

The Duduk



(Armenian Double reed)

[Sound Example:](#)



Intro: The Armenian duduk is a very ancient double-reed/cylindrical woodwind with one of the most unique, expressively unequalled, and unmistakable sounds in the whole world.

Main [solo] Instrument: In the key of 'A'
Or Bb [for slow tunes, & D for faster ones]



Idiosyncrasy:

There are basically two performance styles:

- 1. Involves **slow song-like forms**, in which the solo instrument 'sings' over an uninterrupted, quiet pedal tone ['Dam'], played by another duduk player using circular-breathing.
- 2. This style is a louder, with **faster phrasing and more notes**, with a **more 'raw' & 'reedy' sound**. It is more celebratory ['joyful'] and it is generally accompanied by the 'Dohl' [trad. Armenian drum].
- By nature, its mostly mid-range voice-like, 'velvety-yet-airy' tone does not project well over loud or high-harmonic content contexts.
- Favors **Legato** playing...

Other Remarks: The poignant-sounding duduk is essentially a modal instrument [while capable of yielding the complete chromatic scale], effectively favoring its inimitable expressive melodies.

By combining its unique acoustical properties, powerful performance techniques, and the historic struggle of its people, the Duduk conveys a universal 'voice', expressing sensibilities that go beyond geographies, ages, & cultures.

Basic Range:

Actual Sounds

possible

Basic Range

Lipped-Up

Lowest hole (closed with the knee)

Avoid:

- Extreme ranges & /or chromatic passages
- Loud, busy, high-harmonic-spectra content contexts
- Fast, staccato artic. passages

Basic Scales for a Duduk in 'A':

<-- with the knee

<-- with the knee

- Transpose accordingly to G [1 step lower than the above], Bb [1/2 step higher, etc], ...Simile for higher C, D & Eb duduks.