

# The Original Battle Harp by Abbot David Michael

## Introduction

This handcrafted beautifully finished 10 stringed Hebrew Shepherds Harp of David also called a Kinnor is hand-made with quality hardwood for the frame and western red cedar sound board. Abbot David Michael is an Orthodox Franciscan Abbot and has until recently lived at 10,000 foot elevation in the high Rockies of Colorado as a monk in retreat making his harps. He has recently relocated to Eureka Springs, Arkansas for part of the year. <http://pioriofjerusalem.org>

## Description

The Shepherds Harp is a 10-stringed instrument built based on the Temple Harps of King David mentioned in the Psalms of the Bible. It is tuned to the major scale of 'A' (do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do, re, mi) with the two higher strings an octave repeat of the low do' and re' of the scale.

The dimensions of the Shepherds Harp is approximately 5 ½" wide by 28" long by 1 ¼" thick. It is extremely light so they are very easy to carry for travelers, gypsy's, shepherds, mountainmen, backpackers and troubadours. For added ease of carrying, just attach a strap over one end and throw it over your shoulder for hiking and travel. Because of the compact dimensions and light weight of the Shepherds Harp, it can be easily carried most anywhere and even placed in a strong suitcase among your clothes for convenient travel.

## Easy to Play

The Shepherds Harp is a very easy instrument to play. So easy that five year-olds have learned to play songs on the harp in under 2 hours. The original Shepherds Harp is based on the known designs of the Temple Harps of David still being used in the Temple by 132 AD.

Simplicity of playing was paramount in the design of this historic harp. The Shepherds harp can be played one-handed although you can also play with the left hand from the back through the large frame hole. If you are left-handed, the Shepherds



Harp can be easily restrung for left-handed players.

If you do not consider yourself a musician, there is no problem. Learning the Shepherds Harp is very easy and any beginning piano book can be used to help you learn the Mountain Harp. However, if you have no intention of learning to play, the Sheperds Harp is also an original art piece that can be hung on the wall or placed on a stand for viewing. Each Sheperds Harp can come with an optional (extra cost) wood-burned original design that is hand signed (burned in) by the artist Abbot David Michael. As an art piece, it will likely become a topic of discussion as your friends come over for to visit or at parties. It wonderfully accents a well-designed interior decor, complementing many art styles and periods.

#### **In Brief:**

- Materials: Hardwood frame and western cedar back and soundboard.
- Dimensions: Approximately 5 ½" wide, 28" long and 1 ¼" thick.
- Finish: Clear hand rubbed satin to accent the superior wood grain of the instrument
- Scale: Key of A major - do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do, re, mi.
- Tone: Cross between a Celtic Harp and a Guitar.
- Includes: Shepherds Harp and tuning key.
- Playing: Left-handed or right-handed playing.
- Shipping: Priority Mail or other as requested by buyer.
- Payment: PayPal debit transfer or Charge Card through PayPal

#### **History**

What became known as the Shepherds Harp was believed to have come to Ireland by about the 5th century BC and then to America by the 17th century. The Shepherds Harp is thought to have originated in the Sumerian civilization and was carried away by Abraham from Ur to become the primary instrument of Israel. Then it became the Battle Harp of the Trojans, the Celts and finally it is found its way into America.

Sheperds Harps were used at the Battle of Jericho when the Ephrati Prince Joshua commanded the army of Israel with musicians leading in the war against the walled city of Jericho. As the story goes, as the priests and army of Israel sang and played their instruments, the great walls of the city shook and then fell down.

There is also compelling evidence that the Ephrati Hebrews escaped Egypt during the final period of the 18th dynasty Pharaohs and founded the city of Troy. The Trojans were noted as warring against various giants and beasts of their day and they too used music and battle harps to overcome their enemies.



Picture below is Hebrew Temple Harp made of Hawaiian Koa (Acacia wood) made by Abbot David Michael valued at \$800. Six were purchased by 'secret' Levites in Jerusalem in 2002 for use when the Temple is rebuilt in Jerusalem.

The Hebrew Trojans then migrated to Ireland from Troy by about the 6th century BC and became the ruling kings of Ireland. From Ireland, the harp migrated to Scotland by 300 AD and then to America with the arrival of the Scots-Irish in the 1600's. It has reappeared from time to time in Appalachia and the Ozarks in the playing of mountain folk music.

The Shepherds Harp was designed and made to be carried easily into battle. In time as folk music developed in America, the Shepherds Harp became an instrument in its own right and is now reproduced exclusively by the Battleharp Music.

## Materials

The materials I use are common to the area where I make the Mountainman Harp. For the frame, oak, beech, cherry, Koa, alder, and walnut have been preferred woods with great success. For the back and sound board, I often use carefully selected quarter sawn Western Red Cedar which provides a very mellow tone.

This combination of woods and design makes the Shepherds Harps very light and easy for warriors, adults and children to hold and carry. The dimensions of the Mountain Harp are about 6" wide, 28" long and 1.5" thick so it can be easily stored or carried over the shoulder. The strings are a high quality mono-filament nylon like the nylon strings used on guitars.



## How it Sounds

The Shepherds Harps are strung with nylon strings and sounds like a cross between a classical guitar and a Celtic lap harp. Many that hear this harp for the first time comment saying, "Oh what a beautiful tone!" Such a tone produced in such a small sound box has taken years of testing of woods and design to get it just right - perfect for signing the Psalms and love ballads.

## Strings and Tuning

The Shepherds Harp has 10 strings just like the Temple Harps of King David in the Bible called the Kinnor. The strings are strung in a guitar width spacing (1 cm apart) so they can be easily picked with the finger tips or finger nails. This is an easy to play one-handed instrument although you could also use your other hand from the back. The Mountain Harp is tuned to a diatonic scale of A major (do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do) so it can play most folk tunes. The tuning is like the white keys on the piano so it is a great instrument for kids and adults to learn to read and play music. It can also be tuned to A minor if desired. If you already pick a guitar, you likely will adapt to the Shepherds Harp with only a few hours of practice.

## Ornamentation

Each Shepherds Harp is hand made and then an optional (extra cost) original 'wood burned' design can be artistically applied to each harp. No two harps have the same design as no patterns are ever used. Each design is first drawn free-hand lightly in pencil and then the wood burning is applied for detail, cut depth and shading. The effect is as if it was carved with the cuts stained to enhance the picture. Even if you are not a musician, the Shepherds Harps are works of art that can be hung in a room and admired as a conversation piece.<>

## About Abbot David Michael

Abbot David Michael earned his degree in dance, drama and music from the University of Hawaii with High Honors and holds DoDDS K-12 teacher certification in both music and theater. His graduate degrees include a MEd in Education, a MS degree in Information Systems, a DD in Divinity (honorary) and a ThD in Theology. His apprenticeships includes the prestige as a master cabinet maker, a luthier (instrument maker) as taught by George Gilmore (Student of Segovia) and an apprenticeship under Robert Thomas as a sculptor in metals.

David's music profession has taken him on national tours as a vocalist with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of Acts, Jimmy and Carol Owens, Jamie Owens-Collins, Berry McGuire, Pat Boone, Dean Jones and others. His skills at the harp, guitar and flute are accented with a pure tone voice that is often described as angelic while others as an Irish Tenor.

His journey in the Church has taken him through the Baptist Church where he was baptized, the Full Gospel movement where he received the infilling of the Holy Spirit at age 12 and the Episcopal Church where he was confirmed at age 15. David's father, also a minister, was deeply involved in the Jesus People movement of the 60's and 70's and founded many new works where David grew up in "Christian Communes" until the age of 20.

In 1985, David was ordained into the Personal Prelature of Pope John Paul II as a deacon, then a Priest into the Episcopal Church in 1992 and a Bishop into American Orthodoxy in 2000 with lines to the Syro-Chaldean and American Orthodox jurisdictions. He has served as a Wing Chaplain for the CAP/USAF over the State of Hawaii for 8 years and now serves as the Piror for the Priory of Jerusalem. His background in music includes the writing of over 50 songs and 2 operas for the stage. David has also worked with renown Dr. Arthur Harvey in using music for the healing of the mind and body. He is also is a published author with 5 books in print and now offers seminars and retreats as requested.

Notwithstanding, his first love has always been to return to the harp and sing the Psalms of David to his beloved creator, YHWH.

