Playing Saz

The traditional method of playing the saz is to pluck the strings with the fingers of the right hand and note the strings with the fingers, and occasionally the thumb, of the left hand. Today however, most players use a short plastic plectrum to strum the strings. Professional players also use electronic pickups to amplify the sound. When playing without the plectrum, the fingers of the right hand strike the strings. This method is called selpe. When playing with the fingers or a plectrum, players can add rhythm, by hitting the soundboard with the right hand.

Care

Here are some simple tips to care for your saz:
- Use a dry soft cloth for dusting
- Use a damp soft cloth for cleaning
- Avoid extreme temperatures
- Avoid extremely dry conditions
- Avoid direct sunlight
- Avoid using abrasives
- Replace broken strings immediately
- Use only Manufacturer recommended strings

Accessories

String Sets, Cases, and other accessories are available at www.mid-east.com

– Owner’s Guide –
The saz likely descended from one of the numerous long-necked stringed instruments of the Central Asian region. There are several dialect names for this group of instruments: kopuz, kobuz, komuz, qomuz, kyrgyz, and gopuz. These terms all refer to any long-necked stringed instruments which originally had strings of hair, leather bodies and were fretless.

Some researchers suggest that the kopuz was sacred. According to some, the instrument itself contained enough power to protect a warrior if carried into battle. However, other researchers take a more secular approach to the history and believed it was introduced as a heroic instrument by traveling minstrels who would sing tales of war.

In the 15th century the use of metal strings marked the emergence of the fretless cogur; the hybrid between the kopuz and saz. The metal strings added greater stress which required that the leather body be replaced by one of wood.

Construction and Types

The saz body is deeper than it is wide, the neck is very narrow and the peg box is long and narrow set at a slight angle to the neck. The body is made using stave construction.

The 6 to 8 metal strings are tied to a block at the base of the soundboard. From there, they run over a bridge on the soundboard. The strings continue over the neck, which has 10-19 or more, tied nylon frets. The strings are tuned by tapered wooden pegs, set at 90 degrees to one another.

The steel or brass strings usually have 3 courses of 2 strings each. Sound holes may be absent, on the soundboard, on the bottom, or carved in the sides of the body. Some sound holes have decorative rosettes, others are plain openings.

Tuning

For the 6-stringed baglama instruments the most frequently used tunings, two strings to a course, high to low pitch (thin to thick string, or bottom to top string) are:

A G D A D E A D F# G D G A D A A E A G A D G C G

For the 7-stringed instrument, the most frequently used tuning, from high to low pitch, is: A D G, where A is a 3-string course.

A common tuning for the cura saz is: A D G, high to low pitch (thin to thick string, or bottom to top string) one octave above the baglama (bozuk duzen).

As you can see, there are a number of tunings that can be used. Tunings for saz vary by region. You will likely find a saz in every part of Turkey, and each one tuned differently. A player may tune the saz to match their voice, or for the specific folk song, or maqam, being played.