

# Music - A Key to the Heart

Have you ever been called into a room where there were parents are sitting next to their motionless baby or child. They so desperately need you and what can you do?



In Denmark I saw Gunil called into neonate where she sang, with her ukulele, a little folk tune. It was so sweet and so appropriate. Shobi has always felt so unprepared for these situations. So I decided to look around for some things I could play.

Music lifts the spirits and the mood anywhere. You don't really have to have a great or even good voice.

So here are some of this things I found. Put all these things together with a washtub base and you'd have a jug band for a nursing home!

**Pick-Me-Up Music:** Obviously we can't go through the hospital making a lot of noise, so volume is very important. Years ago while clowning in the hospital the elevator door opened on the maintenance floor. A man standing there waiting to go the other direction looked at me and said "You need one of these and he pulled up a little speaker (about 1 by 2 inches which was hooked by a small wire to a cassette player in his pockets) The elevator doors closed. "Whow" I thought "I could really use one of those. Wonder where he got it?" The doors opened again to the same man standing there. He said "\$14.95 at Radio Shak" (As I've always said sometimes I get a lot of help!) This is like a personal speaker, so it can't be heard far. It's great for a little pick me up music. Another possibility, but more expensive is a little Panasonic CD player with built in Speakers.

## My Little Violin

For a little staff pick-up I love my little violin I make a big deal out of playing it - actually it plays automatically. With a little acting you can look like you are actually playing this 10 inch violin. Then of course the violin goes off by itself and gives away the joke. I've seen them in various sizes all over the place, but here's an Internet source.

<http://www.wonderfullywacky.com/violin.htm> 201/909-8600 or 1-800/788-1957



There are many little musical instruments you can play if you don't read music. Call these people for a catalogue. **Empire Music Company**, P.O. Box 9754, Bellingham WA 98227-9754 / 800-663-5979, [empire@empire-music.com](mailto:empire@empire-music.com), <http://www.empire-music.com>



## Watering Can Kazoo

If you've been to Mooseburger Camp) you're familiar with a Kazoo band. The Kazoo is probably the easiest to play, but to make it more theatrical build on

it. You can put the Kazoo in the neck of a watering can or a tea pot and tape it with colorful tuck tape. There has to be an opening for the air to escape. This is a Splittergale instrument.



## The Canjo The Key to My Musical Heart

*MT Pockets (above) and Olive Everbuddy (next page) both characters of Donna Wilinski, who works as a nurse in Southwest Michigan. Having been active in various clown organizations for more than ten years, she brings silly, wacky musical skills to parties, company functions, parades and visiting nursing homes and has even performed at a memorial service.*

"A canjo looks like a banjo made with a stick and a can. It has real musical instrument parts with three strings, tuning gears and frets. It is a humble, upside-down cousin to the Appalachian Dulcimer. The amazing thing is, it doesn't look like it could make any real music, but it CAN. Guitar players say "It's just too easy." Regular dulcimer players say, "The whole darn thing is upside down. But it's cute."

"A canjo gives you a great excuse to get out and make people, move and laugh and even sing. I like to share my props and have folks act out the songs. Imagine acting out the Itsy Bitsy Spider with a rubber spider, a round plastic sun, and a loaded squirt gun. Turkey in the Straw with a rubber chicken, a plastic egg. See that chicken dance!"



Donna Olive Everybuddy Wilinski of Michigan with her Canjo (this one made with a ham can)

*Oh I had a little chicken and she wouldn't lay an egg.  
 So I poured hot water up and down her leg.  
 Well she wiggled and she giggled and she hollered  
 and she begged  
 Then that silly little chicken laid a hard boiled egg*

Donna keeps her Canjo in a guitar case with other little instruments like bells, whistles, tambourines and she has mini jam sessions including siblings, parents and/or a whole day room of a nursing home. She even let's other children play it as it is "pretty hard to damage."

Shobi has just bought one. It sound really good especially for a can! It can also be played like the dulcimer (see picture to the right)

Donna's Canjo has three strings and the can is usually tuna can or a ham can (as pictured above). If you think this is something you might want to own, e-mail Donna at: MTPO@aol.com. (269) 381-3471 \$55 Includes shipping

This canjo comes with a book of instructions, ideas and songs you can easily play..

## You Too Can Canjo!

Shobi found another Can Jo enthusiastic - Herschel R. Brown. His Can Jos have one string with a real banjo fret board and a geared tuner. They are really easy to play. Shobi has one of these and loves it! It doesn't make lots of noise (good for hospitals) and it's totally silly. "The CAN JO is for people who can't carry a tune in a bucket or play a radio," says Herschel. Easy playing instructions included.

Herschel R. Brown, 102 Marian Place, Jacksonville, NC 28545-8102 (910) 346-4854 The kits are \$20 (includes shipping) This includes everything (except can) and instructions on assemblage and playing instruction with several tunes.

## You Can Even Make a Can-jo

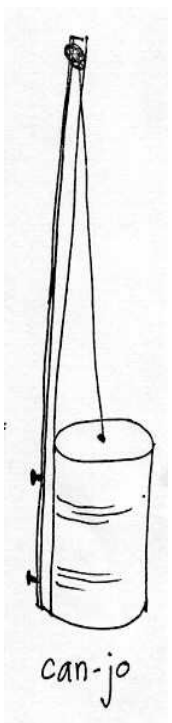
From: Russ Childers, 1555 Old State Route 74, Batavia, Ohio 45103 / russchilders@fuse.net

Russ doesn't sell them, but gave me permission to print his instruction on how to make one.

With recycled products and kitchen trash, you can create your own music on your own manufactured instruments. Appalachian musicians sometimes had to use what was at hand when store-bought musical instruments were not available or affordable.

This can-jo is Russ's adaptation of the traditional washtub bass that is commonly used in Appalachian musical settings. Materials needed: large coffee can, wooden yardstick, string, paperclip, 2 nuts and bolts.

Directions: Punch a hole in the center of the bottom of a tin can (lid has been removed). Setting open end of can on a counter, drill two holes through the yardstick and the can so that stick extends up from closed end. Fasten with 2 nuts and bolts. Drill hole in other end of stick. Push string through the hole in the can and fasten to a paper clip inside the can so that the string cannot pop out. Stretch the string to the hole in the far end of the yardstick; tie securely and tighten as much as possible.



## Make a Dulci-can

(Photo, Russ displays the Dulci-can)

Dulcimer, a word that comes from the Latin dulce melos, means "sweet sound." A lap dulcimer is a traditional Appalachian folk instrument played in the Southern Highlands. The dulci-can shown here is a straight-ahead utilitarian version of its more graceful hand-carved wooden ancestor of hourglass or teardrop shape. Made from a fretted fingerboard, three geared tuners, three guitar strings, and a recycled coffee can for a resonator, it can be played on a lap or a table top for even greater resonance. This particular design comes from David Ball of Knoxville, Tennessee.



## A Little Angelic Harp for Everyone

This little harp is perfect for the hospital. It has quite an angelic sweet sound. Everyone can play this Melody Harp. Simply slide a song sheet under the strings, and follow the dots with a pick. I was surprised with very little practice Mona and Shobi were playing Christmas songs without the sheets!

It's approximately 8"x 13" with 15 strings. The Melody Harp is available at most toy stores. It is from Trophy Music Company, 3800 Kelley Ave. Cleveland, Ohio 44114; (US\$49) Also available are additional song sheets for Christmas, folk tunes, children's songs. Each set has approx. 12 songs

