



Music of Central Asia VOL.10
BORDERLANDS

WU MAN *and* **MASTER MUSICIANS** *from the* **SILK ROUTE**



Smithsonian Folkways

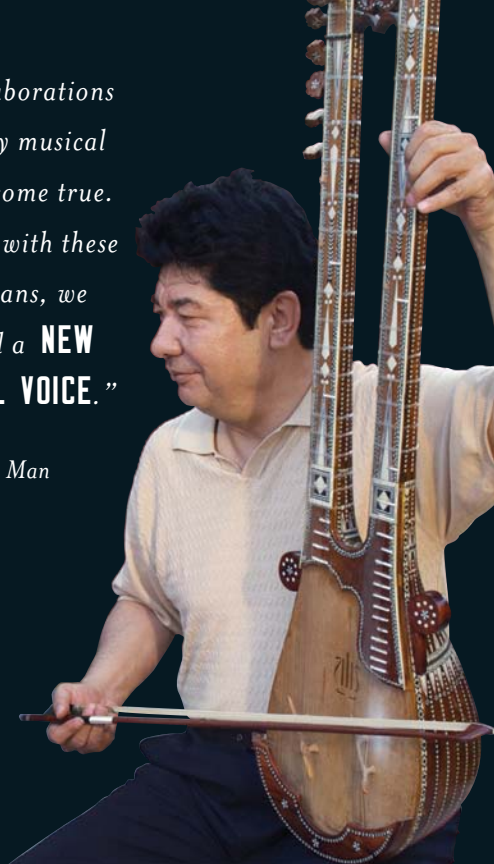
MUSIC OF CENTRAL ASIA is a co-production of the Aga Khan Music Initiative, a program of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. The aim of the series, released worldwide by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, is to present leading exponents 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 is an interregional music and arts education program with worldwide performance, outreach, mentoring, and artistic production activities. Launched to support talented musicians and music educators working to preserve, transmit, and further develop their musical heritage in contemporary forms, the Music Initiative began its work in Central Asia, subsequently expanding its cultural development activities to include artistic communities and audiences in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. The Initiative promotes the revitalization of cultural heritage both as a source of livelihood for musicians and as a means to strengthen pluralism in nations where it is challenged by social, political, and economic constraints.



*"The collaborations
made my musical
fantasy come true.
Together with these
musicians, we
created a **NEW
MUSICAL VOICE.**"*

— Wu Man



CD TRACKS

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DVD

MUSIC OF CENTRAL ASIA AND THE
AGA KHAN MUSIC INITIATIVE

BORDERLANDS: WU MAN AND
MASTER MUSICIANS FROM THE
SILK ROUTE

BORDERLANDS, PART II: PARIS

INTERACTIVE INSTRUMENT
GLOSSARY

MAP OF CENTRAL ASIA

Music of Central Asia Vol. 10
Borderlands: Wu Man and Master Musicians
from the Silk Route

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MUSICIANS

ABDUVALI ABDURASHIDOV,
sato-tanbur

SIROJIDDIN JURAEV, *dutar*

MA ERSA, *vocal*

ABDULLA MAJNUN, *diltar, dutar,
tambur, vocal*

HESENJAN TURSUN, *satar*

SANUBAR TURSUN, *vocal,
dutar*

WU MAN, *pipa*

YASIN YAQUP, *dap*



CENTRAL ASIAN MUSIC *An Overview*

Central Asia is commonly understood to encompass the territory of six nations: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (see map, p.11). 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. Isma'ilis are linked by their allegiance to a living Imam in direct lineal descent from the first Shia Imam, Ali.

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



Left: A TYPICAL NOMADIC YURT. *Right:* HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN THE CITY OF SAMARKAND.

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, 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 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 up to 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 ex-

pression 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 firmly 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.

INTRODUCTION *Borderlands:*

Wu Man and Master Musicians from the Silk Route

The borderlands explored in this CD-DVD stretch north and west from China's Great Wall, encompassing vast expanses of desert, mountains, and grasslands—the Gobi and Taklamakan; the snow-covered peaks of the Tian Shan, Pamir, and Altai; and the fertile Ferghana Valley west of the Tian Shan range—that for millennia have both linked and divided Chinese and Central Asian civilizations. Historically, these regions exercised a fascination for the Chinese. Beyond the Western Pass, the last gate in China's Great Wall, was a place of exile, the home of the "northern barbarians"—nomadic peoples who raided and periodically fought

deep into Chinese territory, and even established new "barbarian" dynasties to rule over China. The historical record of these borderland regions is dominated by Chinese sources that invariably portray their inhabitants as exotic, feared, and "Other." Yet for all their fearsome mystique, the borderlands were indispensable to the Chinese, for it was through them that both commercial and cultural riches flowed to China from civilizations to the west and from Central Asia itself. Languages, music and musical instruments, and religions—Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity—no less than trade and luxury goods entered China along the



The trans-Eurasian trade routes collectively known as the Silk Route are superimposed on a map of present-day Central Eurasia, which includes China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and western Gansu province.

Silk Road caravan routes that passed through the oasis towns surrounding the Taklamakan Desert.

One of the musical instruments that traveled eastward from Central Asia was a short-necked, pear-shaped lute, brought to the frontiers of China some 1,500 years ago. By the 8th century, at the height of China's glorious Tang Empire, this foreign lute—onomatopoeically named *pipa* in Chinese, after the forward and backward plucking sounds made by the right hand (*pi-pa*, *pi-pa*)—had been assimilated

into the Tang court music tradition. The *pipa* was not the only Chinese musical import from lands to the west. Tang emperors

brought musicians and musical instruments from Persia to Chang'an (now Xian), the Tang capital, where they created a cosmopolitan musical culture in the heart of China. Cultural contacts between China and Central Asia diminished as the Tang dynasty lost control of the borderlands region but were revived during the 13th-century reign of Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, when most of Asia was under the suzerainty of Mongol rulers and the Silk Road trade flourished. Following the decline and breakup of the Mongol Empire, these cultural connections dissipated, and in subsequent centuries Central Asia became culturally isolated from China.

The notion of exploring and revitalizing connections between Chinese and Central Asian music had long



fascinated *pipa* virtuoso Wu Man. Born in China but for the last two decades living in the United States, Wu Man launched her own project to seek out little-known musical tradition-bearers in far-flung regions of China and bring them to the attention of audiences in the West. She had also visited Central Asia and performed with Central Asian musicians in several earlier projects sponsored by the Aga Khan Music Initiative, the co-producer of the present CD-DVD. “I often imagined what it would be like if the *pipa* were mixed with instruments such as *satar*, *tambur*, and *dutar*,” Wu Man recalled. “What would it sound like if I played



SANUBAR TURSON, ABDULLA MAJNUN, AND WU MAN IN REHEARSAL

Uyghur classical *muqam* and Ili folk songs on my *pipa*?” Wu Man’s ideas resonated with the Music Initiative’s own goal of helping build a cosmopolitan Central Asian modernity by reassembling diverse expressions of the region’s mu-

sical heritage in contemporary forms. Armed with a working knowledge of Central Asian musical instruments and repertoires, Wu Man joined forces with the Music Initiative to develop contacts with outstanding musicians from the “borderlands” region, rehearse a body of work, and record it for this CD. The results—a mixture of newly arranged traditional songs and instrumental pieces, original improvisations, and solo performances of local classics—make a compelling case for blending the sounds of the historically kindred musical worlds represented by Wu Man and her Central Asian collaborators.

At the heart of *Borderlands* are the musical traditions of the Uyghurs, whose homeland is the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the far northwest of China, a region also sometimes

known as Chinese or East Turkestan. Great distances separate Xinjiang’s oasis towns, which, until the mid-20th century, were accessible only by arduous overland journeys through deserts and over mountains. These harsh but beautiful landscapes are described repeatedly in Uyghur song lyrics—for example, in the Kashgar folk song “Yaru” (track II).

Borderlands introduces three outstanding Uyghur musicians who are rooted in traditional repertoires while simultaneously working to develop and communicate their art in the contemporary world. *Muqam* expert Abdulla Majnun and singer-songwriter Sanubar Tursun traveled twice to Beijing in 2010 to work with Wu Man; they were joined for the second session by Sanubar’s younger brother Hesenjan, himself a rising star instrumentalist. These

musicians, like Wu Man, were attracted by the prospect of exploring the deep historical links between Central Asian and Chinese cultures. “Actually, what is known in China as *pipa* is one of our Uyghur instruments—the *barbat*,” said

Abdulla Majnun. “During the Tang dynasty there was a composer from Kucha, a Uyghur named Sujup.



He took our *barbat* to the imperial capital Chang’an, and it stayed there. Uyghurs stopped playing it, but the Chinese kept it up. So they were parted seven or eight hundred years ago—two children of the same mother—and now they are reunited in Beijing after seven centuries apart.”

For singer Sanubar Tursun, the collaboration with Wu Man is unique because her own songs are very much at its core. “I worked for a Chinese song-and-dance troupe and played Chinese songs with them for five years,” said Sanubar. “What’s different this time is that when I play with Wu Man, we are playing Uyghur music.” All three Uyghur musicians work primarily within the oral tradition, while Wu Man, the

WU MAN AND SANUBAR TUR SUN

product of rigorous classical-style training at Beijing's Central Conservatory, preferred to draw on published notations or transcriptions of Uyghur songs provided by ethnomusicologist and Uyghur music specialist Rachel Harris.

Stylistically, Uyghur music lies somewhere between the Central Asian heartland and the Chinese sound world. Central Asian listeners are apt to dismiss Uyghur music—especially vocal music—as “sounding Chinese,” while for the Chinese, Uyghur music is something exotic and strange. Like many Chinese listeners, Wu Man was first attracted to Uyghur singing when she was young: “As a little girl, I learned to sing many Uyghur songs translated into Chinese,” she said. “They always sounded mysterious and very charming.” In fact, there is considerable mu-

sical variation across the large Uyghur region. Each of Xinjiang's oasis towns has its own distinctive musical style and repertory, ranging from the sunny, pentatonic modes of eastern Qumul (Hami) to the darker sound of music from Kashgar, in the southwest. You

HESENJAN TURSUN



can hear this variety on *Borderlands* in the songs performed by Sanubar Tursun (tracks 3, 4, 6, 11, 12).

In addition to performing folk songs, the musicians on *Borderlands* collaborate in performances of music typically glossed as “classical”—the large-scale suites of vocal and instrumental pieces that belong to repertoires once performed in the courts of Central Asia’s ruling emirs and khans. Two such classical repertoires are represented on the CD: the Uyghur Twelve (On Ikki) Muqam and the Tajik-Uzbek Shashmaqom. The names of both repertoires derive from the Arabic term *maqâm*, which, in a variety of cognate forms, is used to designate canonical suites of traditional vocal and instrumental music that have been cultivated by communities of urban profes-

sional musicians from Cairo to Kashgar. While it has been common in recent years to hear the much-exalted Uyghur Muqam and Tajik-Uzbek Shashmaqom performed in grandiose style by large ensembles and choirs supported by state patronage, *Borderlands* features the creative search of individual musicians who are seeking to explore and reanimate the artistry of these rich repertoires. Within this more flexible musical environment, Wu Man’s *pipa* easily finds its own voice.

Wu Man’s journey of discovery illuminates some of the challenges of bringing together the historically linked but stylistically distinct musical languages of Central Asia and China. “Since the *pipa* was introduced to China, it has developed its own unique musical language,” she said. “Chinese and Central Asian music have very different basic scales,

but the most significant difference is the intonation. The modern *pipa* sound is often bright and high-pitched—it became more so in the 1960s and 1970s during the Cultural Revolution, when everything needed to be suitable for propaganda purposes, and unfortunately many traditional music instruments changed and lost their regional voices. In this project I purposely adjusted my *pipa* sound color to be closer to the Central Asian musical style.”

Wu Man’s encounters with music from the Chinese borderlands included the traditions of the Hui Muslim Chinese of China’s northwestern Gansu province, the Kazakh nomads of Xinjiang, and the Tajiks, whose center of population is in the independent nation of Tajikistan but who also live in parts of southwest Xinjiang. The renowned Hui



WU MAN WITH SINGERS MA Ersa AND MA JIANHUA

folksinger, Ma Ersā, came to Beijing to record a series of unaccompanied *hua’er* (literally, “flowers”) folk songs for the project, and Wu Man later added a *pipa* counterpoint to one of the recorded songs. Her arrangement brings us back to a more recognizably Chinese sound world: traditionally these *hua’er* songs created a meeting ground for Han Chinese, Muslims, and Tibetans, who

all congregated at the *hua'er* folk song festivals held annually on Gansu's Lotus Mountain.

Wu Man's encounter with Kazakh music is also through an original arrangement for *pipa*—in this case, an existing Kazakh instrumental piece recorded by Beijing-based Kazakh fusion star Mamer on the *dombyra* (two-stringed plucked lute). Finally, Wu Man's encounter with Tajik musicians Abduvali Abdurashidov and Sirojiddin Juraev took place not in China or Central Asia, but in Paris, where all three musicians had come to perform at the Théâtre de la Ville as part of a concert series co-curated by the Aga Khan Music Initiative. Working together during a short but intensive rehearsal period, the trio created original improvisations based on the melodic

style of Tajik Shashmaqom (tracks I and 13). Thus, while rooted in history, the collaborative music-making represented on *Borderlands* is the result of a highly contemporary series of encounters among globalized musicians facilitated by air travel, mediated by recordings, and supported by an international cultural development agency—encounters that took place both virtually and in multiple locations around the globe.

Beyond their geographical contiguity, the borderlands musical traditions represented on the CD are united by their common roots in a shared Islamic culture, which, to a greater or lesser extent, underpins the traditions' role within that lived faith. This sense of music as expression of faith is most vividly captured in Abdulla Majnun's passionate performance of "Charigah"



SIROJIDDIN JURAEV, WU MAN, AND ABDUVALI ABDURASHIDOV

(track 14). He reminds us that, beyond the concert stage, Central Asian *muqam* and *maqom* belong to a deeply religious performance tradition. The lyrics of “Charigah” convey the classic Sufi sense of longing for the divine, and

these lyrics are still sung by *ashiqs*, or religious beggars, in the context of Xinjiang’s great shrine festivals held on the southern edges of the Taklamakan Desert.

As recordings from the various collaborative sessions were mixed, edited, and mastered, Wu Man summed up her thoughts about the *Borderlands* project. “The process of working with all these artists was an amazing cultural learning

experience—and not just as a musician,” she said. “Now I understand better what the *pipa* is! The collaborations made my musical fantasy come true. Together with these musicians, we created a new musical voice.”

THE ARTISTS

ABDUVALI ABDURASHIDOV

A leading performer and scholar of Shashmaqom, Abduvali Abdurashidov is artistic director of the Academy of Maqom, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, which he founded in 2003 with support from the Aga Khan Music Initiative. He studied *sato-tanbur* with the great Uzbek master Turgun Alimatov (1922–2008) and has been at the forefront of the current Shashmaqom revival in Tajikistan. Working with a small group of graduate students in the Academy of Maqom, Abdurashidov recreated a historically informed performance version of the six Shashmaqom suites that he is presently in the process of recording, tran-

scribing, and publishing. A preliminary version of his work with Shashmaqom is presented on *Music of Central Asia, Vol. 2: Invisible Face of the Beloved: Classical Music of the Tajiks and Uzbeks*.

SIROJIDDIN JURAEV

Sirojiddin Juraev comes from a lineage of *dutar* players in his native region of northern Tajikistan. “Both my father and grandfather played the *dutar*,” said Sirojiddin, “and my first *ustad* was my father. Later I studied at the Music College in Khujand and at Khujand University, and after that, at the Academy of Maqom in Dushanbe, where my *ustad* was Abduvali Abdurashidov. I listen a lot to old



ABDUVALI ABDURASHIDOV, *left*, AND SIROJIDDIN JURAEV

recordings of the great *ustads*, and when I hear something I really like, I try to learn those tunes. Now I teach *dutar* in the National Conservatory in Dushanbe. When I feel inspired, I also compose my own music on the *dutar*. If you listen a lot to old records that are inspiring, there should be an urge to compose. You can't compose from a void. There has to be an inspiration that comes from listening to a master."

MA ERSA

Ma Ersä is the sole representative of Hui (also known as Dungan) Muslim Chinese musical traditions on *Borderlands*. Born in 1970, Ma Ersä was named after the Islamic Prophet Eysä—"Jesus" in the Christian tradition. Brought up in a mountain village in southern Gansu, the heartland

of the *hua'er* song style, he absorbed the style while working as a shepherd and itinerant laborer, and gained a reputation locally as an outstanding singer. In the 1990s, a newly found enthusiasm for “authentic folk song” in China propelled him to national fame via televised folk song competitions. Through the inscription of *hua'er* songs to UNESCO’s Representative List of



the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, he has more recently been officially recognized as a transmitter of the tradition.

ABDULLA MAJNUN

Abdulla Majnun’s adopted name means “crazy lover”; it comes from the tale of the star-crossed lovers Leila and Majnun that is told across the Islamic world. He learned the classical Uyghur Twelve Muqam suites in his native Khotan, an old city on the southern edge of the Taklamakan Desert, first studying with family members and subsequently apprenticing himself to Khotan’s leading musicians. During the chaos of the Cultural Revolution he wandered for several years with *ashiqs*, the religious beggars who sing for alms in the region’s bazaars and shrine festivals. “My music



ABDULLA MANJUN

has the flavor of the *ashiq*,” says Abdulla. “Where does the flavor come from? It comes from people’s minds, from history, from the heart. If people sing without passion, the music has no flavor.” In the 1980s, he joined the Muqam Research Group in Urumchi and began work on the task of reconstructing and recording the full set of Twelve Muqam suites.

HESENJAN TUR SUN

Hesenjan Tursun was born into a respected music family in the northern Uyghur town of Ghulja in the green and fertile Ili Valley. He is a rising star in the world of Uyghur music, now beginning to take on the mantle of his older brother Nurmemet Tursun, the leading instrumentalist of his generation, who died in 2002. Like



HESENGAN TURSON

his late brother, Hesengan mastered a range of traditional instruments and, after exploring pop and folk music as well as the classical *muqam* repertory, devoted himself to the noblest of the Uyghur instruments, the *satar*.

SANUBAR TURSON

The older sister of Hesengan, Sanubar is now the leading performer in the Tursun family and has established a reputation as the preeminent Uyghur female singer-songwriter. A singer and *dutar* player since childhood, she trained and worked professionally as a *chang* (hammer dulcimer) player. She achieved real success as a singer and *dutar* player with a series of albums of traditional and composed songs, working initially with her eldest



SANUBAR TURSUN

brother, the virtuoso *satar* and *tambur* player Nurmemet Tursun, and, more recently, with Hesengan. Her songs are widely listened to and imitated by audiences and musicians across Xinjiang's towns and rural areas, and she is respected for her integrity as an artist. "I am close to the people, I spend a lot of time with them," said Sanubar. "What many people are thinking but can't put into words, those things come out in my songs." Sanubar has recently left her homeland in order to study composition at Shanghai Conservatory. "Now I can write my own songs, but I'd like to compose larger pieces," she said. "I want to write down and publish my musical ideas for other musicians to see what they think."

WU MAN

Trained at Beijing's Central Conservatory and since 1990 a resident of the United States, Wu Man has become synonymous with the musical globalization of the *pipa*, of which she has been an industrious advocate. She is an intrepid explorer of world music, an enthusiastic cross-cultural collaborator, and a pioneer in seeking new ways to link traditional musical instruments and performance techniques to contemporary musical ideas and artistic languages. Wu Man speaks modestly about the results of her extraordinary intercultural journey with the *pipa*—a journey that has led her to a starring role in works by contemporary composers such as Philip Glass, Terry Riley, Lou Harrison, and Evan Ziporyn performed by the world's



leading orchestras and ensembles. “It’s taken twenty years to get to this point,” said Wu Man, “and it’s been hard. Sometimes I ask myself why I’m doing this work. The answer is that I really love the *pipa* and all of its many expressive possibilities, and I want it to have a prominent place on the global stage. Music from around the world is all much closer now, and it’s a great time to be trying new things.”

YASIN YAQUP

Born in 1966 in the old Silk Route town of Kashgar, Yasin graduated from the Xinjiang Arts School, specializing in the Uyghur *dap* frame drum. He is



a member of the Kashgar City Song and Dance Ensemble, and performs in concerts around Kashgar city and province, working in a variety of contemporary and traditional styles.

TRACK NOTES



IMPROVISATION FOR THREE AND A HALF INSTRUMENTS

Music: Improvised arrangement by ABDUVALI ABDURASHIDOV, SIROJIDDIN JURAEV,
and WU MAN

ABDUVALI ABDURASHIDOV, *sato-tanbur*

SIROJIDDIN JURAEV, *dutar*

WU MAN, *pipa*

Wu Man recalled the genesis of this lively improvisation: “I will never forget the first rehearsal with Abduvali and Sirojiddin in the lobby of the Théâtre de la Ville, in Paris. I barely knew them, and I wasn’t sure if we could come up with a whole concert program in only three hours. It was an amazing moment when we picked up our instruments and played a few notes together. My concerns completely disappeared.” Among the pieces that the newly formed trio created was this one, which Abduvali whimsically dubbed “improvisation for three and a half instruments,” because his own instrument, the *sato-tanbur*, is in fact a single instrument played in two different fashions: as the *tanbur*, it is played with a plectrum, and as the *sato*, it is played with a bow. The opening melodic themes and motifs are loosely adapted from the Central Asian *maqom* tradition, in particular, from the mode *hisar*; but in the spirit of collaboration, the melodic scope of the improvisation is not limited to its traditional model.



CHEBIYAT

Music: Traditional; arranged by WU MAN and ABDULLA MAJNUN
ABDULLA MAJNUN, *dutar*
WU MAN, *pipa*

Chebiyat is the second of the prestigious large-scale suites that form the Uyghur Twelve Muqam repertory. Abdulla explained his reasons for teaching this *muqam* to Wu Man: “In the history of our Uyghur *muqam*, you can hear links to other peoples. Some *muqams* are closer to other musical systems. Chebiyat is closer to Chinese style. It has hardly any semitone intervals, just whole tones.” When Wu Man learned the most complex section of the suite—the opening unmeasured *muqaddima*—in a few hours, Abdulla perhaps realized that he had underestimated the abilities of his “pupil.” But Uyghur music is linked not only to China and Central Asia; India lies just to the south, and the resonance of the *dutar* and the sinuous melodic line of this piece strongly recall the *alap* of a morning raga. Here, the *dutar* realizes what is normally the vocal line of *muqaddima*, while the *pipa* plays the role of the instrumental accompaniment.



KURT NAXSHISI (*Song of the Kurds*)

Music and text: Unattributed
SANUBAR TURSUN, vocal and *dutar*
HESENJAN TURSUN, *satar*
WU MAN, *pipa*

With a distinctive and insistent nine-beat rhythm, “Kurt Naxshisi” is of unknown provenance, but Sanubar believes that it was brought into the Uyghur repertory recently from somewhere in Central Asia. The title suggests a possible origin in lands further west—perhaps northwestern Iran, which is home to many Kurds. The lyrics describe an idealized homeland that has captured the Uyghur imagination. In this arrangement the *pipa* improvises a solo introduction, then takes the place usually occupied by the metal-stringed *tambur* alongside the *dutar* and bowed *satar*. The *pipa* neatly complements the two Uyghur instruments but subtly changes the tonality and harmonies of the song into something new.

Ah shahim bizning eller bardur
Ushu derya su qishlarning
Baghlari baghwen baqar
Miwilikdur yaghachlarning

Oh Lord, we have a homeland
Of rivers, water, villages,
Gardens cared for by gardeners,
And fruit-bearing trees.

Appaq qardur tagh bashliri
Yaqut-marjandur tashliri
Teyyar tekkir behishliri
Du'a qilur derwishliri

Snow white are its mountain peaks,
A jade necklace, its stones,
The fruits of heaven ripen,
The dervishes perform their prayers.



ADEMLER ULUGH (*People Are Glorious*)

Music: SANUBAR TURSUN

Text: MEHEMMETJAN RASHIDIN

SANUBAR TURSUN, vocal and *dutar*

This is Sanubar's own composition, written in the style of her hometown in the northern Ili Valley, to which she sets lyrics by a respected contemporary poet.

*Kunlarningmu her xil bardur
Gullarningmu her xil bardur
Ademlerdin renjime konglum
Ularningmu ser xil bardur*

There are all kinds of days,
There are all kinds of flowers.
My soul, don't think badly of people,
Among them are outstanding ones.

*Tilemchige nan birer biri
Kepterlerge dan birer biri
Zorur bolsa qan birer biri
Hetta janni bergini bardur*

There is one to give bread to beggars,
One to scatter grain for the pigeons,
One to shed his blood in time of need,
Even one to sacrifice his life.

*Yatmiqi bar aghrip saqningmu
Sulmiqi bar seylihahningmu
Dolet keshe, hetta shahningmu
Dongdin qoray termiki bardur*

The healthy may lie down sick,
The traveler may encounter disaster.
A king may lose his country,
And find himself gathering firewood
on the dune.

Dunya tilsim, ademler ulugh
Tiriklikke adem ozi togh
Yanghingha su, zimistangha chogh
Shunga guzel menzili bardur

This world is mysterious, people are glorious,
In life people are their own pillars.
Just as there is water for the fire and
embers for the winter,
So there is beauty for the journey.



SHADIANA (*Celebration*)

Music: Traditional; arranged by WU MAN and ABDULLA MAJNUN
ABDULLA MAJNUN, *dutar*
WU MAN, *pipa*

This virtuoso piece has recently entered the professional Uyghur repertory in versions for the *rawap* and *dutar*—both plucked lutes. It is adapted from a traditional piece for drum-and-shawm band (*naghra-sunay*), which nowadays is popularly played at festival time. Historically, “Shadiana” is believed to have accompanied medieval Central Asian kings into battle. Certainly in Wu Man’s expert hands it takes on something of the style of the “martial” repertory for the *pipa*, exemplified by the well-known piece “Shimian Maifu” (Ambush from All Sides).





BIDERDING (*The Only Pain*)

Music: SANUBAR TURSUN

Text: Traditional

SANUBAR TURSUN, vocal and *dutar*

HESENJAN TURSUN, *satar*

Sanubar sings one of her own compositions, accompanying herself on *dutar* with her brother Hesenjan on *satar*. The style, with its swooping melodic line and “limping” six-beat rhythm, is associated with her hometown of Ghulja in the northern Ili Valley.

Rengmu-reng guller ichildi

Etiyazdin kuzgiche

Her kishi yarni tapşa

Shewikedir shu keche

Biderding sening derding

Yaman yarim

Flowers of many colors bloom

From spring until autumn.

Anyone who can find a lover

Will pass a sweet night.

The only pain is your pain,

My mischievous darling.

Yarni dep chiksa ashig

Her nepeste ming japa

Shu japani bilse rahet

Yardin tapur wapa

Biderding sening derding

Yaman yarim

When a lover sets out to catch his darling,

Every breath is a thousand struggles.

He knows comfort in his struggles

When he finds his faithful darling.

The only pain is your pain,

My mischievous darling.



USHSHAQ

Music: Traditional
ABDULLA MAJNUN, *diltar*

Like “Chebiyat” (track 2), “Ushshaq” is a *muqaddima*—the unmetred opening section of a Uyghur *muqam* suite. These are normally sung, but here Abdulla plays the melody on solo *diltar*. The practice of performing the *muqaddima* instrumentally is a recent innovation in Uyghur music. The melody rises phrase by phrase to a climax (*awaj*) before descending more rapidly. Modally, *ushshaq* is more complex than *chebiyat*, with its characteristic “unstable” pitches; in Abdulla’s hands, these seem to shiver uneasily before falling to a stable neighboring pitch.



KAZAKH SONG

Music: Traditional; arranged by MAMER and WU MAN
WU MAN, *pipa*

An arrangement of a *dombyra* solo previously recorded by Beijing-based Kazakh fusion star Mamer. Wu Man says, “I arranged this piece for *pipa* solo from a Kazakh tune. I’ve changed the tuning to imitate the *dombyra*, and tried to match the deeper and ‘older’ herdsman feeling.”



HEZHOU ERLING

Music: Traditional; arranged by WU MAN

Text: Traditional

MA ERSA, vocal

WU MAN, *pipa*

Titled simply “Second tune from Heling,” this is a fixed melody, tied to place, to which singers improvise lyrics, typically in the context of the big *hua’er* festivals that are held on the mountains of the Heling region of northwestern China throughout the summer months. Gathering around fires dotted across the mountains, groups of young people exchange jokes and flirt through these *hua’er* songs. Here Ma Ersa appends typical lyrics:

I climb a mountain and rain is falling,
I forget the umbrella in my hand.
Looking out to see you coming,
I forget the gift in my hand.

Wu Man said about the song, “This beautiful *hua’er* represents the Chinese Muslim music of the Hui people from the center of China. This is perhaps the only track on the CD in which my *pipa* speaks the Chinese language.”



WOY BALA (*Hey Kid*)

Music: Traditional; arranged by NURMEMET TURSUN
HESENJAN TURSUN, *satar*

Hesenjan Tursun plays a stunning medley of Uyghur folk songs on the *satar* in an arrangement created by his older brother, Nurmemet Tursun. The augmented intervals signal that these songs hail from Kashgar.



YARU (*Darling*)

Music and text: Traditional
SANUBAR TURSUN, vocal and *dutar*

Another folk song in two parts from Kashgar, simply and beautifully realized by Sanubar, who accompanies herself on *dutar*. The lilting, almost stumbling nine-beat rhythm of the second section is found in just a few classic Kashgar songs.

Egiz-egiz tagh bashida chiraq kuyedu
Chiraq emes yarning oti yurek kuyedu

On a high mountain a flame is burning,
Not a light, but the fire of my love's heart
burning.

Egiz-egiz tagh bashida qurghuy egiydu
U egigen qurghuy emes yarlar egiydu

On a high mountain a pheasant is hovering,
Not a pheasant, but lovers hovering.

Bir dane guldum ming dane boldum
Eqli hushumdin bigane boldum
Xushtarmen sanga amrighim yarim
digeysen

My single flower has become a thousand flowers,
Knowing this, I became foolish.
I love you, my darling, say you will be mine.

Sendek qizil gul her jayda bolmas
Her jayda bolsa seningche bolmas
Xushtarmen sanga amrighim yarim digeysen

Red flowers like you are not everywhere,
Were they everywhere they would not be like you.
I love you, my darling, say you will be mine.



HANLEYLUN

Music and text: Traditional
SANUBAR TURSUN, vocal and *dutar*
HESENJAN TURSUN, *satar*
WU MAN, *pipa*

A radical shift in tone color in this song, accompanied on *satar* and *pipa*, takes us to the pentatonic style of Qumul, an old city in eastern Xinjiang.

Žimistan kormigen bulbul
Baharning qedrini bilmes
Japani chekmigen ashig
Wapaning qedrini bilmes

The nightingale who has not seen winter
Knows not the joy of spring.
The lover who has undergone no struggles
Knows not the joy of faithfulness.

Japani kim tola tatsa
Goherni shu alur tashtin
Goherni alghuche tashtin
Nesawda otidu bashtin

Those who have struggled hard
Can find diamonds among the stones.
Before you can find diamonds among the stones,
You will undergo many hard times.



NAVO

Music: Improvised arrangement by ABDUVALI ABDURASHIDOV and WU MAN
ABDUVALI ABDURASHIDOV, *sato-tanbur*
WU MAN, *pipa*

This contemplative improvisation was conceived in the spirit of the miniaturized *maqom* instrumental pieces perfected by Abduvali Abdurashidov's musical mentor, the Uzbek *sato-tanbur* and *dutar* player Turgun Alimatov. In the introductory *sato* melody, Abduvali sketches an outline of the *maqom*—here Navo—which is picked up and developed by Wu Man in a way that moves the melodic intonation ever so subtly in the direction of Chinese pentatonicism (five-note scales). In the final part of the piece, Abduvali puts away his bow and plucks the *sato-tanbur*, showing off the other half of this remarkably protean instrument.



CHARIGAH

Music and text: Traditional
ABDULLA MAJNUN, vocal, *tambur*, *dutar*
YASIN YAKUP, *dap*

Abdulla sings the opening *muqaddima* and final *meshrep* sections of “Charigah,” accompanying himself on *tambur*, with Yasin Yaqub on *dap*. “This *muqam* is for *ashiqs*,” Abdulla said. “Their *meshreps* are the most lovely and intoxicating. They play like they’re going to war, like they are drunk on it, with their wild hair everywhere. When they sing this at the festivals, everybody cries.”

Yarning koyida men diwane boldum
Xelqi alem aldida bigane boldum
Bir zaman chektim japa qilargha sebrim
Ay yuzning shewqige perwane boldum
Ey yaranlar yaru wesli meni eylep dil
xumar
Ishtiyaqing keypide mestane boldum
Mustisil astanide meyxane boldum
Xelqi alem aldida weyrane boldum

My love’s flames, I have become a beggar,
Before the whole world I have become a fool.
I have suffered for an age, my patience is ended,
I am a moth drawn to your moonlike face.
Oh darling, my soul is addicted to loving you,
I revel in your passion, I have become a
drunkard.
In the city, I have become a wine shop,
Before the whole world I have been ruined.
(Fifth *meshrep*)

INSTRUMENT GLOSSARY



DAP

Uyghur frame drum, similar to the Uzbek/Tajik *doira*; normally covered with donkey hide, set with metal rings. The smaller *dap* is a virtually indispensable instrument for the Twelve Muqam, marking out the complex rhythmic cycles. A larger version is used in folk contexts to accompany dancing at *meshrep* festivities and in shamanic-style healing rituals.

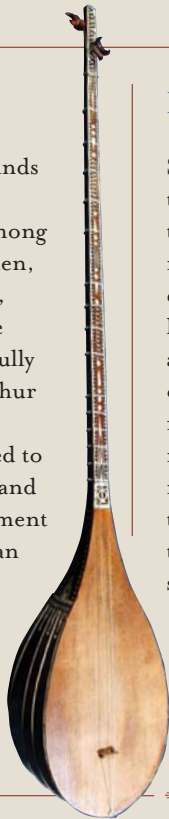
DILTAR

Created by Abdulla Majnun, the *diltar* (literally, “instrument of the heart”) combines the plucked *tambur* with the bowed *satar* to form one double-necked instrument with 28 sympathetic metal strings. A one-of-a-kind instrument, the *diltar* has a sweeter tone than the *satar* and an extraordinary resonance.



DUTAR

Designates different kinds of two-stringed long-necked fretted lutes among Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmen, Qaraqalpaks, Uyghurs, and other groups. The Uyghur *dutar* is beautifully decorated, like all Uyghur lutes, with settings in horn or bone. It is used to accompany folk songs and as a supporting instrument in the *muqam*. A *dutar* can be found in almost every Uyghur home, and it is the sole instrument which Uyghur women have traditionally played.



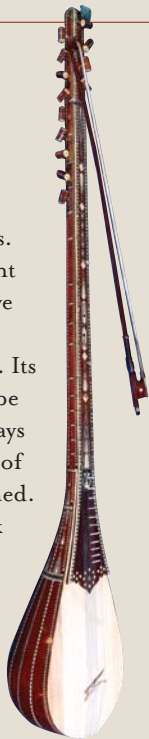
PIPA

Short-necked plucked lute that came to China from Central Asia around the 7th century. The instrument has since undergone many changes, notably a shift from a horizontal playing position to an upright one. The name is onomatopoeic, representing forward and backward plucking movements; however, today it is no longer played with a plectrum but with false nails attached to the fingers. It has four metal strings and six wedge-shaped frets, as well as 26 smaller bamboo frets. It is played in a range of traditional instrumental ensembles, to accompany styles of narrative song, and, since the 20th century, as a virtuoso solo instrument on the concert stage.



SATAR/SATO

Long-necked bowed lute. The Uyghur *satar* has one melodic and 12 sympathetic metal strings. The *satar* has an important role in the Uyghur Twelve Muqam and is usually played by the lead singer. Its sympathetic strings may be tuned in five different ways depending on the mode of the *muqam* being performed. The shorter Tajik-Uzbek *sato* has five strings; one is bowed, and the others serve as drones.



TANBUR/TAMBUR

A long-necked plucked lute with raised frets used in Uzbek-Tajik and Uyghur music traditions. It is the fundamental accompanying instrument for vocal performances of Shashmaqom. The Uyghur *tambur* accompanies *muqam* and songs, and today is also a virtuoso solo instrument. The melody is played on one double course of strings, while the others serve as drones. The Uyghur *tambur* is probably the longest of all Central Asian lutes, at around 150cm, with five metal strings plucked with a tiny metal pick (*nakhāla*) strapped to the index finger.



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