

Hurrian Hymn – The Oldest Written Song – NAF (Extended Range)

Classical notation for E–minor pentatonic flute (extended range)

*Interpreted by Richard Dumbrill
Arranged by Clint Goss*

♩ = 120

Melody

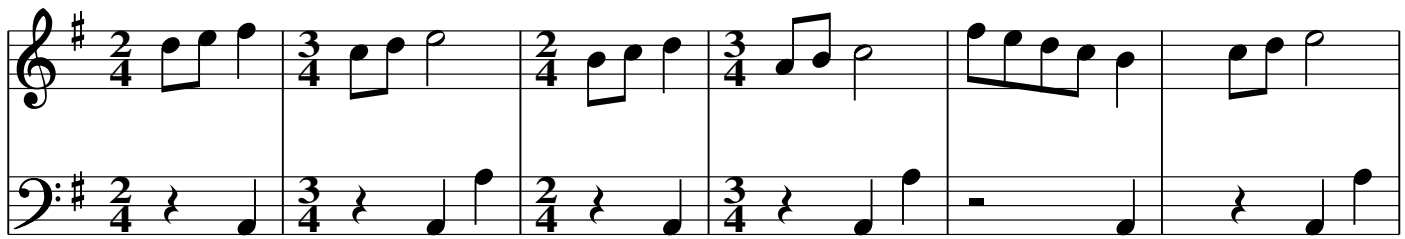
The first system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Melody' and is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a 4/4 time signature, followed by a 3/4 time signature, and returns to 4/4. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff is labeled 'Drum' and is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp. It features a simple rhythmic accompaniment with rests and quarter notes.

The second system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. It features a continuous eighth-note melody. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp, featuring a continuous eighth-note accompaniment.

The third system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. It begins with a 2/4 time signature, changes to 4/4, and returns to 2/4. The melody includes eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp, featuring a simple rhythmic accompaniment.

The fourth system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. It features a 3/4 time signature, followed by 2/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 3/4. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp, featuring a simple rhythmic accompaniment.

The fifth system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. It features a 2/4 time signature, followed by 3/4, 2/4, and 3/4. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp, featuring a simple rhythmic accompaniment.



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French archeologists excavated a clay tablet in the early 1950's which is believed to be "sheet music" for this Hurrian Hymn. It is currently the oldest known written music.

The tablet was excavated from the site of the ancient city Ugarit, the current Ras Shamra, a few miles North of Latakia in Syria. It is dated to about 1400 BC and is written with cuneiform signs in the Hurrian language. It records a hymn to the goddess Nikkal, wife of the moon god. The tablet is broken and water-damaged, and at least four groups of scholars have attempted to interpret the music.

This version is based on the interpretation of Dr. Richard Dumbrill. See <http://www.kingdavidsharp.com/pages/sacred.htm>. While Dumbrill's interpretation is highly conjectural, it is widely believed that the notation of the music refers to diatonic intervals and a scale within a particular mode.

Another interpretation was made by Dr. Anne Kilmer. See <http://www.webster.sk.ca/greenwich/evidence.htm>.

I arranged this version for Native American Flute and Drum (two drums of different tones). It is written in Classical notation for an E-minor flute. The melody in this version has been preserved, but will only be playable on a Native American Flute with extended range and clear notes in the upper register.

– Clint Goss, July 16, 2002.