

COLLECTION OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY OF AZERBAIJAN

Unique tambourine (def) with the image of the Sheikh Shamil. 1900

The rich musical culture of the Azerbaijani people has ancient roots spanning many centuries. It shaped up as a result of a lengthy historical evolution of aesthetic values and perceptions of the nation, skills of the musical performing art, a fusion of the national and professional musical traditions and the capabilities of craftsmen who make musical instruments.

Research of the history of development of a nation's musical culture is impossible without studying, cherishing and preserving relevant tangible artifacts, including musical instruments, which are of great importance in this regard. An extensive collection of musical instruments is stored at the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan (NMHA). It has been collected throughout the existence of the Museum, i.e. since 1920. The collection is kept in two parts at the Museum, namely, the Ethnography Foundation (EF) and the Foundation of Gifts and Memorabilia (FGM). The Ethnography Foundation contains Azerbaijani national musical instruments, which were made in the period from the 18th to the early 20th century. These include tar, kamancha, naghara (drum), gosha naghara (double drums), saz, daf, zur-



na, pipe, harmonica, etc. A total of about 90 musical instruments are available at the Foundation.

In particular, this category of exhibits extensively

*Body of percussion musical instrument dumbul.
Body made of clay*



features Tar samples. Tar gained wide popularity in the Azerbaijani territory from the 18th century. Historically, tar has had five strings (two white ones, two yellow ones and a bass string) and a large and deep body, with 27-28 concords tied on its long neck. The musical instrument was heavy and the musician held it on his lap or below the chest while playing it. In the 1870s, the tar was

*Wind musical instruments tutak
and ney carved from wood and reed*



A rare gosha nagara with its body made of clay



remodeled by Mirza Sadikh, a musician and composer popularly known as Sadikh-jan. The remodeled musical instrument, called "the Azerbaijani tar", was particularly common in Azerbaijan's territory from the last quarter of the 19th century. The tar of this type soon became widespread in the entire Caucasus, as well as in Turkey and Central Asia.

In the Azerbaijani music, the tar is used as a leading musical instrument in the composition of the Mugham trio featuring the khanende (singer), which also includes the kamancha and gaval (1). As is known, Mugham lies at the core of the Azerbaijani music, along with the Ashig art. Mugham is an instrumental and vocal-instrumental music genre. Thus, the tar has always been one of the most important elements of the Azerbaijani musical culture.

The museum's collection contains tars that belonged to Suleyman Mansurov (NMHA, EF, inv. No. 5298), Bahram Mansurov (NMHA, EF, inv. No. 6801), Niyazi (NMHA,

*Musical instrument santur.
On the case it is written: "1872 y."*





Tar presented to outstanding Azerbaijani conductor and composer Niyazi in the city of Shusha in Karabakh. The inscription says, "To dear Niyazi from the people of Shusha for 70th birthday"

FGM, inv. No. 4894), Zulfugar Hajibayov (NMHA, FGM, inv. No.708), Ahmad Bakikhanov (NMHA, EF, inv. No. 7970), and Mirza Faraj (NMHA, EF, inv. No.7840). There is also an ancient tar sample at the museum with an inscription saying "1744, Shusha" (NMHA, EF, inv. No. 5150). In total, 16 tar-related exhibits are available at the museum.

The museum's foundations also feature a great number of such exhibits as kamancha, daf, zurna, naghara, gosha naghara, pipe, and harmonica. The collection includes musical instruments that were owned by such musicians as the Adigezalovs (NMHA, EF, inv. No. 6618), Ahmadagha Bakikhanov (NMHA, EF, inv. No. 7971), Sidgi Ruhulla (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 5497), and Asaf Zeynalli (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 407). A three-string pandura was found in Shaki as well (NMHA, EF, inv. No. 9127).

The musical-poetical art of Azerbaijani Ashigs is attributed to the professional art branch of the verbal tradition. Ashig music is accompanied by a saz, a national string instrument with an ancient origin. The Azerbaijani saz has its own special features distinguishing it from the same musical instruments of the neighboring nations.

Saz is one of the oldest national musical instruments of Azerbaijan. Its predecessors were the setar (or Jufti saz referenced in Nizami's poems in the 12th century) and the dutar, which has a similar shape. According to Majnun Karimov, an Azerbaijani art critic, the contemporary Azerbaijani saz should be considered the most advanced successor of Gopuz. It assumed the current

shape as late as during the rule of Shah Ismail Khatai (16th century). The saz is eulogized in the following wonderful lines in one of Khatai's "Goshma" poems:

I did not take my saz with me today,
my voice won't be touched.

Each of us has four important things to do,
which are science, words, singing and saz (2).

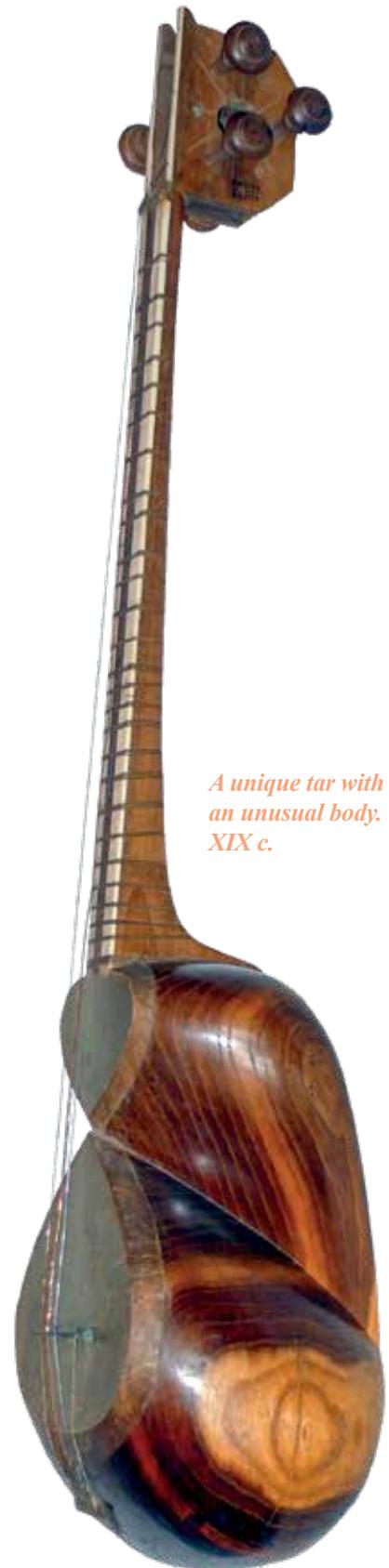
The contemporary Azerbaijani saz differs from the widespread version of other Turkic-speaking nations in terms of the technique of playing it and acoustic features and has significant and undeniable advantages.

Making a saz is a very long and laborious job. Usually, craftsmen use several tree species to carve out different parts of saz. The body is made from selected types of the mulberry tree, while the fingerboard is made of cherry tree timber, and hard walnut is used to make the connecting strip whereupon the musical instrument is assembled using pegs. The saz is played by plucking it with a plectrum made of black cherry tree bark (3).

The Ethnography Foundation collection contains several saz samples. The five-string "saz-jura" presumably dates back to the 18th century (NMHA, EF, inv. No. 9256). It also has a "chogur" saz with seven strings (NMHA, EF, inv. No. 4010). Another musical instrument, an eight-string "saz-khatavand" of Ashig Huseyn Bozalganli, was made in the 19th century (NMHA, EF, inv. No. 5210) (4).

In addition to Azerbaijani musical instruments, the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan features those of other countries, including India, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Senegal, Cuba, and Russia. The Foundation of Gifts and Memorabilia has a total of 43 exhibits. The musical instruments from India and China are particularly interesting. It is worth mentioning the following items among the Indian string instruments presented by Indian Ambassador Krishna Menon to the Museum of History of Azerbaijan in 1961: sarangi (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 851), sitar (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 852), mkdank (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 853), shehnai (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 854), sarod (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 855), tambourine (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 858), two tablas (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 848, 849), two banjos (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 856, 857), and a flute (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 847), as well as bowls used as musical instruments, with the sound produced by striking them with small sticks (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 837-846).

The Chinese musical instrument chi-suan-chin is also fascinating. Its shape resembles a saz and has seven strings (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 48). The item was presented to the Museum by representatives of the People's Republic of China in 1954.



*A unique tar with
an unusual body.
XIX c.*



A rare kamancha with a flat body, with fish skin on both sides of it. South Azerbaijan

A clavichord-harmonica displayed at the Z. Taghiyev House Museum is one of the unique exhibits of the museum. The clavichord was made in Berlin in 1898 (NMHA, FGM, inv. No. 5284).

Thus, studying the abundant collection of musical instruments of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan provides a lot of new facts regarding the musical culture and cultural links of the Azerbaijani people. ✨

Ancient form of kamancha



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The most ancient tar in a collection of the museum. An inscription on the case the Arab graphics: "Shusha. 1744"



Pandura. Sheki distrikt