



AnDa Union



Meet AnDa Union

AnDa Union is a vocal and instrumental group comprised of 10 young musicians and singers from Inner Mongolia. The group was formed in 2003 and has since gained fame by performing at the Kennedy Centre in China and receiving the Eco-Youth Prize from China Central Television. AnDa Union has toured France, Spain, Finland, Sweden, Korea, Japan, and the United States.

The Music of AnDa Union

AnDa Union performs traditional Mongolian folk music with a unique twist. Their goal is to preserve the ancient music performed many centuries ago. Inner Mongolia now has many contemporary pop singers and even a “Mongolian Idol” television show. AnDa Union, however, plays more traditional Mongolian music with a combination of early styles, equivalent to traditional American fiddle tunes and yodeling.

Where is Inner Mongolia?

Inner Mongolia is a province in China. It borders the countries of Russia and Mongolia. Inner Mongolia has a population of 23.8 million people, and the capital city of Hohhot has a population of over 2.8 million people.



Can you think of a city in the United States that has a similar population to Hohhot, Inner Mongolia?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_Mongolia



Photo by: E. Pouhier



Photo by: S. Yundenbat



Horse Head Fiddle (morin khuur) – The horse head fiddle is a two-stringed instrument that is played with a bow, similar to a cello. The body is made of wood and the strings are made from horses’ hair. The body is constructed in the shape of a trapezoid and the top is carved to resemble a horse’s head.

Throat Singing (khoomii) – Throat singing is unique because the singer manipulates the sounds coming through their throat. Sometimes an overtone, or higher sound, can be heard when the sound waves produced from the vocal chords are heard in the person’s mouth and throat.

Three-Holed Flute (tsuur) – The three-holed flute is a vertical wooden wind instrument. The mouthpiece of the pipe touches one’s front teeth rather than their lips.

Two-Stringed Lute (tobshuur) – The two-stringed lute is similar in design and sound to the horse head fiddle, but is played with one’s fingers instead of a bow.

Mongolian Drum (zhangu) – Similar to most other drums, the Mongolian drum is made of wood and leather and is played with two sticks.

If you were to perform with AnDa Union, which instrument (including your voice) would you choose? Why?

Look up the word “nomad” in the dictionary and write the definition below:

no·mad (noun) –

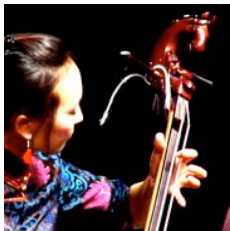
How is AnDa Union influenced by their nomadic history?

Inner Mongolia was primarily a nomadic culture until just a few centuries ago. Over time, nomadic tribes began to settle in cities and slowly gave up their nomadic heritage. A member of AnDa Union says, “our music draws from all the Mongol tribes that Genghis Khan unified. We all have different ethnic backgrounds and we bring these influences into our music.” The horse head fiddle and three-holed flute are traditional nomadic instruments that were previously played before the nomads would embark on a hunting expedition to ensure safe weather for traveling. Today, AnDa Union’s music is comprised of traditional nomadic folk songs, as well as original pieces that reflect the feelings of a nomad traveling alone.

What’s so special about horses?

When nomads occupied most of Inner Mongolia, the horse was their only means of transportation. The horse was viewed as man’s best friend, and there were many songs and poems written to celebrate the horse. In fact, the horse was so important in Mongolian culture that horse heads are carved onto the top of the *morin khuur*, and the instrument strings are made from horses’ hair.

When you attend the AnDa Union performance, listen for the instruments to create a galloping sound.



<http://www.blm.gov>

What animal would you choose to represent if you were writing music?

What kinds of instruments and rhythms would you use to create music representing the animal you like?



Photo: National Palace Museum of Taipei

Genghis Khan was the founder and emperor of the Mongol Empire from 1206 to 1227.

Here is how to say “hello” in Mongolian:

Сайн Байна уу

*pronounced
“sa-yen baya-noo”*

After reading this poem carefully, think of a time in your life when you had to start over. Perhaps you moved to a new town, enrolled in a new school, or started a new grade.

What feelings did you have about leaving your old life?

What feelings did you have about starting something new?

How does the author of this poem, Hemu Gupta, probably feel about leaving her home and starting over? What words in the poem make you think she feels this way?

How did the nomads in Inner Mongolia probably feel about moving so frequently?

Leaving Home

By Hemu Gupta, 2010

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/leaving-home-7/>

Leaving home to make a new one is not always so easy.

It leaves the soul empty, like a home deserted...

They say life goes on but it has twists and turns, Making life a way of dreams, Sometimes different than before.

Time changes to bring new life, Leaving old life behind.

Giving heart a little pain, To add experience in life.