

# **Pizarro: Children's Discovery Museum making music with its newest exhibition**

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The new hands-on exhibit at the Children's Discovery Museum in downtown San Jose may help create a new generation of musicians.

"Soundscapes: Orchestrate the Extraordinary" looks like it'll be a lot of fun for kids, whether they're budding rock stars or hoping to be the next Yo-Yo Ma.

"So many different cultures use music as part of their holiday celebrations this time of year, so we decided to focus on that," said Children's Discovery Museum Executive Director Marilee Jennings, who gave me a behind-the-scenes look before the exhibition's official opening Saturday.

The museum's west wing has been turned into a do-it-yourself paradise of unique musical instruments, mostly made out of plywood and cardboard, as envisioned by San Jose artist Joe Saxe and titled "Musicians at Work."



This huge functional guitar (which also serves as a bench) is part of "Soundscapes: Orchestrate the Extraordinary," a new exhibit at the Children's Discovery Museum in San Jose. (Sal Pizarro)

The "instruments" are all pretty unusual. There's a giant guitar -- with strings and everything -- that doubles as a bench. There's a set of three big plastic tubs that could be a starter set for taiko drummers, as well as a few drum kits made out of plastic buckets. And a wooden door isn't just decorated with a guitar -- it is one, plucking strings above it

as it opens and closes with a guitar pick attached to its top edge. Check it out soon because that part of the exhibit closes Feb. 9.

A more lasting element is the change made to the museum's big staircase, which has become a permanent installation all its own by artist Christopher Janney. Using a network of electric eyes and speakers, the staircase creates sounds every time someone takes a step. There are musical tones, insect noises and bird calls. And when you've got several kids and their parents going up and down the stairs at the same time, it turns into quite a symphony.

See what it's all about at [www.cdm.org](http://www.cdm.org).