

MOM'S JOY ROOM

Where Obsolescence Ends and Wonder Begins

2964 Fairmont Road • Morgantown, West Virginia 26501 • (304) 282-3671

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY & APPRAISAL

Vintage Carousel Music Box

Animated Carousel Horses • circa 1977 • Wind-Up Drawer-Style Music Box

ESTIMATED WORTH

\$40 – \$75

Reflects the crisp, unfaded carousel artwork and the animated spinning horses, which outsell static music boxes of the same era.



Her painted carousel — striped tent, canopy border, and two carousel horses



Drawer open — the carousel platform, its red-spoke hub, and the wind-up key

History & Background

Of all the music boxes made for the gift shops of the twentieth century, none has been loved longer than the carousel. The great carousels of the early 1900s — with their prancing horses, brass rings, and band-organ waltzes — became the very picture of a vanished pleasure, and toy and music box makers have been shrinking that picture to shelf size ever since. By the 1970s, Japanese movement makers like Sankyo were supplying tunes to gift importers across America, and carousel boxes were among their

best sellers: every tourist town and boardwalk had one waiting on a shelf.

This music box, from around 1977, is the carousel captured in full. Her outer sleeve is printed as the carousel itself — red-and-white striped tent, an ornate gold and magenta canopy border across the top, and two painted carousel horses prancing beneath: a rich red one with a blonde mane and elaborate tack, and a black one in gold-trimmed saddlery. The sleeve slides open like a drawer to reveal the works: a cream tray, the little silver wind-up key at the side, and the green carousel platform with its red-spoke hub. Housed within are the tiny carousel horses that spin to the rhythm of the classic music as the movement plays — the whole wonder of the midway in a box that fits in two hands.

No maker's mark is visible, which is typical of this generation of gift-import music boxes, so she is attributed to the 1970s Japanese-movement carousel tradition by her construction and artwork. Her condition is unusually good: the striped sleeve is clean and the colors unfaded, when most of her sisters spent decades bleaching on shop shelves. She joined the Mom's Joy Room collection in October 2026, and stands with the shop's other carousel music boxes — a small carousel of carousels.

Notable Information

- ◆ Type: drawer-style wind-up music box, circa 1977, gift-shop era
- ◆ Theme: the carousel — striped tent, ornate canopy border, and two painted carousel horses (red with blonde mane; black with gold trim)
- ◆ Action: animated — carousel horses spin to the rhythm of the music as the movement plays
- ◆ Construction: printed cardboard sleeve sliding over a plastic tray; silver-toned wind-up key; green carousel platform with red-spoke hub
- ◆ Condition: clean, crisp, and unfaded — the artwork shows little of the sun-bleaching that marks most survivors
- ◆ Attribution: stylistic — unmarked, typical of 1970s Japanese-movement gift imports
- ◆ Mechanism: to be confirmed upon arrival — tune and spinning action to be verified
- ◆ Joined the collection: October 2026

Collector's Notes

Animated carousel music boxes — the ones whose horses actually spin — are the prizes of this category, and they outsell static boxes of the same era by a comfortable margin. Values for working 1970s carousel boxes run from about \$35 for plain players to \$60-75 for animated examples in crisp condition. Wind the key gently and never past its stop; if she hesitates, a single tiny drop of light clock oil at the movement's pivots is all a healthy music box ever needs. Keep her out of direct sun, because the striped sleeve artwork that makes her charming is the first thing light will take.

"The whole wonder of the midway, caught in a box that fits in two hands."

Mom's Joy Room
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Morgantown, WV 26501

Sandy Wade

PROPRIETOR

October 17, 2026