



# Eyster Lyres

Care & Instruction  
Book



**The Eyster Lyre Company**

*A Family of Musical Instrument Makers*

In our workshop, we strive to provide you with pentatonic and diatonic instruments having artistic and functional design, even tone, and durability.



# The Purpose and Benefit of this Booklet

This booklet serves as a brief introduction to the lyre. It is not a teaching manual. There are many fine lyre teachers throughout the United States. Most are members of the Lyre Association of North America ([lyreamerica.net](http://lyreamerica.net), 141 Davis Road, Vienna, Maine 04360). We also highly recommend, "You and Your Kinderlyre" by Mary Lynn Channer available from [CamdenRose.com](http://CamdenRose.com) or your toy & music retailer.

## Getting Started

Please inspect your lyre upon delivery. We will repair or replace any lyres that are damaged during shipment. If any strings are broken or the tuning wrench is missing, contact [CamdenRose.com](http://CamdenRose.com) (734-995-1400) immediately for replacement.

Your lyre will probably need to be tuned when you receive it. The combination of changes in temperature and vicissitudes of travel may cause the strings to stretch out. Please read the following sections on string tuning below. Please note that the instrument may require frequent re-tuning for the first few days as the strings stretch. After that, the lyre will remain in tune from weeks to months at a time.

The lyre is, above all, a tone creator. Its notes vibrate sweetly and call to attention the wonder of sound, without the need to plug into an electric socket. In addition to playing songs, you can just delight in listening to the beauty of the individual tones as they materialize and then softly vanish.

## History of the Lyre

Originating in ancient Mesopotamia five thousand years ago, the lyre (pronounced "līr" [rhymes with "fire"]) is a stringed instrument in which the multiple strings lie in the same plane as the body of the instrument. The harp, in contrast, has strings that run perpendicular to the body.

Eight early lyres have been excavated from the City of Ur in Iraq. One is on display at the University Museum in Philadelphia. The instrument known in the bible as King David's harp was most likely a lyre.



While lyres were made and played throughout the ancient world, they had their greatest significance among the Greeks. According to myth, Hermes, the Messenger of the Gods, created the first lyre out of a tortoise shell and seven strands of sheep gut. He gave it to the Sun God Apollo, who proclaimed, "With this instrument I can comfort sorrow, relive past glories, and melt the heart of stone. I think it will sing of itself for me the moment I touch it."

The lyre's role in Greek culture is confirmed by its use in poetry and theatre. Homer himself recited *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* to the accompaniment of the lyre and every Athenian school child took daily lyre lessons.

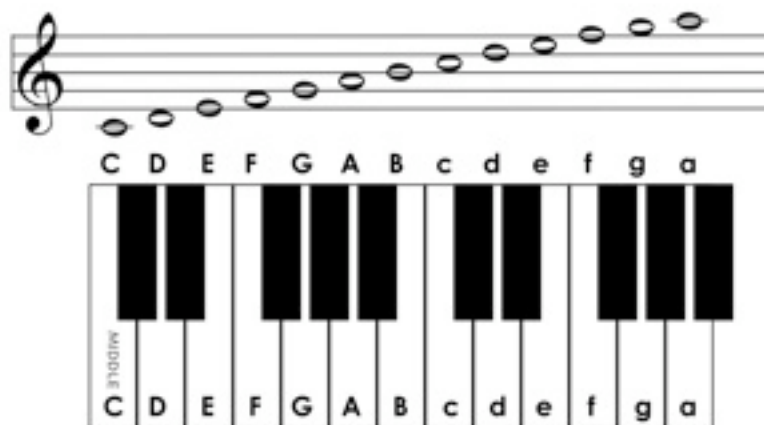
Interest in the lyre re-emerged at the beginning of the Twentieth Century due to the encouragement of Educator/Philosopher Rudolf Steiner. He recommended the pentatonic scale for children. Unlike diatonic instruments, all combinations of notes on pentatonic instruments are pleasing.

The lyre, with its rich Classical tradition and its pentatonic tuning serves as a perfect instrument for introducing music to children of all ages, providing musical accompaniment to ceremonies and festivals, and a focusing source for quiet meditation. It has also shown utility in music therapy for the physically and mentally handicapped, as well as for sick children and adults.

## Tuning Your Lyre

**DO NOT OVER-TIGHTEN! THE STRING WILL BREAK** Because the string will be tightened to 80% of breaking tension, frequently pluck the string while tuning, listening for the correct pitch.

If you have a piano, recorder, some other instrument, or a pitch pipe or electronic tuner, you can easily tune your lyre, using the following chart. The numbers below the piano keyboard represent the lyre strings, from longest (1) to shortest. Each lyre has its own tuning. For example. The longest (and lowest) string on the Sweet Spring lyre is tuned to "G", while the lowest string on the Meadow Lyre is "D".



Spring Lyre Tuning		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		A	G	E	D	C	A	G

Meadow Lyre Tuning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	E	D	B	A	G	E	D

Seasons Diatonic Lyre Tuning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	G	A	E	F	C	D	A	B	F	G	C	D	E

## A Simple Song

Below is a song you can play right away. The #1 string produces the lowest note on your lyre. It is easily identified as the longest string on the lyre.

### Amazing Grace

for the Spring Lyre or Meadow Lyre

1 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 2 1  
1 3 5 4 3 5 6 6  
5 6 6 5 4 3 5 4 3 2 1  
1 3 5 4 3 5 4 3

### Amazing Grace

for the Seasons Lyre

2 5 7 6 5 7 6 5 3 2  
2 5 7 6 5 7 9 9  
7 9 9 7 6 5 7 6 5 3 2  
2 5 7 6 5 7 6 5 3 2

## Replacement Strings

Replacement strings are available from the place where you purchased the lyre or can be obtained from most guitar stores. They are identified by their gauge. From left to right, they are as follows:

### Sweet Spring

A-.12 G-.12 E-.14 D-.16 C-.17 A-.20 G-.20

### Meadow Music

e-.12 d-.14 B-.16 A-.17 G-.20 E-.24 D-.24

### Season's Muse

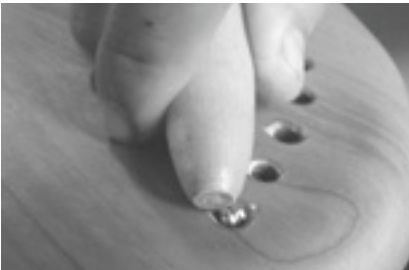
G,A,-.12 E,F,-.14 C,D,-.16 A,B,-.17 F, G -.20 C, D, E,-.24

## Replacing a String

**DO NOT OVER-TIGHTEN - THE STRING WILL BREAK!** Because the string will be tightened to 80% of breaking tension, frequently pluck the string while tuning, listening for the correct pitch.

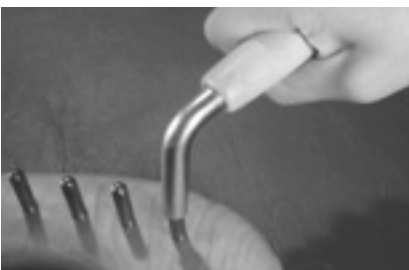
**STEP ONE:** Remove the broken string. You may need to use a nail, a fish hook or other sharp implement to pry out the ball end, if the ball has embedded itself too deeply in the wood. Take care not to lose the brass grommet (If you do lose a grommet, visit [CamdenRose.com](http://CamdenRose.com) or your retailer for a replacement).

**STEP TWO:** Insert the new string through the larger hole in the back of the lyre.



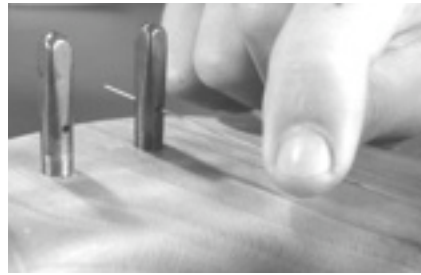
**STEP THREE:** Pull the string through until the ball is tightly lodged in the large bore hole. If it does not fully descend into the hole, push it in with the handle of the tuning wrench.

**STEP FOUR:** Thread the grommet, narrow end first, over the new string so the top of the grommet is flush with the surface of the lyre.



**STEP FIVE:** Turn the pin two times counter-clockwise with your tuning wrench.

STEP SIX: Insert the plain end of the string through the hole in the pin and pull it tight.



STEP SEVEN: Approximately one inch from the pin, bend the string to form a 90 degree angle.



STEP EIGHT: Insert the plain end of the string through the hole in the pin and pull it tight.



STEP NINE: Using the wrench, turn the pin clockwise, wrapping the string around the pin and over the bent section.

STEP TEN: When you reach the pitch you want, pluck it several times. It is normal for it to fall out of tune frequently the first few days, after which time, it should stay in tune for months without needing tuning.

If the pin becomes loose, carefully remove the string and unscrew the pin from the lyre turning it in a counter-clockwise direction until you can remove it. Next place a toothpick or hardwood sliver into the pin hole. REplace the pin and, while inserting some pressure, screw the pin back in in a clockwise direction.

STEP ELEVEN: Bend the extra length of string back and forth as close to the pin as possible.

The unneeded length should eventually snap off, leaving no sharp point exposed, which could prick your finger.



## About the Eyster Lyre Company



For more than fifteen years, Jason and Diana Eyster have been making musical instruments that combine aesthetics, physics, and playability. Joined by their four children, Athena, Teddy, Harold, and Artemis, their home-based business has provided families around the world with lyres, flutes and thumb pianos, while serving as an incomparable home-schooling experience.

As your lyre ages, its tone will improve and its color will mellow to a dark red brown color. Please note that all cherry wood contains mineral deposit streaks. These are not defects, they are natural characteristics of cherry wood. We use great efforts to only purchase lumber that has been harvested by timber mills that are "Sustainable Forestry" certified. This assures us and you that the wood used in Eyster Lyres was procured with a concern for the health of the woodlot combined with assurance of sustaining our precious natural resources for generations to come.

We warrant our lyres for the life of the instrument. If there are any defects in workmanship or materials, we will replace or repair the instrument free of charge. Please contact Camden Rose at [camdenrose.com](http://camdenrose.com). You are responsible for any string breakage (after delivery) and for cracking of the wood due to high temperatures or dry conditions. There is a risk of injury from a string breaking, especially during tuning. Please keep your face, and particularly your eyes, a safe distance away from your lyre, especially while tuning.

Eyster Lyres are exclusively distributed worldwide by Camden Rose Inc. Camden Rose is a collective voice of designers, artists, teachers, musicians, craftspeople, and parents, who choose to bring-about a better future for our children. We design and manufacture and distribute simple, elegant and unique wooden and textile toys. Natural materials and USA and Fair Trade manufacturing highlight our "leave no footprint" philosophy. Visit Camden Rose online at [CamdenRose.com](http://CamdenRose.com).

