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## **ROB PARKINSON: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS USED IN SESSIONS**

*The extraordinary range of instruments used in performance sessions for both adults and children is an important part of the 'flavour' and imaginative impact. These notes give some information about the instruments and how they are used.*

### **1. The instruments**

*The list below briefly describes some instruments most often used in performances and workshops, with some of the repertoire associated with each. Various others are used more occasionally. For more information about repertoire and how instruments are integrated with storytelling, see under 2. below.*

**Guitars:** Guitar used in performance is most commonly a hand made jazz-style Troubadour electro-acoustic guitar by Emil Grimshaw, sometimes amplified. Styles range from classical to blues, jazz, folk, rock and many original compositions and arrangements, plus song accompaniments in a range of styles.

**Renaissance lute:** a fifteen string 8 course renaissance lute by Martin Haycocks is sometimes used with a repertoire of renaissance music and arrangements of traditional tunes.

**Medieval lap harp:** a small two-octave minstrel's harp with a repertoire of medieval, renaissance and folk pieces

**Cittern:** 4 course renaissance instrument. Various renaissance & medieval dances plus improvisations.

**Bowed psaltery:** European folk instrument of zither family played with a bow

**Turkish saz:** (long-necked lute) using techniques and repertoire learned in Istanbul

**Moroccan gumbri:** large stringed instrument with string bass sound familiar in gnawa trance music in Southern Morocco using techniques learned in Essaouira

**Various hand drums including:** *bodhran* (Irish traditional frame drum), *darbouka* (Turkish/Arabic drum), *djembe* (West African drum)

**Assorted ethnic percussion:** (partly gathered through travels and partly from festivals and 'interesting-looking' shops)

**Arabic oud (lute)**

**Various small ethnic and other stringed instruments, whistles etc.**

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## **2. General Use of Music in Storytelling sessions:**

Rob plays a big range of instruments, especially in sessions for children. Stories may be 'topped and tailed' by short pieces and effects, whilst interludes may be played during the narrative, or the story may be actually accompanied throughout. Much of Rob's practice here is based on a contemporary re-interpretation of traditional minstrelsy and bardic techniques from around the world. He says that such techniques exist to enhance the telling, sometimes to prepare the way for better listening, sometimes to draw listeners further in, to vary the impact, to complement words and to make listening and imagining easier

### **Differences between Children's and Adult's Storytelling Performances:**

In children's performance sessions, one of the purposes of the instruments is to constantly arrest attention through introducing different instruments at appropriate times. Another is to introduce children to unusual acoustic sounds and strange instruments with some hands-on experience especially with smaller groups and students in special education - as well as simply to move in the way that music can on various levels. Adult sessions usually also include a range of unusual instruments with the central aim of offering an integrated, imaginative and entertaining art of sound and word.

### **Workshops on Story and Music:**

Rob regularly gives workshops for both adults and children, explaining and exploring the art of combining music with words. Information on these is given in various other downloadable documents.

### **Music only sessions:**

Please contact Rob directly to find out more about the possibilities for both adults and children (*contact details below*).

### **Musical Styles:**

Range of styles is highly eclectic, from the popular sounds of the fantasy songs to medieval and renaissance pieces on lute, harp and psaltery, from classical, jazz,

blues and folk-baroque guitar to traditional Arabic, Turkish, African, Indian and other sounds on his various ethnic stringed and percussion instruments. Many of these will be included in single sessions, though it's possible to specify one particular range of musical styles

Further information:

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