

Kalimba Magic Press Release Hugh Tracey 8-Note Kalimba

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Q: What's cute, earthy, curvey, shiny - smells nice and fits perfectly in your hands - makes an entrancingly beautiful sound - and is BRAND NEW from African Musical Instruments?

A: The new Hugh Tracey 8-Note Kalimba.



The Hugh Tracey Kalimba was the first kalimba to be exported from Africa in the late 1950's, and it started the Kalimba Revolution. The fact is that today the thumb piano is found across the globe thanks to the Hugh Tracey Kalimba. And the company that brought the Hugh Tracey Kalimba to the world almost 50 years ago, African Musical Instruments, still makes kalimbas that are among the best in the world.

African Musical Instruments have now come out with a simple and straightforward kalimba for children and beginners. With just 8 notes, this kalimba covers exactly one octave of the C major scale. And there is already a great book to help you learn to play the 8-note kalimba like a pro. You'll be amazed at how much real music you can play with just 8 notes! The painted tines make this kalimba look like the lower 8 tines of the Alto Kalimba, so anything you learn on this kalimba can also be played on the Alto without modification. The Hugh Tracey 8-Note is a great way to learn how to play kalimba, and it is a great stepping stone to the other kalimbas in the Hugh Tracey line.

Why is the new Hugh Tracey 8-Note Kalimba shaped this way? I'd like to say it is functional - the extensions on the lower kalimba body help it fit perfectly in your two opposing palms. But actually, this is the shape of the Hugh Tracey trademark, which depicts one of the more artistic shapes to be found among the traditional kalimbas of Africa. The photo below shows the new Hugh Tracey 8-Note Kalimba with a kalimba brought back from Africa by a tourist around 1955 (it originally had eight notes, but now only four remain), before AMI started to make kalimbas.

The Hugh Tracey 8-Note Kalimba has a good sound and great resonance and sustain. If you press it to a table top, bowl, or styrofoam cooler while playing, you can increase the volume tenfold and get some cool buzzing to give an authentic African sound. Experiment to find the best resonating object in your house!

As the least expensive of the Hugh Tracey kalimbas, this one won't take a big bite out of your wallet. But the real reason you'll want to get one of these great new kalimbas is that they are so cute! If you love kalimbas, you'll love this one.



Left: new Hugh Tracey 8-Note Kalimba and its box bearing the AMI trademark. Right: drawing of a traditional kalimba shape (from liner notes of a Hugh Tracey field recording) and a kalimba brought back from Africa by a tourist circa 1955.