Flutes Around the World
Introduction

• Musicians around the world perform on what might be called a standard, orchestral flute, but there are other kinds of flutes that are also used by musicians in each culture.

• This presentation will introduce you to flutes around the world and the ensembles that use them, to help you prepare for the April 26-27 GCO concert featuring flutist Rhonda Larson.
Orchestral Flutes: Fast Facts

- Regular flutes are really called *side-blown* or *transverse* flutes because they are held sideways.

- Flute players blow across a hole in the side, rather than into the instrument. The air spins inside the empty tube and produces a whistling sound that we recognize as a flute tone.

- Fingers open and close holes along the flute, which makes the flute longer and shorter to control the *pitch* (highness or lowness of sound).
Orchestral Flutes: Fast Facts

Here is Rhonda Larson playing a regular, orchestral flute. Click on the picture to hear a recording of the musician.

*(this will redirect you to an online mp3 recording).*

Here is another musician performing on a small flute called a piccolo. *Piccolo* is an Italian word that means “small.” Click on the picture to hear one of the most well-known pieces for piccolo.

*This will redirect you to Youtube.*
A Dizi is played in an ensemble called a Sizhu: a group that uses stringed (silk) instruments and wood or bamboo flutes, and performs in tea houses throughout China.

Click the picture to hear this group.

A traditional Chinese flute is called a Dizi.

Click the picture to hear this instrument.
Flutes in Japan: The Shakuhachi

- A **shakuhachi** is an end-blown flute. It is usually played by Buddhist monks.

- The word *shakuhachi* is the measurement that tells the musician how long to cut the bamboo when making the instrument.

- The music is believed to bring spiritual and physical healing to the listener. The basket is worn on the head to protect the musician from unwanted negative energy.

*Click the picture to hear a recording.*
South America

The Andes Mountains run along the west coast of South America. Two common flutes from this mountain range are the Tarka and the Zampoña (pan flute).

A Tarka is an end-blown flute from Bolivia. It is carved from wood and decorated with traditional images. 

Click the picture to hear a recording of the tarka.

A pan-flute or Zampoña is the most common flute from the Andes Mountains. It is made by cutting bamboo to different lengths and attaching them longest to shortest.

Click the picture to hear the Zampoña.
Native America

Many Native American Indian tribes play end-blown flutes in religious ceremonies.

*Click the picture to hear a recording.*
Ireland

- Traditional Irish music uses two kinds of flutes: a transverse or side-blown flute (right) and an end-blown flute called a penny whistle. Both instruments are used in a lot of different Irish music, and are usually played in pubs or restaurants.

*Click on each picture to hear recordings*
Hawaii: The Nose Flute
(yes, that’s right – the nose flute)

This one does not need too much explanation.

Click on the picture to hear a recording.

Here is another type of ancient nose flute from Africa. Blow through your nose while keeping your mouth open, and change the shape of your mouth to change pitch.

Click on the picture (if you dare) to hear a recording.
In Your Own School

- In elementary school you probably played (or are learning to play) a recorder. This is another type of flute.

- Although we may think of a recorder as a toy instrument, it is actually thousands of years old. In fact, it was the instrument that helped musicians create the modern flute. And, when composers like Bach and Handel wrote music for flute, they really meant recorder because the side-blown or transverse flute had not yet been invented.

- Click on the picture to hear a recorder ensemble and look at all of the different sizes of recorders.
Suggestions for Additional Activities

- We hope you enjoyed this presentation. As additional activities, we suggest:
  - Find world music for older students to perform on recorders. A suitable example is *Firefly* (Japanese folk song, arranged by Carol King, in *Recorder Routes Vol. 1*).
  - Find instructions to make your own flute or panflute from straws, PVC or other materials.

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