



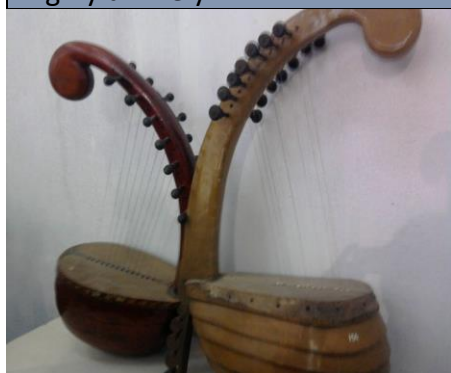
INTACH

UNIQUE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

YAZH

The Yazh, a plucked string instrument, like the harp, was used in Ancient Tamil music. The instrument is believed to derive its name from *Yali*, the mythological creature featuring in many South Indian temples. As an instrument, the Yazh, finds mention in several historical and religious texts. It is played both as an instrument alone and as an accompaniment to vocal music. Only straight notes could be played on the instruments and there was no way to play Quarter tones on it.

Yazh, is said to be virtually extinct in the contemporary times, its popularity declining with the emergence of Veena. For a lot of people, Yazh was the precursor to Veena, but scholars find it highly unlikely.



DID YOU KNOW:

The 'zh' sound in Yazh, is found in a number of Indian languages and is closest to the 'rl' sound. In the English language, hence, Yazh will most probably be pronounced as 'Yaarl'.

HISTORICAL REFERENCES:

In the Tamil literature, the instrument finds various descriptions, the first being in the text- *Thirukkular* composed by the poet Thiruvalluvar. Other classical literature that mention the Yazh include- *Cilappatikaram*, *Penurpanarrupptai*, *Seevaga Sindhamani* and so on. An extensive piece on the Yazh was written, during as late as the 20th century, by Swami Vipulananda, entitled *Yazh Nool*. The instrument, is said to have been played by the poet and musician Panapathirar.

DID YOU KNOW:

The Yazh was played in temples like the Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple in the past. Today, the instrument is seen in sculptures in Darasuram and Thirumayam temple as well as in temples of Amravati and Andhra Pradesh.



TYPES OF YAZH:

The Yazh is not a single instrument and comes from a family of harp. Each kind of yazh has a different number of strings:

- Sagoda Yazh
- Makara Yazh
- Senkottu Yazh
- Seeri Yazh
- Maruththuva Yazh
- Adi Yazh
- Peri Yazh
- Killai Yazh
- Vallaki Yazh
- Tumuru Yazh
- Kichaka Yazh

Most of these varieties are known to us due to their specific mentions in Tamil literary texts.

DID YOU KNOW:

Adi Yazh is the earliest Yazh. According to legends, it was used to win on the kreta yuga, the first era of the world.

ACTIVITIES!!

1. The Yazh is currently extinct and whatever information we have comes from mostly their references in the ancient texts. Try to find some more instruments of this kind featuring in ancient texts, which may or may not be extinct.
2. The Yazh is said to be the precursor to Veena. True or not, there are certain similarities between the two instruments- both are stringed, belonging to the same family of instruments and have various kinds. Search about more instruments belonging to this family having several types.
3. Using paper-mache and dysfunctional wires as strings, try to make a kind of Yazh (the paper mache can be used to make the animal head the rest of the structure).

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