

Short Description:

Rabab

The rabab is widely played in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the wider Pashtun regions of Pakistan and beyond. It is an important part of Pashtun cultural heritage and has been practiced and preserved by communities for generations. The rabab is often associated with the historical cultural traditions of the region, including the heritage of Gandhara.

The rabab is a traditional stringed musical instrument resembling a lute. Its significance lies not only in its music but also in the craft of making the instrument. The communities are both players and makers of the rabab, making it a combined tradition of craftsmanship and musical practice.

The instrument is made from mulberry wood, which is shaped and hollowed according to specific measurements. The *taj* (crown) and *seena* (soundboard) are added, followed by decorative work where required. Goat skin is fixed onto the body, and finally, strings are attached to complete the instrument.

The knowledge of making and playing the rabab is passed on through the *ustad–shagird* (master–apprentice) system, as well as through informal and increasingly online learning methods. While it was traditionally played by professional musicians, today it is also practiced by a wider community, including youth and students.

The rabab is played in *hujras*, weddings and cultural gatherings. It holds an important place in Pashtun poetry, storytelling and social life, and is considered a symbol of cultural identity and community cohesion.