THE HARP OF AEOLUS

This Woodstock Windharp is a unique way to listen to the wind.

The range of sounds produced by your windharp are called aeolian tones, after Aeolus, the Greek god of wind. Legend has it that the first windharp was heard when a tortoise shell washed up on the beach, and the wind whistled through the string-like remains of the creature that once lived inside. The sound that was heard was a new kind of mysterious music.

Over time, the wind harp was adapted into many forms. The principle of the windharp (or aeolian harp) has been spoken of since the time of King David, but fell out of favor in the Middle Ages when one could be suspected of sorcery for owning a harp that played itself.

The windharp reached new popularity in the Victorian era, when Keats, Wordsworth and Coleridge all referred to it in their poetry. We've adapted the basic Victorian design for use today. Place the harp in an open window, and let the wind blow across the strings. Wait patiently, and you'll be treated to a magical, mysterious performance.
Patience will yield rich rewards.

To listen properly to the Woodstock Windharp, patience is a virtue. This is not an instrument that will whistle incessantly; rather, it will provide you with magical moments that can not be predicted. For the best success with your Woodstock Windharp, place it string side up in a window sash, and make sure the wind has a clear path to the strings. Close the window to a few inches above the strings, for the wind needs only a very narrow tunnel through which to pass to create sound. Experiment by leaving the window open at different heights to change the path the wind takes.

We've provided a tuning key for changing the sound of your harp. Different levels of tension will change the sound. Keep changing the tension until the harp creates a sound that you find most pleasing. Be careful not to make the strings too loose or too tight.

The hardwood parts on your windharp have a durable oil finish. If they get dried out, revitalize the wood with danish or lemon oil. Regular oiling will help prevent the aging of the wood. Don't expose your harp to heavy rain, as the wood may warp and the strings loosen.
Windharp Science

Exactly how a windharp makes sound is still something of a mystery.

It is only in the last hundred years that we've come to better understand how aeolian tones are generated. When the wind blows across the stretched string, wind eddies are created between the string. Imagine the string were a whip swishing through the air.

Actually, the principle of the windharp is similar to the airfoil that is created when an airplane lifts off. The wind both pushes and pulls the string as it blows past it. When the string can no longer resist the turbulence, it is released, and the movement of the string back to its original position creates sound. However, a complete explanation of the phenomenon of windharps continues to challenge modern science.
“And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely fram’d,
That tremble into thought, as o’er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the soul of each, and God of all?”

From *The Eolian Harp* (1795)
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Since 1979, musician/instrument designer
Garry Kvistad has been tuning Woodstock Chimes.
This Woodstock Windharp is a natural extension of his art,
combining his love for music and history with his
ability to create unique musical instruments.

Handcrafted in
New York’s Hudson Valley by
Woodstock Percussion, Inc.

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