

To : David Gibson , Globe Institute San Francisco

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From: Galia Gatt Ginzberg , Sound Healing 2016 Summer Course

The Native American Flute- The Vibration of the Heart

Next to the drum, the most important Native American instrument is the flute.

The Native American flute construction is significantly different than the African, Asian or European flutes.

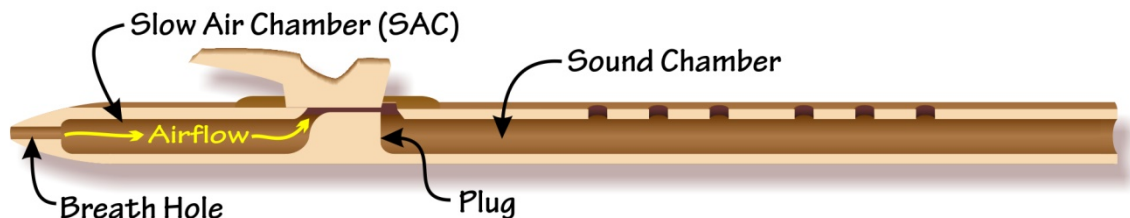
Flutes in general are at least 33 thousands yrs old. The Bones flutes are 60 thousands yrs old. The Native American flute in the past was not allowed for a period of time, by the government in most parts of USA. So, the elders of the tribes kept the traditional alive. The Renaissance started in the 1900's.

Flutes were used for different dances and spirit calling ceremonies, for entertainment while travelling, for courting and playing love songs. In sound Healing the flutes are used to reduce heart rate, increase resilience to stress and promote psychological harmony.

The Native American flute has an open finger holes and two chambers , one for collecting the breath of the player and the second creates the sound.

A block on the outside on the instrument directs the player's breath from the first chamber – called "the slow air chamber" into the second chamber called " the sound chamber".

The design of a sound hole at the proximal end of the sound chamber causes air from the player's breath to vibrate. The vibration causes a steady resonance of air pressure in the sound chamber that creates the sound. "Flute is singing with yr breath" (Source: Odell Borg).



(The description is based on definition provided by R. Carlos Nakai/ taken from internet)

Legend of the first flute

A very long time ago there was a young man who was very interested in a beautiful girl. He was always trying to get her attention but she never seems to notice him. Whenever she was present, he would ride his horse proudly, but nothing he did seemed to attract her.

One day when the girl where down by the river, getting water , the young man tried to impress her by diving of rocks and swimming across the river, but again, she paid him no mind.

Rejected, he walked into a nearby old forest and set down at the base of the long dead cedar tree, thinking about the girl, when a woodpecker landed on a hollowed limb that was over his head. The limb had been hollowed overtime from the wind and weather.

The woodpecker began to peck holes...tap...tap...tap...along the length of this hollowed limb, as the woodpecker pecked the limb broke off and felt next to the young man and as the wind blow over this hollow limb, he heard musical voices coming from it. He picked it up and found that when he blew into the limb and covers the holes, he could make beautiful music to match the feeling of his heart. He set there making up haunting melodies.

The young girl heard the music coming from the old growth forest and this soulful sound captured her as she fell in love with her heart music. She fell in love with the young man, who was sitting in the base of the cedar tree, playing this first flute, giving to him by the woodpecker. They went of hand in hand to live happily ever after.

*One of the most popular uses of the Native flute was for attracting mate. The legend also says that once you got a mate, you were to push the flute away, not to attracting someone else.

(Source: Phillip Brown Bear)

The ancient Native American, did not have a written music language. Their songs and playing techniques were passed down from generation to generation in disciplined ritual and practice. Individual styles were developed through experimentations and imitation of sounds heard in nature. The music came spontaneously "from the heart".

Playing the flute is a way to connect to people, nature and spirit. The Native American flute is a low tech and simple to learn. Anyone can create soulful expressive melodies.

The breath is the life force, a physical expression of one's experience and feeling.

When you play , you directly project yourself through this wonderful piece of wood, bringing it to life and bringing yr life to the world, that is what the ancient ones had in mind when they created this instrument.