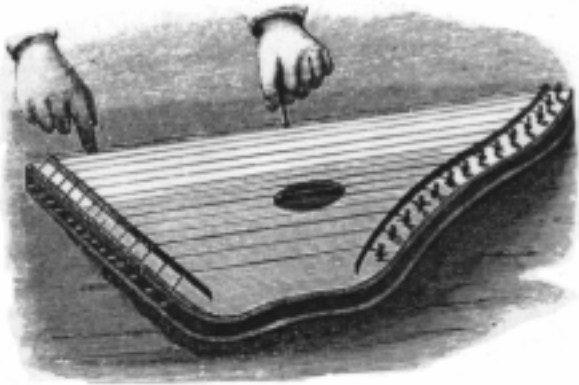


James Jones Instruments

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Your Zither

History

Some of the earliest musical instruments were board or simple zithers. Early instrument makers stretched strings across boards or hollow vessels of various shapes and sizes; the strings being plucked by the fingers. Your zither is different only in that it has a constructed hollow resonating chamber under the strings which amplifies the sound.

Tuning

Your instrument has 2 octaves (15 strings) in the key of G. The lowest G on this instrument is the next G above middle C. The highest G will be two octaves up from that pitch. **I tune this highest G first** using a tuning fork, pitch pipe, piano or an electronic tuner. I now offer inexpensive but accurate electronic tuners which would be a worthwhile investment if your ear is weak. Be careful when you tune the highest note as it is at a greater tension and more likely to break if you're not careful. If you are using an electronic tuner hold the mic very close to these high strings to get a reading. Your next step is to tune the strings **down** the scale.

Care and Strings

Your instrument is finished with satin poly and needs only occasional dusting. I find a medium sized paint brush and a soft rag works well. The strings going down are in different gauges. They are listed on the enclosed tuning chart. If you need replacements see the enclosed accessories sheet and either order individual strings or a complete set.

Replace a string exactly as its neighbors are strung. As the tuning pins (the big ones) work like screws, make sure you back out the pin a couple of turns before reattaching a new wire. Start by inserting the end of the new wire into the hole in the tuning pin and bending the last 1/8 of an inch upwards. Do this carefully as you don't want any ends of the wire which are sharp to prick unsuspecting little fingers. With the tuning wrench wind on a couple of revolutions than taking the free end run the wire around the hitch pins on the opposite side of the instrument. Take the free end past the 2nd tuning pin clipping the excess wire off leaving about 1" for attaching to and winding on the second tuning pin. A good needle-nosed pliers and a wire clipper make the job easier. Make sure when tightening the new strings that it makes good contact on the two saddles on either side of the instrument. This will be accomplished by insuring that the string winds in on the bottom of the tuning pin.

Playing Music

The enclosed tunes are in tablature which will enable you to easily pick out the melodies by picking the strings above the dots in sequence from left to right. Occasionally the cards don't fit quite right. You may need to trim them down with a matte knife or scissors. The notes are indicated but their duration or how long to play each is not so you must rely on your familiarity with the tune. I recommend that after learning a tune using the sheet, try to play the tune with the sheet next to the instrument rather than under the strings. The next step would be to play by memory. Eventually you should learn to read real musical notes as it will open up the whole world of music.

James

For additional information on other musical instruments I build which include: wooden slit drums, bowed psalteries, hammer dulcimers, Irish bouzoukis, harps, mandolins, mountain dulcimers, and custom guitars visit my web site.

Need more zithers, tune cards, case etc? Visit jamesjonesinstruments.com

Making Your Own Tune Sheets

- 1) Make and save extra copies of this master
- 2) Cut out
- 3) Place under strings
- 4) Try to figure out your tune
- 5) Use a pencil to mark note through strings when you think you have it right
- 6) Move left to right connecting dots with lines
- 7) When you think you have it right enlarge the dots with a felt tipped pen
- 8) Send me a copy

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Note: You can use a copy of this as a tuning reference. Make sure when tuning you start with the high G

