

The Wild World Of Musical Instruments

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THE WILD WORLD OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

? The harmonica is the world's top-selling instrument, with about three million of the free-reed wind instruments sold globally each year. Its popularity is based on the fact that it is small, lightweight and affordable.

? The kazoo is often a person's first musical instrument. An American original, the kazoo is likely derived from the eunuch flute, which is held horizontally while the kazoo is played vertically.

? Spoons have been used as musical instruments for centuries. Former UB40 singer Duncan Campbell was once a registered spoon player with the United Kingdom's Musician's Union.

? A luthier is a person who makes a string instrument that has a neck and a sound box, which includes members of the violin family, guitars, banjos, and even the 42-string Picasso guitar with four necks, two sound holes and 42 strings.

? Benjamin Franklin invented a lot of devices, but music lovers probably think his coolest invention was the glass harmonica (aka armonica). Invented by Franklin in 1761, the glass harmonica is a series of glass bowls arranged horizontally in graduated size (larger to smaller) that produce music through friction.

? Equine jaw bones make popular percussion instruments in some parts of Latin America. Known as the Quijada or Charrasca in Spanish, or simply the jawbone in English, the instrument was originally brought to the Americas by African slaves.

? With an estimated price of more than \$20 million, the Messiah Stradivarius is the most expensive violin to ever exist. It was crafted in 1716 by Antonio Stradivari, a world-renowned maker of the best violins in the world. Stradivari created the Messiah during his golden period, and it stayed in his shop until he died in 1737. Violinists do not play with it as much, hence its relatively new condition.

? The Earth Harp is the longest stringed instrument in the world. Invented by William Close, the Earth Harp's strings extend up to

291.71 m (957 ft 0.6 in) and is installed in different locations that have optimal acoustics.

? The “world’s smallest violin” is a real thing! Venezuelan luthier and violinist Baltazar Monaca performed Vivaldi’s “Violin Concerto in A Minor” on a three-inch violin in 2014.

? The Guinness World Book of Records considers the Great Stalacpipe Organ in the Luray Caverns of Virginia to be the largest musical instrument in the world. The organ was first constructed by Leland W. Sprinkle in 1956 and covers 3.5 acres of the caverns.

? The harpsicord and piano may look like similar instruments, but they’re actually in different instrument classes. The harpsicord functions by the strings being plucked, like other stringed instruments, while the piano works by hammers hitting the strings, making it a percussion instrument.

? If you ever watch the 1989 post-apocalyptic B-film, *Cyborg*, you’ll notice many of the characters are named after musical instruments. There’s the hero, Gibson Rickenbacker (Gibson guitars), the antagonist, Fender Tremolo (Fender guitars), and the cyborg, Pearl Prophet (Pearl drums).

? The popular instrument known as the Jew’s harp is neither a harp nor associated with Jewish people. It originated in 3rd century BCE China and although it’s plucked like a harp, it’s played in the mouth.

? The Aztecs of Mexico loved music and human sacrifice, mixing the two in elaborate rituals. Death whistles were musical instruments carved out of different substances into the shape of human skulls that were used by priests during human sacrifice rituals.

? Before the record player/phonograph became affordable and popular in the 1930s, anyone who was anyone had a player piano, or pianola, in their home. Player pianos played programmed music on paper or metallic rolls.

? Clapperless cowbells are common in modern Latin music and can be heard in pop music from around the world by musicians who “want more cowbells.” They are played by simply beating them with a drumstick.

? The theremin is a musical instrument that is played without physical contact. Invented by Russian Leon Theremin in 1919, the theremin is played by moving one’s hands around and between two metal antennas.

? The sistrum was a hand-held percussion instrument that was popular in ancient Egyptian religious rituals. Music was made by simply shaking the sistrum, which rattled the metal rings that hung on it.

? A typical piano has over 120,000 parts, of which more than 10,000 of

these move. Pianos also have more than 230 strings and 88 keys, making them one of the most complex instruments in the modern world.

? Late Nirvana's front man, Kurt Cobain's acoustic-electric 1959 Martin D-18E sold for \$6.1 million at an auction in 2020, making it the most expensive guitar ever sold.

? American engineer Robert Moog and his 1964 invention, the Moog synthesizer, changed popular music forever. The Moog synthesizer was groundbreaking because when it became available to the public in 1965, it became the world's first commercial synthesizer. It was used in the Beatles' album "Abbey Road" in 1969.

? If you're a fan of the film Star Wars: A New Hope, then you certainly remember the scene at the Mos Eisley cantina. The band actually had a name, Figrin D'An and the Modal Nodes, and the clarinet-looking instrument some of them were playing is known as a "kloo horn."

? One of the oldest stringed instruments ever discovered is the "bull harp" or "bull-headed lyre." It was discovered in the ruins of the ancient Mesopotamian city of Ur (modern Iraq) and is believed to have been made sometime between 2,550 and 2,450 BCE.

? Bucket drumming—simply playing the drums on one or more plastic buckets—has become popular in urban landscapes around the world. New Yorker Larry Wright is often credited with starting the modern music trend in 1990 when he was around 13.

? You've probably heard a musical saw but didn't know it. A musical saw is simply a flexible handsaw that is held between the knees and