lesson 10. Special Techniques - Cross fingerings

Actually the five notes of the pentatonic scale are just wonderful for improvising all kinds of tunes but there are always those who want a few more notes if they are available, and they are. Used with taste these extra notes can add much to your improvisations. Cross fingerings include all the notes on the fingering chart that aren't part of the pentatonic scale.

Lesson 11. Overtones

Some of the upper notes are overtones and require more air than the lower ones do. For the upper tones you need enough air to blow the candle out. Experiment and they will speak. Enjoy the journey!

Fingering Chart

Adjustable clip-on block

Sound Hole

1 2 3 4 5 6

Left Hand Right Hand

a g e d c A c c# d d# e f f# g g# a a# b c

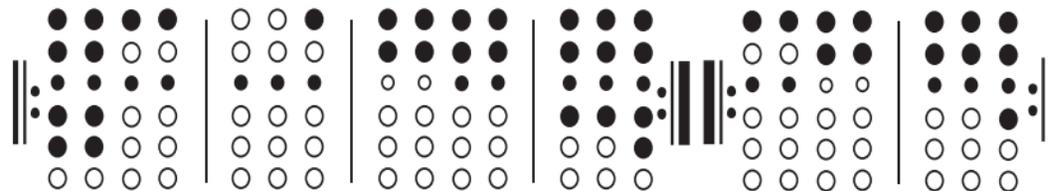
Left Hand

Right Hand

Pentatonic Scale Chromatic Scale

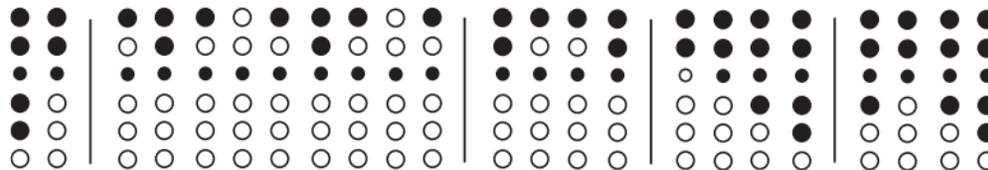
| Hand | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| Finger 1 | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ○ | ○ |
| Finger 2 | ○ | ○ | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Finger 3 | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Finger 4 | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Finger 5 | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Finger 6 | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

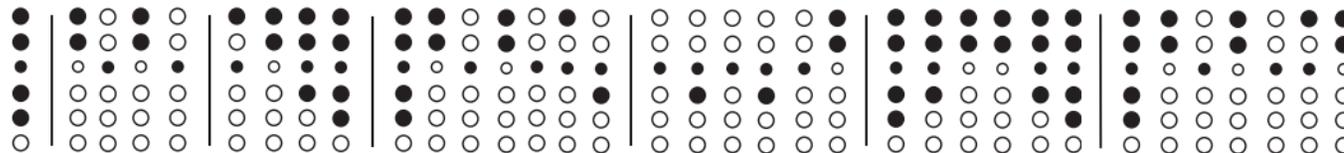


Play song twice through

Michael Row the Boat Ashore

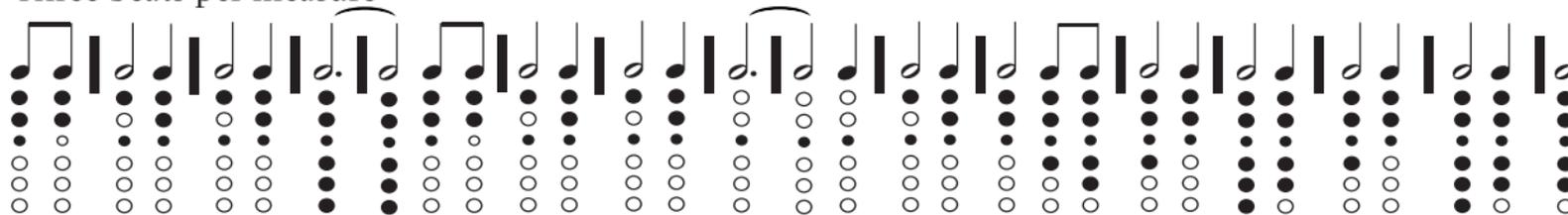


Amazing Grace



Mountain Air

Three beats per measure



© 2001 Hal Kacanek

Some other songs to try:

Theme song Lord of the Rings

Believe Me if all those Endearing Young Charms

Oh Susannah

Oh Shenendoah

The First Noel

Joy to the World

Mary had a little lamb

“Goin Home” from Dvorak’s Sym #9

♩

fine

D.S. al fine

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Goin Home" from Dvorak's Symphony #9. It consists of two staves. The top staff contains a melody line with notes and rests, and a corresponding Braille transcription below it. The bottom staff contains a second line of music, likely a bass line or accompaniment, also with a Braille transcription below it. The score is marked with a treble clef (♩) at the beginning and ends with the instruction "fine". The second staff begins with the instruction "D.S. al fine".

Tell Me Why the Stars Do Shine?

The image displays a musical score for the song "Tell Me Why the Stars Do Shine?". The score is presented in two staves, each using a simplified musical notation system. The notation consists of vertical stems, note heads (solid black circles), and rests (open circles). The notes are arranged in a way that suggests a melody, with stems pointing upwards. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The first staff contains 12 measures, and the second staff contains 12 measures. The notation is consistent across both staves, suggesting a single melodic line. The notes are placed on a grid of circles, with the top circle of each stem representing the note's pitch. The stems are solid black lines, and the note heads are solid black circles. Rests are represented by open circles. The overall layout is clean and minimalist, focusing on the rhythmic and melodic structure of the piece.

Native American flute songs

Zuni Sunrise

Three beats per measure

The image displays musical notation for the song "Zuni Sunrise". It consists of two rows of notes. The top row contains 18 notes, each with a vertical bar to its right. The notes are organized into groups of three, with a curved line above the first two notes of each group. The bottom row contains 10 notes, also with vertical bars to their right, organized into two groups of five. The notes are represented by black dots on a grid of white circles, indicating pitch and rhythm. The notation is a form of dot notation used in Native American music.

Rhythms are approximate.
Play this freely.

Lonesome Flute Song

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Lonesome Flute Song". The score is presented in two parts: a standard musical notation at the top and a corresponding dot-matrix representation below it. The musical notation includes a vertical bar line on the left, followed by four notes (half, quarter, dotted quarter, quarter), a triplet of eighth notes, two quarter notes, and a half note. This is followed by another vertical bar line, then a quarter note, a beamed eighth-note pair, a quarter note, and a dotted quarter note. The final part of the score consists of a quarter note, a beamed eighth-note pair, and a dotted quarter note, followed by a final vertical bar line. The dot-matrix representation consists of six rows of circles. Each column of circles corresponds to a note in the musical notation above. The circles are either filled (black) or empty (white), representing the pitch and rhythm of the notes. A '3' is placed above the triplet of eighth notes in the musical notation. The dot-matrix representation uses a grid of circles to map the notes and their durations across six rows.

Kiowa Love Song

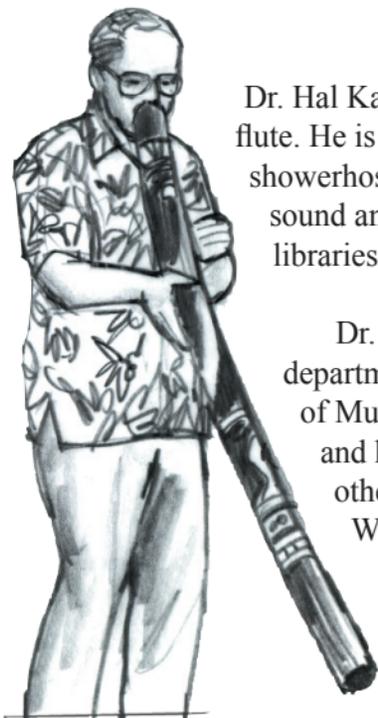
The musical notation for 'Kiowa Love Song' is presented in two staves. Each staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The notation consists of a series of notes and rests, represented by dots and vertical lines. The notes are arranged in a sequence that corresponds to the title 'Kiowa Love Song'. The first staff has a double bar line with a repeat sign at the beginning and end. The second staff has a double bar line with a repeat sign at the beginning and end. The notes are arranged in a sequence that corresponds to the title 'Kiowa Love Song'.

Lullaby

The musical notation for 'Lullaby' is presented in two rows. Each row contains eight measures of music. The notation uses a dot-matrix system where notes are represented by vertical stems with a dot above them, and rests are represented by horizontal bars. The notes are placed on a grid of five vertical lines, with the top line being the highest and the bottom line being the lowest. The notes are either solid black circles or hollow white circles. The rests are represented by horizontal bars of varying lengths, indicating the duration of the rest. The first row starts with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by two measures of music, a rest, two more measures, a rest, and finally two measures. The second row starts with a rest, followed by two measures, a rest, two more measures, a rest, and finally two measures ending with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Wedding Song

The image displays a musical score for a "Wedding Song" on two staves. The notation is a simplified form of musical notation, using vertical stems, dots, and beams to represent notes and rests. The first staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign (two dots). The melody consists of a sequence of notes: a dotted quarter note, an eighth note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The second staff continues the melody with a quarter note, and a quarter note. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.



About the author

Dr. Hal Kacanek, is an educator, musician, world traveler, author of this manual and the developer of your Native American style flute. He is also the creator of the Gazimba™, Gazimbette™, Gazimbass™ the phenomenal fanatical flute loop, the funnelphonium-showerhosium and many other strange instruments. He is also known as the “Didjeri-dude,” and is a speaker on the subject of sound and sound making instruments. He brings his excitement and enthusiasm for exploring the world of sound to schools, libraries, service clubs, museums and many adult groups through workshops, presentations and as an artist in residence.

Dr. Hal is CEO of Sounds We Make LLC. He has been a Wisconsin Humanities Council scholar, professor and music department chair of Carroll College in Waukesha, WI. His educational background includes degrees from the Eastman School of Music, the University of Michigan and a PhD (music education) from the University of Kansas. Dr. Hal composes music and has recorded **Soundscapes 2**; a CD of original music featuring the same style flute you purchased along with several other instruments he plays. For a sample go to www.drhal.net/pages/CompositionsArrangements.htm and enjoy. He lives in Waukesha, Wisconsin with his wife, Jean, and son, Keith, who is a member of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin.

Help Dr. Hal make a better flute. If you have any comments, concerns, recommendations or nice stories about the flute you would like to share please contact Dr. Hal; www.SOUNDWEMAKE.com (262) 547-5402 [email: drhal@drhal.net](mailto:drhal@drhal.net)

This manual is revised from time to time. For the latest revision with links to additional flute songs go to
www.SOUNDWEMAKE.com/pages/flutemanual.htm
Problems, Concerns, Questions, Testimonials, etc.? contact drhal@drhal.net



R 4.0

Made in U.S.A. - Sounds We Make LLC

©2008 Sounds We Make LLC