

# Newsletter of the International Jew's Harp Society

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**Five articles by**

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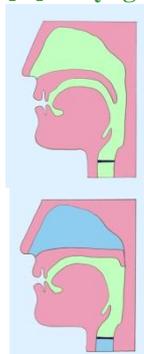


**Jew's harp sounds related to the movement of the soft palate and glottis**

The metal Jew's harp is put on teeth, and the reed is vibrated by plucking. The sounds created the reed vibration resonate to cavities around the oral cavity.

The fundamental sound making by Jew's harps can be classified into the following three types

**[A] Laryngeal sounds: respiratory position**

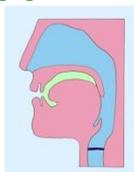


The glottis is kept open differently from voice production. The glottis is open like when respiration, and soft palate is hang down to open the nasal cavity or lifted up to close the nasal cavity. The sounds resonate to oral, pharyngeal, laryngeal cavities, and trachea.

**[B] Pharyngeal sounds: vowel position**

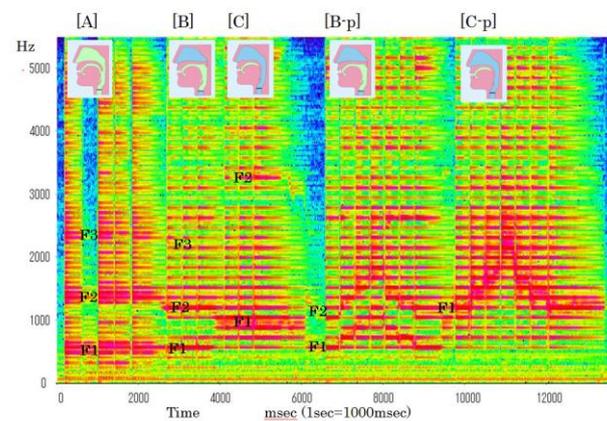
Glottis is closed and the soft palate is lifted up to close the nasal cavity, just like when pronunciation of vowels. The sounds resonate to oral and pharyngeal cavities.

**[C] Oral sounds: nasal sound position**



Soft palate is pulled down to close the oral cavity like when pronunciation of nasal sounds. The sounds resonate to anterior oral cavity.

(right) Cross-section drawings and sound spectrogram by Kazuhiro Abe



Sound spectrogram of a jew's harp (of D sound)

(far right, top) Zarina Kopyrina & Ilya Zhirkov. Photo courtesy of Emilie Maj

Time msec (1sec=1000msec)  
Sound spectrogram of a jew's harp (of D sound)

In the spectrogram, the vertical and horizontal axes are frequency (Hz) and time (msec); the intensity is represented by color pattern, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red are from no to higher decibel.

The above figure shows a narrowband spectrogram representing the horizontal lines of fundamental frequency and its harmonics. The reed of the Jew's harp is plucked 4 to 5 times a second. The lines of harmonics are kept constant in positions and ranges during the play except for the laryngeal sounds [A] which have the longest resonance space to emphasize low frequency.

(far right, bottom) Zarina Kopyrina. Photo courtesy of Emilie Maj

The sounds of [A] and [B] show similar formants, F1, F2, and F3, and the sounds of [C] show F1 of two times higher frequencies of resonance, completely different from those of nasal sounds of voice. The sound of [C] is not the nasal sound, but oral sound due to short resonance space of the anterior oral cavity which is

formed by interruption at the middle point of the resonance cavity between lips and glottis. A half shorter resonance space of [C] than [B] produces two times higher formants.

In addition, notice differences of harmonics pattern between [A] and [B][C] sounds. The [B][C] sounds are just a two times wide harmonics pattern. The difference reflects effects of open-end air column in [A] and closed-end air columns in [B][C] for resonance. Changing pitches (sound C, E, G, octave higher C, G, and C) keep a constant harmonics pattern but follow moving of formant frequencies ([B-p], [C-p]). The higher pitches represent higher formant frequencies. This reflects the position of the tongue, upper or lower and more anterior or posterior. The hearing different pitches are virtual pitches due to missing fundamental for human perception.

In the full length article, I would more detailed explanation with many figures relating various ways of Jew's harp sound making based on movements of articulators and various sound analyses.

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**Yakut music tour, France 2010**

**Emilie Maj**

Zarina Kopyrina and Ilya Zhirkov were invited to France by the association *European House of Imaginaries*, chaired by Emilie Maj, an anthropologist specializing in Yakut culture. The musicians gave a serial of concerts at two festivals, not far from Poitiers and Saint Malo, and in a Parisian theater. The public has enthusiastically embraced the *Jew's harp improvisations* of Ilya listened with curiosity and the Zarina's interpretation of the *epic story*.



**Austria**

**NEWS FROM AUSTRIA – October 2010**

**Jour fix** of the Austrian Maultrommelgesellschaft: since 15 December 2009, we meet each month and the group of participants is steadily growing. On average we are 6 jew's harpers, who meet monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday at Café Concerto (Aeusserer Lerchenfelder Guertel 53, 1160 Vienna). Some participants like Bernhard even travel for 3 hours to talk and jam with us.

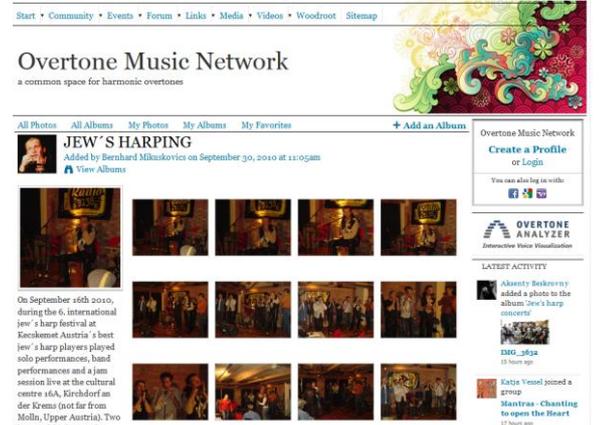


On the 25<sup>th</sup> of August, **Deirdre Morgan** joined our jour fix in Vienna and it was a great pleasure to jam with her and her companion Neptun. Manfred Russmann took care of her during her visit in Molln.

We try to keep our website updated - [www.maultrommelverein.at](http://www.maultrommelverein.at)

**Concerts and presentations:**

The definite highlight of this year was the participation of Austrian Maultrommelspieler at the **1st Virtual International Jew's Harp Festival**, which at the same time was the 6th International JHF. Since the virtual part was the idea of Austrian jew's harpers, we made the best out of it. We organised a nice concert place at the culture centre 16A in the city of Kirchdorf, some 20 km from Molln. Nearly all important Austrian jew's harpers came and on 16 September from 8-10 pm we were livestream with concerts from 1) Wolf Jansch, 2) Christof Köpf with Sigi Loidl, and afterwards with Bernhard Hanreich and Ing. LOOP, 3) Bernhard Mikuskovics (<http://www.overtone.cc/photo/albums/jews-harping>),



4) Mollner Maultrommler with Manfred Russmann, Robert Russmann, Christof Köpf and Herbert Walter, 5) Albin Paulus and 6) a jam session with all musicians including Werner and Franz Kuml. See

The stay in Paris was the opportunity to visit the sights of the capital, to go to Disneyland thanks to Manfred, a young Russian who left Yakutia at the age of five with his parents and was pleased to find compatriots and guide them for two days in the French capital. The time was full of meetings. The musicians were able to meet many musicians: Ilya has played duets with Cyprien, a Jew's harp and overtone singing singer, while Zarina improvised with Rajasthan singers and with a singer from Belgium specializing in instruments and ethnic songs. Zarina has tried to the *didjeridu*. She liked to try this instrument and took some private lessons from musicians at festivals.

(right)  
Ilya Zhirkov playing in a cowshed.  
Photo courtesy of Emilie Maj



(far right)  
jour fix: starting at 6 o'clock, clockwise:  
Wolf Jansch,  
Franz Kuml,  
Bernhard Mikuskovics,  
Robert Koch,  
Bernhard Hanreich

Between concerts, young the young Yakut people went to Yura mountains, where they lived for five days in a nineteenth century mill, a paradise built on a river whose waters are unleashed at the slightest rain. They were accompanied by Eric Cordier, musician and specialist in natural sounds. Near lakes, in caves, in the heart of the forest and the warmth of a barn, they recorded a CD of exception, where the pieces of Yakut music heritage resonates alongside the reverberation of waves on the stalactites or deep forest and cries of barn owls, woodpeckers and woodpecker thud jumping carp in ponds. Two musical landscapes will cross in the CD, the one of Northern Siberia, a mythical space in the eyes of Europeans, and the wild Jura yet unknown by people from across the globe.



(right)  
Ilya Zhirkov filmed in a field location.  
Photo courtesy of Emilie Maj

(far right)  
Overtone Music Network – Jew's Harping web page.

For musicians, the trip was well filled and unforgettable in its diversity. With concerts and meetings full of humanity and nature walks, Zarina and Ilya had access to another France that tourists don't see and they return to Russia with a head full of souvenirs and projects.

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