

## Moyo Magic Is Not Just for Adults

I smile as I stand in the midst of watching teenagers who are totally engaged in playing music. They have turned their cell phones to vibrate and they pick up the Moyo mallets. Those who play the drums with their hands have removed their watches and rings. They are both inspired and delighted. This is not the traditional “music lesson” music, it is a time of allowing the youth to find their own song. The Moyo Baby drum is an instrument that does not require any previous musical training. It therefore becomes a safe instrument; “there are no wrong notes.” Everyone can play!

“It is not a drum, play lightly,” I encourage. And with that, they become focused on the melodious notes, the interval between notes, beginning to hear the silences and the notes, both equally important. As the teenagers play they are transported into a world of stunning sound. They find a common rhythm; the three teens play as a trio. They have entered into the sharing of this moment; they laugh with joy at what they are creating.

I am convinced that the Moyo drum, an incredible steel melodic drum with 8 tongues, is almost magic. These drums are now available in various sizes: The Baby Moyos and the Midi Moyos are all very portable and weigh in at only about 10 pounds. These are incredible tools in the hands of children. When several sets of parents bought Moyo drums for their children who were diagnosed with hyper-active tendencies, I realized yet another important reason for this instrument. The Moyo is an excellent outlet for those with learning disabilities and special needs.



Developmentally, the child, regardless of age, can enjoy finding sounds and rhythms in a solo situation or with a group. A repetitive motion of soothing quality is nice for the parents and important for the children. The Moyo drum gives young ones the ability to play music using easy and gentle motions. When given an instrument with “no wrong notes” there is freedom to “just play.” This supersedes criticism, lack of confidence and shyness. The player becomes part of the whole and loses themselves in the music.

The same transformation happens with adults. I have “grown-up” students who, when playing this Moyo drum, suddenly become very attentive; they are “lost” in the music. For the first time in their lives many are now able to understand what it is to “be in the groove.” This altered state where the focus is on the music is a healing place. It is a place of joy and stress reduction. It allows the players, regardless of their age, to be a part of the musical circle. There is not a long training time before the player is “good enough to play.” They can begin simply and beautifully when they pick up the sticks.

I recently participated in a jam session in Arizona. We played didgeridoos, drums, hammer dulcimers and guitars. It was a moonlit night and everyone was involved. Everyone, that is, except dear woman who sat quietly beside me, listening. When I asked if she would like to play an instrument, her response is one I hear often, “Oh, my husband is the musical one.” I smiled

and handed her a Moyo Baby (in the key of A) while we played didges and hammer dulcimers in the key of D. Tears came into her eyes as she realized that she too was a part of the music; a place she had so wanted to occupy but didn't consider herself "musical. The freedom she experienced playing the Moyo Baby exceeded any words she could speak.

Duets utilizing Moyo drums in the same key are also a place of spontaneous joy. Playing a Moyo duet is relatively easy: First, pick a simple rhythm and play this on one drum. A heart beat, three beats, or whatever seems easy...just keep it simple. Then, just like teaching a simple duet on the flute, have one player strike the higher notes while the other plays the lower notes. The outcome of harmony lights up faces and hearts when the "non-musical ones" discover they can create lovely sounds. The confidence and well-being level soars as players discover the other side of performance pressure! The joy is spontaneous...



I have talked in the past about using this instrument with stroke patients who have the use of one hand. It is also a fabulous aid to toning and chanting. The use of voice with the Moyo drum as a harmonizer adds another texture to the voice. This can be used by an individual in their meditations, or in a group setting. The Moyo can be played slowly and deliberately. Find the key that best suits your voice. These drums now come in pentatonic keys of A, F#, D and E.

When playing the Moyo Drum with other instruments, be aware of the keys being played. If you are playing guitar in the key of E, try to "E" Moyo Midi. The "A" Moyo Baby is a wonderful accompaniment with an A Native style flute. But don't stop here...experiment to find that the F# Moyo Baby is delightful with a B Native flute. And the D Moyo Midi with a D didgeridoo will take the music into a deeper realm of wonder. Enjoy!

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