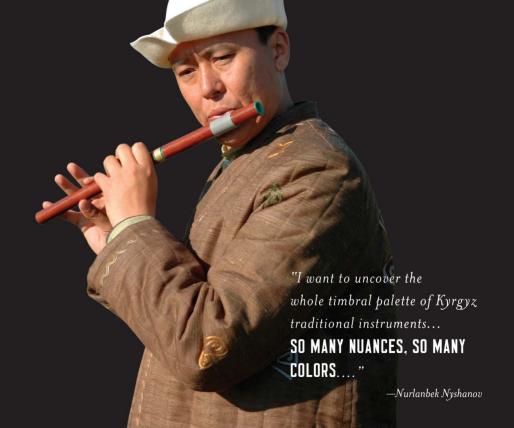


MUSIC OF CENTRAL ASIA is a co-production of the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia, a program of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. The aim of the series, released worldwide by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, is to present leading exponents of Central Asia's rich and diverse musical heritage to listeners outside the region. As a new generation of talented performers reinterprets this heritage - much of it ruptured or lost during the Soviet era - older traditions are reanimated and transformed. Music of Central Asia documents the work of musicians who represent both a mastery of their own tradition and a contemporary spirit of innovation expressed through new approaches to performance style, repertory, and technique. Each release includes a DVD with a documentary film on the featured performers as well as a map, musical instrument glossary, and short introduction to Music of Central Asia and the Aga Khan Music Initiative. These intimate, often poignant, musical portraits bring to life a group of remarkable artists whose creative achievements proclaim Central Asia's prominence on any musical map of the world. ~~ THE AGA KHAN MUSIC INITIATIVE IN CENTRAL ASIA was created in 2000 by His Highness the Aga Khan to contribute to the preservation, documentation, and further development of Central Asia's musical heritage. The Music Initiative pursues its long-term goals both within its region of activity and worldwide. In Central Asia these goals include revitalizing important musical repertories by helping tradition-bearers pass on their knowledge and craft; building sustainable cultural institutions that can eventually be maintained by local organizations and communities; and supporting artists who are developing new approaches to the performance of Central Asian music. Worldwide, the Music Initiative strives to increase knowledge about Central Asia's music and culture, particularly among students, and to nurture collaborations among musicians from different parts of Central Eurasia and beyond. For more information, see: http://www.akdn.org/Music/Musicin.htm





CD TRACKS

- 1. JANGYLYK (Novelty) 3:14
- 2. ERKE KYZ (The Spoiled Girl) 2:07
- 3. KÜIDÜM CHOK (I Burn, I Smoulder like Charcoal) 3:27
- 4. EPISODE FROM THE MANAS: KÖKÖTÖIDÜN ASHY (Kökötöi's Memorial Feast) 6:26
- 5. BELEK (Gift) 2:07
- 6. KARA ÖZGÖI (Impudent One) 3:21
- KYIYLYP TURAM (I'm Sad to Say Goodbye) 2:33
- . Attila Khan 3:28
- 9. AK SATKYN MENEN KULMYRZA (Ak Satkyn and Kulmyrza) 9:10
- 10. FANTASY ON THE CHOPO CHOOR (ocaring) 2:00
- 11. GÜL (Flower) 3:36
- 12. JOLJÜRÜSH (On the Road) 2:27
- 13. KENGESH (Soviet) 3:11
- 14. ESIMDE (I Remember) 5:04
- 15. KER ÖZÖN (Wide Valley) 2:39
- 16. SAGYNAM (I Miss You) 3:31
- 17. KAMBARKAN 4:50
- 18. KYZ OIGOTOOR (A Melody That Wakes Up a Girl) 2:47

Music of Central Asia Vol. 1 Tengir-Too: Mountain Music of Kyrgyzstan SFW CD 40520 ⊕ © 2005 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

DVD

Music of Central Asia and The Aga Khan Music Initiative

Tengir-Too: Mountain Music of Kyrgyzstan

Interactive Instrument Glossary

MAP OF CENTRAL ASIA

MUSICIANS

ENSEMBLE TENGIR-TOO:

Nurlanbek Nyshanov, Artistic Director, wooden and metal jew's harps, sybyzgy, choor, chopo choor

GULBARA BAIGASHKAEVA, komuz and jew's harp KENJEGÜL KUBATOVA, vocal and komuz AZAMAT OTUNCHIEV, kyl kiyak TOKTOBEK ASANALIEV, vocal ASYLBEK NASIRDINOV, komuz, jew's harp, and kyl kiyak

GUEST ARTISTS:

NURAK ABDRAKHMANOV, komuz
BAKYT CHYTYRBAEV, kyl kiyak
ZAINIDIN IMANALIEV, vocal and komuz
RUSLAN JUMABAEV, komuz

RYSBEK JUMABAEV, manaschi (Manas epic reciter)
NAMAZBEK URALIEV, komuz

AQYL QASABOLOTOV, choor, chopo choor AKTAN ISABAEV, dobulbas (drum) (in performance of Manas)

CENTRAL ASIAN MUSIC: An Overview

entral Asia is commonly understood to encompass the territory of six nations: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (see map). Yet patterns of settlement and cultural links that predate the establishment of current political boundaries argue for a broader definition of the region. For example, the Uyghurs, a Muslim, Turkic-speaking people whose traditional territory is in western China, have old cultural affinities with other Central Asian groups. The Turkmen, who comprise the titular ethnic group of Turkmenistan, are strongly represented in the Iranian region of Khorasan that flanks Turkmenistan to the southwest. Shia Isma'ili Muslims in mountainous Badakhshan, the eastern region of Tajikistan, share cultural and religious traditions with Isma'ilis living in the nearby Northern Territories of

Pakistan, Afghanistan, and western China, as well as in Khorasan and other parts of Iran.

Beyond Central Asia itself, diaspora communities created by recent emigration have spread cultural influences from the region far beyond its geographical borders. Some of Afghanistan's finest musicians were among the hundreds of thousands of Afghans who fled to Pakistan and later emigrated to the West following the Soviet invasion of their country in 1979 and the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s. Outstanding musicians were also among the tens of thousands of Central Asian ("Bukharan") Jews who left Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to resettle in New York City and Tel Aviv when the USSR opened its borders to Jewish emigration in the mid-1970s. Central Asian Jews long lived as a Persian-speaking minority population among their Muslim neighbors. Indeed,



€ 7 €

an overwhelming majority of Central Asia's Persian-speaking and Turkic-speaking population identifies itself with Islam, as an active religious practice, a cultural legacy, a worldview that informs everyday social life, or all of these. Excluded from this group are Russian-speaking Slavs and other non-Muslim immigrants who began to populate Central Asia after the tsarist conquests in the latter half of the 19th century and during the Soviet era accounted for half or more of the population of the region's major cities.

Central Asia's history has been shaped by its strategic position at the intersection of two great axes of civilization. One axis points southwest, toward the sophisticated urban culture of Iran. The other axis points northeast, to what has been called Turan—the nomadic world of the Inner Asian steppe, where pastoralists belonging to myriad Turkic and Mongolian clans created a succession of powerful steppe

empires. Iran vs. Turan, sedentary vs. nomadic, urbanite vs. steppe-dweller—in broad strokes, these contrasting pairs represent the distinctions of worldview and way of life that echo strongly in Central Asia's musical traditions despite centuries and millennia of intermingling among its diverse social groups.

In nomadic cultures, the consummate entertainer is the bard, and music is characterized by a strong narrative dimension. Epic tales as long as thirty times the length of Homer's Iliad, and instrumental pieces whose wordless melodies and rhythms relate beloved stories through a kind of musical onomatopoeia all reflect a nomadic sensibility. Traditional nomadic spirituality ascribes spiritual power to a range of natural phenomena and living creatures, and nomadic music and sound-making often serve as a means of representing and accessing the power of spirits.

The music of sedentary-dwellers, by contrast, reflects the deep impact of Islam as a spiritual and cultural force. The central artifact of musical performance is the elaboration and embellishment of words and texts by a beautiful voice. Singers are typically accompanied by small ensembles of mixed instruments that almost always include percussion. The beauty of the voice may also be represented symbolically by a solo instrument such as a plucked lute, violin, or flute, which reproduces the filigree embellishments and ornamentation characteristic of a great singer.

In the years following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Union tried to bring about fundamental transformations in the organization, transmission, and expression of indigenous culture among the inhabitants of its vast empire. Since the beginning of the post-Soviet period, musicians throughout Central Asia have sought to recover and

reanimate older musical traditions in response to growing interest in their cultural heritage, among both local inhabitants and outsiders. These traditions are deeply rooted in local musical practices, but none of them is "pure." Central Asia's long history of contact and exchange with other cultures continues to evolve in our own time. And as the musicians whose performances come alive on Music of Central Asia leave their own creative imprint on the region's musical legacy, there can be no doubt that authentic traditional music remains forever contemporary.

rengir-Too is a new ensemble that plays lead old music. The group takes its name from the mountain range that towers over the high alpine passes linking Kyrgyzstan and China and that is better known by its Chinese name, Tien Shan: "Celestial Mountains." Founded and directed by Nurlanbek Nyshanov, a gifted composer, arranger, and multi-instrumentalist, Tengir-Too (Too is pronounced like "toe") provides a living laboratory for Nyshanov's efforts to find a voice for Kyrgyz music in the contemporary cultural marketplace. Kyrgyz music is rooted in the sensibility of nomads who inhabit a spectacular landscape of mountains, lakes, and pristine grasslands where the elemental energies of wind, water, and echo, the ubiquity of birds and animals, and the legendary feats of heroes have inspired a remarkable art and technology of sound-making. During

the Soviet era however much of this music was lost or adapted to European musical ideals. Orchestras of reconstructed folk instruments replaced solo performers, and the introduction of music notation undermined orality, with its deep-rooted tradition of transmission from master to disciple. Soviet cultural policy decreed that among the diverse peoples of the USSR, art should be "national in form, socialist in content," and local music was adapted to conform to Socialist themes. In Central Asia, religious and spiritual song lyrics were replaced by texts that glorified Soviet economic achievements and reflected official and popular optimism about the country's future. Nostalgia for that optimism is reflected in the continuing popularity of songs from the 1930s, several of which are included on this recording ("Gül" [Flower], track II; "Esimde" [I Remember], track I4;



"Sagynam" [I Miss You], track 16.

Following the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, musicians throughout Central Asia began to find their way back to older traditions. The best of them strove not simply to reproduce tradition, but to innovate within it. Nurlanbek Nyshanov exemplifies such traditionalist innovators. His life in music was shaped both by his childhood in Naryn, a mountainous region in northern Kyrgyzstan, and by his experience as a student in the music education system created in Central Asia during the Soviet era. A graduate of Kyrgyzstan's State Institute of Arts (now the National Conservatory), Nyshanov draws on his compositional skills to craft for small ensembles striking arrangements of repertories typically performed by solo players and singers. Unlike Soviet-era folk orchestras and consorts, however,



Tengir-Too performs on traditional Kyrgyz instruments and works within the boundaries of conventional Kyrgyz musical forms, textures, and genres. At the heart of these genres is the music known in Kyrgyz, a Turkic language, as küü (pronounced like the first two letters in "cute"). An analogous tradition in Kazakh music is called kui.

Küü refers generically to music composed for a particular instrument komuz (three-stringed lute), kyl kiyak (twostringed bowl fiddle), temir komuz (metal jew's harp), and others—as well as to individual pieces within this repertory. Until the Soviet era, when folklorists began to notate traditional music, küüs were transmitted orally from one generation of performers to the next. But unlike the anonymous creators of much oral-tradition music. composers of küüs dating back to the early 19th century are known by name and are widely venerated by Kyrgyz music-lovers. As the present recording makes clear, küüs

are still being composed, arranged, and rearranged. Featured here are new küüs such as Nurak Abdrakhmanov's "Attila Khan" (track 8) as well as old chestnuts that have become genres in their own right—for example, "Kambarkan" (track 17), which honors the legendary inventor of the komuz and has sprouted myriad variants identified with particular composer-performers.

Whatever their subject, küüs rely on instrumental means to represent or tell a story about it—"program music," in Western terms. Performers of küüs often use gesture as a means of reinforcing the music's narrative dimension, and in some cases they provide a verbal synopsis of a küü's plot before performing it. Some küüs display a virtuosic performance technique, while others depict complex emotions or inner states through subtle expressive means. Indeed, the literal meaning of küü is "mood," "state," or "temperament." Bakyt Chytyrbaev, one of the performers on this

recording, has interpreted $k\ddot{u}\ddot{u}$ to refer more broadly to "an inner energy" or to "the inner state of any phenomenon, especially, a living organism." $K\ddot{u}\ddot{u}$ is also the root of the word for "tuning" ($k\ddot{u}\ddot{u}l\ddot{o}\ddot{o}$), suggesting the power of different musical tunings to affect the human soul and psyche.

In addition to instrumental music. Tengir-Too's repertory includes another great Kyrgyz performance tradition: the lyrical songs of the akyn, or singersongwriter. Like the best singer-songwriters of our own time, akyns have traditionally been not only musicians but poets, entertainers, and philosophers. The ability to improvise lyrics was highly prized, and oral poetry contests (aitysh) were a central part of traditional Kyrgyz life. Rooted in diatonic major and minor scales and performed in an extroverted bel canto style, the singing of the akyns is a tradition much appreciated by contemporary Kyrgyz music-lovers.



NURLANBEK NYSHANOV AND ENSEMBLE TENGIR-TOO

by Raziya Syrdybaeva, Senior Lecturer, Kyrgyz National Conservatory

"Iwant to uncover the whole timbral palette of Kyrgyz traditional instruments," said Nurlanbek Nyshanov, founder and director of Ensemble Tengir-Too. "So many nuances, so many colors! The best way to hear and 'see' them is when they come together in an ensemble, where they can reveal themselves more completely." Nyshanov's ensemble is an unconventional one that fuses aspects of nomadic culture with European compositional techniques. His work displays a solid command of musical form while

Ensemble Tengir-Too, from left to right: AZAMAT
OTUNCHIEV, AQYL QASABOLOTOV, GULBARA
BAIGASHKAEVA, ASYLBEK NASIRDINOV,
TOKTOBEK ASANALIEV, NURLANBEK NYSHANOV,
KENIEGÜL KUBATOVA.

mixing genres and experimenting with the timbral colors of traditional Kyrgyz instruments, several of which he revived and reintroduced into musical practice. In "Ak Satkyn and Kulmyrza" (track 9), for example, Nyshanov transforms a wellknown folk epic, traditionally performed by a solo bard, into a piece for male and female vocal, two komuzes, two choors, a sybyzgy, and a kyl kiyak. The CD's opening track, appropriately titled "Jangylyk" (Novelty), features a wooden jew's harp and two metal jew's harps playing threevoice polyphony rooted in the formal conventions of European counterpoint. In "Kyz oigotoor," (A Melody That Wakes Up a Girl, track 18), Nyshanov supplements the traditional solo komuz with two choors, a chopo choor, a kyl kiyak, and a second komuz.

Tengir-Too's role in the contemporary musical world of Kyrgyzstan must

be understood in the context of the nation's recent history. Nomadic cultures in Inner Asia share a propensity for solo performance, yet as the Kyrgyz came under the sphere of Russian cultural and political influence at the beginning of the 20th century, European musical forms and instruments took root. Later came orchestras and consorts of Kyrgyz folk instruments, their tuning systems retooled to reflect European intervals and scales. The repertory of these groups included European classics, transcriptions of folk music, and newly composed pieces for folk orchestra. Such collectives are still popular.

Nurlanbek Nyshanov and Tengir-Too broke away from these Eurocentric models but their success was neither immediate nor easy. As Nyshanov explained, the obstacles were to a considerable degree in his own conservatory training. His breakthrough came when he understood that, rather than rely on the academic conventions of ensemble music, he had to let his music "speak" in its own language—the language he had learned as a child growing up in the mountains of Naryn, where the earliest musical sounds were those of his grandmother playing the jew's harp. Nyshanov's achievement has been to transmit the vibrant rhythms of nomadism and the serene atmosphere of the Kyrgyz mountains in a musical language that is as contemporary as it is ancient.

TRACK NOTES



JANGYLYK (Novelty)

Composer: Nurlanbek Nyshanov (b. 1966)
Performers: Nurlanbek Nyshanov, Gulbara Baigashkaeva, Asylbek Nasirdinov, metal jew's harp (temir komuz) and wooden jew's harp (tygach ooz komuz)

"'Jangylyk' is an experimental piece for jew's harp trio," says Nurlanbek Nyshanov about his new composition. "The players try to extract all possible overtones from their instruments—overtones that aren't typically used in jew's harp music. Moreover, jew's harps have traditionally been solo instruments, whereas we perform as a small consort. In composing 'Jangylyk,' I drew on my conservatory training in counterpoint: there are canons and melodic motifs in contrary motion. We learned the piece from musical notation and play it from a score, even though it has the feeling of an improvised jam session. The jew's harp is truly a global instrument and provides a wonderful timbral resource for composers."



ERKE KYZ (The Spoiled Girl)

Composer: Unattributed

Performers: Tengir-Too, komuz, kyl kiyak, choor, chopo choor, sybyzgy

Tengir-Too transforms this instrumental tune ($k\ddot{u}\ddot{u}$), traditionally played as a solo on the komuz, into a seamless unison melody with continually shifting textures. The sonority produced by plucked and bowed string instruments with flutes calls to mind another great tradition of unison instrumental music: Irish dance tunes.



KÜIDÜM CHOK (I Burn, I Smoulder like Charcoal)

Composer: Atai Ogonbaev (1900–1949) Text: Atai Ogonbaev Performer: Zainidin Imanaliev, vocal, komuz

In this autobiographical song, Atai Ogonbaev, a famous Kyrgyz bard, recounts his youthful romance with the daughter of a wealthy neighbor. To prevent the girl from marrying a poor musician, her family secretly gave her in marriage to a boy from a distant settlement. Atai composed this song after a fruitless two-year search for his beloved. The performer, Zainidin Imanaliev, exemplifies the qualities of a traditional *akyn*, who is at once master instrumentalist, singer, poet, and entertainer.

I burn, I smoulder like charcoal
I think I'm burning, but there is no smoke.
On the upper part of my heart
There is no spot that is whole.

In the high mountain pass Kan-Jailoo A cold breeze blows when snow falls. My dark-eyed one in the wide collar, I burn; if you know the price of my love, come yourself.

Like a blossoming white poplar You walk, showing off a white dress. I have no choice; I cannot be with you I wander around like a lost young camel. Küidüm küidüm küidüm chok Küidüm desem tütün jok Jürögümdün bashyndai Küidüm jügörüdöi bütün jok

Kan-jailoo degen biyik bel Oshogo kar jaasa sogot muzdak jel Qairyma jaka kara köz Küidüm kadyrdy bilseng özüng kel

Ak terektei bürlönüp Jürösüng sen ak köinök kiyip türlönüp Aila jok saga jete albai Men jüröm adashkan tailak öngdönüp







ZAINIDIN IMANALIEV

Like a blossoming silvery poplar You walk coquettishly in a silvery scarf. Unable to find a way to be with you, I am left suffering like a weeping young camel. Boz terektei bürlönüp Jürösüng sen boz jooluk salyp turlönüp Boljolun taap jetalbai Men jüröm bozdogon tailak öngdönüp.



EPISODE FROM THE MANAS: KÖKÖTÖIDÜN ASHY (Kökötöi's Memorial Feast)

Text: Traditional

Performers: Rysbek Jumabaev, recitation; Tengir-Too, musical accompaniment

Manas is the central hero of the sprawling Kyrgyz epic that bears his name. In myriad versions of as many as 500,000 lines, the poem narrates Manas's life story, recounting his legendary birth to aged parents and his early military feats, when he liberated the Kyrgyz from the yoke of their principal foe, the Kalmyks (Mongols). The poem continues with his marriage to the warlike Kanykei, describes how he united the Kyrgyz clans, and ends with his death after a great raid against the Chinese.

- = 18 =

€ 19

The origins of the *Manas* epic have been the subject of much speculation. In 1995, Kyrgyzstan celebrated "1000 Years of *Manas*," although whether any parts of the epic are that old cannot be confirmed. What is certain, however, is that the *Manas* is rooted in a centuries-old oral tradition of folktales, legends, and myths, and that its episodes and subplots have been compiled and retold over an extended period of time by generations of performers, called *manaschi*.

The Manas is traditionally performed without musical accompaniment. Manaschis alternate between a rapid declamatory style for narrating factual information and a strongly rhythmic recitative for depicting dialogue and direct quotation. Dramatic gestures and facial expressions are integral to the performance: manaschis use all means at their disposal to hold the attention of an audience.

The present performance, in which musical accompaniment embellishes storytelling, represents an innovation on tradition. It began when Nurlanbek Nyshanov saw manaschi Rysbek Jumabaev on a Kyrgyz television station and invited him to collaborate in an experimental performance, in which Ensemble Tengir-Too created atmospheric music around Jumabaev's recitation. The present piece, composed and arranged by Nyshanov, emerged from this collaboration.

Memorial celebrations for dead heroes, featuring horse races, games, and feasting, were important not only in Inner Asian nomadic culture but in Western antiquity—for example, the funeral feast for Patroklos, described in book 23 of the *Iliad*. At the memorial for Kökötöi, invited guests included not only the dead hero's friends but his foes—here the Kalmyks and the Chinese. "Kökötöi's Memorial Feast" originally belonged to a separate epic that over time became part of the *Manas*. The plot changed accordingly, with the towering figure of Manas overshadowing the original hero, Bokmurun (literally, "Snot-Nose").







RYSBEK JUMABAEV

Since Kökötöi-khan, the father of the nation, died recently, And his poor soul saw the place from which nobody returns, His son Bokmurun
Has been carelessly eager to throw a memorial feast.
On Karkyra steppe
He settled by the banks of the Ürkünchü,
And by the banks of the Üch-Kapkak.
He did not invite Khan Manas from Talas;
He did not listen to Koshoi-khan's advice.

Bokmurun gave young Aidar Maniker, his father's horse, And sent him to the four corners of the world, Carrying an invitation to Kökötöi's memorial feast. Kechee jurt atasy kan Kökötöi ölgöndö Kairylgys jaidy kairan kishi körgöndö Oshondo Kökötöidün uulu Bokmurun Atama ash berem dep oolugup Oshondo Karkyranyn talaaga Ürkünchünün boiuna Üch-Kapkaktyn boiuna kelip konup Oshondo kan Manasty Talastan chakyrtpai Je kan Koshoidun tilin albai.

Oshondo baiagy jash Aidardy Manikerdi mingizip Tögöröktün tört burchuna chaptyryp Oshondo eldi ashka chakyrtty deit Bokmurun

€ 20 €

Before long,

The campsite was beautifully decorated.

Guests came from Orchong, Kokand, Margelan.

From Kokand came Kozubek;

From Margelan, Malabek;

From the Six Cities came Alvbek,

And twelve khans came along.

At the same time.

The Khan of Kakanchy

Elected a delegate, who was carrying his flag

And wearing a cotton waist sash and wide boots.

He was Kongurbai, Khan of Kechil,

Of proud looks indeed.

Neskara, Khan of Manju, came.

From the Kalmyks, Joloi-khan.

From the Solon tribe came Oiokyr.

And at the same time. The steppe of Karkyra

Was filled with multitudes of Chinese and Kalmyks, Who almost overwhelmed the Kyrgyz at the feast.

So Koshoi-khan said in despair:

"Truly, the Kyrgyz people will never live in peace without Manas!"

Discreetly Koshoi-khan Dispatched young Aidar hastily Upon the deceased's horse, Maniker, To the tamarisk-rich region of Talas,

To fetch the beloved Manas.

Oshol kezde karasang

Ordoluu shaiyk kökjeke

Orchong, Kokon, Margalang

Kokondordon Kozubek

Margalangdan Malabek

Alty shaardan Alybek kelip

On eki kan kosho kelip.

Oshol kezde karasang

Kakanchynyn kanynan

Shailanyp tuu chygaryp

Kebez bel boo, keng ötük

Kechildin kany Kongurbai

Kelbersingen chirkin ai

Manjunun kany Neskara

Oshol kalmaktardan kan Joloi Solondordon Ojokyr kelip.

Oshol kezde karasang Karkyranyn talaasy

Kytaj-kalmakka kyjyldap tolup

Ash berüüchü kyrgyzdy takyr chaap koioordo

Oshondo kasiettüü kan Koshoi arman kylyp Kapyrai ee, bul kyrgyz Manastyn bardygyndai

bolboit dep.

Bir adamga bilgizbei, bir adamga tuiguzbai Oshondo jash Aidardy Manikerge mingizip Jylgynduu Talaska

Özüng körgön jaryktyk Manaska

Chaptyrdy deit oshondo.

Back at the feast Neskara raged

And said to Bokmurun, son of Kökötöi:

"Hey, you Burut!*

Do as I say, you Burut.

I will not beat around the bush.

I will not take your offering of meat.

I am from Bakburchun.

Kökötöi's horse Maniker is

A humble yet exquisite thoroughbred;

An ethereal steed.

Worthy of warriors to ride.

It is an animal worthy of Beijing.

Oh, this cunning world,

I have a grudge against you! This very Maniker is able to carry me

To the true khan of Beijing."

As Neskara spoke,

The strength left Bokmurun's hands,

And fear seized his heart

In the sky Allah's sun hid behind the clouds:

And to Kökötöi's son

Sixty worries came at once.

Bokmurun was in such despair, When Koshoi-khan the wise.

His soul gripped by desperation,

Honked like a gosling.

His gray beard was shining,

Oshol kezde baiagy Neskara oolugup

Kökötöidün Bokmurunga: Atangdyn körü, sen burut

Aitkanyma kön, burut

Andai-myndai debeimin

Tartkan ashyng jebeimin

Menin chykkan jerim Bakburchun

Kökötöidün Maniker

Karabaiyr kazanat

Kaiypka chalysh mal eken

Berender minip belsenip

Beejinde jürör mal eken

Atangdyn körü, dünüiö

Sende öchüm bar, düinö Ushul turgan Maniker

Beejindin kara kanyna meni alyp ketchü jönü bar.

Dep oshentip turganda

Kökötöidün Bokmurun bileginen sap ketip

Jürögünön kap ketip

Asmandan allanyn künü bürköldü

Kökötöidün Bokmurun balaga

Oshondo altymysh müshkül bir keldi.

Bokmurun mintip turganda Kasiettiii kan Koshoi

Oshol kezde jan achuu

Bala kazdai barkyldap

Aksakaly jarkyldap

— # 22 F — - ≈ 23 ⊱ And this gifted warrrior Let no one know.

Let no one notice.

That he had sent young Aidar,

Whom you already know,

Upon Maniker,

To beloved Manas

In tamarisk-rich Talas.

At that very moment,

On the banks of Ürkünchü,

And on the banks of Üch-Kapkak,

The steppe of Karkyra

Was filled by a multitude of Chinese,

Who nearly overwhelmed the Kyrgyz

At the memorial feast.

And then, oh dear,

From out of nowhere

As the dawn cracked

And the glittering stars dimmed,

Manas arrived with an army of horsemen and followers.

He pushed forward

Like a race horse ready to run,

Like fog at dusk.

His advisor Bakai-khan was by his side;

His wife Kanykei was next to him;

Forty choros** surrounded him,

Among them Almambet, Chubak,

And the young Syrgak.

Kasiettüü kairan sher

Bir adamga bilgizbei

Bir adamga tuiguzbai

Özüng körgön jash Aidar

Oshondo Manikerdi tarttyryp

Jylgynduu Talaska

Özüng körgön jaryktyk Manaska

Oshondo at chaptyryp.

Tak oshentip turganda

Ürkünchünün boiunda

Üch-Kapkaktyn boiunda

Karkyranyn tüzündö

Kyjyldap kytai tolgondo

Ash berüüchü kyrgyzdy

Takyr chaap koioordo.

Oshol kezde jaryktyk

Kaidan keldi bilbeising

Tang agaryp atkanda Taraza ivldyz batkanda

Naizanyn bashy soroktop

Kol bashchysy koroktop

Mailagan buudan jüzdönüp

Küügüm tuman közdönüp

Kan Bakaiy kashynda

Kanikei töshündö

Kyrk chorosu janynda

Almambet, Chubak aralash

Bala Syrgak jana jash.

On the steppe of Karkyra, Manas the Hero, as you have seen.

Arrived in high spirits.

And when he arrived,

The Kalmyks sulked,

And the Kyrgyz rejoiced.

Karkyranyn tüzündö Özüng körgön Manas er Oshondo kirip keldi shartyldap Kany Manas kelgende Kalmaktar jüröt küiünüp Oshondo kyrøyzdar jüröt süiünüp.

^{**} Choro: One of a group of Manas's forty closest companions in daily life and in war.



BELEK (Gift)

Composer-performer: Nurlanbek Nyshanov, wooden jew's harp (jygach ooz komuz)

This piece is an example of the dedicatory genre (arnoo) popular among Kyrgyz poet-improvisers (akyns), who composed poems in honor of patrons. In the spirit of the akyns, Nurlanbek Nyshanov dedicated his composition to the sound engineer and producer who recorded him.

— ₹ 24 €

€ 25 €

^{*}Burut: Sino-Kalmyk name for the Kyrgyz.









Ruslan Jumabaev



KARA ÖZGÖI (Impudent One)

Composer: Niyazaaly Boroshev (1856–1942) Performer: Ruslan Jumabaev, komuz

"Kara özgöi," an obligatory part of any komuz player's repertory, is well known throughout Kyrgyzstan, but the relation between its name and melodic character has never been clearly explained. The great composer and instrumentalist Karamoldo (1883–1960) said that he performed "Kara özgöi" to describe the realities of his time, which were often difficult and complex. Komuz player Ruslan Jumabaev (b. 1973), one of the leading instrumentalists of his generation, grew up in a musical family in Naryn, and began playing komuz at the age of six. He is a graduate of Bishkek Conservatory, and has a baccalaureate degree in law.



KYIYLYP TURAM (I'm Sad to Say Goodbye)

Composer: Kanymgül Dosmanbetova (1935–1978)

Text: Omor Sultanov (b. 1935)

Performers: Tengir-Too; Kenjegül Kubatova, vocal solo

A nostalgic song from the early 1960s, when many Kyrgyz moved from rural mountain regions to the city. The text as well as the high-decibel vocal style recall the alpine pastoral life left behind. "This style comes from the mountains," Nurlanbek Nyshanov emphasizes, "and it's thought to be very old. Singers sang at huge weddings—without microphones, of course—and the stronger the voice, the better." Kenjegül Kubatova learned the song from the recordings of Mysqal Ömürkanova, a famous singer from Naryn, who died in the 1970s.

Driving a herd of horses at dawn,
I slowly rode my horse along the shallow gully.
The cool air of the jailoo [summer pasturage]
Met me with a tender and discreet hug.
The native aroma of flowers
And their beauty intoxicate me.

Cholok-Tör and Ashuu-Tör [names of pasturages], I dearly longed for you.
Picking your iridescent flowers,
I fixed them on my collar.
If you sing, share with me
The song's echo reflected from cliffs.

During our childhood in the mountains, I played chikit [a Kyrgyz children's game].

Jylky aidap üröng-barangdan Jylgany boiloi bastyrsam Jailoonun salkyn abasy Erkelei sogup astyrtan Köngülgö singgen gül jyty Körkömü meni mas kylgan

Cholok-Tör menen Ashuu-Tör Engsedim seni sagynyp Jadyrap öskön güldörüng Jakama üzüp tagynyp Obonun sozsong bölüshchü Askangan chykkan jangyryk

Toodogu ötkön balalyk Tobulgu, chikit chabyshyp

26 🗦 — — 💐 27 💆

When we argued ten times a day, We made up ten times. We played catch, Competing with foals.

Those days of mine Grow more and more distant. I'm sad to say goodbye To my dear childhood. Life tries to steal from me My insatiable youth. Bir kündö on jol urushsak On jolu kaira tabyshyp Kuushup oyun salchy elek Kulundar menen jaryshyp

Oshentip jürchü kündörüm Bülbüldöp uzap baratat Kyiylyp turam kosh debei Kymbattuu kurbum bala chak Men toibos jashtyk kezimdi Mezgilim koldon talashat.



ATTILA KHAN

Composer: Nurak Abdrakhmanov (b. 1947) Performer: Nurak Abdrakhmanov, komuz

"I dedicate this küü to the honor of the great Attila Khan," says Nurak Abdrakhmanov. "The melody represents a spiritual connection to those times. The Turks are one people, and the Mongols and Huns were our ancestors." Attila the Hun (d. 453), who earned the sobriquet "Scourge of God" for his contribution to the fall of the Roman Empire, is viewed more respectfully in the East. Nurak's tribute expresses the reverence he feels for the Huns, called Xiong-nu in ancient Chinese sources, as founders of Inner Asia's first nomadic empire and progenitors of the later Turkic and Mongol steppe empires. Nurak's küüs are known for their meditative cast and deep philosophical content. Alongside his activities as a composer, instrumentalist, and singer, Nurak is renowned as a komuz maker.





AK SATKYN MENEN KULMYRZA (Ak Satkyn and Kulmyrza)

Composer: Unattributed Text: Traditional, arranged by Barpy Alykulov (1884–1949) Performers: Tengir-Too; Kenjegül Kubatova and Toktobek Asanaliev, vocal duet

A dastan, or short epic, whose tragic text was sung rather than recited. A comparison to the murder ballads of America's southern Appalachians would not be out of place. Nurlanbek Nyshanov first heard the melody from a country performer whom he saw on television as a child. Much later. as an aspiring urban-based folklorist, he came across the same melody again and taught it to the other members of Tengir-Too. The text reflects the editorial hand of Barpy, who created his own variant from what, according to Nurlanbek, would have originally been a much longer poem. "A lot of young people are trying to revive these dastans," says Nurlanbek. "They set them to melodies that they find among older singers or on recordings, or sometimes make up their own."

€ 29 €

Under me is a blanket from rough silk, my friend.*
Under my head is an embroidered pillow.
I lay on my side.
In my head were deep thoughts.
Having made a path from one side, you followed it across,
Slashed the side of the yurt, and thrust in your hand.
Having made a path from another side, you followed it across,
Slashed the front of the yurt, and thrust in your hand.

* "My friend" [dosum] repeats at the end of each line

I said, "Stop, stop"; but you didn't stop.

You crawled into my bed.

I pleaded with you but you didn't obey.

You crawled next to me.

Not only did you not leave, you didn't listen to me.

After midnight you fell asleep.

I slept uneasily; there were strange dreams.

I awoke from nightmares.

You didn't take your hand away from my neck:

You didn't get out of my bed.

Someone bent down and looked through the hole [of the yurt].

Two people came in through the door.

You were thrown toward the entrance.

You fell to the ground, breaking your neck.

A double-whip hit your croup;

A double-dagger plunged into your liver.

Your innards are strung out on the ground.

Your face turned pale, you're dying.

Bashai töshök astymda, dosum Sajmaluu jazdyk bashymda Jatkan elem jambashtap Jash bashty jalang oi kaptap Kaptaldai basyp jol saldyng Kapshytty tilip kol saldyng Tuuralai basyp jol saldyng Tushumdan tilip kol saldyng

Koi, koi bir desem koibodung Koinumdu közdöi soilodung Jalyngan menen bolbodung Janyma karai soilodung Turmak bir tügül ukpadyng Tün jarym ooi uktadyng Ukmushtuu tüshtör, tolgondum Uikumdan chochup oigondum

Tartpadyng bilek moinumdan Turbadyng menin koinumdan Engkeip tiktep teshikten Eki adam kirdi eshikten Bosogo boilop yrgydyng Moinungdan jerge shyrgydyng Kosh kamchy tiidi soorunga Kosh kanjar kirdi boorunga

Icheging jerge chubaldy Irenging öchüp kubardy Six people came together.
Your dear life was put to an end.
My brothers talked among themselves.
They gave advice to people around,
And buried the body in an ash heap.

That's how my grief was buried.

[Not sung:]

From your clan they came to search for you.
From your village's upper land
They looked for you, but couldn't find you.
I did not like your deeds, my friend.
Today your father brought in several horse-riders,
And asked about his dear one:
Who killed, and who died,

Who buried the dead body in the ash heap.

[Not sung:]

Now I'll tell your people; Let it be clear to all.

Today let the people know about your death.

Let the wind know that blows from above.

Let the people know today about your demise. Let the wind know that blows from afar.

Your gray horse with a white spot on the forehead, Let the grey horse be returned to [your] people.

Those who came to search for their dear one, Let them dig up that ash heap. If they open it, they will find your body; Alty adam keldi jyiylyp Aziz jan kaldy kyiylyp Agamdar turdu süllöshöp Ar kimge akyl üirötüp Kül döbö kazyp jashyrdy Küüttü shuntip jashyrdy

Joktoshup keldi elingden Jogorku aiyl jeringden Joktoshup kelip tapkan jok Jorugung maga jakkan jok Atakeng alyp top atchan eldi Asylyn surap bügün da keldi Öltürgön kimder, ölgön kim Ölügün dönggö kömgön kim

Aitaiyn emi kalkynga Achyk bir bolsun jalpyga Ölgönüng bügün el bilsin Öidötön sokkon jel bilsin Ajalyng bügün el bilsin Alystan sokkon jel bilsin Mingen bir atyng kök kashka Kök atty elge kaitarsyn

Külpötün izdep kelgender Kül döbö kazyp kangtarsyn Kül döbö kazsa tabylat The flower-bed will be refreshed.

I'm testing my strength; Let me fix the levy for your death: Sixty herd animals with big horns and a hundred gold coins And a beautiful young girl.

I am at their disposal.

Let's agree on this, my friend:

Let my father suffer, paying the compensation;

Let your father be joyous taking the compensation.

Kulmyrza died, very good indeed;

And he became a couple with Ak Satkyn.

Ak Satkyn killed herself with the white dagger's thrust:

People saw the power of love.

Gülüstön jüzü jangyrat

Kubatym kancha chenein Kunungdu bychyp berein Altymysh aiyp, kunung jüz Alarga koshup suluu kyz

Kyz dese eling - özübüz Bolbosun eki sözübüz Kun bergen atam kuurasyn Kun algan atang jyrgasyn Kulmyrza ölüp kup boldu Ak Satkyn eköö jup boldu Ak shamshaar salyp Ak Satkyn öldü Ashyglyk küchün adamdar kördü.



FANTASY ON THE CHOPO CHOOR (ocarina)

Composer-performer: Nurlanbek Nyshanov

In Kyrgyzstan, the ocarina has traditionally been considered a children's instrument, but adults—both women and men—also play it. According to Nurlanbek Nyshanov, it was used as a signaling instrument by horsemen riding at night in the thick forests of southern Kyrgyzstan. Nurlanbek considers that his "Fantasy" preserves the basic features of music for *chopo choor*: short phrases, variation, repetition, and melodic fluidity. "The melody sounds traditional," he says, "but I thought it up."



GÜL (Flower) Music and text: Atai Ogonbaev Performer: Zainidin Imanaliev

Atai Ogombaev was a well-known singer and komuz player from Talas, in western Kyrgyzstan. In this song from the early 1930s, he expresses the optimism of those times. Zainidin Imanaliev imitates the style of Atai's singing, which often employed falsetto, and emphasized sweetness more than power. The nightingale is a central image of Sufi-inspired poetry, and its spiritual symbolism resonates in Atai's verse.

The hollyhock that appears in the spring Grows like a flame day after day. When the nightingale sings in the spring, The flower is still more beautiful.

The time comes for the flower to bloom, Spring is the time of flowers. You blossom like spring flowers. Spring is truly the time of the young.

The nightingales cling to the flowers; They turned heads to exchange glances. The nightingale is like a dew on the flower. Truly we're worthy of this [happy] life.

If a nightingale sings at dawn, It's like the aroma of a fine flower. Our spirits rise, and we open up In this new time. Jazynda chykkan gülkaiyr Jalyndap ösöt kün saiyn Jazynda bulbul sairasa I koichu jarashat gülüm an saiyn

Güldün bir güldöör kezi eken I koichu güldördün maaly jaz eken Jazgy bir güldöi jainasang Bu degi jashtardyn maaly jaz eken

Bulbuldar gülgö janashkan Burulup birin karashkan Bulbul bir gülgö bir tamchy I koichu bul turmush bizge jarashkan

Tangda bir bulbul sairasa Bu degi jakshy güldün jytyndai Sanaasy ösüp jainagan O degi jangy zaman tushunda.

€ 32 €

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JOLJÜRÜSH (On the Road)

Composer-arranger: Nurlanbek Nyshanov Performers: Tengir-Too

Nurlanbek Nyshanov expanded and arranged two traditional melodic motifs into this short composition. "We always play it from notation," he says, "and it remains fixed in its present form. The first two motifs are old; the rest is new." The major scales, symmetrical phrases, and lively tempos call to mind folk music from parts of Europe. Is this resemblance a vestige of ancient contact between Inner Asian nomads and proto-Europeans? History does not provide a sure answer, but songs and tunes rooted in diatonic major and minor scales are common not only in Kyrgyz music but among the historically nomadic Kazakhs and Khakas.







Members of Tengir-Too





NAMAZBEK URALIEV

9 13 3

KENGESH (Soviet)

Composer: Ybrai Tumanov (1888–1967)

Performer: Namazbek Uraliev, komuz

Ybrai Tumanov composed "Kengesh" in the 1920s, at the dawn of the Soviet era, and dedicated it to the newly established Soviet government. According to Kyrgyz folklorist Raziya Syrdybaeva, the jaunty character of the $k\ddot{u}\ddot{u}$ illustrates the "people's happiness about the new changes, and the hope of a better future." Komuz player Namazbek Uraliev is not a regular member of the ensemble Tengir-Too, but with Nurlanbek Nyshanov, he teaches young musicians in the master-apprentice (Kyrgyz: ustat-shakirt) program established by the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia. He is also an outstanding luthier whose komuzes are much in demand in Kyrgyzstan.



ESIMDE (I Remember)

Composer: Atai Ogonbaev Text: Jusup Turusbekov (1910–1943)

Performers: Tengir-Too, Toktobek Asanaliev, vocal solo

Atai composed "I Remember" in the 1930s, after coming to Bishkek to work in the Philharmonia Society, the government cultural organization that managed and booked performing artists. According to Nurlanbek Nyshanov, Atai was illiterate when he arrived in Bishkek, and Philharmonia officials sent him to adult education school. "He was a terrible student," Nurlanbek recounts. "He couldn't learn either to read or write. Once a teacher brought a Kyrgyz newspaper and read the text of this song. The author, Jusup Turusbekov, was then a young poet who had just started to write like a Russian or a European. When Atai heard the text, he liked it, and asked the teacher to give him the newspaper. That's when he learned to read. He memorized the poem, and composed a melody based on it. But the more literate he became, the less he created. Reading and writing didn't help him. They sent Atai to the Moscow Conservatory, and when he returned, he never did anything more in music."

When summer reached its peak
On the hilly mountain,
She chose one of the many flowers and picked it.
I remember that tranquil girl.

We agreed to entrust our fate to one another; We agreed to pick the flowers of this life together. I remember the days when we talked about this, As the meaning of life grew deeper. Jaidyn bir toluk kezinde Adyrluu toonun betinde San güldön tandap birdi üzgön Jaidary selki esimde

Özümdü saga berem dep Ömürdün gülün terem dep Süilöshkön kündör esimde Turmushtun syry terengdep Recall your vow and make a choice; My passion for you did not cool. Let modern, merry youth Have a life-partner like you. Antyngdy oilop tandagyn Köngülüm senden kalbady Azyrky shaiyr jashtardyn Özüngdöi bolsun algany.



KER ÖZÖN (Wide Valley)

Composer: Murataaly Küröngkeev (1860–1949) Performer: Baktybek Chytyrbaev, kyl kiyak

The wide valley represented in this piece is said to be that of the Chui River, in northern Kyrgyzstan. Although performed on the kyl kiyak, a bowl fiddle with two horsehair strings, "Ker özön" evokes the sound of the surnai, a loud oboe associated with military music, according to performer Baktybek (Bakyt) Chytyrbaev. "No one plays the surnai now in







Вактувек Снутукваеч

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Kyrgyzstan," says Bakyt, "but there are recordings of it."

Bakyt grew up in the countryside of mountainous Naryn Region and began his musical studies at age seven. These studies, however, focused on European music. "I was 19 or 20 when I started to play kyl kiyak," he recounts, "and when I started playing, there was only one person in Kyrgyzstan who was playing the kiyak, and he had only one instrument. I searched inside the music to try to find its essence. I have students now; kids come to me to listen and learn." When not playing the kyl kiyak, Bakyt works as a computer system administrator. He is also a serious practitioner of tai chi.



SAGYNAM (I Miss You)

Composer and text: Musa Baetov (1902–1949) Performers: Tengir-Too, Kenjegül Kubatova, vocal solo

"The text of this song is nothing special," says Nurlanbek Nishanov, "but the melody is beautiful. There's love, melancholy, and nostalgia."

Thinking of you, I miss you; Remembering you, I realize your value. One day will I extinguish The flame that burns in my heart.

On the next day I left on horseback for a long trip. If only my golden one came here!
Is she living in good health in her village,
She who is beloved and spoiled by the ahyn?

Sagynam seni oilonup Sanadym estep kadyryng Qaisy bir künü öchüröm Jüröktün küigön jalynyn

Attandym alys ertesi Altynym mynda kelsechi Ailynda aman bar beken Akyndyn süigön erkesi I say this as if singing
With passion boiling inside me.
Where is she now,
The girl with eyes gleaming like a mountain ram?

Aitaiyn tilim sairatyp Ashkere ichti kainatyp Kai jerde jüröt boldu eken Arkardai közün jainatyp.



KAMBARKAN

Composer: Karamoldo Orozov (1883–1960) Performer: Nurak Abdrakhmanov, komuz

Throughout Central Asia, legends portray Kambarkan, also known as Kambar-ata, as the father of music, inventor of musical instruments, and patron of musicians. Among Kyrgyz musicians, he is regarded as the creator of the komuz. Nurak recounts the creation legend as follows: "Kambarkan was a hunter, and once when he went to the forest, a monkey fell as he jumped from one tree to another. The monkey's stomach became impaled on a sharp twig and burst open, and his intestine got stretched out between a high tree branch and the ground. When it dried, a wind came up, and the intestine emitted a magical sound. Kambarkan realized that the sound was coming from the monkey's intestine, and he got the idea of using that intestine to make an instrument. He took a piece of wood, curved it, and fixed the intestine tightly over it. That's how he invented the komuz." No evidence suggests that monkeys ever lived in what is now Kyrgyzstan, but terra-cotta statues of monkeymusicians dating back almost two thousand years have been unearthed in various parts of Central Asia. A variant of the legend recounted by Nurak was also known in India, where it turns up in 14th-century literary sources, underscoring historical links between Central Asia and the Subcontinent.

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There are many variants of "Kambarkan" in the repertory of komuz players, but all exhibit a deep philosophical and meditative character and are played in a specific tuning with the strings set at the interval of a fifth (bosh tolgoo). "Instrumental music starts where the expressive power of words ends," Nurak explains. "Words have a limit: they can describe thoughts up to a point: after that, there are other feelings that we can express only with music. Music is more important than verbal traditions, and instrumental music is the highest expression of the Kyrgyz soul."



KYZ OIGOTOOR (A Melody That Wakes Up a Girl)

Composer: Attributed to Asanaaly Oshur uulu Arranger: Nurlanbek Nyshanov Performers: Tengir-Too

For a finale, Tengir-Too performs its arrangement of this rousing komuz piece from one of the principal genres of the küü repertory: shynggyrama, from shynggyra, "to jingle softly." The genre is characterized by a lively tempo and playful, refined melodies.



TENGIR-TOO

______ # A

INSTRUMENT GLOSSARY



CHOOR

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

CHOPO CHOOR

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



JYGACH OOZ KOMUZ and TEMIR KOMUZ

(wooden and metal jew's harps)

Jew's harps, called by a variety of local names, belong to the traditional instrumentarium of pastoralists throughout Inner Asia. The specifics of instrument construction and performance styles vary, but 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.

KYL KIYAK

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

KOMUZ

The main folk instrument of the Kyrgyz-a three-stringed. fretless, long-necked 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 stylized hand and arm gestures, which add an additional narrative component to the komuz's typically programmatic repertory.

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 sybyzy has its own repertory of solo pieces (küü) that are distinguished by their lyrical style.

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