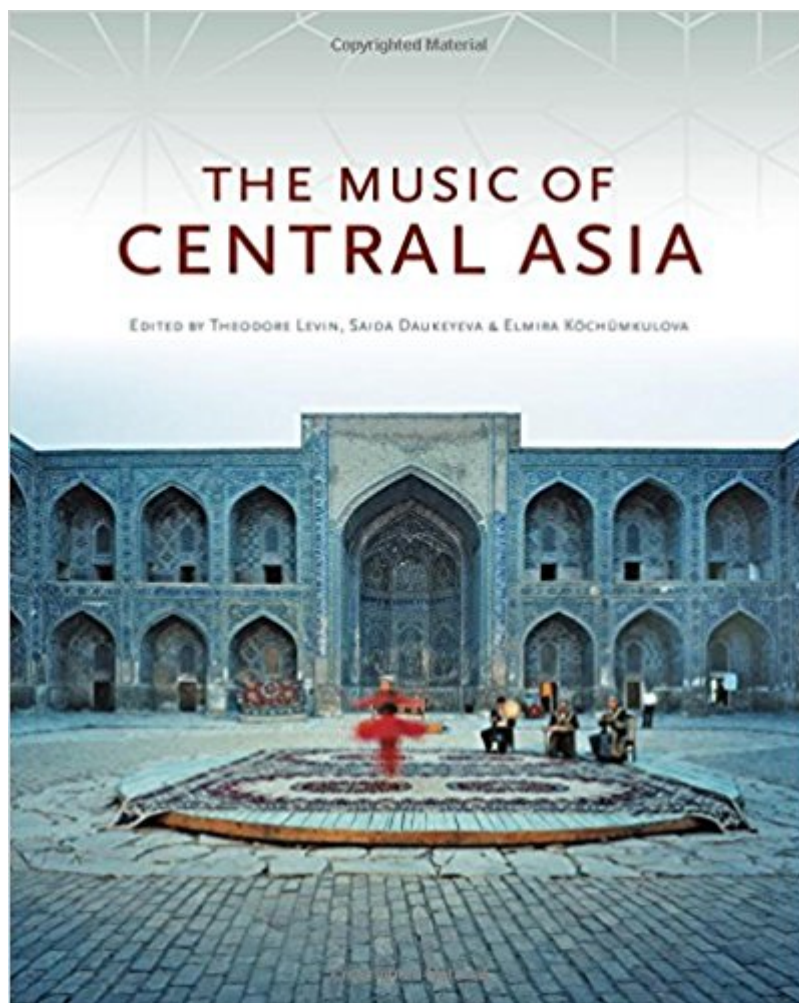


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# The Music Of Central Asia



## Synopsis

This beautiful and informative book offers a detailed introduction to the musical heritage of Central Asia for readers and listeners worldwide. Music of Central Asia balances "insider" and "outsider" perspectives with contributions by 27 authors from 14 countries. A companion website ([www.musicofcentralasia.org](http://www.musicofcentralasia.org)) provides access to some 189 audio and video examples, listening guides and study questions, and transliterations and translations of the performed texts. This generously illustrated book is supplemented with boxes and sidebars, musician profiles, and an illustrated glossary of musical instruments, making it an indispensable resource for both general readers and specialists. In addition, the enhanced ebook edition, which is so comprehensive it had to be split into two ebooks, contains 180 audio and video examples of Central Asian music and culture. A follow-along feature highlights the song lyrics in the text, as the audio samples play.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Music of Central Asia is like its subject: vast, variegated, resonant, and rich in musical traditions that have remained all too closed to outsiders for centuries. The book is both authoritative and innovative, ringing with regional voices and dozens of well-chosen examples of cultural riches to be sampled and savored by both specialists and students." —Mark Slobin, Winslow-Kaplan Professor of Music, Wesleyan University  
"This magnificent book has been many years in gestation, but it has been worth the wait.... No prior knowledge is required to enjoy it. And enjoy is the word. The chapters are short, vivid, and packed with human interest." —BBC

Music Magazine" *The Music of Central Asia* is an encyclopedic page turner! This is essential reading for all performers, composers, ethnomusicologists, students, scholars and culturally engaged people everywhere. There has never before been one book that so expertly, vividly, and deeply unites the past, present, and potential future of an entire swath of the world's musical landscape."

—David Harrington, Kronos Quartet

Theodore Levin is Arthur R. Virgin Professor of Music at Dartmouth College and Senior Project Consultant to the Aga Khan Music Initiative. He is the author of *Where Rivers and Mountains Sing: Sound, Music, and Nomadism in Tuva and Beyond* (IUP, 2006) and *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels in Central Asia (and Queens, New York)* (IUP, 1996). Saida Daukeyeva is a Georg Forster Research Fellow (HERMES) at Humboldt University in Berlin. She is author of *Philosophy of Music by Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi*. Elmira Khamkulova is Senior Research Fellow at the University of Central Asia in Bishkek. She is author of *Respect Graces the Living, Lamentation Graces the Dead: Kyrgyz Funeral Lamentations* (in Kyrgyz), and *Kyrgyz Herders of Soviet Uzbekistan: Historical and Ethnographic Narratives* (in Kyrgyz and English).

There exists nothing of this kind on the music of Central Asia. A must-have for everyone interested in the region.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Central Asia republics, Western ethnomusicologists and world music fans have been attracted to the little known musics of these old Silk Road lands. In 2005, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's Music Initiative funded tours of musicians and worked with the Smithsonian Institution/Folkways to issue a 10-volume set of music CDs with DVDs, and Yo-Yo Ma and his Silk Road Ensemble have brought unfamiliar instruments and sounds to public attention. Now comes an extraordinary book, rather, a 680-page tome, that brings expert scholars together to provide rich detail and colorful photographs about the music, its instruments, its importance in the life of the people, and the musicians themselves. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, the Uygurs of China, the Badakhshan people in Tajikistan, and the Jews of Bukhara are topics covered in 35 chapters. The nations were drawn by the Soviets as the Middle East was carved by British and French after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, ethnicities and languages overflow the boundaries and smaller republics may lie within a larger nation. Often a review describes what a book contains; in this instance, one tries to think what it does not contain. Full page scores or detailed comparative musical analyses are

absent; however, some traditional structures of styles and scales are discussed. No accompanying CD is found, although a related website does offer samples of music. Aside from these, we are treated with a treasure of ethnomusicology: the various types of music, as epics, laments, romances, festival tunes, wisdom songs, religious pieces and chants, and the training and life of musicians, lyrics, social and political history, and gender separation by instrument and venues. Steppes, alpine zones, deserts, nomads and urban peoples, the Asian expanse has been a cipher for too long, and this almost encyclopedic compilation will be consulted often, especially the glossary of terms and the many illustrated pages of instruments. Both the professional musicologist and amateur world music fan will find much to appreciate, to learn and to enjoy. Study questions are included in each section. I personally have been listening to music from these lands since the Aga Khan Trust-sponsored tour of musicians in Morocco, and I attend presentations at the Silk Road House in Berkeley [founder Alma Kunanbaeva has a chapter on Kazakh songs.] I read editor Theodore Levin's other books on music of Tuva and of Uzbekistan. Thus, with such familiarity I welcome and highly recommend this amazing, edifying, beautiful book.

I have a deep-seated non-professional interest in the many cultures of central Asia. This book, together with its website, give an unbelievably vivid picture of the sounds and looks of the people rather than the look of the places. Creating a master text and auditory website for courses in colleges and universities everywhere is a wonderful achievement. I hope many other disciplines go to the effort to produce works like this in other areas of culture.

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