

ARTS MIDWEST WORLD FEST

Study Guide Israel - Music and Instruments

About Yamma Ensemble

The product of an immigrant society, Israeli music brings together Balkan, Moroccan, and traditional Russian, Arabic, and Middle Eastern sounds. Featuring the captivating vocalist Talya G. A. Solan, the five members of Yamma Ensemble come from varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds reflecting the rich diversity of Israel. The ensemble's unique performances represent the colorful cultural characters in Israeli music—the Sephardic traditions, Mediterranean influences, the music of Yemenite Jews—as well as original music. The ensemble was established in 2004 by leading figures in the vibrant Israeli music scene.



Yamma Ensemble, 2011

Musical Instruments

Yamma Ensemble plays a variety of instruments from all over the world. In addition to instruments you might be more familiar with, like the violin or guitar, there are some other instruments that may not be as familiar. These instruments make different kinds of sounds and add unique tones and rhythms to the ensemble's music.

Oud

Since the 9th century the musical tradition of the Mediterranean Sea was based in great part on the oud. Often called the prince of Arab instruments, the oud is an ancient stringed instrument which probably originated more than 3,500 years ago in Persia. The Arabic name, Al Oud, means thin wood. Sometime during the 11-13th centuries, the moors or the Crusaders carried the oud to Spain, where it became known as the lute ("al-ud") and was ultimately transformed into the six-stringed fretted guitar. The oud is pear-shaped, and it has a relatively short handle and no frets. The precise shape and dimensions differ throughout the world, as do the number of strings.

Jumbush

The Jumbush originated in Turkey and the Balkans. It looks like a banjo, with six doubled strings and a fretless grip. Its body is made from light metal with stretched skin.

Darbuka

The darbuka (also called a doumbek, tablah, or goblet drum) is an hour-glass-shaped drum popular throughout the Middle East. The drum head or skin is stretched tight with rope or leather thongs or even nails. The body may be made of copper, ceramic, pottery or wood. It is often used in belly dancing because of the crisp and deep sound.



A very ornate example of a darbuka, or goblet drum

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