

How to Play and Improvise with Your Chimalong.

set-up

The Chimalong is a metallophone (this means “sounds of metal”) consisting of eight tubes. It comes completely assembled as a one octave instrument in the key of C. An extra tube is also provided, allowing you to convert your Chimalong to an instrument in the key of F.

The extra tube, color coded with a black band and labeled with the note name “Bb” and “#7”, replaces the original #7 “B” tube. Switching tubes is very easy. Simply slip out tube #7 coded with the purple band and replace it with tube #7 with the black band. Notice that although it is still a one octave instrument, after switching the tubes, the instrument sounds quite different.

This songbook is arranged in 3 sections. The colored strip along the edge of each page identifies which #7 tube is needed. The first songs have a purple strip and use the original #7 purple-banded “B” tube. The second group of songs can be played with either of the #7 tubes in place. The last songs have a black strip and use the #7 black-banded “B-flat” tube.

tubetunes notation

The longest tube should be on the player’s left, the shortest tube on the right. Each of the tubes has a color band in the middle which corresponds to the color dot located below the notes in the songbook. In addition to the color, each tube is imprinted with a number and a note name. Just rotate the tube in its foam holder to display either the number or the corresponding note name. The numbers, notes and colors are shown in Fig. 1.

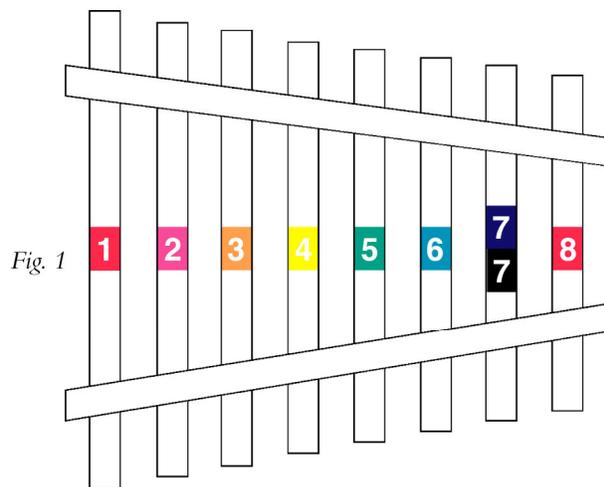
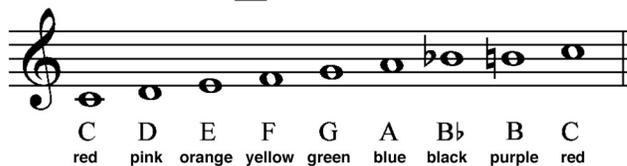


Fig. 1



In order to play a melody from the songbook, you can simply match the colors below each note and strike the tube of the same color. The numbers on the tubes and in the songs can be used in the same manner by the older child. Eventually, traditional notation can be learned through association with the color and number system. Rotating the tubes to reveal the note names also promotes knowledge of common musical notation and enhances the value of the Chimalong as an educational tool.

At the top of each tune is a row chart of color circles. Only tubes used for that tune will appear on the chart.

improvising

Just “playing” the Chimalong without the tubetune melodies is fun too. Making up the music as you go is called improvising. You don’t need any experience to start improvising right now, and you will find it very enjoyable. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Making sure you are comfortable and it is quiet around you, begin playing one note at a time. Let the sound stop completely before striking another. Listen very carefully to each sound and continue striking tubes until you have played all eight. Now repeat this exercise while you sing the notes as you strike them. Try skipping around and playing different sequences, continuing to sing while you play.

Playing two notes at a time produces an interesting effect. Listen carefully because two notes played together is more than one plus one! Play tubes numbered 4 and 5 together loudly. You will hear a third sound buzzing in your ear. (This sound is called a difference tone). Now play tubes numbered 5 and 7 in the same manner. The buzzing will sound higher. Try to listen to (and perhaps sing) the difference tone as you play any two tubes together.

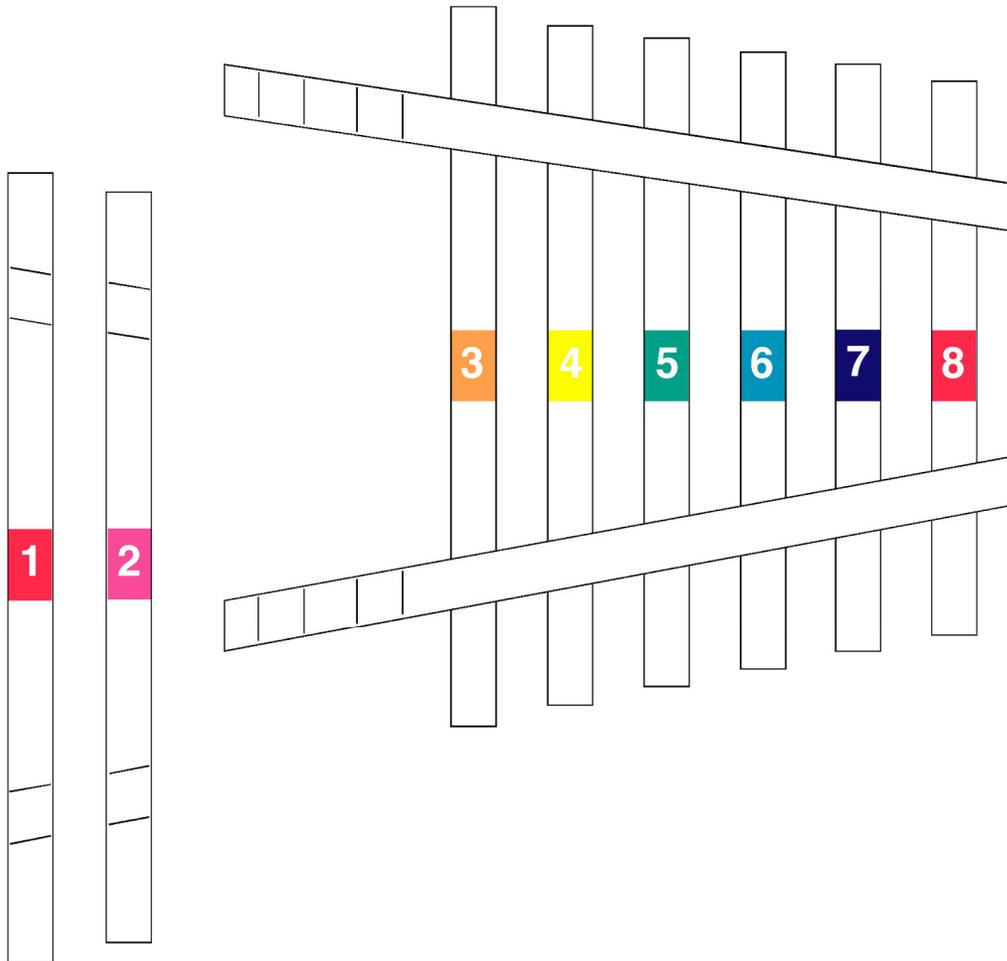
You can also remove some of the tubes and improvise on the remaining tubes. Remove tubes numbered 4 and 7. Play the remaining tubes (numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 8). Put number 4 back and remove tube number 3. Play the remaining tubes (numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 8). These are two examples of the many “pentatonic” scales available, which are so called because they have five notes in one octave. (Tubes 1 and 8 are both the note C but are in different octaves). Pentatonic scales are especially wonderful since all of the notes harmonize well together. Try this by making up your own pentatonic scales. Experiment with other combinations and improvise your own music. You may discover that you like some scales better than others. Always take time to just “play” on each new combination.

One rule you should always consider as you improvise: quality is always more important than quantity. Do not feel that you have to play many notes. Keep it simple, and you may enjoy the results much more.

Tube re-assembly

If you remove a tube for any reason or find that a tube begins to sound less resonant, simply slide the tube into the foam holder so that the double lines inscribed near the end

of the tube are within foam holder. Repeat this procedure for the other end of the tube. To ensure the most resonant sound from the Chimalong, periodically check the tubes for the correct positioning in the foam holder.



To the parent:

The Chimalong is unique among children's instruments in that it combines the purest musical sound with a creative system of musical instruction. The system of notation utilized in the songbook was developed so that it can be understood by a child of any age. The songs can be played in the early stages by simply matching colors. In the same manner, the older child can use the numerical system. Eventually, the traditional music notation can be integrated. Each tube of the instrument is electronically tuned to the highest standards and securely suspended in a safe foam holder, ensuring the soft, resonant sound of the instrument. The Chimalong is completely portable, so it may be easily taken anywhere.

The Chimalong helps your child develop in many important ways. It aids motor development and coordination through the kinetic process of striking the tubes. The

accompanying color-coded songbook also helps with color recognition and introduces musical notation in a fun way. It is helpful for an adult to read the colors aloud from the songbook as the child plays the tube tunes. The child can then concentrate on the colors of the tube. The Chimalong is a single octave instrument, either as shipped in the key of C, or with the extra tube in the key of F. The tubes are tuned in a basic diatonic scale pattern, as in the familiar “do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do.” You will no doubt enjoy discovering the many melodies and songs that can be played on the Chimalong (in addition to those in this book) as long as they fit the “do-re-mi” scale requirements. Songs with different scale patterns (i.e. minor and chromatic) generally cannot be played on this instrument. Also, tubetunes can be played on many traditional instruments as well as other instruments in the Woodstock Music Collection, that are diatonic and at least one octave in range. The specific range and key of this instrument was chosen because it best fits the range of a child’s voice. This encourages your child to sing along and instills a sense of tone and pitch relationships, making playing a lot more fun. Most important is the incalculable joy your child will experience from making music, whether reading from the songbook, picking out other familiar melodies or just “playing.”

The Chimalong is recommended for children ages 3 and up. Adult help may be needed to read the instructions and to understand the notation used for the tubetunes. The instrument is constructed of only the safest and highest quality materials.

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