

OVERTONE II (PVC)

The following, omitted from the first file for brevity, is largely attributable to correspondences with Ben Sorenson over the last few years. Ben bills himself as a folklorist but is also a trained musician who has studied at length with premier Fujara players and makers in Slovakia.

The “Tali” system

This is the traditional system for locating hole positions on a number of different folk flutes. It probably results from repeatedly folding a string, a lot of experiment and certainly not from calculator bashing. Divide the nominal length of the tube, which determines its pedal tone, by fourteen resulting in fourteen “tali”. Starting at the bottom, on the second tali add the inside diameter of the bore and place the first hole. On the third tali up add the diameter of the first hole and place the second hole. The third hole is four tali from the bottom. Notice this does not tell you what the size of the holes is only their position. Drill the hole small and enlarge it gradually (sharpen) until it focuses. If it does not focus (flat) and becomes too big you will have to move the hole. UP sharpens and makes the hole smaller.

Hole Repair (with epoxy putty)

Take a short piece of pipe the next smaller size of that you wish to repair and cut a slit out of it so when compressed it will fit inside the bigger pipe. You can heat this short piece to shape it if need be. Tap it inside and under the hole you wish to repair. This provides a smooth backing for the patch. Chamfer the offending hole both inside and out to provide a flange for the epoxy putty to grab. Chamfering results in a squashed hourglass shape of the epoxy plug that is locked into the pipe. It is possible to make completely invisible repair, both inside and out. When the epoxy has set drive the backing piece out. The beauty of epoxy putty, although expensive, is it sets hard in a few minutes allowing you to press on.

EVALUATION (of the finished project)

Evaluation parameters for overtone flute

Plays E outright without jumping and sustains without dropping off

Trill second A

The “mumble” first four tones though weak must be musically useful

The next octave must be clean and in tune.

The E in this octave trill able from its hole or from top hole

The D in this octave has vibrato from top hole.

The second octave must have a trill able A, and a trill able B&C

Both G's have vibrato from top hole.

The D&F vibrato on second hole

The last steps D—G chromatic without half holing.

After this G there should be a strained D

Unused G (all holes closed) should equal G (all holes open) with change in timbre.

These are rigid (take no prisoner) test parameters. Most instruments will have problems meeting all of them. If yours does not do not despair there is more pipe.

An Opinion of the FINISHED PRODUCT

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Fri Apr 6, 2007 6:27 pm (PST)

Hi Joe,

the plastic PVC fujara has a wicked voice!!!! It is as well tuned as a fujara can possibly be without moving parts- the funny thing is that I tried it against my Dusan Holik fujara- and that with a tuner- and they came out equal! Now, the Paricka fujara has a lowered A compared to these two, and the high E is a little flat on the P., but it gives my playing a kind of "old world" tone that I actually prefer, though that also depends on my mood! Now, with tuning almost all but completely discussed with the fujaras that I have here and with all fujaras in the world (that no matter what anyone says, getting a fujara to play in equal-temperament is just not possible. the whole thing is about compromise, even if some stores say otherwise. It is what it is, as they say when playing the blues here in Wilmington...) This Riley fujara is an animal all on its own.

For the modern player, this fujara has a dark, recessed, haunting sound that gives a "metallic ring" when overblown- something that wooden fujaras, unless they are made out of teak, just don't do. There is absolutely a sound difference- though not so pronounced as I first thought it would be- from a wooden fujara. The scatter reminds me of the scatter that I found on the largest fujaras- one being almost two and a half meters tall- but this from a fujara that is actually about 170cm-175cm! It does not spike like a fujara from Lubo Paricka or Pavol Smutny would, but it starts with a windy, intense type of rush that moves into audible overtones, and those overtones are well-spread out through the spectrum of a good scatter. No holes from top to bottom, though some overtones catch the material and length of the fujara and ring out just a little bit more- more because of the material than anything. Getting used to controlling this is not hard, and once that is accomplished, the fujara's tone is indistinguishable from a traditional one. But, this takes some getting used to, and I am sure that not all fujaras from him do this. The cool thing is that these are PVC fujaras that one expects to be consistent from instrument to instrument- but I don't think that it is! No fujara is better or worse- they are all consistent, but each is still different and still bear the maker's "sound." I bet that this is true of all fujaras, wood or plastic.

The finger holes are DIFFERENT from a wooden fujara: The bottom two are so far apart that you have to spend some time adjusting to the new measure. Imagine the first time you play a 7 or 8 string guitar after playing 6 for your whole life... it is about the same on this fujara. No tuning differences, but the hand has to think its positioning through on each note at first. It also, and this is the only bad part, makes some traditional "cifry" (riffs) HARD to play. But, in about ten minutes I was used to it, and playing it like a traditional fujara. Here is the BIZARRE part-

This fujara is, aside from the distance between holes and material, ONE OF THE MOST TRADITIONAL FUJARAS I HAVE EVER PLAYED! A good fujara should play the middle G with both holes open and closed, changing only timbre but not the tuning. MANY wooden fujaras don't do this, but Riley's DOES! Also, The old masters (I just noticed that Mr. Takac is here with us, and he could tell us all about the old masters!!!! At least that is what my friends in Martin say, that he is VERY knowledgeable about fujaras... and a very good maker..) were playing the fujara a bit differently than we do today. The fujaras back then could give a thick vibrato on the high D using either the top OR the middle hole, and many players opted for the TOP hole. Today, almost everyone uses the middle hole. (Learn both, because actually EVERY fujara does this, but it is harder on some than others. Holik's fujaras are the hardest fujaras to vibrate the high D on the top hole..It gives you a pleasant timbre change

when your ear demands it...)Riley's fujara does this- and without a problem!

My final conclusion is that this fujara is a good fujara for the beginner, absolutely. For all other fujara players, it is a very good addition to your collection, though I don't see it replacing the good wooden fujaras. It is my opinion that the finger holes will present a challenge to all players, but it is easily overcome with vigilance- and the positioning is necessary to keep it from playing D D# F#.... YIKES! I say that this fujara, for all of its non-traditional clothing, is actually traditional in playing character and therefore makes a great practice fujara, first fujara, beach fujara, and alternate fujara for the professional. I could only tell you more by recording it against my other two fujaras.... and that I will do as soon as I figure out how...

Ben

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