

Outreach Notes, Vol. 13, No. 5

Sent 2/8/16 by Randi Hacker, CEAS Outreach Director

## MONGOLIA— Throat Singing/ Heavy Metal Fusion (All grades)

Mongolian nomads have lived very close to nature for centuries. Their shamanistic religion reveres the natural world. Not surprising, then, that traditional throat singing, or *khoomi*, reflects this by mimicking the natural sounds of the steppes. Throat singers have impressive control over all parts of the human linguistic apparatus. Individual singers can produce as many as four notes at once: from thrumming low notes to melodic mid-range notes to whistles. Some of them can even play the flute and sing at the same time. The sounds are at once earthly and unearthly. *Khoomi* is an ancient art but it has just been catapulted into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by a man named Nature Ganganbaigal. Ganganbaigal plays both the electric guitar and the traditional Mongolian horsehead fiddle known in Mongolian as the *morin khuur*. This young musician has combined the ancient steppe sounds with the sounds of heavy metal which many may consider the very antithesis of nature's symphony! As our world gets smaller and smaller, other fusions like this will become more commonplace. Have your students listen to other traditional forms of music and think about what fusions might arise: Beijing opera (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mN9iXlfxpxl> )/rap? Japanese min'yo folk songs (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPBKwHZ5-pw> )/Country western ballads? Korean *gyageum* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfTxj8IYMpY> )/alternative?

News Story about the Metal/Mongolian fusion:

<http://www.greatbigstory.com/stories/one-part-metal-one-part-mongolian> (Please note the young American boy playing the *morin khuur* in the video.)

More about Ganganbaigal: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature\\_Ganganbaigal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature_Ganganbaigal)

Ganganbaigal's website: <http://www.nature-ganganbaigal.com/>

Ganganbaigal playing the *morin khuur* with the NYU

Philharmonic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWy-Pn9aswY>

Some general information about throat singing: <http://www.folkways.si.edu/throat-singing-unique-vocalization-three-cultures/world/music/article/smithsonian>

Here is the website of Alash, a throat singing troupe from Tuva, a place in Central Asia in which throat singing is also practiced: [http://www.alashensemble.com/about\\_tts.htm](http://www.alashensemble.com/about_tts.htm) You can listen to the individual singers make their sounds. Be sure to listen for the whistle that can be heard over the deep note.

One more example of fusion: Here's a youtube video of the Chinese 12 Girls Band, a group of women who play contemporary music on traditional Chinese instruments. In this one, they're playing Take Five.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdPG2AxwQS8>

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**On an entirely different note and just for fun:** Here's a video and news story about a wild sparrow that has adopted an elderly Japanese couple as his chosen family:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-sparrow-idUSKCN0VH15T?feedType=nl&feedName=oddlyEnoughNews>

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