

* = my favorites!

Tinwhistle (or “pennywhistle,” or “Irish whistle,” or just plain “whistle”)

- Used in Irish traditional music; also South African *kwela* music.
- Fipple mouthpiece.
- Simple-system fingering.
- Six-finger “high” D is most common, followed by C and “low” D; available in most other “keys,” too.
- A few notable uses: *Riverdance*, *Titanic* (including that awful Celine Dion song), *Lord of the Rings* (the Hobbiton theme). There’s a nice kwela-style solo on Paul Simon’s song “Call Me AL.”
- Some good authentic listening: Mary Bergin, Joannie Madden of Cherish the Ladies, Paddy Moloney of the Chieftains.
- Some good contemporary/crossover listening: Brian Finnegan of *Flook, Andrea Corr of The Corrs.
- “Cheap” whistle makers: the gold standard are Generation whistles in *brass or nickel.
- “High-end” whistle makers: Google these makers: *Burke, Copeland, Abell, Chieftain, Overton, Susato.
- For more info: chiffandfipple.com, *The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle* by Grey Larsen, *The Complete Irish Tinwhistle Tutor* by L. E. McCullough.

“Irish” flute

- Used in Irish traditional music; the flutes involved are essentially 19th-century wooden flutes (with or without keys).

- Transverse; play a little more rolled in than a silver flute.
- Simple-system fingering; additional keywork is very much optional.
- Six-finger “low” D is, by far, the most common.
- Some good authentic listening: *Grey Larsen, Matt Molloy, Seamus Egan. Also Google either “flute gods” or “flute geezers” and look for MP3s.
- Some good flute makers: Casey Burns (the *Folk Flute is cheap and very good), *Doug Tipple (PVC!). Also baroque flute reproductions by Aulos. Expensive: Michael Copeland, Dave Copley, Hammy Hamilton, Skip Healy, Terry McGee...
- For more info: message board on chiffandfipple.com, firescribble.net, *The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle* by Grey Larsen.

Bamboo transverse flutes

- Used in a variety of situations, especially music of India and the Far East. Can be used for Irish music, as well.
- Most often simple-system fingering or some derivation thereof.
- Available in just about any key and scale you can think of. Asian/Indian flutes are usually referred to by their three-finger note, and frequently have a narrow bore for a sweeter sound.
- A few notable uses: Broadway’s *Tarzan*, *The Lion King*, and *Miss Saigon*.

- Some good flute makers: Patrick Olwell (now hard to get and expensive), Jeff Whitter (Indian-style), Erik the Flutemaker (wide-bore), *Doug Tipple (a great PVC substitute).

Dizi (or D’tzu)

- Used in Chinese traditional music and opera.
- Transverse; requires a very focused embouchure. Uses a very thin and fragile mirliton (vibrating membrane)—installing this properly is something of an art.
- Simple-system fingering.
- Three-finger D is most common, followed by C. Higher flutes like G are common in Chinese traditional opera.
- A few notable uses: *Mulan*, Broadway’s *The Lion King* and *Miss Saigon*.
- Some good authentic listening: Feng Zicun, Liu Guanyue, Lu Chunling, Zhao Songting
- It’s hard to locate good ones in the USA. I order mine through chineseculture.net
- For more info: “Di-zi: The History and Performance Practice of the Chinese Bamboo Transverse Flute” by Ming Li (doctoral dissertation, FSU).

Shakuhachi

- Used in Japanese traditional music.
- Endblown. This one is a challenge to play!
- Uses index and ring fingers of both hands, plus left thumb. Half-holing and other methods of humoring can yield a virtually chromatic scale.

- “1.8” size is most common, giving a low note equivalent to D.
- A few notable uses: *Legends of the Fall*, *Pearl Harbor*, *Willow*, *The Mask of Zorro*, *The Last Samurai*.
- Some good authentic listening: Goro Yamaguchi, Nishimura Koku, John Kaisan Neptune.
- Some makers: *Shakuhachi Yuu (good plastic ones), Monty Levenson (can be expensive).
- For more info: Articles on shakuhachi.com, *Ichiyo Shakuhachi Manual* (vols. 1 and 2) by Tom Deaver, *Shakuhachi: Japanese Bamboo Flute* by Masayuki Koga.

Duduk

- Used in Armenian traditional music.
- Uses a huge double reed. Embouchure is extremely relaxed and includes puffed-out cheeks.
- Has eight finger holes plus a left thumb hole. Sometimes played with LH1-3 and RH1-4, leaving the last finger hole open. In this scenario, the fingering is similar to simple system plus a lower leading tone.
- Six-finger A is most common.
- A few notable uses: *Passion of the Christ*, *Gladiator*, *The Chronicles of Narnia* (Mr. Tumnus’s double flute is actually two duduks), *Syriana*, *Munich*.
- Some good authentic listening: *Djivan Gasparyan.
- A good source for duduks of reliable quality is *duduk.com
- For more info: articles and message board on duduk.com, *The Duduk and National Identity in Armenia* by Andy Nercessian.

Native American flute

- There are a number of flutes indigenous to the American continents, but this term usually refers to a Lakota-style flute, and that’s the one I refer to here.
- Duct mouthpiece, structurally different from a fipple but played in the same way.
- Six (sometimes five) finger holes.
- Key of F# minor is most common, but many keys are available.
- Some good authentic listening: *R. Carlos Nakai. He has also done some contemporary/crossover projects.
- Some good NAF makers: *Butch Hall, Odell Borg (High Spirits Flutes), Ken Light (Amon Olorin Flutes—more expensive).
- For more info: *Art of the Native American Flute* by R. Carlos Nakai, message board on chiffandfipple.com

Recorder

- Used in Renaissance and Baroque music; also has a twentieth-century repertoire. Because they are fully chromatic and available in many sizes, they can be good substitutes for other flute- or whistle-type instruments.
- Fipple mouthpiece.
- Somewhat complex fingering system. Different sizes use one of two fingering schemes, with either C or F as the lowest note, but all are considered concert pitch.
- Alto (or “treble”) is the most common Baroque solo instrument. Soprano (or “descant”) is more associated with Renaissance music (and elementary-school screeching).
- A few notable uses: besides a vast Baroque repertoire, try Broadway’s *Wicked*, *Spamalot*, and *You’re a Good Man Charlie*

Brown, or Led Zeppelin’s “Stairway to Heaven” and the Beatles’s “Fool on the Hill.”

- Some good makers of quality plastic recorders: Yamaha (300 series), Aulos, Zen-on.
- For more info: recorderhomepage.net, various books and articles by Anthony Rowland-Jones.

More instruments to check out:

- Bagpipe chanter
- Bamboo saxophone
- Baroque flutes, oboes, and bassoons
- Crumhorn (Renaissance)
- Didgeridoo (Australia) – not really a woodwind.
- Fife (American Revolution and Civil War styles)
- Fujara (Slovakia)
- Harmonica—not really a woodwind.
- Kaval (Turkey, Bulgaria)
- Launeddas (Sardinia)
- Nay (Middle East and Egypt)
- Ocarina
- Panflutes (South America, Romania)
- Quena and quenacho (South America)
- Sarrusophone
- Shawm (Renaissance)
- Shehnai (India)
- Shvi (Armenia)
- Suona (China)
- Tarogato (Hungary)
- Xiao (China)
- Zurna (Armenia)

Have fun!
Bret