



## UZBEK MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND THEIR TYPES

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, only a small percentage of our people understand classical music, maqoms, and the performance of folk instruments in ensembles. There is a lack of knowledge about the history of our national instruments and their creation. Our youth and even adults do not know the names of our national instruments. For example, they refer to the Kashgar rubab as “dutor.” Sometimes we hear remarks like “Stop playing the ting-ring,” which shows a lack of understanding. Even schoolchildren are unaware of the names of our national instruments, such as the chang, ud, gijjak, doyra, flute, tanbur, rubab, qanun, and others, or of the famous performers associated with these instruments. Young people are more familiar with instruments like the guitar, electric organ, clarinet, accordion, and percussion instruments, rather than our traditional national instruments

**Key words:** history of national instruments, classical music art, maqoms, traditional singing, master artists, famous musicians, national musical instruments

**Аннотация:** На сегодняшний день лишь небольшая часть нашего народа понимает искусство классической музыки, макамов и исполнение на народных инструментах в ансамблях. Отсутствуют знания о истории наших национальных музыкальных инструментов и их создании. Наши молодежь и взрослые не знают названия наших народных инструментов. Например, касгарский рубоб называют «дутор». Иногда мы слышим замечания вроде «Прекрати издавать этот «тинг-тинь» звук!». Ученики школ также не знают названия таких наших народных инструментов, как чанг, уд, гижжак, доира, най, танбур, рубоб, канун и другие, а также не имеют информации о знаменитых исполнителях на этих инструментах. Молодежь лучше знакома с такими инструментами, как гитара, электрический



орган, klarinet, akkordeon и ударные инструменты, нежели с нашими традиционными народными инструментами.

**Ключевые слова:** история народных инструментов, классическое музыкальное искусство, макамы, традиционное пение, мастера искусства, знаменитые музыканты, народные музыкальные инструменты

## INTRODUCTION

In Uzbekistan, there are more than 30 types of national musical instruments used in performance practice. Among them, 18 types of musical instruments were improved after the 1940s with the collaboration of Professor A.I. Petrosyan and a group of specialists and instrument makers. These instruments were designed for use in concert performances, both as solo instruments and, primarily, in orchestras and multi-voiced ensembles.

These instruments were created by either enlarging or reducing the shape of existing national musical instruments, based on experimental work aimed at creating a family of instruments, which led to the development of the flute, chang, rubab, dutar, and gijjak families.

The flute is an ancient wind instrument of the Uzbek people. The flute is widely used in Uzbekistan and occupies an important place in ensembles and Uzbek folk instrument orchestras. It is also played solo. Its wide range of sound makes it suitable for folk melodies and maqoms.<sup>29</sup> Due to its loud sound, it can also perform the role of a lead

<sup>29</sup> Xomidov, Z. (2024). ISHBILARMONLIK MUHITINI TAKOMILLASHTIRISH SUBYEKTALARINING FAOLIYATIDA BOSHQARUV JARAYONI TAHLILI. *Наука и технология в современном мире*, 3(1), 4–6. извлечено от <https://in-academy.uz/index.php/zdift/article/view/25482>

instrument in an ensemble. The flute has six small holes, which can be fully or partially covered with fingers to produce different high and low pitches. The total pitch range of the flute is from F in the first octave to D in the fourth octave. Notes are written in the violin clef.<sup>30</sup> A thin paper is attached between the first hole and the finger, which is used mainly by Chinese performers. In China, the flute is made from bamboo, and the thin paper from the bamboo is attached to one of the holes, helping to amplify the sound. At the second end of the flute, there are four permanently open holes that help soften certain tones. The length of the flute is 500-600 mm. It is made from wood, bamboo, and brass, and therefore it is called "wooden flute," "bamboo flute," or "brass flute."

Well-known flute masters include Abduqodir Ismailov, Saidjon Kalonov, as well as Mirza Toirov and Abdulahat Abdurashidov. When these masters perform wonderful works like "Cho'li Iraq," "Chorgoh," and "Bir Kelsin," they

<sup>30</sup> O'rolov, D. ., & Azamkulov, G. . (2025). MUSIQIY CHOLG'ULARNING TUB KELIB CHIQISHI HAQIDAGI ILMIY FARAZLAR. Журнал академических исследований нового Узбекистана, 2(7), 37–39. извлечено от <https://inlibrary.uz/index.php/yoitj/article/view/121128>



lift the spirits of the listeners, filling them with joy and good mood.

The surnay is also an ancient instrument. It is mainly used in celebrations, festivals, picnics, and weddings, along with other instruments such as the doyra, nagara, and karnay. The surnay has a very loud sound, which makes it suitable for outdoor performances. The surnay is made from the wood of hard trees such as apricot and walnut. It has six holes on the upper side and one hole on the lower side, and the pitch is controlled by covering or uncovering these holes. The part of the surnay where the sound is produced is made separately and is called the "nay pachoq," which is installed in the surnay before each performance.<sup>31</sup>

The chang is considered an ancient musical instrument, and although it is believed to have entered our region in the early 20th century, it is a traditional string instrument of Central Asian peoples. The chang is played with two thin sticks covered with rubber on the upper side. It is struck like a special mallet. Musicologist Darvishali Changiy, who lived in the 17th century, wrote that the chang is a very ancient instrument and was used for treating diseases. Nowadays, the chang has been modified to have a chromatic sound scale, meaning it has

semitone intervals.<sup>32</sup> It has three legs mounted with screws, making it convenient for the performer to sit while playing.

The Qashqar rubab, although its origin is associated with the place name Qashqar in Eastern Turkistan (now the Uygur Autonomous Region of China), is one of the most widespread and popular Uzbek national instruments. The Qashqar rubab has a very melodious and pleasant sound, and it is one of the instruments that can be quickly learned. This instrument can be played both solo and in musical ensembles. Famous performers and musicians who contributed greatly to popularizing the Qashqar rubab include Muhammadjon Mirzayev, Ergash Shukrullayev, Shavkat Mirzayev, Qobiljon Usmonov, Sulaymon Taxalov, Ari Boboxonov, and Tohir Rajabiy.

The rubab-prima is a new instrument created to expand the family of the Qashqar rubab. It has a wider range, from Sol in the small octave to Mi in the fourth octave. The rubab-prima consists of three main parts: the bowl, the neck, and the head. The bowl is elongated and half-spherical, made from wooden ribs with a wooden bottom, and covered with skin. The junction between the bowl and the neck is decorated with a ribbon. The four pegs at the bottom are used to secure the strings. The rubab-prima is

<sup>31</sup> Konurova Leyla Ruslanovna. Methods for developing the creative abilities of preschool children based on music therapy. (2025). *Texas Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 41, 46-49. <https://doi.org/10.62480/tjms.2025.vol41.5976.p46-49>

<sup>32</sup> Abdurasulov B. O'ZBEK XALQ MUSIQASI ASOSIDA O'QUVCHILARNI MA'NAVIIY AXLOQIY FAZILATLARINI SHAKLLANTIRISHNING AHAMIYATI <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/o-zbek-xalq-musiqasi-asosida-o-quvchilarni-ma-naviy-axloqiy-fazilatlarini-shakllantirishning-ahamiyati/viewer>



tuned in a chromatic scale, and it is suitable for both solo performance and ensemble playing. Prominent performers who contributed to the development and popularization of the rubab-prima include Republic competition laureates Abdusalom Malikov, Shuhrat Ziyayev, Asqar Dadamuhamedov, and others.<sup>33</sup>

The Afghan rubab, also known as the Bukhara rubab, is most popular among Persian-speaking peoples and is recognized for its deep, soft sound. A slightly different version of the Afghan rubab can be found in India, Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, some Caucasian nations, and Arab countries. In the 1940s, the Afghan rubab was improved and made chromatic, allowing it to be adapted for solo and ensemble performances. The master musician Ghulomqodir Ergashev made significant contributions to the promotion of the Afghan rubab.

The gijjak is a bowed string instrument that has been widespread among Central Asian peoples, especially the Uzbeks, since ancient times. Its bowl is made from gourd, coconut (or sometimes jujube wood), with the center hollowed out. In the 1920s, musicians started using double-stringed gijjaks to increase its volume. The bow is made from horsehair and is played by pulling it with the right hand. In the 1930s, the gijjak was reworked with four strings, tuned in intervals similar to a violin, and

its range was extended from Sol in the small octave to La in the fourth octave. Gijjak is used both as a solo instrument and in ensembles and orchestras. It is found among Tajiks, Azerbaijanis, Turkmen, Armenians, Uighurs, and other peoples. Notable gijjak performers include Toxtasin Jalilov, Murodjon Toshmuhamedov, Abdushoshim Ismoilov, Shuhrat Yo'ldoshev, Botir Rasulov, and Qahramon Nazirov.<sup>34</sup>

The gijjak-bass is a larger version of the gijjak, and it performs the role of a cello in orchestras. It is tuned with the four lowest strings in intervals of a fifth, and its range extends from Do in the great octave to Re in the third octave. It is played with a bow and written in the bass clef.

The gijjak-contrabass is the largest form of the gijjak, and it performs the role of a double bass. It is tuned in fourths, and its range extends from Mi in the contrabass octave to Sol in the first octave. It is played standing up, like a double bass.

The dutor is one of the most beloved and popular Uzbek musical instruments, and its name in Tajik means "two strings." The dutor consists of two main parts: the neck and the bowl, joined by a part called the "neck joint." The bowl can be made from carved wood or ribs of wood that are bent and glued together.

<sup>33</sup> Konurova Leyla Ruslanovna. (2026). MUSICAL AND RHYTHMIC NEUROPRACTICES IN WORKING WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN [Data set]. B Latin American Journal of Education (T. 6, Выпуск 01, cc. 420–425). Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1828426>

<sup>34</sup> Annakulova Dildora Baymuratovna. (2025). The Creation Of Ergash Jumanbulbul O'Gul In The Formation Of The Samarkand School Of Epistlectorship. *European International Journal of Pedagogics*, 5(03), 56–60. <https://doi.org/10.55640/eijp-05-03-15>



The "carved dutor" is made from a single block of mulberry wood and is popular in Samarkand, Khorezm, and Turkmenistan, while the "ribbed dutor" is made from 8-10 thin pieces of wood glued together. The cover on the top of the bowl is also made from wood.

Tanbur is an ancient stringed instrument widely spread in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and the Xinjiang region of southern China (where it is called "danbur"). The body of the tanbur is carved in a pear shape or assembled from several ribs, and a long neck is attached to it.

The tanbur is played with a special plectrum worn on the index finger of the right hand. When played, only the first string is struck, while the other strings are used to create additional sounds.

The tanbur is used for performing folk music and maqom melodies, either as a solo instrument or accompanying a singer.<sup>35</sup> Similar to other Uzbek folk instruments, the tanbur has been improved and its tuning system made chromatic, allowing it to be included in orchestras. The notes are written in the treble clef and appear an octave higher than they are heard.

## CONCLUSION

The Uzbek tanbur originally had three strings, but later it was improved by adding a fourth string, and a new

instrument, known as sato, was created. Sato is a version of the tanbur. Initially, a simple tanbur was used as a sato, but now the tanbur has been slightly enlarged and its shape altered to create this new instrument. In sato performance, a bow used for playing instruments like the gjijak and violin is employed. The sound of the sato is very soft and noble, and it is primarily used for melancholic and heavy melodies. The sato sounds beautiful when played together with the dutor and tanbur or even as a solo instrument. However, it is difficult to perform in large ensembles and orchestras without special sound amplification devices.

<sup>35</sup> Bahadirov Nail Sharifovich. (2025). DUTOR CHOLG'USI IJROSIDA SHTRIXLARDAN TO'G'RI FOYDALANISH VA O'QUVCHILARDA TURLI SHTRIXLARNI ERKIN ISHLATA OLISH QOBILIYATINI SHAKLLANTIRISH. [Vol. 1 No. 7 \(2025\): STUDYING THE PROGRESS OF SCIENCE AND ITS SHORTCOMINGS](#)



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