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## Fitchhorn Song Flute

Described by Dwight Newton, Mewzik.com organologist.



Many people who grew up in the US are very familiar with the Song Flute or one of its variants. These have been widely used in public schools to teach the basics of reading and playing music. The Song Flute is among the easiest instruments to play, being essentially a simplified recorder requiring little training in embouchure, attack or fingering.



Fitchhorn Song Flutes are made of black plastic and are intended as a simplified recorder-type flute for school children. Elva Joseph Fitchhorn originated and patented the design which came to be used in schools everywhere. Fitchhorn was a band instructor in Delaware, Ohio, near Columbus. Fitchhorn's

Song Flute Company manufactured the flutes for several decades and was located in Evanston, Illinois. They are now made by Conn-Selmer in several colors.

The letter D in the patent No. D115616 refers to a design patent (as opposed to a new invention) relating to the overall look and configuration of the instrument. Patented July 11, 1939 by Fitchhorn and for a duration of 14 years. The patent is titled "Design for a Musical Instrument of a Flute-Like Nature" and shows a front and side view of the familiar song flute, but without the descriptive details that would normally be found in an original invention patent.

The similarity to a recorder is more than superficial. The wide mouth-end of the instrument narrows to a relatively tiny hole in the foot end, thus imitating the recorder's inverted conical bore. The range of the Song

Flute is a 9th, from  $c^1$  to  $d^2$ . Fingering for the C Major scale is a simple progression with no cross fingerings. Accidentals are available using alternate fingerings.

In contrast to a recorder, the Song Flute's range is limited. Overblowing is not possible. The flute comes with a fingering chart and a few introductory tunes.



From the [VanderCook College of Music website](#):

*Elver J. Fitchhorn was born in Pulaski County, Indiana on July 3, 1896. He was a former French horn player with the John Phillip Sousa band. Early in his career, he played violin in theaters. He took classes at VanderCook School of Music, entering in September 1915, up to 1936. He studied personally with Hale VanderCook. Fitchhorn was regarded as the "father of the pre-band instruments" (the saxette and song flute). He also patented a molded plastic fipple-flute in 1937. He was bandmaster in the Delaware, Ohio City Schools from 1928 to 1938. Later he served as educational director for C.G. Conn Ltd. In 1936 the School Musician rated him one of the 10 outstanding band*

masters in the United States. He received the National Band Association citation of excellence in 1976. He died in 1985 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Description by Conn:

### Conn Song Flute

The pre-band instrument that's preferred by many leading educators.

Designed to fit small hands, the Conn Song Flute offers accurate intonation over a full octave scale from C to D. Needs no tuning.

Black, one-piece plastic construction. Individually packaged with instructions.

- 981 Conn Song Flute
- 984 Conn Song Flute Instruction Book

### Conn Song Flute Carrying Bag

Attractive black vinyl bag that complements the Song Flute.

Protects the instrument and helps keep it clean.

- 982 Song Flute Carrying Bag
- 983 Conn Song Flute Desk Stand



<p><i>Fitchhorn</i> <b>SONG FLUTE</b> <i>Easy to Play</i></p>	 <p>A REAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENT • NOT A TOY</p>
 <p>THE IDEAL INSTRUMENT FOR MUSICAL TRAINING!</p>	<p><i>Always in tune!</i></p>
<p><i>Fitchhorn</i> <b>SONG FLUTE</b> <i>Easy to Play</i></p>	 <p>A REAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENT • NOT A TOY</p>
 <p>POPULAR INSTRUMENT FOR YOUNG AND OLD</p>	<p><i>Pure flute-like tone!</i></p>

THE WHOLE FAMILY CAN HAVE FUN WITH A...

# SONG FLUTE

THE WHOLE FAMILY CAN HAVE FUN WITH A...

MAKES REAL MUSIC  
PLAYS IN KEY OF C  
FINGERS EASILY  
TRAINS THE EAR

*IT'S EASY TO PLAY - THE SONG FLUTE WAY!*

THE SONG FLUTE COMPANY 1810 RIDGE AVE. EVANSTON, ILL.



# have fun Song Flute swingin' on a

## AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3

It isn't even necessary to know one note from another to play the Song Flute!  
With your right thumb, push up your Song Flute by the small end - the one tilted side facing you. Then put the mouthpiece between your lips - but not between your teeth - and with your tongue forming the word "hon," blow steadily. When all holes are open, as they are now, you produce the highest note on the Song Flute.

Now, depress the Song Flute from your lips and look at the "Thumb" chart at the right. As shown, put your left thumb over the single underside hole. Place fingers 1, 2, 3 of your left hand over the three top holes as shown in the "Left Hand" chart. Put your right thumb on the rest provided on the opposite side, and then place right-hand fingers 1, 2, 3, 4 in the "Right Hand" chart over the holes provided for them. When all holes are covered, as they are now, you produce the lowest note on the Song Flute. Okay? Let's try the Song Flute from top to bottom. Put the Song Flute between your lips again. All set?

## LET'S GO DOWN THE SONG FLUTE

We'll go down from the top note as before. Blow "hon" each time.  
Place left thumb on bottom hole (1).  
Add 1st finger left hand (2).  
Add 2nd finger left hand (3).  
Add 3rd finger left hand (4).  
That's all for left hand. Place right thumb on the rest provided.  
Add 1st finger right hand (5).  
Keep adding one at a time, until you're out of fingers.

## WHAT DID WE DO?

Look at the "Musical Scale" chart at the right. See what we just did? We went from high "D" down to middle "C." Notes that solid dots indicate holes covered by fingers, and open dots tell which holes to leave uncovered. Each note as it is played for the first time in a melody is indicated by "1", "2", or a number. That's the way Song Flute music is scored. If you don't know the notes, just follow the numbers.

Look at the "Accidentals" chart and you will see how sharp and flat are played and how Song Flute music is marked to indicate them.

## THIS IS GOOD NEWS

If you're a little lousy on musical notation (quarter notes, half notes, time markings and the like), and want some additional Song Flute notes, too, just give your dealer 12¢ for a copy of "Play with a Song Flute." This exciting book tells all about musical notation and contains 18 popular songs tailored for Song Flute, just like those on the next page.

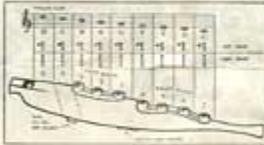


THUMB



LEFT HAND

RIGHT HAND



LET'S PLAY SOME MUSIC . . .

**JINGLE BELLS**

SONG FLUTE

Jin-gle bells, jin-gle bells, jin-gle all the way, — Oh what fun it  
 is to ride in a one horse o-pen sleigh — Jin-gle bells, jin-gle bells,  
 jin-gle all the way, — Oh what fun it is to ride in a one horse o-pen sleigh.

**JOY TO THE WORLD** Arr. by E. J. FITCHERMAN  
REV. E. A. SWEET, D.D., A.M.

Upper Part DUET

1

Lower Part

2

**MUSIC IN THE AIR—TRIO** Arr. by E. J. FITCHERMAN  
REV. E. A. SWEET, D.D., A.M.

Upper Part NEW NOTE—F sharp

1

Middle Part

2

Lower Part

3

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**ECHOES OF THE TREES**

Solo with Piano accompaniment English Folk Dance

SONG FLUTE

PIANO

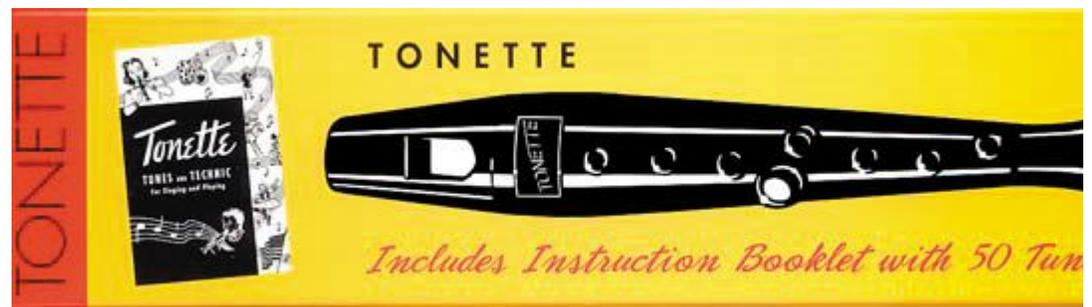
*a little slower*

*a little slower*

## Tonette

The Tonette Company made a similar flute, but with some variations. This was invented by Ziegner Swanson ca. 1938 and distributed by Chicago Musical Instrument Co.

The Tonette is actually a vessel flute in the manner of an elongated ocarina. The bottom end is closed (even though there is a decorative flared bell) on some models, as opposed to the open end of the Song Flute. The mouthpiece is removable for cleaning the interior and for adjusting pitch.





## Flutophone

The Flutophone is currently distributed by Hohner and by Trophy Music, a division of Grover Music Products. I have not seen one up close to see if it has an open or closed end.

## \*Flutophone #S9636

Approximately 11" long with a full chromatic scale in low C, the flutophone is shaped like a clarinet with raised finger guides for easier playing. For the more advanced players, a traditional fingering chart is included.

Age 3 and Up



**Best  
Seller!**



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