


A (Simplified) Flute History

Florida State University Summer Music Camps Flute Master Class 2012
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Medieval (500 – 1400)	900s	The earliest depiction of the transverse flute in Western culture originated in tenth century Byzantium.	
	1300s	The rising presence of the transverse flute is indicated through an increased appearance of the instrument in period art.	
Renaissance (1400 - 1600)	1500s	Flutes appear in many sizes in the sixteenth century. Renaissance instruments performed in consorts of like instruments. The flute consort generally consisted of three different sizes of flutes pitched a fifth apart.	
	Pre 1600	Cylindrical with mouth hole and six finger holes	
	1600	Flutes, now often referred to as fifes, are frequently used in military and ceremonial ensembles throughout England, France, Italy and Germany	
Baroque (1600 - 1750)	1660 – 1700	Conical bore and d# key added (attributed to Hotteterre family)	
	1720s	4-section flutes, <i>corps de réchange</i>, extension to low c'. Adjustments to intonation were made via a screw cap register slide (included on the end of the footjoint)	
	1707	Jacques Martin Hotteterre writes the first method book for the Baroque flute: <i>Principles de la flûte traversière</i> .	
	1726	Addition of second Eb key (higher than D#) by Johann Joachim Quantz. Quantz also adds a headjoint tuning slide around this time.	
	1760	London flute makers develop the four-keyed flute (d#, f, g#, Bb). John Just Schuchart is frequently credited with this innovation. Six-keyed flutes, created by makers such as Thomas Lot-Paris, Richard Potter-London and August Grenser-Dresden, evolve from this time and extend the range of the flute to low c.	

FUN FACT: the majority of professional flutists in the 1700s began on the oboe

Classical (1730 – 1820)

1785

Leipzig virtuoso Johann George Tromlitz invents a flute with seven keys. This leads to the standardization of the eight-keyed flute by 1800 (c'' and f').

1820s

FLUTE MANIA strikes Europe

Romantic (1815 - 1910)

1829

Old-system Boehm flute created

1831 – 1832

Boehm, inspired by the flute playing of Charles Nicholson, invents the ringed-key mechanism (or 'conical Boehm' flute). The use of pins and rods allowed for larger, acoustically placed holes.

1847

Boehm replaces the conical bore with a cylindrical and begins creating the instrument from metal instead of wood. Other features

FUN FACT: Boehm's ring key or 'conical Boehm' flute was initially criticized for sounding "more like a trumpet than a flute."

include padded keys, larger tone holes and a parabolic head joint.

1849

Giulio Briccialdi Bb mechanism becomes standard (Bb lever positioned above B natural).

1850

Richard Carte Combination System (Rudall, Carte & Co.) simplifies complicated cross-fingerings by using an open g# and f# fingering, eliminating the thumb keys, as well as making other alterations.

circa 1850

"French" model open hole becomes prominent ("Godefroy perforated key plates.")

Twentieth Century

1924

The silver modified Boehm flute rises to prominence. By 1924, the most popular flute company (Haynes) discontinued production of the wooden flute.

1952

Doriot Anthony Dwyer becomes the first woman to win a principle chair in a major US orchestra.

1960s

Albert Cooper devises the "Cooper scale," easing the intonation inspired woes of flute players around the world.

1970s

Alto and bass flutes are invented.

1980

Invention of the quarter tone flute by Eva Kingma.