

"Journey of World Music"- The Instruments

The **sarod** is a stringed musical instrument, used mainly in Indian classical music. Along with the sitar, it is the most popular and prominent instrument in Hindustani (northern Indian) classical music. The sarod is known for a deep, weighty, introspective sound (contrast with the sweet, overtone-rich texture of the sitar) with sympathetic strings that give it a resonant, reverberant quality. It is a fretless instrument able to produce the continuous slides between notes known as meend (glissandi), which are very important to Indian music. The sarod is believed by some to have descended from the Afghan rubab, a similar instrument originating in Afghanistan. The name *Sarod* roughly translates to "beautiful sound" or "melody" in Persian.

The **Rubab** or **robab** (Persian: برّیا *rubāb*) is a lute-like musical instrument from Afghanistan. It derives its name from the Arab *rebab* which means "played with a bow" but the Central Asian instrument is plucked, and is distinctly different in construction. The *rubab* is mainly used by Afghan, Pashtun, Tajik and Iranian Kurdish classical musicians.

The rubab is a short-necked lute whose body is carved out of a single piece of wood, with a membrane covering the hollow bowl of the sound-chamber, upon which the bridge is positioned. It has three melody strings tuned in fourths, three drone strings and 11 or 12 sympathetic strings. The instrument is made from the trunk of a mulberry tree, the head from an animal skin such as a goat skin, and the strings either gut (from the intestines of young goats, brought to the size of thread) or nylon.

The *rubab* is known as "the lion of instruments", and is one of the two national instruments of Afghanistan (together with the Zerbaghali). It is an ancient instrument, and has been mentioned since the 7th century in old Persian books, and many Sufi poets mention it in their poems. It is the traditional instrument of Afghanistan and is also widely used in countries neighboring Afghanistan, such as Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

The **Setar** (Persian: رات سه, from *seh*, meaning "three" and *tār*, meaning "string") is a Persian musical instrument and is a member of the lute family. Two and a half centuries ago, a fourth string was added to the setar, which has 25 - 27 moveable frets (A **fret** is a raised portion on the neck of a stringed instrument that extends generally across the full width of the neck. On most modern western instruments, frets are metal strips inserted into the fingerboard.) . It originated in Persia around the time of the spread of Islam and is a direct descendant of the larger and louder tanbur. The setar should not be confused with the Indian sitar, which is significantly different, although the name and some aspects of the design of the Indian sitar derive from the setar.

The **Oud** (Arabic: عود *ūd*, plural: داوُعْ *a'wād*; Persian: طبرب *barbat*; Kurdish: *ûd*; Turkish: *ud* or *ut*; Greek: ούτι; Armenian: դուդ, Azeri: *ud*; Hebrew: *ud* עוּד; Somali: *cuud* or *kaban*) is a pear-shaped, stringed instrument commonly used in Middle Eastern music. It is often seen as the predecessor of the western lute, distinguished primarily by its lack of frets.

The **Flamenco Guitar** is a Spanish guitar that is played as an accompaniment to Flamenco style singing and dancing. Most of the flamenco guitarists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were Spanish gypsies, who were poor, and who bought the most affordable guitars available at the time. In the mid 1800s, Andalusian *lutiers* (stringed instrument makers) made instruments in a wide range of prices, largely based on the materials used and the amount of decoration. The cheapest guitars were often simple, basic instruments made from local woods like cypress, which was much cheaper than imported rosewood or maple; wooden pegs were more affordable than geared tuning machines. Eventually, instruments with these features came to be called flamenco guitars, but originally there was really no distinction made by makers or players.

Flamenco is a genuine Spanish art form. It exists in three forms:

Cante: the song (this is the heart of flamenco)

Baile: the dance

Toque: guitar playing

Strictly, flamenco guitar is an accompaniment to singing and dancing in the traditional Flamenco forms. Those in English-speaking countries outside the Flamenco community often use it to mean vaguely Spanish-sounding guitar playing which utilizes some of the Flamenco techniques. Although Flamenco guitarists are now often accompanied by orchestras, flutes, percussion and other accompaniments, when Flamenco first started the guitarist would be playing all by himself. This led to a development in guitar music to make one guitar sound like more than one instrument and forced guitarists to develop techniques to make them sound louder. Those techniques affected the music they're producing to be a bit aggressive. A well-made flamenco guitar responds quickly and typically has less sustain than a classical. This is desirable, since the flurry of notes that a good flamenco player can produce would sound very muddy on a guitar with a big, lush, sustaining sound. The flamenco guitar's sound is often described as percussive; it tends to be brighter, drier and more austere, and have fewer overtones, than that of a classical. As a matter of fact, some jazz and Latin guitarists like this punchy tonality, and some players have even discovered that these guitars' wide-ranging sound also works well for the contrapuntal (composed of two or more relatively independent melodies sounded together) voicings of Renaissance and Baroque music.

A **Djembe** (pronounced *JEM-bay*) is an African skin-covered hand drum shaped like a large goblet and meant to be played with bare hands. According to the Bamana people in Mali, the name of the djembe comes directly from the saying "Anke dje, anke be" which literally translates to "everyone gather together" and defines the drum's purpose. In the Bamanakan language, "Dje" is the verb for "gather" and "be" translates as "everyone".

The **Tabla** (Bangla: *তবলা*, Urdu: *ٲلٲ tablā* from Arabic: *ٲلٲ، ٲلٲ tabl, tabla*) is a popular Indian percussion instrument used in the classical, popular and religious music of the Indian subcontinent and in Hindustani classical music. The instrument consists of a pair of hand drums of contrasting sizes and timbres. The term *tabla* is derived from an Arabic word, *tabl*, which simply means "drum."

Playing technique involves extensive use of the fingers and palms in various configurations to create a wide variety of different sounds. The heel of the hand is used to apply pressure or in a sliding motion on the larger drum so that the pitch is changed during the sound's decay.

