

GLOBAL SOUND BITES

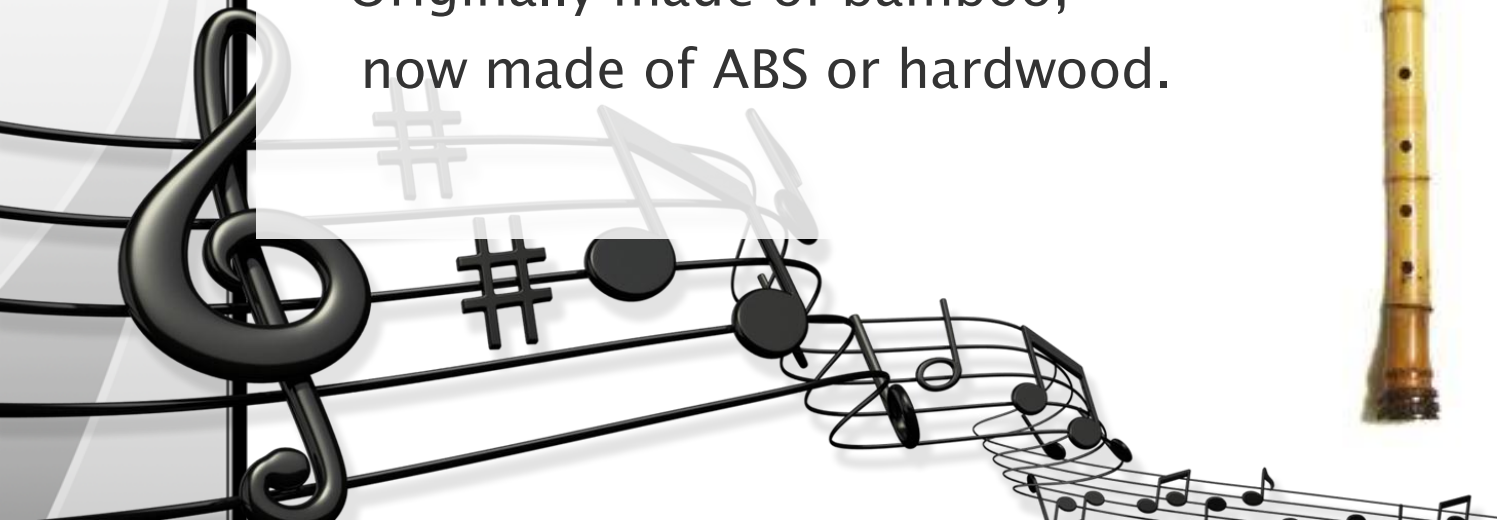
~ A LISTENING PERSPECTIVE ON WORLD CULTURES ~

JAPANESE SHAKUHACHI MUSIC



Shakuhachi – What is it?

- Japanese end-blown flute
- *Shakuhachi* means "1.8 *shaku*", referring to its size. It is a compound of two words:
 - *shaku* is an archaic unit of length equal to 30.3 centimeters subdivided in ten subun
 - *hachi* means "eight", here eight sun, or tenths of a *shaku*
- Originally made of bamboo, now made of ABS or hardwood.



Shakuhachi – Origins/Purpose

- Introduced from China in the 6th century
- Associated with the Zen Buddhist monks of the Fuke Sect, particularly around 17th to 19th century
- Used as a tool for meditation purposes in a practice known as *suizen* (“blowing meditation”) and the pieces form part of the *Honkyoku* repertoire
- These monks are known as *komuso* (meaning “emptiness monks”)
- As a symbol of detachment from the world, monks wore baskets over their heads.
- *Shoguns* (military generals) made use of this to send out some of their spies as *komuso*



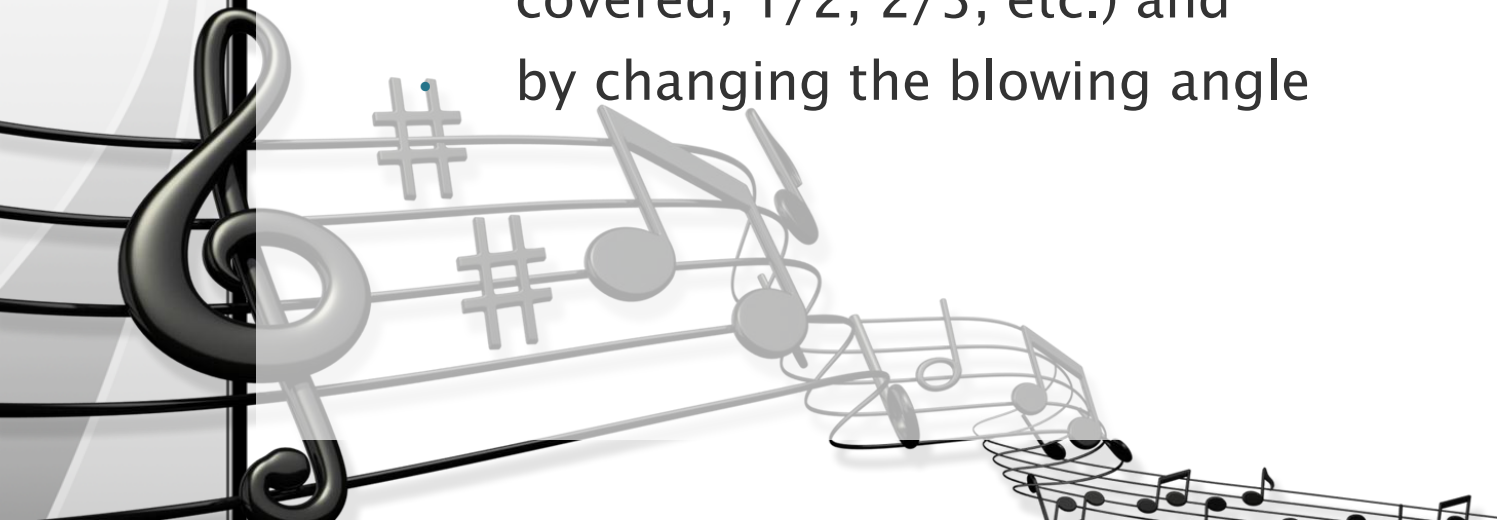
Shakuhachi – Origins/Purpose

- With the Meiji Restoration beginning in 1868, playing of *Shakuhachi* was forbidden for a few years.
- When the playing of *Shakuhachi* was allowed again, it was to be used in small group ensemble, with *koto*, *shamisen* and usually, vocal in *Sankyoku* music.



Shakuhachi – Common Playing Technique

- Subtle differences and nuances of the same pitch can be produced by different fingering and embouchures.
- Pitch can also be varied subtly or substantially
 - by covering the holes partially (1/3 covered, 1/2, 2/3, etc.) and
 - by changing the blowing angle

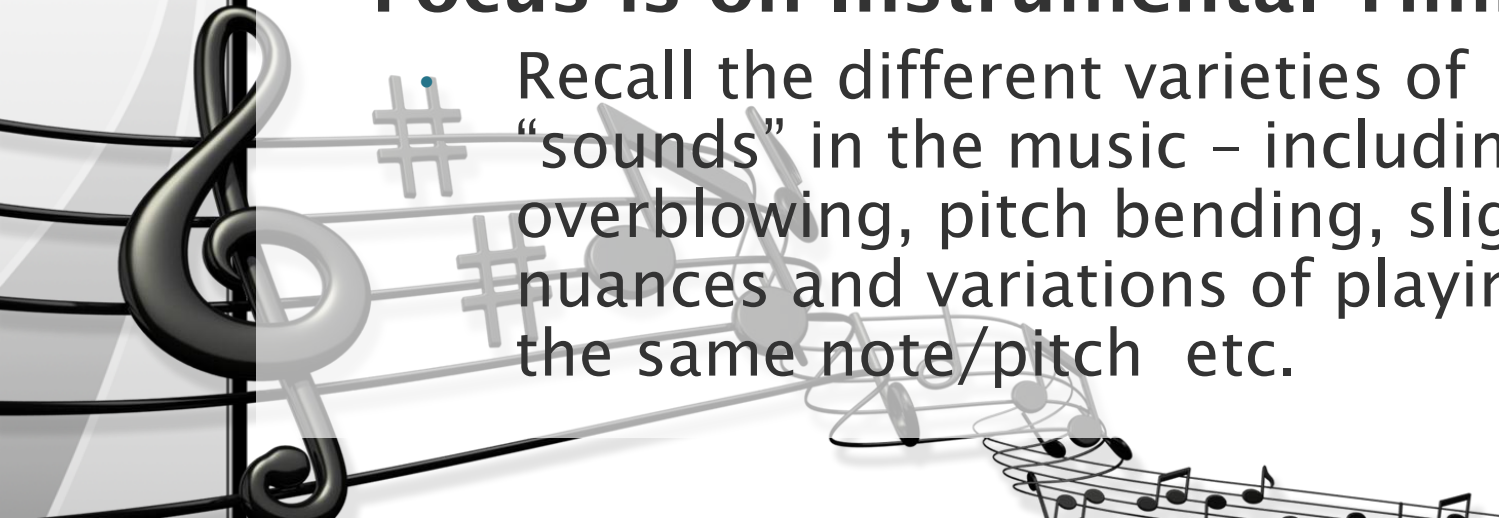


Shakuhachi – Commonly used pitches

- Recall – Major and/or Minor scale in Western Music
- Basic scale of a normal sized *shakuhachi* is the pentatonic minor scale, for e.g. D/F/G/A/C/D
- Most Japanese music are written in
 - *Honkyoku* (music for solo *Shakuhachi*) scale:
 - *Tamuke* scale: D/Eb/G/A/C/D
(D/Bb/A/G/Eb/D)
 - *Hon Shirabe* scale: G/Ab/C/D/F/G
(G/Eb/D/C/Ab/G)
 - *Yamagoe* scale: C/Db/F/G/Bb/C
(C/Ab/G/F/Db/C)
 - *Gaikyoku* scale:
 - *Yo* scale (in *gagaku* & *shomyu*): D/E/G/A/B/D
 - *In* scale (in *sankyoku*): D/Eb/G/A/Bb/D

Shakuhachi – Musical Essentials

- **Western Music – Focus is on Harmony**
 - Recall 12-bar blues – Bass progression (foundation of Harmony) is the “identity” and “driving force”
- **Japanese *Shakuhachi* Music – Focus is on Instrumental Timbre**
 - Recall the different varieties of “sounds” in the music – including overblowing, pitch bending, slight nuances and variations of playing the same note/pitch etc.



HON SHIRABE

本調

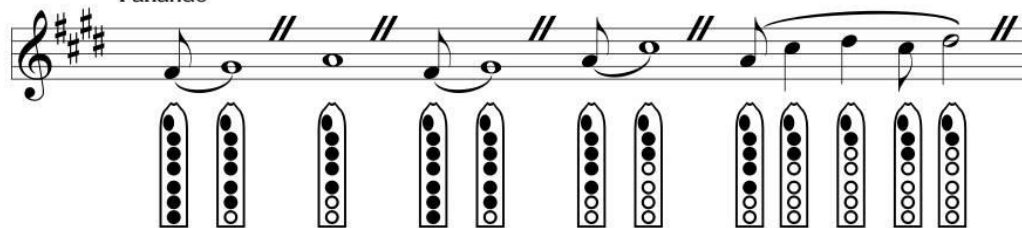
Nakai Tablature for Native American flute

Fingerings for **Anasazi-7** tuned flutes

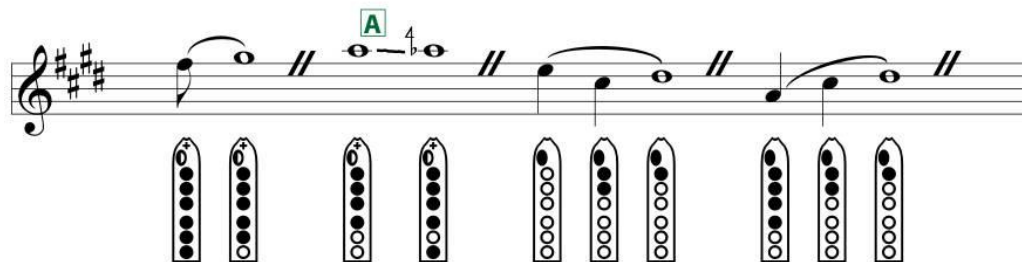
Traditional Japanese Honkyoku

arranged by Clint Goss

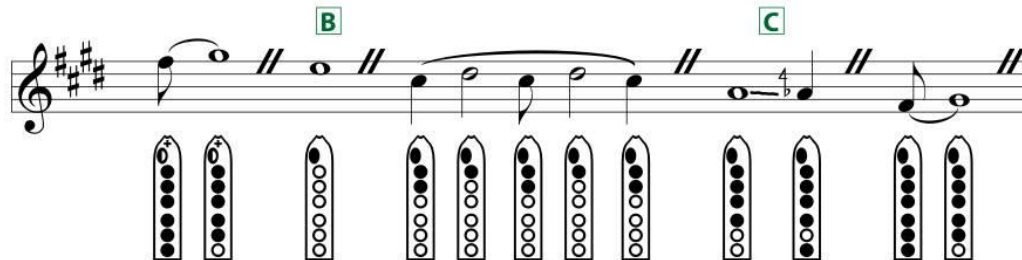
Parlando



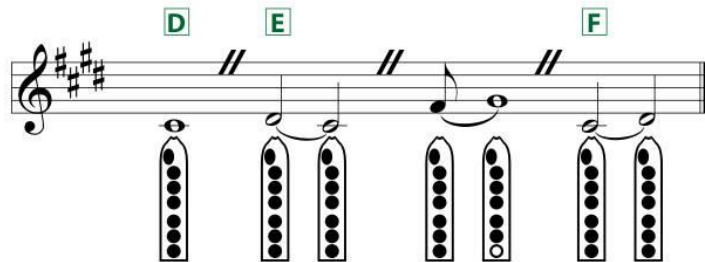
First musical staff with tablature. The staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes with rests. Below the staff are two columns of fingerings for each note, represented by circles with black dots for holes to be covered.



Second musical staff with tablature. It begins with a green box labeled 'A' above a quarter note. Below the staff are two columns of fingerings for each note.



Third musical staff with tablature. It features a green box labeled 'B' above a quarter note and another green box labeled 'C' above a quarter note. Below the staff are two columns of fingerings for each note.



Fourth musical staff with tablature. It features green boxes labeled 'D', 'E', and 'F' above quarter notes. Below the staff are two columns of fingerings for each note.

