

SECTION VI: NEW TUNINGS

While the Sansula is a unique and beautiful instrument just as it is, you will one day find these nine notes somewhat limiting. When you get to that point, remember to come back here. In addition to the standard Sansula tuning, we introduce three new tunings for the Sansula. We explore each tuning through chords, chord progressions, and a bit of tablature - the modalities we've already used to understand music on the Sansula in standard Am tuning.

Understand that a new tuning is a doorway to a whole new world of Sansula music and musical experience, a world which you are now prepared to enter and explore.

NEW TUNINGS FOR THE SANSULA

After you have been playing your Sansula for a few months, you may get tired of the kinds of things it does. Yes, it has its own song built into it, but if you get tired of that song, it may be time for you to explore alternative tunings.

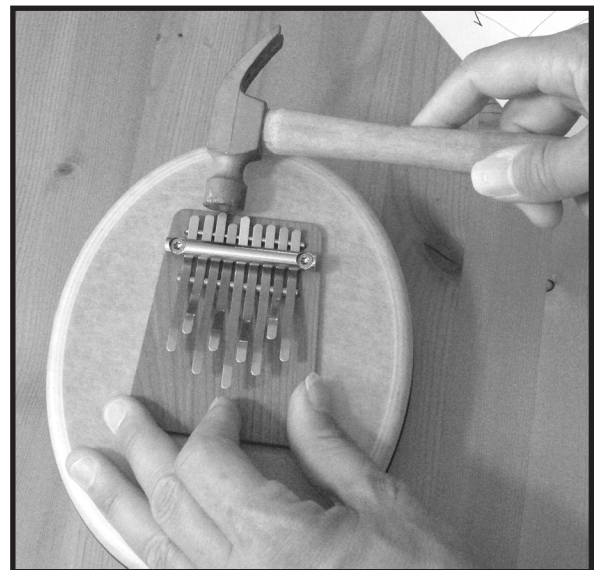
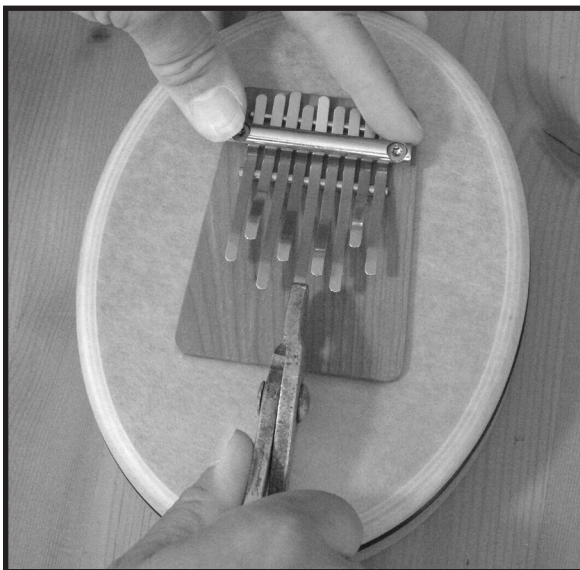
I would estimate that there are well over 100 really good tunings on the Sansula. Some of them are really simple to make - for example, you could take the standard tuning and you could push every tine in by half a step to make it Bb minor instead of A minor - or even push the tines in a whole step to get B minor. There are also many other potential tunings that require only small changes to a few of the tines in the standard tuning. Many of those new tunings will have more harmonic complexity than the standard Sansula tuning. They will sound as beautiful as the standard tuning, but will tend to express a different emotion set. Most of these good tunings have not yet been invented.

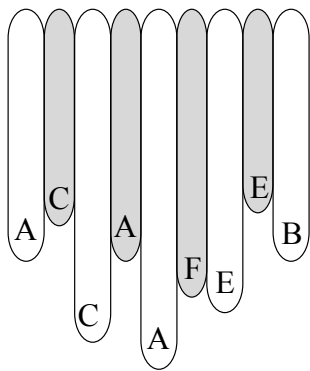
We focus on the standard Am tuning and three alternative tunings: Beautiful E, Heavenly A, and Morocco E. In addition to the basics of explaining the notes involved in each tuning, we also provide sound recordings of each tuning and tablature for some nice riffs. We make a short list of the six most common chords in each tuning, followed by a more comprehensive presentation of the possible chords, and provide some example chord progressions you can use the Sansula chords with.

Retuning a Sansula takes me about 10 minutes, but it can take an inexperienced person an hour or more. You should have an electronic chromatic tuner (they are available for about \$25 these days), you need to know the notes you want to tune the tines to, and you will need either a small hammer or a pair of pliers. I invite you to view a short video on YouTube which illustrates the basics of retuning your Sansula from standard tuning to the Beautiful E tuning:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXx4du0JOYo>

When retuning your Sansula, be very careful that the skin doesn't break! Counter the forces you exert on the tines by holding the kalimba's wood block to minimize stress on the skin. If you aren't confident you can retune, Kalimba Magic has a reasonable kalimba tuning service: see the Kalimba Doctor at <https://shop.kalimbamagic.com>

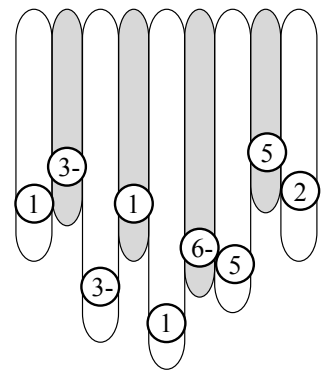




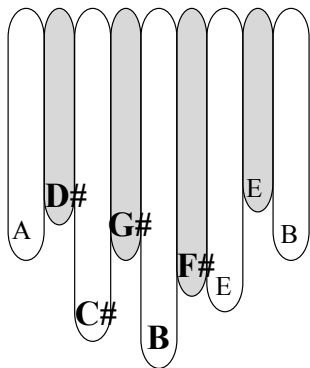
Actual notes in tunings.

The Standard Tuning is an A minor Ake Bono pentatonic scale that is beautiful, melancholy, and mystical sounding. The entire book up to this point has focused on this tuning, but the playing techniques you have learned in the first parts of the book can be applied to any tuning.

CD TRACK 68 -- Standard Tuning.

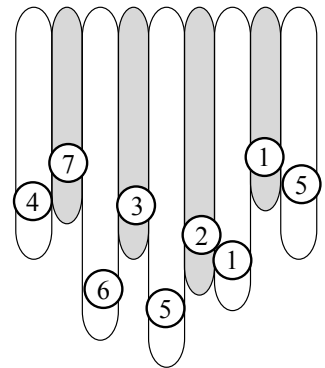


Roles in A minor scale.

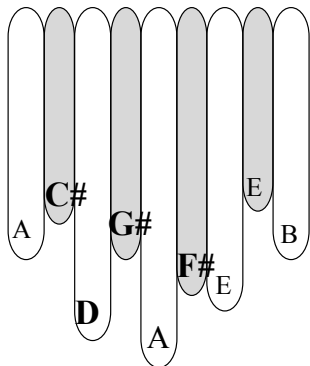
Retuned notes in **Bold**.

The Beautiful E Tuning is magical in a light and airy sort of way. Very happy. This tuning has more musical possibility than the standard A minor tuning, and breaks out of the Sansula's standard sound, yet everything you play still sounds great.

CD TRACK 69 -- Beautiful E Tuning.

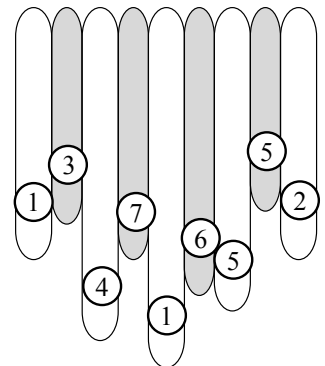


Roles in E major scale.

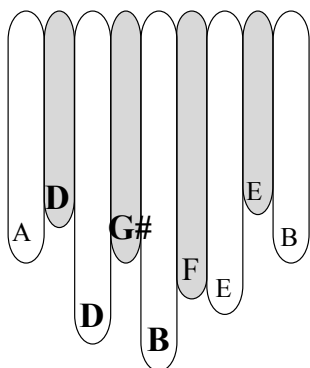


The Heavenly A Tuning was invented by Rick Tarquino. It is very similar in feeling to the Beautiful E tuning: light and airy and beautiful. The left and right sides mirror each other like the wings of a butterfly.

CD TRACK 70 -- Heavenly A Tuning.

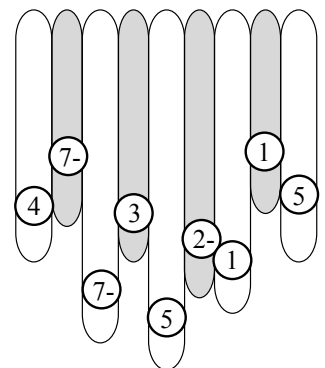


Roles in A major scale.



The Morocco E Tuning has a minor (ie, flat) second but a major third and a minor seventh, giving it the classic Middle Eastern feeling - an ambiguity between major and minor. Tune up this way and pretend you are writing the score for Lawrence of Arabia. Combined with the Sansula's tricks, it's wonderful!

CD TRACK 71 -- Morocco E Tuning.



Roles in Morocco E scale.