

The Flute

Early History

The flute, as we know it today, was first shown in Chinese art of the 9th century B.C. At the time it was called the *chi'ih* and it was made similar to the recorder; however, it was not a very popular instrument.

Originally, the flute was a single tubed instrument made from cane or bone. It took on the shape of a cone and hole were put into the tube in order to change pitch. It was not until around 1750 that keys were used to change notes, and even then, only three or four keys were added to the instrument.

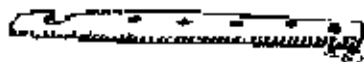


Later Developments

It was not until 1831 that a German flutist named Theobald Boehm decided to try and perfect

the instrument. At this time, the flute was changed into the shape of a colander and was made of metal (like it is now). In 1843, Boehm introduced his flute to the world, however, many musicians found it very uncomfortable to play. After a few modifications, Theobald Boehm reintroduced his flute in 1847.

Another flutist and inventor named Albert K. Cooper designed another flute of a smaller size. Although it is similar to the Boehm flute, many prefer the original model.



Beginning Players

Although it is difficult to play at first, the flute is a good woodwind instrument for beginning musicians, as its fingerings are very similar to the clarinet and saxophone. Unfortunately, there are some physical features that make it a little easier to play the instrument:

1. Students must be big enough to hold the instrument.
2. The fingers in the right hand must be able to reach and hold all of the proper keys,

especially the G³ key.

3. Even teeth and smaller, firm lips make the mouth position more accurate to create a good sound.

In Performance

The flute is primarily used in orchestral, concert and marching band settings, thanks to players such as Susan Hoepner. However, the flute is starting to break into several other genres of music and is becoming increasingly popular in those areas. Musicians such as Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull brought the flute into the limelight of rock and roll in the 1970s. Other musicians, like Canadians Moe Koffman and Bill McBirnie, have made the flute very popular in jazz music.

