



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Music Initiative in Central Asia



Instrument

Glossary



Glossary of Instruments



Choor



Chopo Choor



Daf



Dayra

Choor

End-blown flute made from reed or wood with four or five holes. Under various names and in various sizes, such end-blown flutes are widespread among Inner Asian pastoralists, e.g., *tsuur* (Mongolian), *chuur* (Tuvan), *sybyzghy* (Kazakh), and *kurai* (Bashkir).

Chopo Choor

A clay ocarina with 3-6 holes found in southern Kyrgyzstan and most commonly played by children. There is evidence that horse herders used ocarinas as signalling instruments in thick forests, where they would often graze their horses at night.

Daf

A small frame drum with jingles used to accompany both popular and classical music in Azerbaijan.

Dap

Uyghur name for a frame drum.

Dayra

A frame drum with jingles, commonly played by both men and women among sedentary populations in Central Asia.



Dombra



Dutar



Garmon



Kemanche

Dombra

Refers to different types of two-stringed long-necked lutes, best known of which is the Kazakh *dombra* – a fretted lute that is considered Kazakhstan’s national instrument. Its large and varied repertory centres around solo instrumental pieces, known as *kui*, which, like the analogous Kyrgyz *kuu*, are typically programmatic. The *dombra* also provides accompaniment for Kazakh bards, known as *jyrau*, and for singers of *bel canto* lyrical song.

Dutar

Designates different kinds of two-stringed long-necked fretted lutes among Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmens, Qaraqalpaks, Uyghurs, and other groups.

Garmon

A small accordion used in the Caucasus and among female wedding entertainers known as *khalfa*, in the Khorezm region of northwestern Uzbekistan.

Ghijak

Round-bodied spike fiddle with 3 or 4 metal strings and a short, fretless neck used by Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmens, and Qaraqalpaks.

Kemanche

Spike fiddle identical to a *ghijak*, important in Iranian and Azeri classical music and in the popular music of Iran.



Ghijak



Jew's Harp



Komuz



Qyl-Qiyak

Jew's Harp

Jew's harps, called by a variety of local names, belong to the traditional instrumentarium of pastoralists throughout Inner Asia. While the specifics of instrument construction and performance styles vary, jew's harps in Inner Asia are made either from wood or metal, representing an early and sophisticated use of metallurgy by nomadic peoples. A magical or spiritual dimension has been attached to jew's harps in many cultures.

Komuz

The main folk instrument of the Kyrgyz – a three-stringed, fretless long-neck lute typically made from apricot wood, nut wood or juniper. Playing techniques include plucking, strumming, and striking strings with the fingernails as well as the use of stylised hand and arm gestures that add an additional narrative component to the *komuz's* typically programmatic repertory.

Qyl-Qiyak

The Kyrgyz variant of an upright bowed fiddle with two horse hair strings. Kazakhs call an almost identical instrument *qyl-qobyz*. The deck is usually made from camel or cow hide, and the body is carved from a single piece of wood, typically apricot. The instrument's repertory is heavily programmatic, that is, melodies narrate stories and often imitate different sounds. In the past, the instrument had a strong connection to both shamanism and the recitation of oral poetry.



Rawap

Rawap

Uyghur long-necked lute similar to the *rubab*, but without sympathetic strings.

Rubab

Fretless lute, always with sympathetic strings, played in southern Tajikistan and Afghanistan.



Rubab

Sato

Bowed *tanbur*, or long-necked lute, now rare, played by performers of Tajik-Uzbek classical music.

Sybyzgy

Among the Kyrgyz, a side-blown flute traditionally played by shepherds and horse herders, made from apricot wood or the wood of mountain bushes. The *sybyzgy* has its own repertory of solo pieces, known as *kuu*, which are distinguished by their lyrical content.



Sybyzgy



Tanbur

Tanbur

Long-necked plucked lute with raised frets used in Uzbek/Tajik and Uyghur classical music traditions. An Afghani variant has sympathetic strings.

Tar

Double-chested skin-topped plucked lute with multiple sympathetic strings used in urban music from the Caucasus and Iran (the Iranian version has no sympathetic strings), and now popular in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.



Tar

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