**Choor  CHINA**

### About the Artists

Born on the vast Inner Mongolian plains, members of Choor grew up in herding families with the sounds and rhythms of these grasslands in their hearts. Their name “Choor” is an old Mongolian word that means “polyphonic, harmonic, and overlapping,” and is used to describe a variety of musical techniques within Mongolian music. The group has an impressive background and education as folk musicians, and their performance features the beautiful sounds of *morin huur*, or horsehead fiddles, and world-famous *khoomei* throat singing.

The performers were each born into herding families and, at a young age, began their study of the Mongolian *morin huur* and other instruments from their parents and other folk artists. In their high school years they entered professional music schools where they received systematic, academic training on their instruments and were able to bring their artistry to a new level. After graduation, they each entered careers as professional performers for arts troupes in Inner Mongolia. For entrance into these arts troupes, each performer needed to have mastered skills on bowed and plucked string instruments as well as the ability to sing *khoomei*. They each went on to perform on China Central Television and to win prizes in prestigious national and international competitions on numerous occasions. They represent a fresh generation of young Mongolian performers, and combine adept musicianship with a profound musical sensibility bestowed upon them through many years of living on the expansive grassland. In recent years, they have performed concerts of Mongolian music in venues such as the Sun Yatsen Concert Hall, Beijing Concert Hall, Century Theatre, Tianjin Concert Hall, Shanghai Grand Theatre, and Shenzhen Concert Hall where they received rave reviews and enthusiastic audience reception.

### Members

- **Zhu Zhizong**  
  Team Leader, Morin Huur
- **Zhu Yuan**  
  Percussion
- **Boerzhijinfu**  
  Music Director, Khoomei, Tubsier, Maodin Chor
- **Hasibagen**  
  Morin Huur, Khoomei
- **Li Wenbin**  
  Pluck music, Khoomei, Maodin Chor
- **Fu Shaobo**  
  Percussion
- **Daorina**  
  Singer
- **Tiemuermenghe**  
  Arrangement, pluck music
- **Bai Yinnenghe**  
  Morin Huur
- **Dabuxilatu**  
  Long-tune singer, Hobbis
- **Wang Xiaohua**  
  Jew’s harp, Khoomei

### Resources

- Smithsonian Folkways: Throat Singing  
  [www.folkways.si.edu/explore_folkways/throat_singing.aspx](http://www.folkways.si.edu/explore_folkways/throat_singing.aspx)
- Columbia University: The Mongols in World History  
  [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/mongols](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/mongols)
Throat Singing

Throat singing, called *khoomei* in Mongolian, is a vocal style that allows the singer to sing two notes at the same time. It is an ancient Mongolian art form, and many Mongols believe throat singing has powers that can help heal a person who is ill. Throat singing takes years to master, and singers begin training when they are very young. Choor has trained in many throat singing styles, and you will hear that they use a range of low- and high-pitched singing. The sound of throat singing reminds the listener of animals and the wind blowing through the Mongolian Grasslands.

Long Song

Long song is another ancient style of singing. The name is derived not from the length of the song but from the long notes held during a song. Often this type of song has very few words—a song that lasts three minutes might have only ten words! This style of singing evolved in the grasslands as Mongolians tended their sheep, and the music reflects the landscape in the rising and falling of notes that correspond to the land itself. Typically accompanied by the horse head fiddle, a long song singer can call up the landscape of distant places, transport us to the vast grasslands of Mongolia, and remind us of the power of nature.

Morin Huur

The *morin huur*, or horse head fiddle, has two strings and is played upright with a bow, similar to a cello. Rather than pressing down on the strings, a performer touches the side of the string to change the note. The horse head carved at the top of the neck of each instrument pays respect to the most important animal in Mongolian culture, and almost all Mongolian houses have a *morin huur* hanging in the hallway.

Moadin Chor

The *moadin chor* is a Mongolian flute made from a reed. The flute is played vertically and positioned under the top lip. The performer then plays the flute while at the same time singing *khoomei*, or throat singing. Very few people are able to play this instrument, and Li Wenbin of Choor is one these few musicians in Inner Mongolia that have mastered the *moadin chor*!