

SINGLE NOTE INSTRUMENTS – FROM SPECTRA TO PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

A small number of ethnic instruments from different parts of the world produce a single fundamental frequency in their traditional use. Most notable are the didgeridoo, the mouth-harp, and the overtone singing technique. Constraining a musical instrument to play a single frequency sounds like a contradiction in terms, however these instruments resort to a variety of means to nevertheless make their sound rich and musically interesting. In this talk we will discuss the characteristic spectra of these instruments, how this influences their playing styles, and how they rely on the perception of the listeners to create music that is pleasing to traditional as well as contemporary audiences.