

Pan Pipes

From the workshop of Brent M. Holl

These Pan Pipes were made from a type of bamboo known as River Cane or Yellow Bamboo. It is one of thousands of types of bamboo found throughout the world. The patch of bamboo that produced this flute has flourished in my backyard in Bridgewater, Virginia, for almost 20 years.

Getting the sound. Start with any one of the pipes. Rest your bottom lip on the open edge of one pipe and blow it like a pop bottle. Make sure that the pipe is pointed directly upward and that your head is held straight up. Your bottom lip must be rested loosely on the edge – not pulled up, or curled under itself, or pressed down hard against the pipe! Press your lips together at the corners, leaving a narrow opening at the front, centered above the mouth hole. Blow a solid stream of air directly at the opposite edge of the pipe. Don't lift up your bottom lip as you blow! If you don't get a sound at first it's ok! You'll have to practice a bit to get the hang of it. Try varying the shape and pressure of your blowing or rotate the flute a little to change the angle of your breath. Don't worry about getting dizzy – you just aren't used to breathing so deeply!

Holding the Pan Pipes.

Hold the pipes in both hands with the longest pipe in your left hand. Let your hands move the pipes; don't move your head back and forth to play different notes.

Your pipes are tuned to a **PENTATONIC** scale, a scale of five tones. From low to high your pipes play Do, Re, Mi, So and La. There are many tunes that can be played using only these five notes, including the familiar tune that is written out for you below. Enjoy!

OH SUSANNAH

STEPHEN FOSTER

PAN
PIPES

DO RE MI SO SO LA SO MI DO RE MI MI RE DO RE DO RE

MI SO SO LA SO MI DO RE MI MI RE RE DO

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the song 'Oh Susanna' by Stephen Foster. The first staff is labeled 'PAN PIPES' and features a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in a pentatonic scale using the notes Do, Re, Mi, So, and La. Below the notes are the syllables 'DO RE MI SO SO LA SO MI DO RE MI MI RE DO RE DO RE'. The second staff continues the melody with the syllables 'MI SO SO LA SO MI DO RE MI MI RE RE DO'. The notes are written as quarter and eighth notes, with some beamed together.