Shakuhachi

One of the most popular and oldest of the Japanese fue

FUE is the Japanese word for flute, and refers to a class of flutes native to Japan. Fue come in many varieties, but are generally high-pitched and made of a bamboo called shinobue. The most popular of the fue is the shakuhachi.

Fue are traditionally broken up into two basic categories – the transverse flute and the end-blown flute. Transverse flutes are held to the side, with the musician blowing across a hole near one end; end-blown flutes are held vertically and the musician blows into one end.

The earliest fue may have developed from pitch pipes called paixiao in Chinese. The gabachi instruments eventually made its way over to Japan from China in the fifth century, becoming prevalent during the Nara Period.

Soon after the introduction of fue instruments, members of the Fuke sect of Zen Buddhism made normal use of the shakuhachi. These “priests of nothingness” viewed the instruments as spiritual tools, using them for suizen, or “blowing meditation”. Modern fue performance may feature a soloist or involve either a chamber or large ensemble of the instruments.

from Wikipedia.org
JEAN SIBELIUS was born in Finland. He started music lessons early and studied extensively in his native land, in Berlin and in Vienna. He wanted to be a professional violinist, but this was not to be. In 1893, he became interested in the Kalevala legends of Finland and wrote the Kullervo Symphony, which is based on these tales. It made him famous. The country’s government voted to pay him a state grant for the rest of his life. He devoted himself to composing and conducting, writing seven symphonies and several other important works.

Sibelius was known as one of the foremost composers of nationalist music – that is, pieces that celebrate and describe a particular country. Finlandia is probably his most well known work. Its theme has become a hymn and is included in many Protestant hymnals. Finlandia became the theme of the Finnish Resistance during World War II.

As time went on, Sibelius’ music was less and less appreciated. He finally stopped composing and, living quietly in the country, wrote nothing for the last 31 years of his life.