

Chime Enhancer

Made Specifically for Koshi Chimes

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1. Introduction

In 2020 I started meditating, which was something I'd never tried before, so it was a totally new experience for me. Meditation opened a lot of doors for me and allowed me to turn inwards completely and really changed my general views on life. I got introduced to meditation and meditation music by monk and healer Deepak Chopra (Chopra) through a series of guided meditations focused on abundance in life. Paired with the recordings of Deepak's healing voice, there was meditation music playing specifically to enhance the inward experience. It was astonishing to me how this could grab me and calm my mind so strongly. Ever since my interest in meditation and especially meditation music had started. I found it quite hard to move into solitary meditation, as I always really wanted music to be connected to it. After a while it started to annoy me that I grew dependent on my phone for this healing experience and even more dependent on some specific healers, who didn't have enough content for me. The limited amount of video's resulted in listening to the same guided meditation over and over again. Therefore I started my investment into chimes. I came across many different ones and they also really remind me of my time growing up as a child. However, I live in London and I don't have access to a calming garden or outside space, so there wasn't really a comfortable place to position my chimes. Besides that there was also no wind to make the chimes sound in my apartment. So I ended up finding myself going back to meditating with headphones on in my home or during Yin Yoga sessions at my local yoga studio. I really wanted to figure out a way to meditate without having to use a device or having to relocate to another location for this experience. Because of this interest my idea for the *chime enhancer* came about. A tool which allows you to play your own unique form of meditation music from the comfort of your own home. And even better, you can take it anywhere you want and it will always play a different piece of music, only for you, or shared with friends or family if you want to. I also use chimes in my recorded music and therefore having a tool that would simply make the chimes sound simultaneously, without having to touch them all with my hands, is so efficient and something I could use so well in my recording sessions. In this paper I will take you through the proces of the creation of my chime enhancer,

the obstacles I came across and ways in which I can better the creation of this meditation gadget.

2. The Inspiration

a. History

Chimes originate from China and Japan where they were used for various purposes. Chimes were used in temples for religious reasons but also more practically in day to day life. Chimes were used in both temples as well as homes to wear off spirits but also to shield a garden from birds for example. Studies have shown that “In religious places, the unique religious soundscape, composed of the acoustic environment and sounds, has an obvious effect on mental health.”(Zhang, D) and ‘the environmental psychology’ also stated “that a preference for three sounds in Buddhist temples, i.e., bells, wind chimes and chanting sounds, was significantly correlated with mental health.”(Zhang, D). The results of a questionnaire which was handed out to tourists as well as Buddhist believers in a temple in China showed that the chimes stimulate the psyche and proved that visiting the chime filled temples benefited their mental health.

b. Inspiration and the Koshi Chime

Whilst I was researching chimes, my mother’s friend gifted her a Koshi chime one summer. There was something so magical and captivating about the sound that we were all wired to it as soon as it was unboxed. After this I started looking up Koshi as a company and soon learned about their four different chimes, sounding four different melodies. Each of these melodies is inspired by nature's four elements: Terra (Earth), Aqua (Water), Aria (Air) and Ignis (Fire). Taking this into account for the creation of the chimes to me is very powerful and will make us feel connected to the chimes directly in a way. The four elements of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water have been an integral part of human culture and mythology for centuries. Each element has its own unique characteristics and symbolism that have been used to explain natural phenomena and human behavior (Macauley, D.)

Earth represents stability, grounding, and materiality. It is associated with the physical world and our connection to nature. Air represents intellect, communication, and freedom. It is associated with the mind and our ability to think critically. Fire represents passion, transformation, and energy. It is associated with creativity and our ability to take action. Water represents emotion, intuition, and fluidity. It is associated with the subconscious mind and our ability to adapt. (Macauley, D.) These elements can be found in various aspects of life such as astrology, feng shui, alchemy, tarot cards among others. Understanding these elements can help us better understand ourselves as well as the world around us. They remind us that we are all connected to nature in some way.

The Koshi chime is a musical instrument that has gained popularity in recent years due to its unique aesthetically pleasing design and sound. The Koshi chime is a handmade wind chime that produces a soothing and calming sound when played. The design of the Koshi chime is simple yet elegant, with eight metal tubes suspended from the bottom of the bamboo frame. The minimalist design allows for the focus to be on the sound produced by the instrument rather than on its appearance. The chimes are very versatile, they can be used for meditation, relaxation, or even as part of a musical performance. Its compact size also makes it easy to transport and play anywhere. The design of the Koshi chime is both aesthetically pleasing and functional. Its simplicity and versatility make it an excellent addition to any musician's collection or meditation practitioners.

c. Koshi Chimes

Each of the four chimes have their own melodic base and timbre (Koshi) and they can also be played harmoniously with each other. I researched into the creation of the Koshi chimes and Founder Kabir gives a clear description of how each individual chime has taken form. Kabir states “Eight chime-rods are welded with silver into the metal plate at the base of the resonance tube. Precise tuning creates a play of clear tones that is rich in overtones. The overtones of the shorter chime-rods gradually dominate and become fundamentals, thus forming a circular tone range.

The cylinder, a resonance tube of high acoustic quality, is made in our workshop with thin layers of bamboo and is treated with natural oil. Bamboo has been used since ancient times for musical instruments. The cylinder is 6,3 cm in diameter and 16,5 cm high.”(Koshi). Koshi chimes have been used for meditation and relaxation purposes and their popularity has only increased in recent years.

i. Chimes for Meditation and Anxiety Relief

Meditation is a practice that involves focusing one's attention on a particular object or sound to achieve mental clarity and relaxation. (West, M.) Koshi chimes are perfect for this purpose as they produce gentle, calming sounds that help to clear the mind of distractions. The soothing tones produced by Koshi chimes can also help reduce stress levels, lower blood pressure, and improve overall well-being (West, M.)

Relaxation is another benefit of using Koshi chimes. The gentle sounds produced by these instruments create a peaceful atmosphere that enables a sense of relaxation and calmness. This makes them ideal for use in spas, yoga studios, or any environment where people need to unwind and de-stress. Koshi chimes are an excellent tool for meditation and relaxation purposes. Whether you're looking to meditate or simply relax after a long day, Koshi chimes deliver a certain calmth that always delivers.

Each chime is tuned to its own scale. Terra (G C E F G C E G), Aqua (A D F G A D F A / Pentatonic), Aria (A C E A B C E B) and Ignis (G B D G B D G A / Pentatonic). Each has its own magic timbre and can be played harmoniously with all the others. (Koshi)

Listen here:

[Terra](#) [Aqua](#) [Aria](#) [Ignis](#)

ii.. As a musical instrument or in a Musical Production

In my musical productions I use chimes to add texture and depth to the sound and sometimes as a trademark or to create a melodic line for my sound or song. Chimes are commonly used in film scores to create an ethereal or magical atmosphere which I think it leans to a lot. One advantage of using chimes in music production is their versatility. They can be played softly for a subtle effect or struck more forcefully for a dramatic impact. Additionally, chimes can be easily manipulated through post effects processing such as reverb or delay. A tool I use often to really create depth to my productions.

3. The Chime Enhancer

Creating Your Own Meditation Music

1. Brainstorm and Thought Proces

I started by deciding what materials to use. Initially I wanted to use a square cutting board, which was about 5 inches wide on each side. This was quite a heavy solution so I quickly learnt that in order to get the chimes to move with this construction, it'd be quite difficult. Therefore I started doing some research and looked at designs of mobiles for baby toys as inspiration. To stick to the ethos of Koshi, I wanted to use natural products. Therefore simply copying the construction of a baby toy wasn't an option. I found most toys for children are made cost effective and therefore of plastic, which is not a material I was interested in using. I really wanted to find a sustainable and beautiful solution for this. I started researching some natural materials and started thinking about wood. I initially wanted to use some broken branches which had fallen from the willow tree in the park in front of my house. I quickly found this wasn't a great idea if I ever wanted to create more items, I couldn't guarantee I would have access to the same kind of branches for future creations so I decided not to go with this in the end.

2. Building Blocks

I then got inspired by the Koshi website and figured I could find some bamboo to create the enhancer. Bamboo is a great solution as it's quite flexible and therefore easy to bend. I visited my local garden store and looked for some bamboo there.

Besides the material being bendable it is also very easy to grow yourself, it is a very sustainable piece of material and it also matches the ethos and design of the Koshi Chimes. It seemed like the right product to get working with. A sustainable, environmentally friendly material that is the same as the material. The bamboo being so easy to grow myself in a pot inspired me to connect with the Southwark local council and request a collaboration with the association who runs the Peckham Rye Park in front of my house. I want to rent a small space in the park where I can grow the bamboo I purchased. I could continue creating more chime enhancers in the future at a lower cost and in an environmentally friendly way. I could also sell any remaining bamboo to the gardening centre in Nunhead where I initially bought the first stems of bamboo.

Eventhough the bamboo is quite flexible I did break a few pieces. I eventually found the right construction though. I used tie wraps to secure the pieces of bamboo together and jute rope to tighten and construct the mobile solution.

Tie wraps



Jute String and Bamboo



Bent Bamboo



3. Execution and Dificulties

I went through a lot of trial and error during the process of creating the chime enhancer. I Initially wanted the installation to run powered by an electric fan or the vapour of a diffuser. I placed the diffuser underneath the mobile construction and quickly found that the vapour released from the diffuser I own, wasn't dense enough. The amount of vapourised water released wasn't strong enough and therefore didn't cause any movement in the bamboo enhancer or the chimes.

Because of this the chimes wouldn't make any sound when placed by the diffuser. After that I considered using an electric fan. I simply pointed the fan at the installation and the chimes did move and sound. I also considered attaching a string of the jute rope to the fan so the chimes would move according to the movement of the fan itself. Again, the chimes moved! However, I quickly found that the noise of a fan influenced the experience of the calming chimes too much and resulted in a very noisy, less calming experience. Therefore I finally decided to make the chime enhancer manually controllable by human touch.

I constructed the chime enhancer with three different materials; bamboo, jute rope and tie wraps. I used three pieces of bamboo, slightly bent and tightened together with six tie wraps in total, two on each connecting end for an extra tight grip. I then secured, tightened and sealed the connected pieces of bamboo further with some jute string. I then attached four different pieces of jute closest to each corner of the connected bamboo sticks. These four pieces of string varied slightly in length. This is because they needed to balance the mobile so it would hang straight and balance out evenly on each side, this to make the chimes all have a similar response to any movement made by the following construction. I wanted to be able to control all the chimes at the same time. I initially expected to be able to attach a piece of the jute string to the mobile itself directly. I quickly found that was quite limiting as not all chimes would sound when pulling the string from one end, and it would also mainly enhance the chime closest to the piece of string. Therefore I created another construction to the bottom part of the chimes.



I attached four separate jute ropes of the same length to each of the bottom elements of the Koshi Chimes, leaving them to create movement whenever one of the chimes would be triggered. Due to precise tuning of each of the chimes, the mutually sounding chimes create a very harmonically pleasing and calming sound, allowing the listener to really get enhanced by the calming music. This collective sound allows you to create your own sound bath with chimes, even if there is no wind, garden or balcony available to you, at home. I then attached one piece of jute rope to control the movement of all the connected chimes. It is attached to the jute rope that connects the fire chime to the earth chime. You can choose to gently pull the rope for a soft sounding sound bath or decide to pull the rope a bit firmer for a louder sounding sound bath. Also tightening or loosening your grip to the rope has an influence on the amount of sound being created. It therefore has variations in intensity and loudness and is an easily controllable device.

4. Trial With Friends

Once I had built the installation, I tested the sound of the chimes on my friends. Besides this being a fun activity that I enjoyed doing, I really wanted to test them out on people who didn't work in music to see their reactions to the sound.

Firstly, testing chimes on my friends allows me to judge the quality of the instrument. If the sound produced is pleasing to the ear, then I know that it's a good quality chime. Secondly, it's an opportunity for me to share my passion for music and calming sounds with others. I layed them down on my bed where the chime enhancer was positioned above their heads. They closed their eyes to internalise a little more. Once I started moving the chimes with my chime enhancer, I saw their faces relax and a slight smile appear on their mouths. Seeing their faces light up when they hear the beautiful sounds of the chime was very rewarding. My friends found the experience therapeutic and very calming. They enjoyed the fact that they could use the chime enhancer from the comfort of my bedroom and actually also enjoyed doing it in a small group, as the energies in the room were shared and they felt like they were going through the soundbath together.

5. Development and improvement

a. Design

The jute string is a cheap and sustainable solution for the current creation of the bamboo chime enhancer. Jute string is a versatile and eco-friendly material that has been used for centuries in various applications. It is made from the fibers of the jute plant, which is a sustainable crop that requires minimal water and pesticides to grow. Jute string is biodegradable, making it an excellent alternative to synthetic materials that can harm the environment. However, it is not the most sturdy piece of string. I therefore think it would be interesting to search for a more durable material. This is mainly because I wouldn't want the enhancer to break quickly. I want the enhancer to remain its quality over a long period of time, without breakage.

Currently I have mounted the chime enhancer to a clothing hanger, which is not ideal as it's not the easiest to mount the chimes anywhere and it also doesn't look great either. This was my solution as I haven't found any hooks that I enjoyed the sight of, or were affordable. My idea is to create hooks out of some left over bamboo I have. For this I will need to do some research on how to best construct this and how to eventually, best mount a hook like that to a ceiling. For extra adjustability I also want to create some hooks that would be mountable to a wall rather than a ceiling. This is because not every ceiling is suited to create holes in. This I would also like to create with bamboo so the design is consistent and the enhancer still looks beautiful.

The jute string used for the bottom part is also not ideal for me. I don't really like the way it looks. I am currently thinking of better solutions for this. As mentioned before, the jute is not always reliable as it's not extremely sturdy. I will trial some different natural fibers and see what would work better. Ideally I wouldn't want to have to attach all the ends to each other as obviously as I have now. I have yet to find out how to best adjust this.

6. To Conclude

I enjoyed the process of creating my *Koshi Chime Enhancer* a lot. The goal was to create an installation that would allow the chimes to sound when there's no access to outdoor space or natural wind inside your flat. The Koshi chimes were the right chimes for this as their soothing and calming sound and minimalistic design suited the sound and aesthetic I was going for exactly. The enhancer I built ended up being very in line with the ethos of the Koshi Chime Company, as it is a sustainable piece that I will actually use in practice as well. After researching all the different materials that could be used for the enhancer, I settled on bamboo. It is reliable, bendable and easy to work with, a few tie wraps and about three metres of jute string. Besides the enhancer being a perfect solution to create your own soundbath at home, I will also be able to perform with my chimes live now and have made an installation to record them easily. I can also travel with the chime enhancer as it's light and easily transportable. I perform frequently at yoga retreats where I can even resell the chime enhancers. Building my own Koshi chime enhancer was an exciting project that allowed me to explore my creativity while bettering my musical experience with the chimes and making it a great solution for future projects of mine.

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