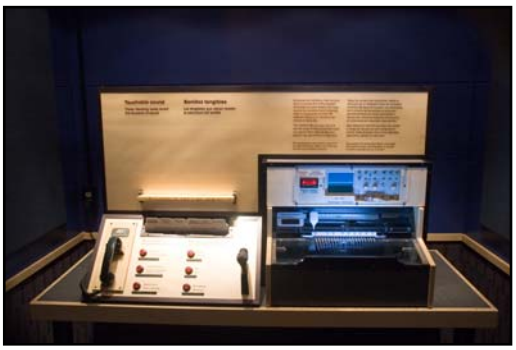
Wild Music: a focus on accessibility

Wild Music has put a priority on accessibility, particularly for people who are blind and have low vision. All areas are designed for easy access by wheelchair users, many include tactile elements, and all have Braille and audio labels.

Tactile whale models with easy-to-locate buttons activate the songs of different species of whales.

Touching songs—At this exhibit (right), visitors can select a tactile diagram (sonogram) of a bird, mammal, or insect song and insert it into a slot to activate an audio recording. As the recording plays, visitors follow the sound with their fingertips.

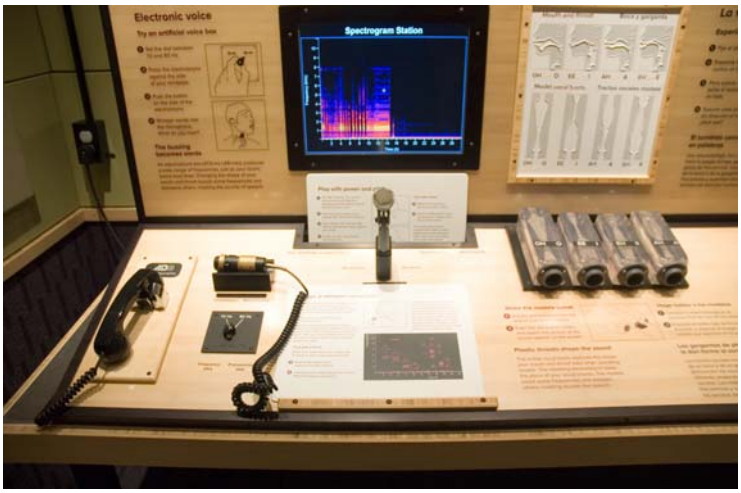


Spectrum analyzer—This exhibit (left) lets visitors both see and feel that sounds may be composed of several different frequencies. Sounds electrically fed into a sound transducer vibrate a bar with touchable metal strips of varying length. Strips of the proper length resonate to specific frequencies in the sound; visitors not only see these vibrations, but feel them directly with their fingers.

Wild Music is a production of ASTC, the Science Museum of Minnesota, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro School of Music, with major funding from the National Science Foundation and additional support from Harman International and NEC Foundation of America.

Working model of larynx—This exhibit consists of a fan blowing low-pressure air through rubber flaps. Visitors can pull on a control knob to stretch the flaps and bring them together, causing them to vibrate and make a sound that varies in pitch with the tension on the string. Strobe LEDs help visitors see how vibrations make the sounds they hear. Braille and audio labels are standard throughout. Signs are also in both English and Spanish.

Born musical— This unit (right) uses a button inerface to control the cursor **—** a technique developed by the Museum of Science, Boston.



Tactile graphics produced by Stephen Landau of Touch Graphics, like these views of the human larynx, are used throughout the exhibition.

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