Kalimba





For ages South African storytellers have used the so called Thumb Piano to illustrate their stories. They are also known by the names Kalimba, Sanza or Mbira.

Metal bars like flat nails of different lengths and thicknesses are fixed on a simple wooden plate. The hollow pumpkin underneath serves as a great resonating chamber and amplifies the tones. Sometimes rings or chains around the bars create the additional snare sounds that African music is known for.

The instrument is held by both hands and the thumbs pluck the metal bars. In that way you can make gentle tones and create interesting rhythms. Although it is very simple the Kalimba has a wide interest. The models we offer here are highly developed musical instruments created by inspired specialists. They differ not only in shape but also in sound. Every type except the traditional one is tuned precisely and offers a large scale. With a little hammer you can (carefully!) push the sound bars in both directions in order to change the tuning a bit.

The Sansula is a special type of Kalimba built on a kind of little frame drum. Its sound is more sonorous, richer and much softer than that of a classical Kalimba. The metal bars are produced precisely, mostly tuned in pentatonic. If you hold the Sansula on your lap or over an even surface you can create intense effects like vibrato or Wah-Wah by lifting and lowering the whole instrument. Thus you can make the tones "speak" or create atmospheric sounds. The simple way of playing and the wide range of sounds will charm you immediately!