

**ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES** – It is important not to expose your harmonium to extreme temperatures or moisture. The wooden parts of the harmonium can react to changes in moisture and temperature and may cause the reeds to buzz, or parts to stick, jam, or worse.

**BUZZING REEDS** – Sometimes simply playing a reed over and over will eliminate the buzz. If that does not work you may have to open the harmonium to view the reeds. On the front of the Harmonium, under the keyboard, is a hinge. The entire top of the harmonium will lift up to reveal the reeds and air chambers. Again each harmonium is different so do not force the top up, look for hinges, screws or levers that may need to be opened before the top can be lifted or slid off.

With the harmonium opened, find the offending reed and loosen the screws on the reed. You do not need to remove the reed, just loosen it. Reeds stick to the wood and if the wood expanded or contracted, the reed may be experiencing torque. Loosen and lift the reed slightly, then retighten it. Also look for any small bit of debris. Any small bit of wood dust in a reed will cause it to buzz. Clean them carefully, reeds can be easily bent and then they may not work.

**FALLEN OR STICKING KEYS** - Under the Cover you will see the back of the keys, which are held in place by a wire arm. The wire acts as a spring to push the key up after you depress it. During transport these wires can slide off. If your key has fallen and can't get up, move the spring back into place.



If the wire spring is in place and your key sticks or stays down, the wood may have expanded. If this happens slide a piece of sand paper back and forth between the keys, just enough for the keys to operate freely.

**STUCK PULL KNOBS** - Do not force a stuck knob. Open the top of the harmonium to look into the air chamber. Each knob is attached to a block of wood that slides between two wooden rails. If the block swells the knob will stick. There is a graphite powder, available at hardware stores, which acts as a form of dry lubrication. Use it sparingly. If that fails you may need to take the block out from between the rails and then very lightly sand the sides. You do not want the block to wiggle between the rails. The block slides over a hole to close off air flow. If the block is loose in the rails you may have an air leak.



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Harmonium

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# banjira™

## HARMONIUM



– OWNER'S GUIDE –

# banjira™ Harmonium

## Parts of the Harmonium

**REEDS** - The brass reeds are thin tongues mounted in the openings of thick rectangular bases. The reed vibrates when air passes through the opening in the base. Short narrow reeds have a higher pitch than long wide reeds.

**BELLOWS** - Pumping the pleated paper bellows moves air into the chambers. Usually the bellows can accommodate left or right handed players. If you don't hear music, stop pumping! **NEVER** pump unless air flows through the reeds.

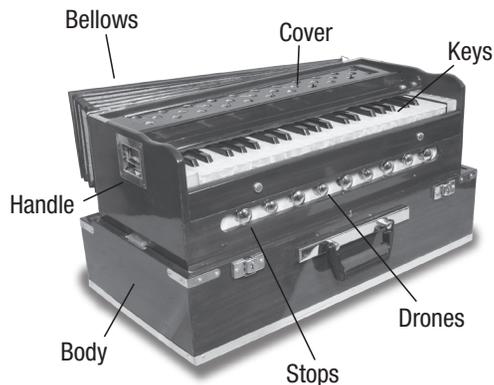
**PULL KNOBS** - The knobs on the front are called Stops and Drones. Stops control the airflow to the reed chambers. Multiple Stops for one chamber provides a more powerful sound. Stops may also control special functions, such as tremolo. Drone knobs control the airflow through fixed reeds that have no keys associated with them. Pulling the Drone knob opens the air flow to a drone reed and provides harmony to the keyboard music.

**KEYS** - Each key represents a reed. With a Stop pulled, depressing one key activates one reed. Pull two Stops from different chambers and one key can activate two reeds; one reed in each chamber.

**MECHANICAL DEVICES** - Mechanical devices provide greater flexibility and variations in sound. These devices can include the Mechanical Coupler and the Scale Changer. They are not available on all models.

The **COUPLER** is an ingenious device that physically connects, or couples, two keys. The result is, playing one key simultaneously engages two reeds that are one octave apart. The coupler may be engaged or disengaged by the user.

The **SCALE CHANGER** is a tool that repositions the keyboard in relation to the reeds. It adjusts in half step increments. Moving to the left lowers the pitch, moving it to the right will raise it.



## Playing the Harmonium

Place the harmonium on the floor and sit cross-legged in front of it. Play the keys with your dominant hand while your other hand works the bellows. You can also place the harmonium on a table while you play. Find a comfortable pose. Practice your scales as you would with an organ or piano.

## Tuning

Harmoniums are meant to accompany vocals. They are not meant to be played in concert with other instruments. Therefore, they are rarely tuned to concert pitch. The reeds will sound good when played together, but not necessarily when played with other instruments. It is important that the sound compliments the vocals, the raga and the temperament one is trying to achieve.

# banjira™ Harmonium

## Care and Caution

**BODY STYLES** - If it is not Fixed, it may be a Suitcase with a removable lid, or Traveler with a hinged top. To raise a Suitcase, remove the lid and locate the handles on each side. Each handle has a metal release trigger, hold **ABOVE** the trigger and lift until the supports pop out. To lower, lift up on the release triggers, until the supports pop in, and then lower the body. For the Traveler, open the hinged top and fold it to the back, lift the body until the supports engage, then latch the top to the sides for a snug seal. To store the Traveler, unlatch the top, holding the sides, lift enough to remove the tension on the supports and push them in while lowering the body, close and latch the top.

**ALWAYS** make sure all the Pull Knobs are pushed in **BEFORE** closing your harmonium. Go slowly, take some time to get to know your harmonium, and **NEVER** force anything.

**BELLOWS & AIR CHAMBERS** - The harmonium has a number of delicate parts that are made of cloth, leather and wood. These maintain the air within the chambers and the bellows. **NEVER** pump the bellows with all the Pull Knobs pushed in; this will cause greater pressure in the chambers than the delicate parts can handle and may lead to leaks. If you don't hear the music, stop pumping!

Be very careful around curious children as there are a number of vents that are perfect for small fingers, pencils, etc. Any holes in the bellows, or cloth vent covers will cause air leaks in the chambers and your harmonium will need repair.