



Music for Mini Maestros

Percussion Play has created a dynamic range of outdoor musical instruments that foster creative playfulness. Our aim is to make music accessible to people from all backgrounds and abilities and encourage music-making in the great outdoors. Here, the focus is on our youngest players and the benefits that musical play can provide to their learning and development.

Musical instruments within the learning environment encourage improvised play, provide an outlet for creative expression, and are an open-ended resource with numerous uses. For example, while playing a xylophone helps children hear different musical notes on a scale, they also develop active listening skills. Using a mallet to strike the chimes helps the child to develop motor skills, and color recognition can be explored using the multicolored heads of the drums. With a bit of imagination, the possibilities are endless!



The many skills developed during this discovery learning time are then put to use during more focused, classroom-based tasks.

Alongside free play, outdoor instruments can be used with an adult for more directed learning. Many of the instruments we manufacture are tuned to the Pentatonic scale, favored for musical teaching methods pioneered by Oorf and Kodaly.

Pentatonic tuning means that there are no ‘wrong’ notes. Players can improvise with the order and combination of notes without creating any dissonant tones. This feature means that young players, or those with little musical experience, can explore safely and build their self-esteem as well as their knowledge.

Creating areas for music and sound exploration inside and out will help integrate music into the everyday experience of the children in a Kindergarten or Nursery.

“The musical instruments have added great educational value to the playground. It has been so fun to watch our kids interact with one another while playing.”

♪ Alex Wheaton ♪

Owner at Zuma Zoo Daycare, IA



The Rainbow Collection

We have created a range of bright, enticing instruments with young players in mind. This collection is designed to help young minds learn the fundamentals of music in a fun and exciting way. Most of the instruments within the Rainbow Collection feature individually colored notes tuned to a simple musical scale, helping even the youngest players experiment with musical concepts and familiar tunes.

♪ Tropical Cyclone

The Tropical Cyclone is a smaller scale version of our full sized Cyclone. It features cheerful and bright Rainbow colors, and the smaller size makes it perfect for early years settings. Spinning the wheel will set the ball bearings inside the wheel into motion to mimic the sound of falling rain. From a gentle pitter-patter through a heavy rain shower to a full-on monsoon, players can control the intensity of the rain sound by how hard they spin the wheel, demonstrating the concept of cause and effect and encouraging gross motor skills.



♪ Rainbow Trio Ensemble

The perfect starting point for any Kindergarten musical learning area is the Rainbow Trio Ensemble. Three instruments chosen to offer rhythm and melody. These elements can be enjoyed separately or played together. Pentatonic tuning ensures that the notes sound harmonious played in any order or combination - perfect for encouraging musical experimentation.

Carefully scaled for younger players, the Rainbow Trio Ensemble may be smaller in size but features the same high-quality materials used to construct our other instruments. The Trio is made up of the resonant Rainbow Chimes, the Rainbow Metallophone with its bright, cheerful tones, plus the Rainbow Bongos to keep the beat. These instruments are played with hands and mallets, helping children develop their gross motor movements and finer dexterity that later translates into skills like spatial awareness and pencil control.

With the option to install into the ground, onto an existing surface, or onto a wall, the Rainbow Trio Ensemble is versatile enough to suit outdoor learning environments of varying sizes.

“Not only are they colorful and accessible height-wise for children, but they also make a fantastic sound.”

♪ Anna Moore ♪

NZ Registered Music Therapist



The Rainbow Collection

♪ Rainbow Cavatina

The Cavatina is arranged like a traditional xylophone or glockenspiel with low to high notes going from left to right. Diatonically tuned, its versatility provides a vast range of expression suited to beginners.

The vibrantly colored anodized notes are set to our rainbow scale and can be combined with one of our Music Books where the notes on the instruments correspond with the colored notes on the music sheets. Making music has never been as easy - players can simply follow the colors to play a well-known song.



Cavatina



Cavatina with Music Book



♪ Penta Post

The Penta Post is a cluster of five rainbow-colored chimes that are small, compact, and visually striking - resulting in the perfect music 'stop' for pre-schools and early years settings.

This instrument is tuned to the pentatonic scale, meaning that there are no wrong notes. Children can hit the notes in any order and they will never hit anything inordinately dissonant. Using the pentatonic scale, we can encourage children to experiment with sound and provide them with the confidence to improvise.

♪ Calypso Chimes

The Calypso Chimes are practical, durable, and stylish with a wonderful melody and sustain that will liven up any outdoor area. Available as eight individual chimes, in three pre-set arrangements, or even mounted to a single post to create a 'Calypso' post.

Whether you are looking for solo chimes to place sporadically around your outdoor area to add a colorful musical sound wherever you go, a fun pentatonic set for sensory play, or a diatonic arrangement around which outdoor lessons and concerts can be played, Calypso Chimes can be adapted to suit all.

The vibrant rainbow colors are appealing for younger players and help to uplift the spirit while adding a carnival vibe to the playspace. Sound and color fit together, and most minds draw intensely vivid connections between the two. For this reason, color can be a helpful tool when teaching music and developing music-reading skills to young children.



Penta Post



Diatonic Calypso Chimes

Inspired By Nature Range

♪ Harmony Flowers

This bouquet of six cheerful and eye-catching musical flowers (C5-A5) is available individually or in two 'posy' arrangements (Major Posy and Minor Posy), each with three flowers.

Each flower has different notes, heights, and colors- you can collect them all to let your musical garden grow and bloom. Harmony Flowers are a colorful and musical addition to outdoor learning spaces, making them an ideal complement to sensory gardens. They spark imagination and inspire children musically with their shapes and sounds.



♪ Petal Drums

These new larger-than-life Flower Petal Drums inspired by the natural world will be sure to create a striking focal point. With designs based on the Sunflower, Forget-Me-Not, Daisy, and Poppy these curvaceous Petal Drums are charmingly simple, instantly recognizable, and sure to brighten up outdoor spaces through the winter months and beyond.

Playing your Petal Drum could not be easier, and anyone of any age or musical ability can play them. They require no training – it is as simple as picking up a mallet, striking the notes, and beginning to create beautiful music in the great outdoors. A smart choice to quickly add a sensory and inclusive dynamic to your outdoor space or playground.

♪ Liberty Bells

Reminiscent of the small grassland mushrooms, the Liberty Bells allow players to experience something magical and bring a little enchantment to the local music park or garden.

Expertly crafted, the aluminum musical bells, tuned to the pentatonic c-major scale, 'sing' when struck with the attached mallets and players can strike the bells in any order and it will sound harmonious - no wrong notes! The stainless-steel 'gill' on the underside of the cap completes the look. The cluster of six powder-coated conical 'caps' in bright colors and wiggly-shaped stainless steel 'stems' positioned at different heights and angles is an eye-catching piece that will quickly become an instant favorite.



♪ Harmony Bells

Our 'blooming' marvelous collection of Harmony Bells are inspired by nature and tuned to uplifting major and minor chords. Visually stimulating and colorful, each 'flower' is made of four bells of decreasing size and ascending pitch. Six variations are available, each with a different chord, color scheme, and sound.

It is ideal for interactive playscapes and an excellent way to connect children with the natural world, stimulate multiple senses, arouse a sense of intrigue, and encourage them to pursue the joy of music-making in the great outdoors.

Musical Garden at Upland Country Day Pre-School, PA

A school in Chester County, PA, has created its very own musical garden to spark creativity and encourage musical learning and group play for its preschool students.

Daniel Hickey, Head of School, comments on the project; “Last year, we embarked on a significant renovation project for our preschool building. There is ample outdoor space around the building, so we wanted to fill that space creatively. We are fortunate to have Kevin Umbreit, President of Recreation Resource USA, as a current parent at our school. We know him to be very knowledgeable and experienced in outdoor play equipment. As we worked with him to brainstorm layout and various pieces of outdoor equipment, Kevin pointed us toward Percussion Play.”

The school fundraised significantly for the overall project and was lucky to have an individual donor who helped fund the equipment. Missy Derabertis, Head of Bee School (the preschool), took the project on, deciding which products to install, which include the [Harmony Bells](#), [Harmony Flowers](#), [Calypso Quatro Post](#), [Rainbow Bongos](#), and a [Sunflower Petal Drum](#).



Rainbow Trio Bongos



Harmony Bell Bunches



Calypso Quatro Post

Students at the Bee School, aged 2.5 years to 4 years old, use the instruments in their free time while outside, collaborating with each other to create songs and even create their own bands together.

Missy also highlights that the student's behavior has changed as the instruments encourage students to move their bodies more, create beautiful sounds, and engage with friends- bringing the students together.

Missy says, "Music is so important for all ages, especially our youngest learners. It is wonderful to have so they can explore these sounds at such a young age. It gives them confidence as there are endless possibilities as they create "songs," sounds, and bands. It is perfect for creating a community feel, having the students work collaboratively together at times as well as individually. It is also excellent for their whole body (kinesthetically) as they move from instrument to instrument. Allowing children to express themselves is fantastic and opens their ears, minds, and brains to music.

"Our students love to have several friends playing all different instruments at the same time. These instruments affirm the love of music in the Bee School. They bring so much joy and sound to our campus."

♪ Missy Derabertis ♪

Head of Bee School



Sunflower Petal Drum



Harmony Bells Bunches

Children's Music Garden in The East End, NY

The Children's Museum of the East End in Bridgehampton has created a music garden for young children to explore, interact, and discover sounds in the great outdoors.

Inside the garden, they have incorporated a bright and colourful musical ensemble to help create opportunities for younger children in the nearby area to learn and play music. The music garden is situated next to the butterfly garden, and the museum team's offices look over the instruments, resulting in a melody of tunes drifting up to the office to be heard throughout the day.



Rainbow Trio Chimes



Rainbow Trio Bongos



Penta Post

To cater to younger players, the music garden features the [Rainbow Trio Ensemble](#), consisting of the [Rainbow Metallophone](#), [Rainbow Bongos](#), and [Rainbow Chimes](#). This bright and colourful collection is smaller in scale and perfect for encouraging younger children to discover music.

In addition to the ensemble is a [Penta Post](#), a cluster of five Rainbow-Colored chimes on one post tuned using the pentatonic scale. Pentatonic Tuning means you can hit the notes in any order, and they sound harmonious. With no wrong notes, younger players will build more musical confidence and learn through creativity, improvisation and discovery.

Leah Oppenheimer, Director of Community Outreach at The Children's Museum of the East End, has been teaching music-making to local and immigrant families for over 20 years. Her classes cater to infants, toddlers, and children, helping them to discover the joy of music-making. Leah has been enjoying using the instruments to teach music-making to the children because they enable players to create beautiful melodies that are always in tune.

"It's such a joy to hear children and parents jamming together. In my book, every children's museum should add these to their offering!"

♪ Leah Oppenheimer ♪

Director of Community Outreach



Preschool at CrossPoint Church, KS

A music garden on the church grounds of a Kansas school provides a place for preschool children to make music together. CrossPoint Church in Salina installed instruments from Percussion Play, using grants the church preschool received. The preschool team had plans to create a music garden, providing an outlet for children to express themselves, and music seemed like the perfect solution.

Research by Percussion Play reveals that exposing young children to musical instruments can not only help children express feelings but also aid in developing hand-eye coordination, improving listening skills, and increasing gross and fine motor skills while developing muscle tone in the hands and arms. Young children have the instinct to create their melodies and explore their imaginations by hearing and making music first, then reading and writing it later, in the same way they learn language skills.

Percussion Play's [Rainbow Trio](#) is incorporated in the garden, which includes [Rainbow Bongos](#), the [Rainbow Metallophone](#), and [Rainbow Chimes](#), all brightly colored to engage young children.



Rainbow Trio Metallophone



Rainbow Trio Chimes



Rainbow Trio Bongos

Sunday School at Cross Tracks Church, TX

Cross Tracks Church in Liberty Hill, Texas, is honoring the memory of its late Choir Master in a unique and appropriate way- with a music garden on the grounds of the 152-year-old United Methodist Chapel.

The parishioners, who have funded the new garden, wanted to create a place for the community to commemorate Louine Noble who was the former Choir Master. Louine's commitment to serving her community meant that friends and family of the church wanted to create a space for the whole community to enjoy and remember her.

The instruments sit between the chapel and its children's education center, meaning that they are used a lot by the 70-plus students of the pre-school and Sunday school. Children can make music in their free playtime, and they are also used when singing hymns.

The musical collection includes two [Harmony Flowers](#), in indigo and red, which sing when struck with the moss green mallet. The [Penta Post](#), is a cluster of five rainbow-colored chimes attached to a single stainless-steel post which makes a perfect music 'station' for pre-school children. There are plans by the church to add to the collection in the near future.

"I'm sure that we'll be seeing budding music stars of the future learn their love of music thanks to our new music garden."

♪ Pam Turner ♪

Chapel Restoration Co-chair and member of Cross Tracks Church



Bright Horizons, NY

The Bright Horizons Day-care center abides by Reggio Emilia and Montessori philosophies and aims to consider what children need in a space and how they will use it. They have inviting classrooms and state-of-the-art facilities that include indoor play spaces guaranteed to keep children active no matter the weather.

Singing and music play an important role in the culture of all Bright Horizons Early Education Centres. Children can experiment with music and sounds by playing the [Rainbow Trio instruments](#), which are installed indoors at just the right height along the wall - perfect for toddlers and younger children to discover music and express themselves with rhythm, melody, and tone. This ensemble features the [Rainbow Bongos](#), [Rainbow Metallophone](#), and [Rainbow Chimes](#). The Rainbow Bongos are percussive, and the Rainbow Metallophone and Rainbow Chimes are tuned to the pentatonic scale to create a safe musical haven for exploring new sounds.

Exposing young children to musical instruments can help develop hand-eye coordination, improve listening skills, increase gross and fine motor skills, and help develop muscle tone in the hands and arms. Young children have an instinct to create their own melodies and explore their imaginations by hearing and making music first, then reading and writing it later, in the same way that they learn language.



Lakeland Reformed Church Daycare & Preschool, MI

Lakeland Reformed Church has embraced outdoor play at their Daycare and Preschool with a number of outdoor musical instruments inspired by their faith.

The Church in Vicksburg, Michigan, included a wall-mounted set of Percussion Play [Rainbow Chimes](#) to expand their popular 'Music Wall' - the creation of which was inspired by Psalm 100 which reads 'Make a joyful noise unto the Lord'.

Music-making in the great outdoors is inclusive, meaning all ages and abilities can come together to play. For children, playing outdoor musical instruments with their elders can speed up the development of social skills, emotional processing, communication, self-esteem, and intelligence - due to a combination of the cognitive responses to music-making and the effects of spending time learning from/with people outside of their age group.

All of these things are hugely important in the formative years of childhood and set children up far better to enter into adolescence and adulthood as balanced, happy, socially intelligent, and well-rounded people.

Director Cindy Palmer says "We recognize the value of musical experiences and how they accelerate brain development in language and literacy. Research also tells us that children who learn to keep a rhythm or steady beat often improve in math skills. The children have enjoyed making music outside, and it has instilled a newfound love for music in some while encouraging others to develop their skills. By far the best update we have made to our outdoor space".



Music & Nature

It is well documented that exposure to nature and the great outdoors is one of the easiest and most sustainable ways to maintain or improve our overall health and well-being. Incorporating music into your outdoor classroom or playground is a great way to subtly integrate music and 'outdoor time' into a child's everyday school experience.

Here are some of the known benefits of using outdoor music to connect children with nature:

- ♪ Lack of exposure to green outdoor space is known to have an impact on children's health and can lead to nature deficit disorder. By encouraging free play and exploration in the great outdoors, we can help encourage more time spent outside.
- ♪ Children often feel less inhibited outdoors, and musical playground equipment will help introduce basic musical concepts while being sure that the focus is on fun and creativity.
- ♪ Outdoor musical spaces or trails as part of a school's outdoor education program will help children discover the joy and empowerment of music-making while reaping the benefits of time in the natural environment.
- ♪ With sun protection, playing outdoor musical instruments increases a child's exposure to sunlight on their skin, triggering the body's vitamin D production. Vitamin D is needed to build and maintain healthy bones and helps with other body functions, including maintaining the muscles, heart health, brain function, and the immune system.



Small Babel



Stepping Stones



Bell Lyre



Harmony Hop



Wall Marimba

Designing a Music Garden

Designing a Music Garden from scratch may seem like a daunting task - but we are here to support you throughout the process.

♪ Knowledge Base

Our online Knowledge Base hosts resources and articles to help you get started and we offer advice and guidance without cost or obligation.

♪ Case Studies

Why not take a look at our Case Studies page? Here, you can gather inspiration from a wide range of projects featuring outdoor instruments.

♪ 3D Render

You are welcome to send us a photo of the space you are considering, and we can drop renders of the instruments into it. This is a useful tool when sharing your vision with others, and is especially helpful when fundraising.

“I cannot tell you how very pleased our school is with your company from the quality of the products to the customer service from the very beginning to end.”

♪ Judy Mark ♪

Music Teacher at Monmouth Memorial School



Temple Block Tree



Large Babel Drum



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