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Billy Horne made his first hurdy-gurdy after he went out to buy one and found they were too expensive for his pocket. His love of Finnish woods and a natural flare for the craft of instrument making, combined with his thirty years as a craftsman and performer of traditional music provide a perfect combination of skills necessary to create an instrument with a fine sound and exquisite quality.



More than 300 hours of work goes into the making of one of these instruments. Special tools and jigs are constructed, formers made and woods specially selected for the wide variety of uses the hurdy-gurdy demands to achieve the best possible acoustic and playing qualities.

Attention to detail, finish, and the overall handling of the hurdy-gurdy have brought Billy Hornes instruments to the attention of many people involved in the world of traditional folk music here in Finland



HISTORY & BACKGROUND

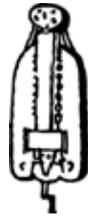
The hurdy-gurdy dates back to the 12th century, when it was first used in the church. Over the ages it has been a popular instrument for dance music and an instrument of beggars, although during the 18th century it was played by the French nobility. Today the hurdy-gurdy is enjoying a popular revival in many countries.



early 12th



13th



14th - 15th



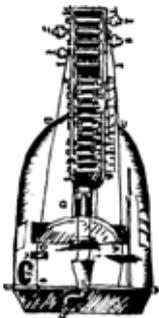
16th - 17th



18th - 19th century



HOW THE HURDY GURDY WORKS



The hurdy-gurdy is basically a violin played with a wheel instead of a bow and fitted with a keyboard similar to that of a piano. The melody is played on a single string which has a range of two octaves. There are also three or four drone strings played one note each, which gives a basic harmony and greatly adds to the richness of the sound. The strings pass over a resin-coated wheel which sets them vibrating. At the point where the strings touch the wheel they are wrapped with cotton wool in order to stop them wearing away.

There can also be two melody strings playing either in unison or in octaves, depending on the way the instrument is set up. The effect of the drone is to make the hurdy-gurdy sound like the bagpipes, of which it is the string equivalent.



There are two rows of keys, the black row giving the naturals and the upper white row giving the accidentals. Each key is fitted with a small piece of wood, the tangent, which presses against the melody to give a specific note. The keys and tangents are mounted in the key-box and covered by a lid.

One of the drone strings passes over a small loose bridge of wood called the *chien* or dog, presumably from the barking sound it makes. The *chien* is finely balanced so that a little extra impetus given to the wheel causes it to vibrate against the soundboard, giving a characteristic buzz. Done in time with the music it strengthens the rhythmic pulse, while at the same time adding to the general excitement of the sound.



ORDER INFORMATION

All illustrated instruments made to order. Using a selection of various and different Finnish woods for backs, sides, headstocks, keys, keyboards, endblocks, linings and pegs.

Decoration to suit, the choice and selection of woods will add to the instrument's own natural beauty.

Soundboards (top) are mainly from spruce, but older instruments used maple or other such hardwoods, pine may also be used.

The selection of woods :

Maple, spruce, ash, alder, birch, juniper, oak, aspen, willow, lime, apple tree, cherry tree and rowan.

Included as an extra is a hard foam lined case.



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Method booklet and information cassette are additional but essential. Basic tuition is available.