

## Notes for the Sansula Hymnal

The Sansula is a magical new kind of 9-tined kalimba made by Peter Hokema in Germany. Mounted on a frame drum, it makes a uniquely beautiful sound and is easy for hands to hold around the frame. The Sansula ships from Germany in a sort of A minor pentatonic scale which has the notes of the Japanese Akebono scale, which is, from bottom to top: A C E F A A B C E, or in terms of intervals relative to the root A: 1 3- 5 6- 1 1 2 3- 5. I have invented several interesting tunings for the Sansula, including the Beautiful E Tuning, which is, from bottom to top: B C# E F# G# A B D# E - or in terms of intervals relative to the root E: 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 7 8. This tuning is more flexible for doing songs which you know in that a) it is the major scale, b) more notes are available since one of the redundant A's has been retuned, and c) it has every interval in the major scale (though not in the same octave - the 6<sup>th</sup> is missing in the upper octave, and the 7<sup>th</sup> is missing in the lower half octave).

As the 7<sup>th</sup> is missing in the lower octave and the 6<sup>th</sup> is missing in the upper octave, there are some difficulties in transcribing hymns or other common songs. Some songs, such as Amazing Grace, fit perfectly in spite of this difficulty. Many other songs, such as Away in a Manger, require some notes that are missing for the Beautiful E-tuned Sansula, but we can finesse the song by putting in notes that harmonize with the melody. If you are trying to play the song as a Sansula solo, it may or may not work. However, if you are singing the song with a strong voice, your voice will carry the song, and the Sansula will harmonize with your voice. As I am not familiar with all the hymns I have translated to the E Sansula, it is possible that you will want to change a note here or there. The hymns are all written in the KTabS (Kalimba Tablature Software) program, and you can purchase this software from: <http://ktabs.theirhouse.org> for \$30. Once you have this program, you will be able to “play” these hymns on your WINDOWS computer both visually and in audio, print to hard copy or PDF, and even edit the hymns if you disagree with my choices for harmony. In some cases, the harmonies I transcribed will be too complex for you to play on the Sansula - if that is the case, decide which note or notes to drop and just remove them by left-clicking on them twice (once to select, the second click removes the note) in the KTabS program.

When I wrote these words for Mary B, this music was unique in the world. There were probably about 10 Sansulas in the Beautiful E tuning (I know of 5, and there could be more, as I have posted a video with tuning instructions on You Tube - just search for “Sansula” and you’ll find it). But certainly nobody is making music on the E-Sansula at this level. If you have a high degree of musical intelligence, you have the opportunity to fly where no one has ever gone before. Enjoy the flight, best of luck, and if you need more assistance, you can find me at:

[Mark@MarkHoldaway.com](mailto:Mark@MarkHoldaway.com)

Take care, we have blessed each others’ lives in this magical moment!

-Mark Holdaway, Kalimba Magic, Seattle, WA, WRAMTA Conference, April 5, 2008