



Anda Union's haunting harmonies and vibrant strings evoke the endless beauty of the Mongolian grasslands. Combining throat singing and long song with horse head fiddles and two stringed lutes they bring this powerful ancient music to life as never heard before.

Anda Union – musicians

Nars	Morin Huur, Ikil, Hoomei & Guitar
Saikhannakhaa	Vocals, Tob shur, Morin Huur, Hoomei
Uni	Tob shur, Ikil, Hoomei & Morin Huur
Urgen	Vocals & Morin Huur,
Urgen	Drums
Chinggel	Percussion, Moadin chor & Hoomei
Chinggeltu	Morin Huur
Tsetsegmaa	Urtyn duu
Biligbaatar	Urtyn duu

Based: Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, Peoples Republic of China

Formed: 2000

Discography: “The Wind Horse” (2011)

“Homeland” (Release Date September 2016)

Feature Film: “Anda Union From The Steppes To The City” (2011)



Anda Union - History

Anda Union's thoroughly addictive combination of Mongolian musical styles is a reflection of their roots. Hailing from differing ethnic nomadic cultures the ten strong band unite tribal and music traditions from all over Inner Mongolia in China. Anda Union bring a wide range of musical instruments and vocal styles together in a fusion that Genghis Khan himself would have been proud of. Keenly aware of the threat to the Grasslands and their age old Mongolian culture, Anda Union are driven by their fight for the survival of this endangered way of life, by keeping the essence of the music alive. Formed in 2000 they have influenced a generation of young Mongolians in Inner Mongolia as traditional music flourishes in the capital. Nars says, “Most of the band members have been playing together since childhood. As adults, we studied professional vocals and instruments together. We are like a family. ten years ago, Anda Union was forged and we haven't looked back.”

Anda Union were all trained in traditional Mongolian music from a young age, many coming from musical families. They are part of a musical movement that is finding inspiration in old and forgotten songs, drawing on a repertoire of magical music that had





all but disappeared during China's recent tumultuous past. As a group they hold on to the essence of Mongolian music whilst creating a form of music that is new. A soloist would traditionally perform many of the instruments Anda Union play, and Mongolian musicians have tended to concentrate on a particular musical technique. Anda Union combine different traditions and styles of music from all over Inner and Outer Mongolia, developing an innovation previously unheard of. The very existence of a music group like Anda Union is new to Inner Mongolia:

Mongols have a strong musical tradition that is passed from generation to generation. The morin huur, or horse head fiddle, pays homage to the most important animal in the Mongol culture; almost all houses have one hanging in the hallway.

The group describe themselves as music gatherers, digging deep into Mongol traditions and unearthing forgotten music. They are on a mission to stimulate their culture and reengage young Mongols, many of who no longer to speak their own language. Saikhannakhaa is fighting to reverse this trend by opening a bar in the capital Hohhot, where she will promote music. "I found an old golden wheel with half its spokes broken in an old dusty shop. It looks like a wheel that once turned the warrior carts of the great Mongol armies. I will hang this wheel in my bar as a warning to Mongolian people that our culture is broken and needs to be mended."

Anda means a blood brother or sister. For Mongolians an Anda is more important than a birth brother as you choose a person to become an Anda, a life long blood brother. Anda Union is a brotherhood of Andas.



Anda Union Instruments

Morin Huur	-	Horse Head fiddle		
Tob shur	-	Mongolian lute		
Moadin Chur	-	Mongolian flute		
Hoomei	-	Throat/overtone singing (various methods)		
		Urtyn duu	-	Longsong
Mongolian Drum	-	Double sided sheep skin drum		

Morin Huur

Commonly known as the Horse Head fiddle this is a 2 stringed instrument played with a bow, similar to a cello, and has a unique method of fingering. Its distinctive beautiful sound with a hint of melancholy is synonymous with Mongolian Culture.

One legend about the origin of the morin huur is that a shepherd named Namjil the Cuckoo received the gift of a flying horse; he would mount it at night and fly to meet his beloved. A jealous woman had the horse's wings cut off, so that the horse fell from the air and died. The grieving shepherd made a horsehead fiddle from the now-wingless horse's skin and tail hair, and used it to play poignant songs about his horse.





Tob shur

This is a Mongolian lute which also has only 2 strings, traditionally used to accompany a singer. Anda Union use the tob shur as a vital melodic instrument used to drive the rhythm of their music.

Moadin chor

This is a Mongolian flute made from a reed which is played vertically with it positioned under the top lip. The player plays the flute whilst at the time singing Hoomei (throat singing). Very few people are able to play this instrument and Chinggel is one of 4 musicians in Inner Mongolia that know how to do so.

Hoomei

The English name for this style of singing is overtone or throat singing. It is a type of singing in which the singer manipulates the resonances created as air travels from the lungs, past the vocal folds, and out the lips to produce a melody. This unique type of singing involves the production of two distinctively audible pitches at the same time. There are many styles of Hoomei from the different parts of Mongolia and Tuva and Anda Union have been trained in a range of these methods. In the concert you will notice the very distinctive styles that they use from very low singing to high pitched. The sound is very reminiscent of the wind blowing through the grasses on the Mongolian Grasslands

Urtyn duu

Urtyn duu, or long song's name is derived not from the length of the songs but rather the long notes which are held. Often a song has very few words, one 3 minutes long might only have 10 words. This style of singing evolved in the Grasslands as the Mongolians tended their sheep and was used to sing to the animals to call and to calm them. Mongolian music records and maps the landscape of their land, not merely in words, but in the rising and falling of notes corresponding to the flow of the land itself. The long song singer can call up the landscape of distant places with the special skill of their voice.

Mongolian Drum

This is a double sided sheep skin drum based on ancient designs which have been developed by Anda Union influenced by Tuvan drums. The skins used are from sheep in the grasslands and were also tanned locally.





Anda Union - Songs Stories & Lyrics

Altargana

Altargana is based on a famous Buriat folksong. The Buriats live in the North East of Inner Mongolia in Hulun Buir close to the Russian Border.

Altargana is a type of special small grass that grows in Hulun Buir in Inner Mongolia. It has very deep roots and is very difficult to pull up.

This song tells how the parents are like Altargana grasses, strongly rooted and looking after their children.

Boomborai

Boomborai is based on a folk song from the Horchin Grasslands. It comes from ancient Mongolian Shaman traditions and tells how one of the Shaman dance rituals, Andai, was born. If women were depressed because of problems in love and marriage, their families would invite the local shaman to dance the Andai to keep away disease and misfortune.

It is said that once upon a time, there lived a father and his daughter on the Horchn Grassland. One day, the daughter, suddenly stricken by an unknown disease, lost her mind and began to behave strangely. She remained ill for a long time without any sign of recovery. One day, the father, burning with anxiety, carried his daughter on a herdsman's wooden cart to a faraway place to see a doctor.

However, when they arrived at the town of Kulun, the axle of the cart broke. At the same time, the girl's condition worsened and her life was in danger. The anxious father had no idea what to do except to wander around the cart, singing a song to express his sorrow. The wailing song drew some people from nearby villages. They couldn't help but shed tears at this sight and joined the old man in swinging their arms and wailing around the cart.

To everyone's surprise, the daughter quietly rose, got off the cart, and followed the people, swinging her arms and stamping her feet with them. When people saw her, she was sweating all over, and her disease had been miraculously cured. The good news spread and from then on, people began to follow suit and treat young women who suffered from similar diseases by dancing around them in the same manner. The dance became known as "Andai."

Derlcha

Derlcha is an ancient Mongolian singing competition. Originally it was kings and princes of banners (regions) that took part but today it has become a popular art. It is often part of a festival or Nadaam, two people battle against each other, each singing a verse which the other has to reply to. The battle can go on for days until one of the singers cannot think of anything to sing but is made speechless. The winner then ridicules the loser in front of the crowd before a new challenger takes on the winner and so the competition goes until one singer is left and declared the winner. The winners of these competitions became very skilled in remembering verses and developing their wits to overcome their opponents. Mongolian children have practiced Derlcha battles with their friends as a game for centuries.





Nars, himself, used to do Derlcha battles with his friends when he was growing up in the Horchin Grasslands and AnDa Union's version is based on verses used in the ancient Derlcha battles.

Galloping Horses

Galloping Horses is undoubtedly the most famous piece of music composed for the Morin Huur. It was written by the master Chi Bulag who created the piece after watching a fierce horse race, in which the winning horse staggered over the finishing line, collapsed and died of exhaustion. Chi Bulag has been central to the evolution of the Morin Huur taking the ancient Chuur Huur and developing it into what we know as the Morin Huur today.

Genghis Khan

This is a song that is sung at auspicious Mongolian ceremonies such as weddings and is often used as a piece of music to start the proceedings. It brings good luck and Genghis Khan is revered by the Mongolians as the founder of Mongolian culture, and many Mongolians make the pilgrimage to the Genghis Khan Mausoleum in Ordos. As the unifier of the Mongolian tribes he is the Mongolian father figure creating their written language and although he didn't unify China, it was his grandson the Kublai Khan who did founding the Yuan Dynasty.

Give You a Rose

This song is based on a very popular Uyghur folk song from Xinjiang.

Heemor – The Wind Horse

The wind horse is an allegory for the human soul in the shamanistic tradition of Central Asia which has been integrated into Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhism. Heemor is a symbol of the idea of well-being or good fortune. As the windhorse rises things go well and as it falls the opposite happens. Heemor takes our prayers to Tengar the sky god. This beautiful piece of music inspired by Heemor was composed by Yalalt who lives and works in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia.

Holy Mountain

The Moadin Chur playing is always inspired by the sounds of the mountains and waters. This song is dedicated to Holy Mountain as before Ghengis Khan became mighty he hid in the holy mountain several times to escape from dangers and find strength. Traditionally the elders always went there to pray and find solace. The Moadin Chur is an ancient Mongolian reed flute, the reeds for the flute are now mostly found in the Altai Mountains in Xinjiang and it there that most Moadin Chur music is played today.

Hometown

This song is inspired by the steady destruction of the grasslands as farming and mining encroach ever further combined with the effects of global climate change. The lyrics were written by Urgan who left his home in the grasslands when he was 13 years old to train at music school in the city. He has never returned but his heart remains there, as do all the hearts of Anda Union's. But the grasslands are no longer the grasslands of their childhoods. This song appeals for the grasslands to be saved and preserved.





*My hometown the place where I was born was far away from here
My close family how is your health
My missing Hometown is far away from here, my missing relatives how is your health?
There is no water in the river, I am sad about that from heart,
There is now water in the spring, I am sad about this from my mind*

Mother (Chagan Tokhoy Notuk)

This is a song about mothers from Chagan Tokhoy, which is a mythical place in the Ujim Chin Grasslands. It consists of two long songs combined into one song. Biligbaatar sings about how much they miss their mother when they are far away. Biligbaatar

“Grey haired old mother, every moment every second we miss you our lovely mother.”

Tsetsegmaa sings a Buriat song that a mother sings to her daughter when she is getting married. The Mongolian nomadic way of life is based on moving pastures four times a year so as to ensure that the grass is not over grazed. It also means that each herder will live far away from the next, also to stop over grazing. It is very common for a Buriat mother to sing this song to her daughter, as often the daughter will move far away to live with her husband’s family.

“After you get married if you find a clean spring you can drink the water, if the daughter marries far from home that happens often”

Ordos Drinking Song

Drink and especially milk wine is very important to Mongolians especially at festive times and occasions like weddings. They drink to inspire themselves and raise their spirits and then sing drinking songs and enjoy themselves. There are many drinking songs but this one is in the the Ordos tradition.

*When the milk wine is in the bottle
Just like small sheep in the pen
When you drink the milk wine
It is just like a tiger out of the pen
We toast everything goes well for me and you*

Sumaro

A young girl, Sumaro is in love with boy called Sanjay Mam. But this is no ordinary love and they are desperate to be together every day. When Sanjay Mam is not there Sumaro climbs to the top of the shrine so that she can see far over the Mongolian plains and waits all day for her lover to return. Sanjay Mam desperate to see his love rides his horse so fast that the dust billows behind him like the spray that rises from the lake as goose lands on the water.

*Thinking and missing him,
She couldn't bear it. O Sumaro
Climbing on top the shrine, she stares into the distance shading her eyes*





The Girl Who Stole Horses

Based on a famous Horchin folk song.

A girl dresses as a boy in order to steal 33 horses from the rich and then gives them to the poor. This makes her famous and great popular heroine.

Lyrics (extract)

*Grey small bird singing in the early morning
The horse from the grassland rides towards the northwest*

The Legend of The Swan Brothers

Based on a Mongolian folk song this tells the story of a very poor Mongolian man similar to Robin Hood. He steals from the rich and gives to the poor.

*Five heroes they steal flocks and flocks of sheep from the rich
They only left the Rams for them
Boydar, Tugno, Bolygor, Hassak
They rob all the sheep
They are 5 heroes*

Wan Li

Based on a very famous Horchin folk song this tells the tale of a very beautiful girl in the Horchin Grasslands. Everyone who sees the girl falls in love with her. And because of this they wrote a song about the beautiful girl whose name is Wan Li.

*A man who walks under the big lanterns
After seeing the beautiful girl Wan Lin
Starts to walk like a drunken man.
When the man on the horse rides quickly past the girl
He feels the girl is the most beautiful.
When a man on a horse goes on the mountain
The feet of the horse clip clop on the rocks
When the horse is beside the girl Wan Li
He feels the girl is the most beautiful.
Very beautiful Hoy*





Anda Union - Singing Styles

Throat Singing

Sung by: Nars
Uni
Chinggel
Saikhannakhaa

Mechanics of throat singing

To understand how throat singing works, one must first understand some basic sound and singing physics. Sound is a wave of moving air. When people speak or sing, the sound is created when the air flowing into or out of the lungs is disturbed by the larynx, or voice box. The vocal folds open and close to produce these oscillating waves which create sound. The vocal tract is a tube through which sound travels and reaches the outside. This tube will resonate at certain frequencies. When people speak or sing, this is what is heard. In throat singing, an overtone, or harmonic, is generated above the fundamental resonating frequency.

Throat singers produce their harmonics through a process called biofeedback. This means they raise and lower the fundamental frequency until they get maximum resonance on the harmonics sounding above, like moving a ladder up and down to achieve a desired height. They achieve this by controlling the manner in which the vocal folds open and close. When throat singing, the singer keeps the folds open for a shorter period and closed for longer. The abrupt closure puts greater energy into the upper harmonics, resulting in a clearer sound.

In addition to controlling the rate at which the vocal folds open and close, throat singers also manipulate the fundamental frequency through moving their jaws forward, and narrowing or protruding their lips.

As to actual pitch manipulation, there are four basic ways by which this is achieved. First, the tip of the tongue remains behind the teeth while the midtongue actually rises. The lips can also be opened slightly. This method is commonly used in the Isgre style, discussed later. Secondly, moving the tongue forward can assist in manipulating pitch. The third method involves the throat itself. For lower harmonics, the base of the tongue moves to the rear of the throat. For mid to high harmonics, the base of the tongue moves forward until there is space in the vallecula, which is the space between the rear of the tongue and the epiglottis. Finally, a throat singer can manipulate pitch by simply widening the mouth in very precise increments, giving the effect of shortening the vocal tract. This is the easiest for one to experiment with and experience. The slightest opening or closing of the mouth can literally raise or lower a pitch. One can try humming a pitch, then very slowly open one's mouth to an "oo" sound, then "oh", "ee" and "ah" and see what happens to the pitch. Listen carefully and there should be a noticeable change in the overtones above the note that is being hummed/sung.





Styles of Throat Singing used by Anda Union

Khomeii

The most popular style of throat singing is known as Khomeii. Khomeii is traditionally a softer sounding style, with the fundamental (or drone) usually in the low-mid to midrange of the singer's normal voice. In this style, usually 2 or 3 harmonics can be heard between one and two octaves above the fundamental. In Khomeii, the stomach is fairly relaxed, and there is less tension on the larynx than in other styles... Pitch is manipulated through a combination of lip and throat movement, like manipulating vowels (ee, ay, ah, oh, oo), and moving the tongue or jaw.

Singing in this style gives the impression of wind swirling among rocks.

Isgre

Isgre has a midrange fundamental and is characterized by strong, flute-like or rather piercing harmonics, reminiscent of whistling - " isgre " means "whistling". Also described as an imitation of the gentle breezes of summer or the songs of birds.

To perform Isgre, the tongue rises and seals around the gums, just behind the teeth. A small hole is left back behind the molars, either on the left or right side. The sound is then directed between the teeth to the front of the mouth. The lips form a bell like shape, usually with an "ee" vowel, and the sound is directed through this small opening. Pitch is manipulated exactly the same way as in khomeii style.

Kargyraa

The more deep sounding style of throat singing is known as Kargyraa (pronounced Kar-gi-ra). Kargyraa has a deep, almost growling sound to it and is technically related to Tibetan Buddhist chant and has some similarities with vocal fry.

It uses both the vocal and the vestibular folds simultaneously, creating two sources of sound. By constricting the larynx, the vestibular folds are vibrated to produce an undertone exactly half the frequency of the fundamental produced by the vocal folds, and the mouth cavity is shaped, just like the manipulation of vowels, to select harmonics of both the fundamental and the undertone, producing from four to six pitches simultaneously.

Uyelje refers to acrobatic trills that are reminiscent of birds and traveling brooks. This is achieved by the quivering of the lips lightly and rapidly.

Ezenggileer is a pulsating style, attempting to mimic the rhythms of horseback riding. It is named after the Tuvan word for stirrup, ezengi.

Chylandyk merely a mixture of sygyt and kargyraa. Both styles are sung at once, creating an unusual sound of low undertones mixed with the high Isgre whistle. It has also been described as the "chirping of crickets."





Urtyn duu (*Long Song*)

Sung by: **Biligbaatar**
Tsetsegmaa

Urtyn duu, or long song's name is derived not from the length of the songs but rather the long notes which are held. Often a song has very few words, one 3 minutes long might only have 10 words. The main feature of the long song is the prolonged, tenuto notes with deeply modulated vibrato on the vowels. These majestic vibrating notes called shuranhai give the song profound philosophical, meditational character and they often depict the spacious mountain valleys and the tranquility of the Mongolian soul. While there are regional differences in the form, it generally features rising and falling melodies and complex rhythms. The singer is often accompanied by the morin khuur, or "horse fiddle." Urtyn Duu dates back over 2000 years and evolved in the Grasslands as the Mongolians tended their sheep and was used to sing to the animals to call and to calm them. Mongolian music records and maps the landscape of their land, not merely in words, but in the rising and falling of notes corresponding to the flow of the land itself. The long song singer can call up the landscape of distant places and transport us to the vast grasslands and the power of nature.

Biligbaatar comes from the Heshigten grasslands and sings in the style of this region having learnt from his mother as a child. Likewise Tsetsegmaa learnt from her mother and the style she uses is Buriat, a tribe that lives in Hulun Buir near the Russian border.

UNESCO declared the Mongolian Long Song one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005.

