

# Maltese Traditional Instruments

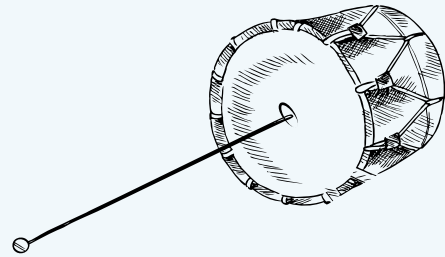
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Instruments are classified into four broad groups based on what part of the instrument vibrates to create sound.

1. Membranophones, like the 'żafżafa' and the 'tanbur', vibrate a membrane stretched over a cavity in order to create musical sound.
2. Aerophones, also known as wind instruments, like the 'flejguta' and the 'żaqq', vibrate air in columns.
3. Chordophones, like guitars and lyres, vibrate strings.
4. Idiophones, such as bells, vibrate the entire instrument.

**Żafżafa (friction drum)** – Similar to the Tanbur, iż-żafżafa consisted of skin stretched over a barrel, with a cane attached to the centre of the skin. Vibrations were transmitted to the barrel skin by rubbing the cane stick up and down. This Maltese instrument makes a low tone 'squeak' sound and, in the past, was used during carnival festivities.



**Żaqq (bagpipe)** – This folkloristic instrument was typically made from animal skin. A bull's horn was fitted to one end to amplify the sound and connected to a mouthpiece made from cane. Musicians continually blew through the mouthpiece into the bag to fill it with air and different melodies were created by covering different pipe holes as the air was squeezed out of the bag.

**Tanbur (frame drum)** – These instruments varied in size and were often accompanied by dance. A tanbur typically consisted of a round wooden frame, stretched animal skin and metal discs inserted into its frame. The technique used to play this instrument is defined as a sequence. When the tanbur was hit in different places by the palm or fingers of the musician's hand, a variety of tones were created.

