



Flute and Piano Examinations

How far you go is really up to you. Practicing your flute or Piano at least half an hour per day for a beginner is very important to see noticeable improvement.

Longer is you are of a higher standard.

I am serious about examinations and have a 100% pass rate. I choose the Associated Board of The Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) syllabus, although examinations are entirely optional and down to you. Some students find exams too stressful and this puts them off playing at all, whilst others reach a high standard of playing without taking a single exam. It all depends whether you want to make music your career. Whether you decide you want to take your grades or not, new students are taught the basics and correct techniques before moving on forward.

THE FLUTE

When the typical American thinks of a flute, he is thinking of a side-blown flute known as the Western classical flute. Flutes are instruments of a long history, but this flute came to Europe from the East in the 12th century.

listen to the sound of the Flute

Throughout the middle ages, the flute was most commonly associated with the military but by the mid 1600's it had become a very important instrument of the opera and court orchestra.

This Western classical flute of Europe would take it's first steps toward the modern flute in the late 1600's. The French Hotteterre family is credited with making these changes and they are known as the first major design changes. The more important and even more radical changes to the western flute's design were introduced by Theobald Boehm.

Boehm was from Munich and during the 1830's he created a complex key-system which revolutionized the flute. Today his design still remains greatly unchanged. "Boehm flutes," can be found as wooden or metal instruments, and are played all over the world.

Description

The flute, a woodwind, is a typically metal instrument. While it sometimes can be found in a wooden form, it is usually made of silver or some similar looking metal. Its sound is produced by the musician blowing across the "blowhole". With the exception of the piccolo, no other instrument is played in this manner.

The flute can be found in orchestras sharing melodies with the violin, but the flute will always be a solo instrument at its best. While the low notes are rich and warm, and sometimes even undetectable, the flutes higher notes sing out from the orchestra and many composers take advantage of this. Mozart was one such composer, and many of his works demonstrate the flutes's ability to play slow and expressive solos or fast complex melodies.

Flutes, however, are not at all limited to the orchestra. They have a bright sound which makes a colorful addition to jazz groups. Some rock musicians, notably Ian Anderson, have even created unique techniques for playing the flute which brings their color to the world of rock 'n' roll as well.

Flute Variations

Piccolo: The piccolo is probably one of the most well known relatives of the flute. It is the smallest member of an orchestra and half the length of a regular flute. This little instrument is made of either metal or wood and plays notes an octave higher than the flute. The piccolo's name is derived from the Italian words for "little flute."

Ocarina: Ocarinas are popular little flutes made of porcelain or terracotta. Their sound is deeper for a large ocarina, and higher for a small ocarina. Their sweet tone is produced when the musician blows into the blowing hole and uses the fingerholes to alter the pitch.

Fife: The fife is a very small flute usually made of wood, but sometimes metal. The fife has a smaller wind channel than the orchestral flute, thus giving it a more shrill sound.

Panpipes: Panpipes have a very airy sound which is due to the fact that they have no mouthpiece. Pipes of various lengths are bundled together and the musician blows across the top of them. This instrument has been in use since prehistoric times and can be made of bamboo, pottery, wood, or plastic.

Nose flute: The nose flute is a very unique instrument. It has a relatively clear sound, particularly considering the method used to play it. The musician blocks one nostril and holds the nose flute up to the other. Nose flutes are made of bamboo, wood, or bone and has been played for thousands of years. A possible explanation for the flute could be the belief of some peoples in the Pacific, that air expelled through the nostrils has mystical powers.

One-keyed flute: This flute is an ancestor of the modern orchestral flute. The wooden instrument is an example of flutes as key systems began to be used on them and as they began to be made in multiple pieces.

Kena: The kena is a end-blown flute from South America. Kenas can be made of many types of materials including, cane, gourds, clay, silver, gold, animal, or even human bones! They are played as solo instruments or as accompaniments to dancing.

Shakuhachi: This end-blown flute comes from Japan and is known for a very unique style of playing. Performers use the shakuhachi to play very long melodies without breaks. It is a bamboo instrument that is known for being played with a lot of vibrato and dynamics.

Nay: This reed, wood, or metal instrument can be found in the Middle East or North Africa. It is played like the recorder but extremely difficult. While it is capable of playing 3 octaves, only a virtuoso can play anywhere near the full-range.

Di: Like many Chinese instruments, the di has a very exotic and beautiful sound. It is a side-blown instrument made of bamboo and ivory with a very "nasal" sound.