The Original Generation

Generation

presents a tutor for

Flageolets

The sweetest toned of all instruments

The Flageolet, perhaps one of the most ancient of musical instruments and often known as the Tin Whistle, is a musical instrument possessing two special qualities: it is the cheapest and it's the simplest. However, don't be misled into thinking that it's barely more than a toy, or that it is inferior or a second-rate instrument. On the contrary, despite its cheapness and its easiness for beginners, the tin whistle is a full-blooded musical instrument, capable of music of a quality often unsurpassed by far more eminent instruments.

Available in the keys of B♭, C, D, E♭, F and G

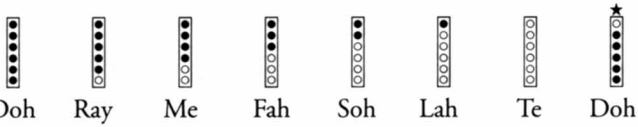
Manufactured by Generation Music Ltd., Oswestry

Getting Started

Hold the Flageolet with both hands making sure the left hand is nearest the mouthpiece. Let the instrument rest on your thumbs whilst covering the six holes with the fleshy pads (not the tips) of the first three fingers of each hand. Make sure all the holes are completely covered and there are no leaks. Place the mouthpiece of the Flageolet between your lips (not your teeth) and gently blow a steady stream of air to produce a nice clear note.

Now progress to playing the natural scale of the instrument by taking a finger off for each step, represented by the tablature below. On reaching high doh you will need to blow somewhat harder to produce the correct sound.

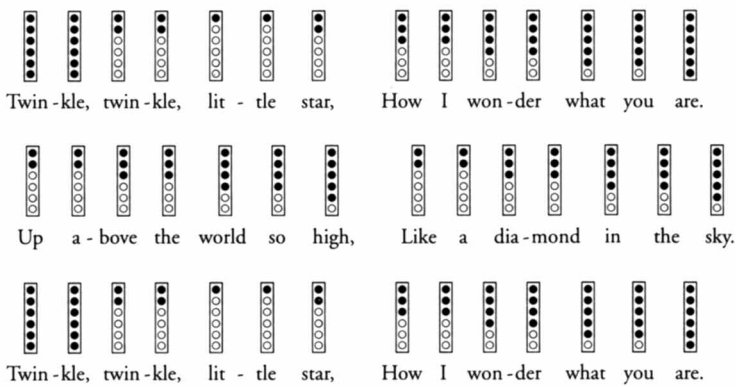
The Scale



Tongueing

A useful playing technique, particularly in the early stages, is to say "te" (as in "letter") before sounding notes; this is called tongueing. It is particularly useful for separating consecutive notes of the same pitch. Use this technique to play this simple tune.

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star



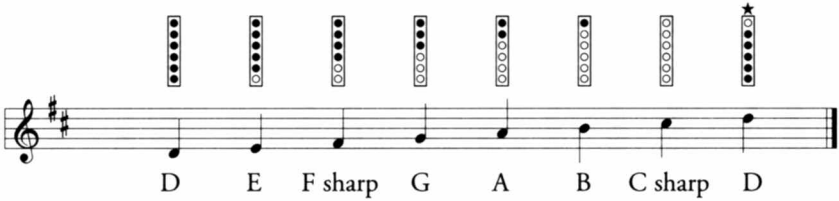
The Flageolet Family

Flageolets, like various other wind instruments such as recorder, saxophone, etc, are known as transposing instruments, because they are available in families of several different pitches.

Music for such instruments is written for the family as a whole, not individual members. Learning to play each member separately would be confusing and tedious. Music for the Flageolet is standardised to D, the pitch of traditional music, thus only one fingering system need be learned. D is known as the **nominal** pitch, it has been chosen to act for the whole family.

D is the natural scale of the Flageolet. It is indicated by two sharps (♯) in the key signature, meaning all F and C notes are raised by one semitone. You don't have to worry about this as it is executed automatically by the Flageolet.

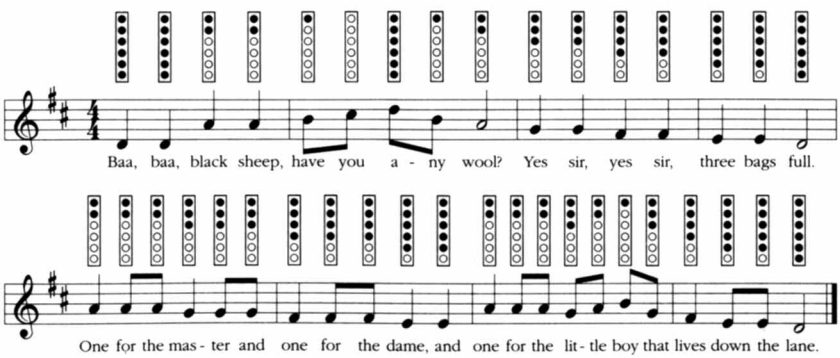
The Scale of D



Notes About Music

Did you notice in 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' that you naturally held the notes for 'star', 'are', 'high' and 'sky' longer than the other notes. The length of a note is denoted by its shape. Take a look at the last bar of the next tune, 'Baa Baa Black Sheep'. Notice how the words 'down' and 'the' are sung quickly in relation to 'lives' and the note for 'lane' is held on for much longer. The three different types of note have a strict mathematical relationship. The notes 'down' and 'the' are called quavers and are half as long as 'lives' which is called a crotchet; 'lane' is known as a minim and lasts twice as long as 'lives'.

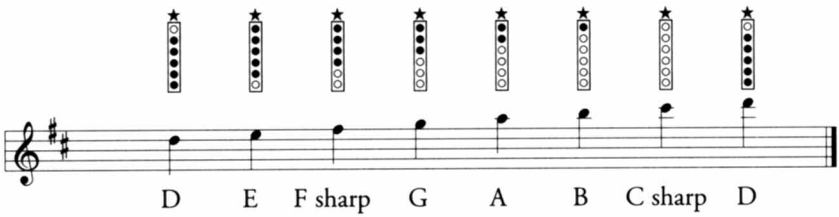
Baa Baa Black Sheep



The High Notes

All the notes learned so far can all be played in a higher register simply by blowing harder, a technique called over-blowing. Try playing each note by blowing gently, then increase the pressure until the note jumps to the higher register; this jump is called an octave. The Flageolet is capable of playing two full octaves, however notes above high B are rarely used. A star above tablature symbols denote when the Flageolet needs to be over-blown.

The D Scale High Octave



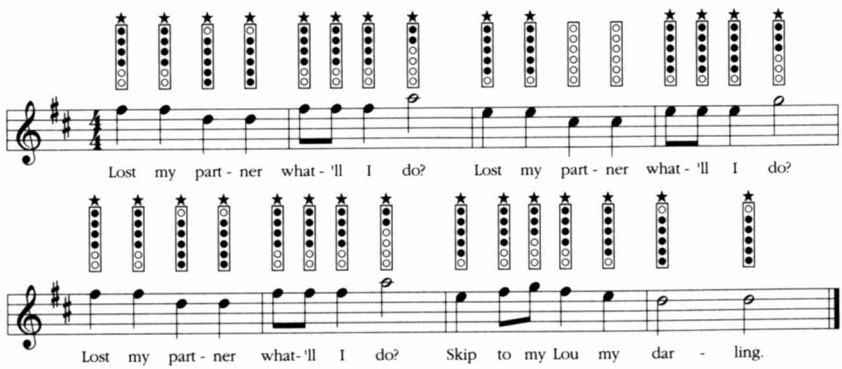
Breathing

Don't just stop anywhere to take a breath; try to make your breaths part of the tune. Draw breath at or near the end of a phrase by dropping or shortening a note. There are no hard and fast rules on breathing and phrasing but two or four bar phrases are the most common. In the next tune try shortening the last note of each line to take a breath.

Playing the C sharp

Because no holes are covered to produce the note C sharp, supporting the whistle can be difficult. The trick is to keep the last hole covered; notice that the pitch is not affected.

Skip to My Lou



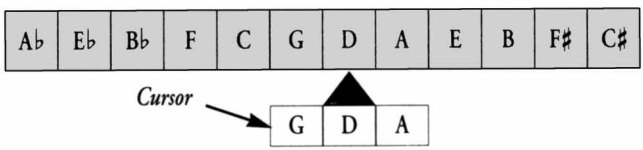
In Between Notes

The Flageolet is also capable of playing notes in between the ones learned so far using a technique called half-holing. This achieved by only half covering the last hole and executed by pulling the last finger slightly away or by straightening the nearest joint to the fingertip. This makes more keys available, *all* in theory, however in practice only two other major keys besides D are used, those of G and A.

The keys of D, G and A are called the **nominal** keys because they are the ones that have been named to act for the whole Flageolet family. Music for the Flageolet needs to be written in one of these **nominal** keys to be of practical use.

Generation Flageolets are available in six different keys B♭, C, D, E♭, F and G. Changing from one key to another is called transposing. You can transpose on the Flageolet simply by swapping for one of a different pitch. To find what the **actual** keys become when these **nominal** keys are used on various Flageolets use this handy little diagram called the 'Circle of Fifths'. If you transfer the cursor to a piece of card it can be moved to point at any **nominal** key, then just read off the **actual** keys. Notice the **nominal** keys for the D Flageolet are also the **actual** keys.

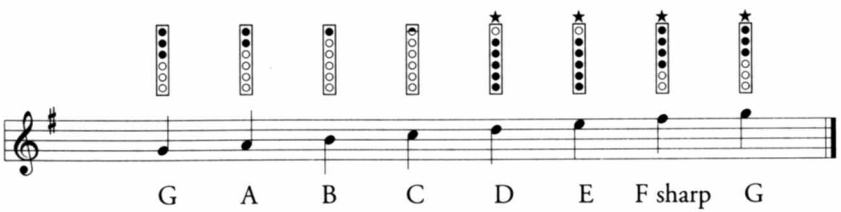
The Circle of Fifths



The Key of G

Only half covering the first hole raises the note B by on semitone to C natural which is half way between B and C sharp. We now have all the notes to play the scale of G which has only F sharp in the key signature.
Note: don't try to half hole in the manner that could be construed from the whistle symbol; it has been represented in this way solely for clarity - see back page.

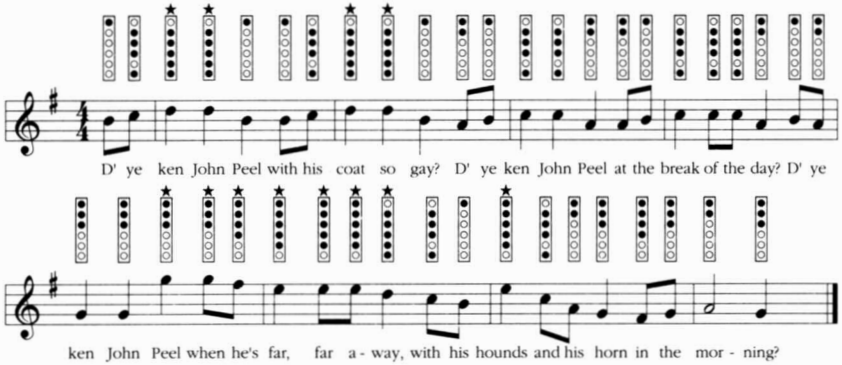
The Scale of G



Alternative C Natural

Half-holing is not particularly practical when playing at speed. Fortunately the more common 'in between notes' can be played using special fingerings - see back page. Instead of using the rather sluggish half-holing method to play C natural use the easier fingering shown in the next tune. Don't worry if it feels a little awkward at first, you'll soon get used to it.

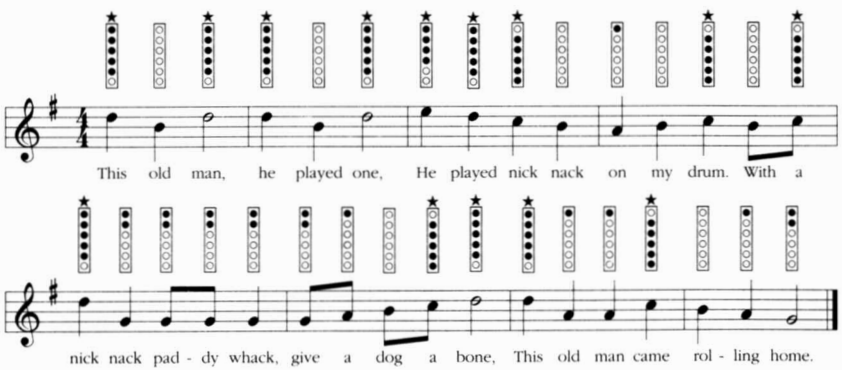
D' Ye Ken John Peel?



Double Tongueing

Here's another easy tune in G, 'Nick Nack Paddy Whack'. When playing the groups of quavers use a technique called 'double tongueing'. Instead of tongueing each quaver with the syllable 'te', alternate 'te' with the syllable 'ke' as in 'joker'.

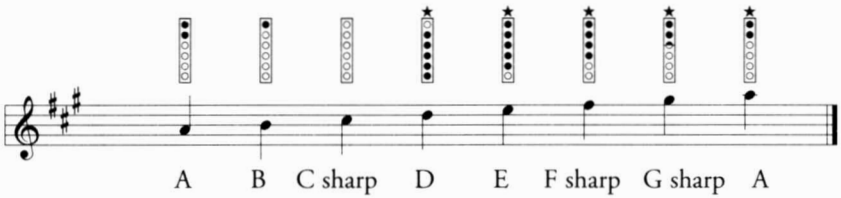
Nick Nack Paddy Whack



The Key of A

The key of A, although not as popular as D and G, is still important; notice its nice bright sound. It has three sharps in the key signature F, C and G. Play G sharp by half-holing with your third finger or use the special fingering shown on the back page.

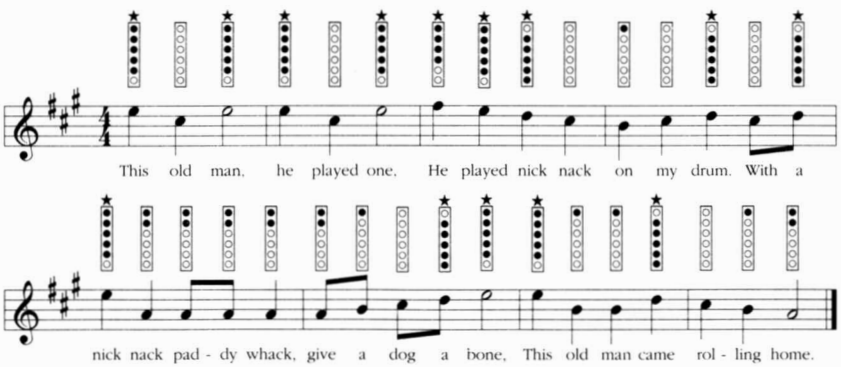
The Scale of A



Transposing Music

Sometimes you may find a tunes you want to play which aren't written in any of the **nominal** keys. This is not a problem, simply transpose the music to the key of your choice. First change the key signature to the one desired; next, raise or lower the key note to the **nominal** key note required; then raise or lower all the other notes by the same number of lines and spaces. Let's try this with 'Nick Nack Paddy Whack' and transpose it to the key of A.

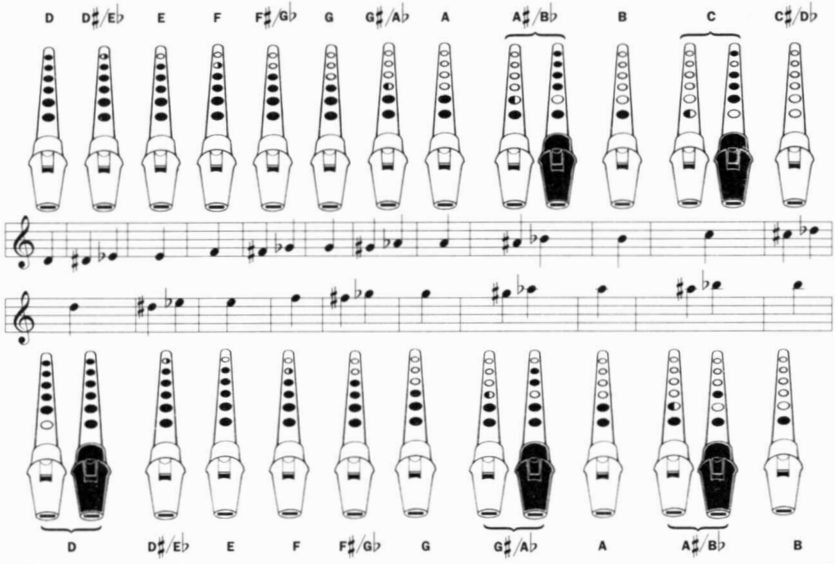
Nick Nack, Paddy Whack



Where Now?

Well you've got the basics but there's still lots more to learn. See back page for details of a series of books designed for the beginner. You need to learn about minor keys, cuts, rolls, waltz time, jig time and a whole host of things. The secret of success is **PRACTISE.**

FLAGEOLET CHROMATIC FINGERING CHART



Instant Tin Whistle

This leaflet is based on a series of of books published by **Dave Mallinson Publications**. **Instant Tin Whistle** tutors contain all the information necessary to learn this instrument using easy tunes and are available in four varieties, **Popular**, **Folk**, **Irish** and **Scottish**; choose the book with the most familiar tunes. The instructions are very gently graded resulting in most people reaching the end of the book. Perfect for individuals and groups, or schools wanting to incorporate traditional music into their curriculum. There is also an optional soundtrack available for each book. More in depth information and a free catalogue containing details of other tutors and traditional music books are available on request, mentioning **The Flageolet Tutor**, from:

DMP

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