



This is a DEMO Version of the
Alto Kalimba Americana eBook.

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Kalimba Americana for 15-Note Alto Kalimba

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Kalimba Magic

Kalimba Americana for Alto

An eBook for the 15-Note Hugh Tracey Alto Kalimba

This download includes the tablature for 29 beloved American songs (four songs are presented in both basic and advanced versions) that are fun to play and will help you become a better kalimba player. Songs are rated by level: 0 = very easy, 1 = easy, 2 = more involved, 3 = beautiful, and 4 = challenging.

The first thing to know: This music is written in Kalimba Tablature for the Hugh Tracey Alto Kalimba. If you don't understand the tablature, go to the web page:

www.kalimbamagic.com/tablature

The second thing to know: You can hear all these songs. Download the MP3 sound files for each exercise in one of two ways: **You could simply click on the Sound Icon to the left of the title on each page**, and it will direct your web browser to the appropriate sound file on the internet. Or, you could go to the web page link below that contains links to all the sound files in this download:



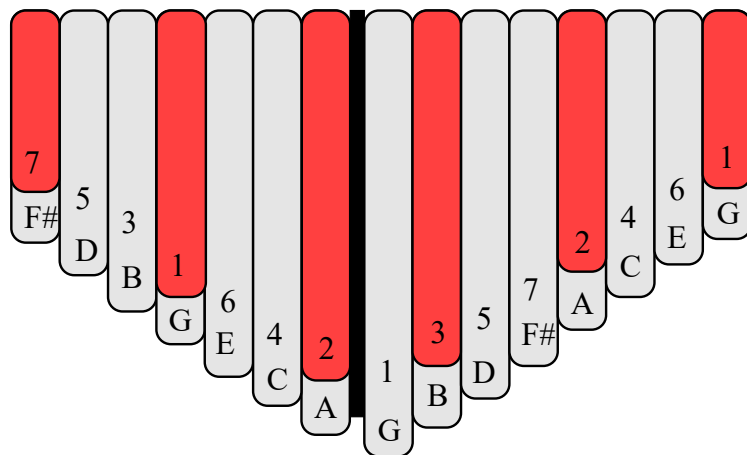
The Sound Icon

Another important thing to know: The main way to keep your kalimba sounding good is to make sure it's in tune.

Your kalimba should come to you perfectly tuned to exactly two octaves of the G major scale. If the tuning doesn't sound correct to you, you can tune it yourself! Learn about kalimba tuning at:

www.kalimbamagic.com/tuning

Check the tuning about once a month, or whenever the kalimba doesn't sound right. While it doesn't matter what color your tines are painted, it does matter which tines are painted. The painted tines match the shaded columns in the kalimba tablature.



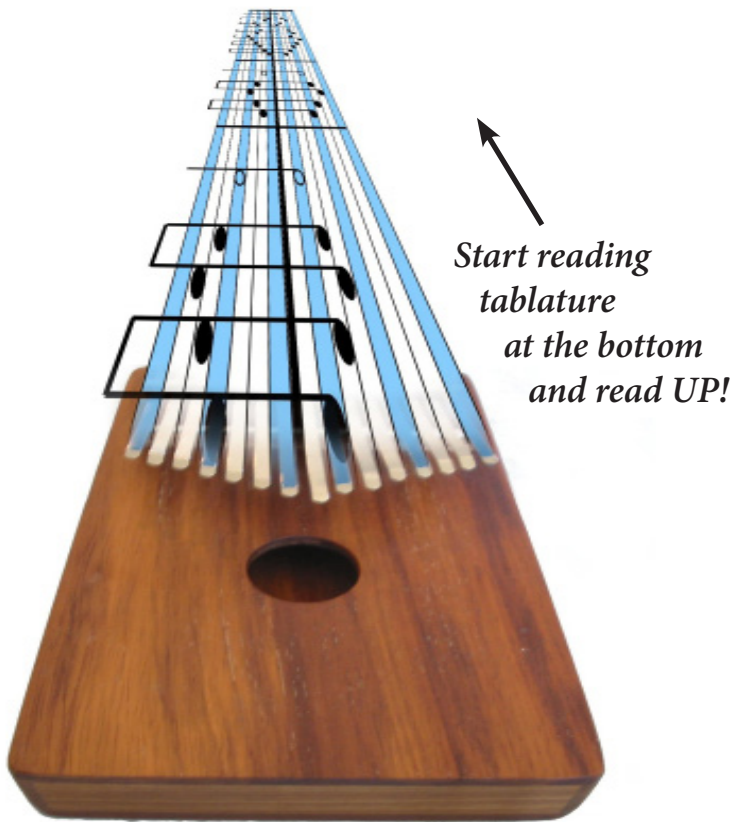
Your kalimba should be tuned to these notes, and six tines should be painted. The paint color doesn't matter.

DEMO Version

has intro material and just these two songs.

Libra Americana for Alto
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Kalimba tablature maps to the kalimba tines.

Kalimba Tablature

Kalimba tablature precisely conveys instructions for exactly which tines to play, and exactly when to play them, to create patterns or songs.

The tablature is a stretched-out map of the kalimba, with one column for each tine on the kalimba. It uses standard musical note symbols placed in these columns, to instruct you on which tines to play.

Kalimba tablature reads from the bottom up.

Chords, or multiple notes played *at the same time*, are represented by two or more notes on the same horizontal line.

Scales will zig-zag back and forth, right to left.

If you have difficulty with the tablature, visit:

www.kalimbamagic.com/tablature

Learn more about the Hugh Tracey Alto kalimba:

www.kalimbamagic.com/alto

Keep your kalimba in tune to keep it sounding great:

www.kalimbamagic.com/tuning

Does your kalimba have a buzzy tine? Learn to fix it:

www.kalimbamagic.com/buzz

Kalimba Magic blog posts

www.kalimbamagic.com/blog

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How to Read Kalimba Tablature

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More Info

www.kalimbamagic.com/info

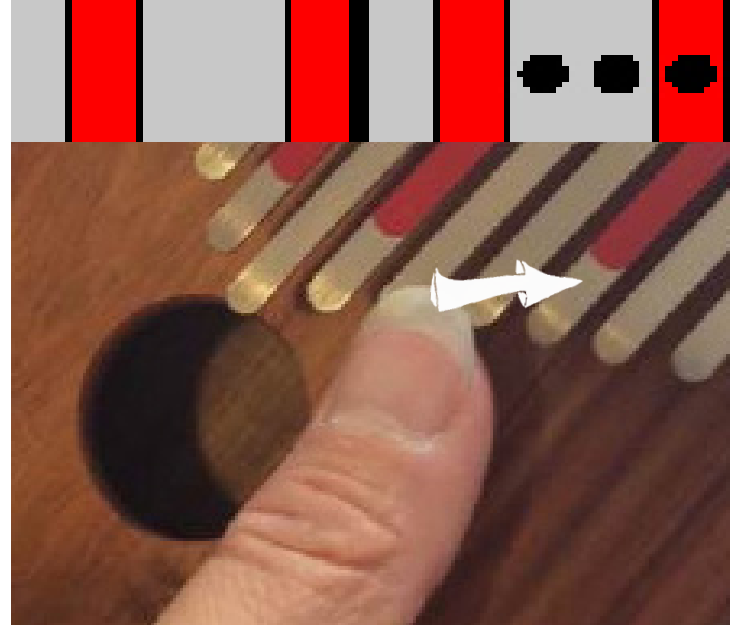
Using the Glissando to Play Chords

The *glissando* is a technique by which you play several adjacent tines at once to make a chord.

I grow my thumb nails to about 1/8 inch to facilitate the glissando playing. Touch the lowest (that is, longest, and centermost) tine of the chord and slide your thumb nail over the adjacent shorter tines, stopping after the last one you are to play.

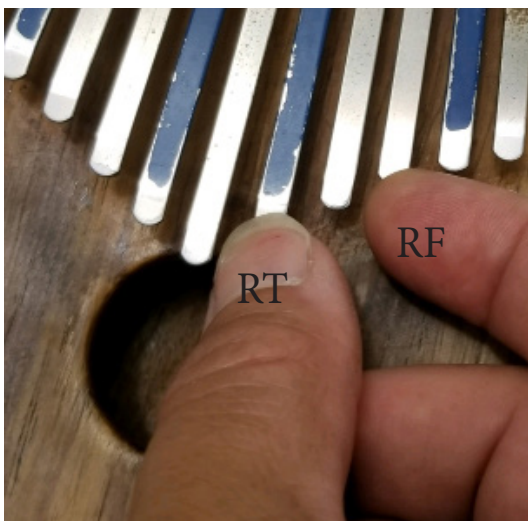
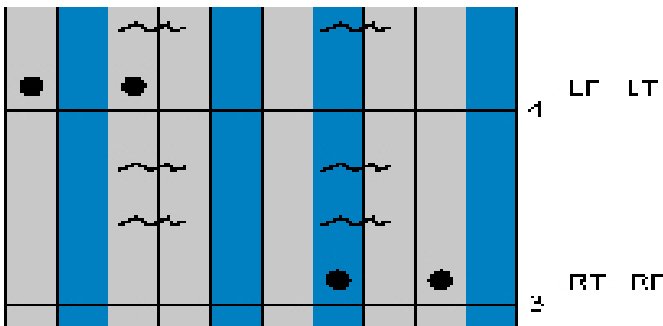
This kalimba is set up to play chords nicely and easily. Any three adjacent tines will play a wonderful triad chord - that is, a chord that plays 1 - 3 - 5. Furthermore, a chord produced by a glissando will ring for several seconds, which will enable you to then play a melody on the other tines, and produce some gentle harmony. This makes beautiful music, simply.

Playing chords and melodies together is common in Level 3, 4, and 5 songs.



Click image above to watch a glissando video.

Playing the Naked Fifth with Right Thumb and Finger



Traditional African kalimba music does not use the full western chord triad, but will often play the 1 and the 5 of the chord, leaving out the 3rd. This is referred to as the "naked fifth." Playing it is somewhat problematic, as you cannot use the glissando - you have to play two tines on the same side of the kalimba, but without playing the tine in between them.

To accomplish the naked fifth, pluck *down* with your **RT** (Right Thumb) and *up* with your **RF** (Right index Finger). If the 5th interval is on the left side, pluck *down* with **LT** (Left Thumb) and *up* with **LF** (Left index Finger).

If this move proves too much of a challenge, there are three cheats:

Sometimes the other thumb can reach over and play one of the two required notes.

You could play just one of the two notes. Try playing the musical phrase with just the top note of the two, then again with just the bottom note. Usually, the music will sound better with the top note.

You can do a three-note glissando and play the 1, the 3, and the 5 - an entire western chord. It never sounds as African, but it usually sounds fine.

History of the Kalimba

The first kalimbas were thought to have been made in Western Africa, around present-day Cameroon, about 3000 years ago. These earliest kalimbas were made with bamboo bodies and raffia tines (from palm fronds). These instruments were easily tunable and had a rather earthy sound. They are still made in Cameroon today.



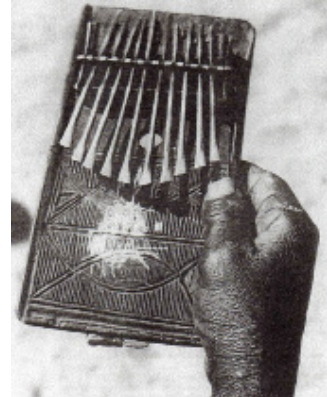
The first kalimbas were made of bamboo and raffia.

The Iron Age started some 3000 years ago in the Middle East, and it spread out into the ancient world in a wave of innovation. When the Iron Age revolution met up with the wave of bamboo kalimba innovation that was also spreading across the continent, one happy result was the creation of metal tines for kalimbas, about 1300 years ago in the great Zambezi River Valley, which is in the vicinity of modern-day Zimbabwe.



The “original mbira”?

The metal-tined kalimbas spread out across Africa over the centuries, and each group of people would alter the kalimba's design and tuning to match their own music. The kalimba was an incredibly flexible instrument in that way. Each new instrument was given a new name in a different language.



Meanwhile, back in the Zambezi Valley, the birthplace of the metal-tined kalimba, the Shona people created a huge instrument, the *mbira dzavadzimu*. Made with an 8-note scale (similar to the underlying scale of your 15-Note Alto kalimba), with between 20 and 25 tines, the *mbira* was capable of very complex and beautiful music that could put a listener into a trance, often intended to attract the spirits of the ancestors. This is the most famous traditional kalimba, and is now played by more people than ever before.



The mbira dzavadzimu.

In 1920, a young English lad named Hugh Tracey went to Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe) to learn farming. He would often hear field workers playing the mbira and was strongly drawn to it. Thus began his life-long fascination with, and drive to discover and preserve, traditional African music. He traveled tens of thousands of miles across Africa, recording and documenting the music and the instruments played in rural areas, before the reach of western popular music could weaken and replace African music that had evolved over millenia.

In 1954, Hugh Tracey started to build the “Hugh Tracey Kalimba” and market it around the world. Inspired by design elements of many different traditional kalimbas, the Hugh Tracey kalimba played a western scale and made beautiful western harmonies, but kept an African sound, feel, and origin. Hugh Tracey kalimbas are still made in South Africa today.

The 15-Note Alto kalimba in your hands is like a big brother to the Hugh Tracey Treble kalimba, but it owes so much to the deep traditions of these African instruments.

Learn more of the kalimba story at:
kalimbamagic.com/kalimbahistory



Hugh Tracey recording an unnamed player of a mouth bow.



Hugh Tracey Treble kalimba, circa 1966.



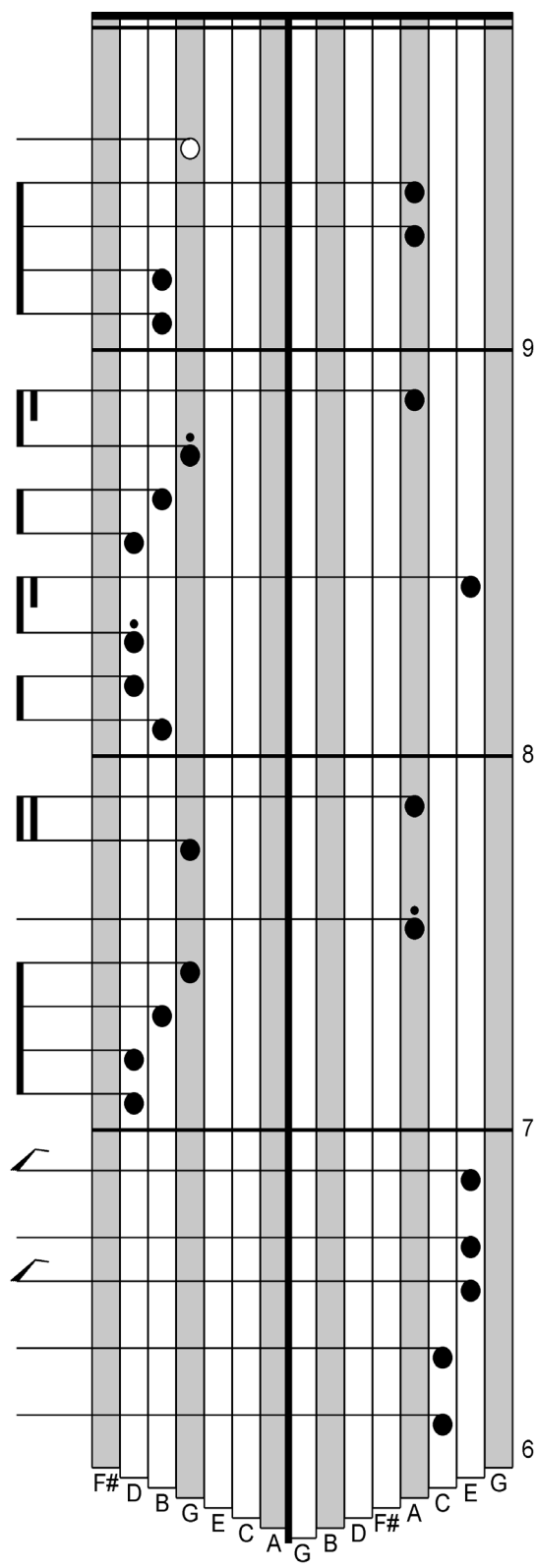
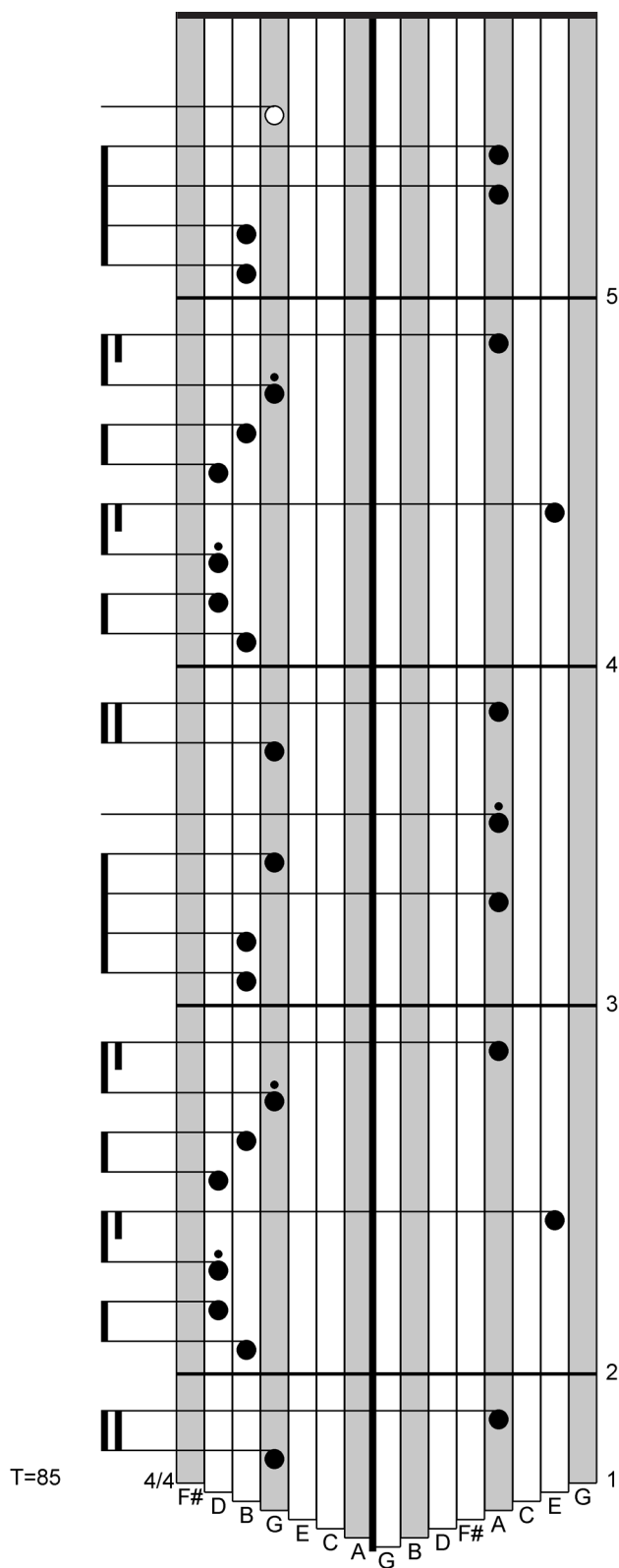
Hugh Tracey Alto kalimba.



8
Oh! Susanna
Level 1

Stephen Foster

DEMO Version





Additional resources for the Hugh Tracey Alto kalimba:

[Alto Kalimba Resources Page](#)

[Easy Alto Download](#)

[Alto Fundamentals Book](#)

[Easy Christmas Carols for the Alto Kalimba](#)

[Alto Hymnal](#)

[Classical Alto](#)

[Alto Kalimba Spirituals](#)

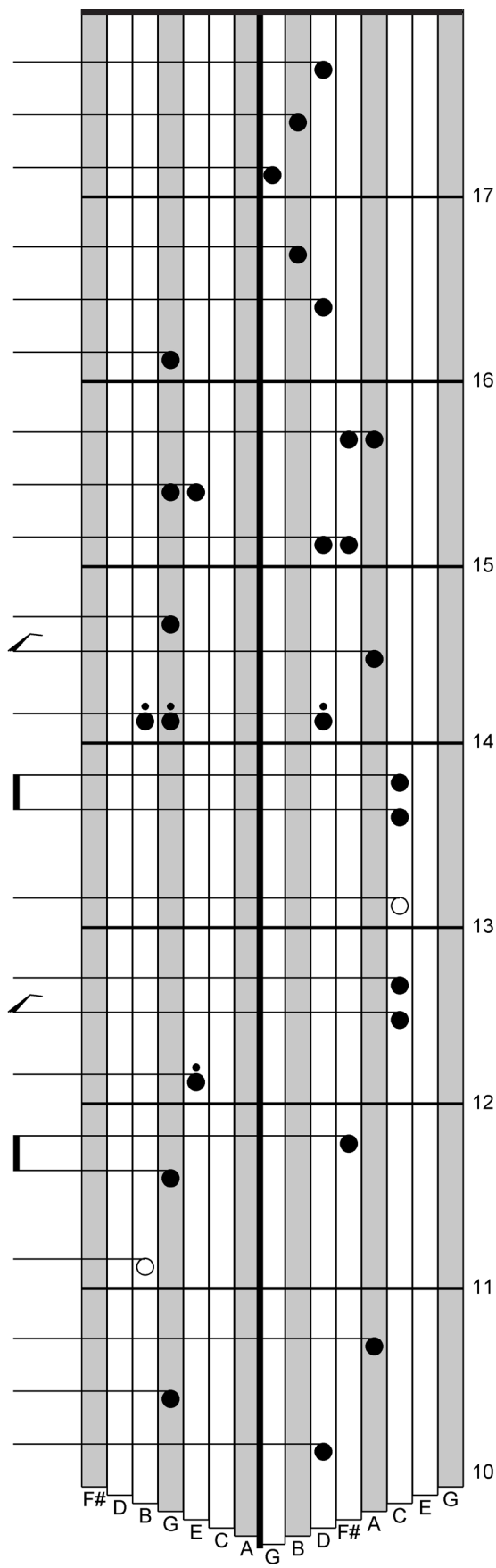
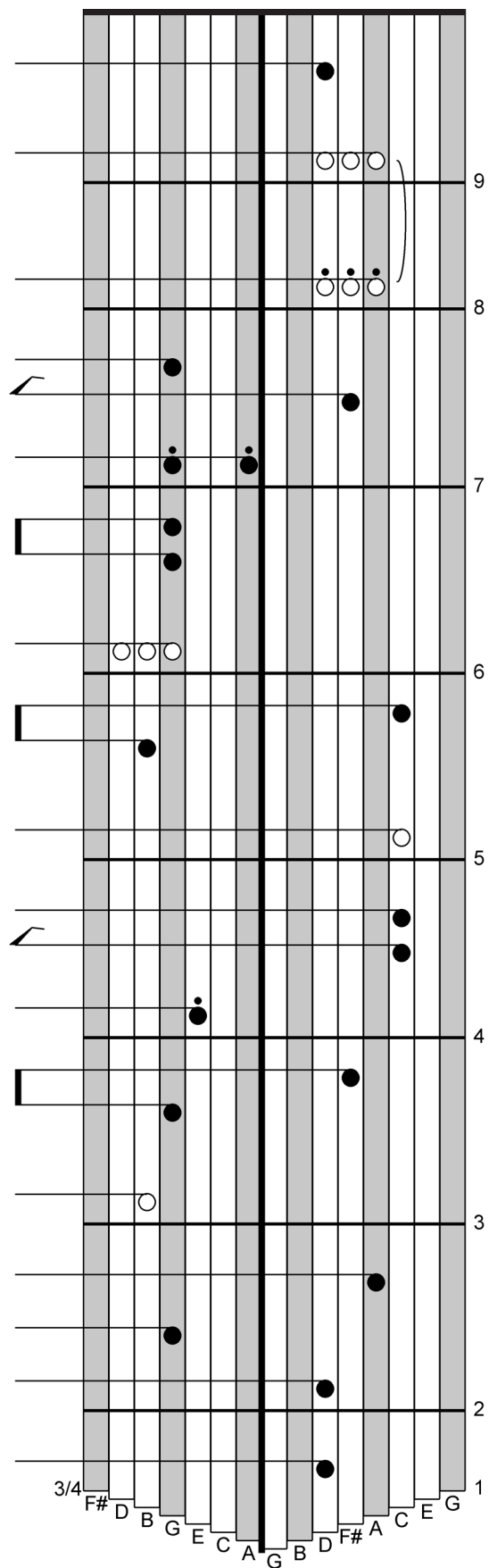
[Blank Alto Tablature](#)



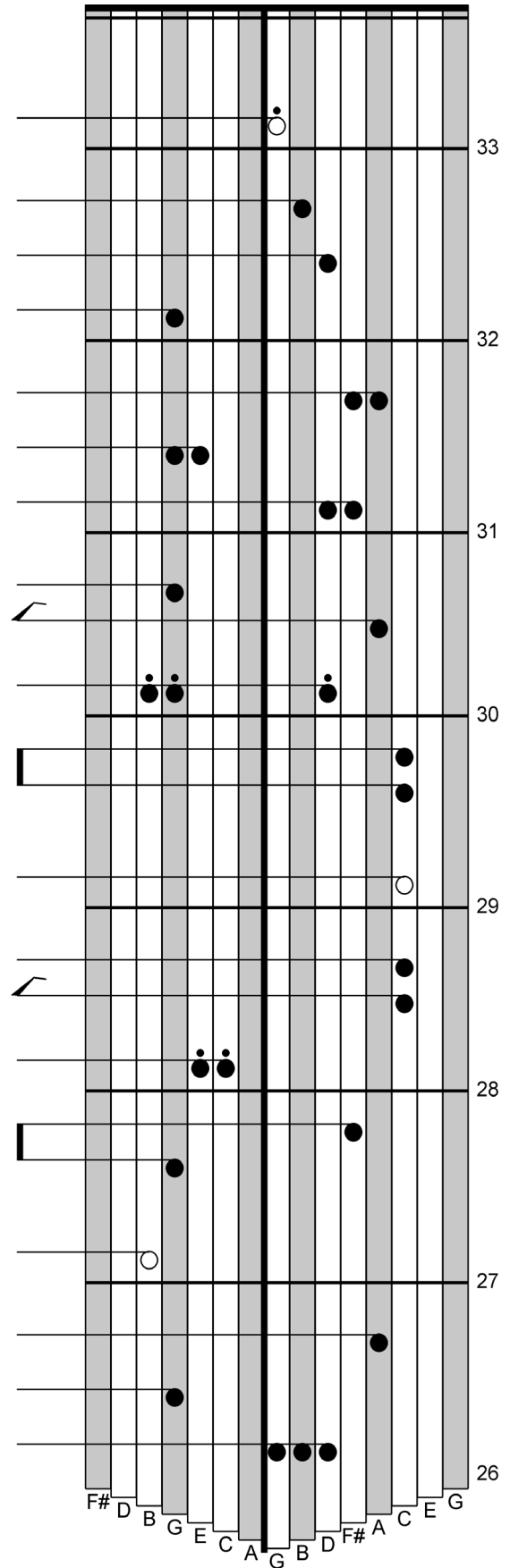
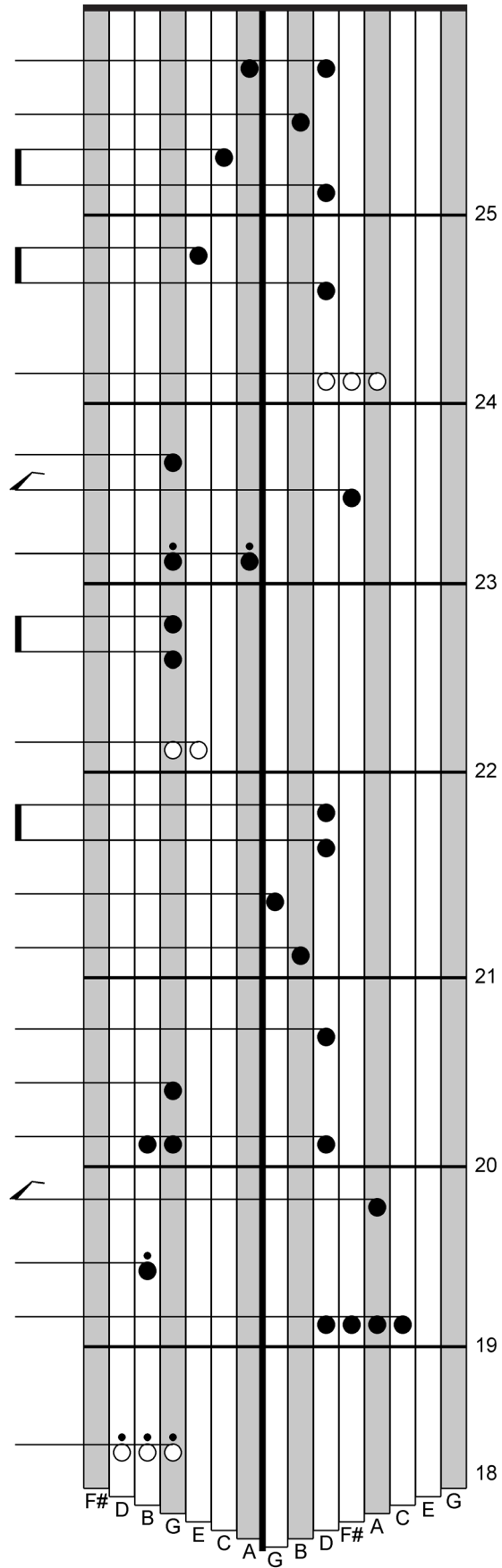
10
Home on the Range
Level 3

Higley and Kelley

DEMO Version



DEMO Version





At Kalimba Magic, we
help you get the most
magic from your kalimba.

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