



### **Revitalising Traditional Culture**

Tengir-Too is a new ensemble that plays old music. Founded and directed by Nurlanbek Nyshanov, a gifted composer, arranger, and multi-instrumentalist who grew up in the city of Naryn, Tengir-Too provides a living laboratory for Nyshanov's efforts to find a voice for Kyrgyz music. Kyrgyz music is rooted in the sensibility of nomads who inhabit an awe-inspiring landscape of mountains, lakes, and pristine grasslands. During the Soviet era, however, much of this music was lost or adapted to European musical ideals.

In 2000, recognition of the fragility of this music – and the important role it played in Central Asian societies – led His Highness the Aga Khan to establish the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia (AKMICA). The aim was to assist in the preservation of Central Asia's musical heritage by ensuring its transmission to a new generation of artists and audiences, both inside the region and beyond its borders.

AKMICA went about this task by supporting a group of exceptional musical tradition-bearers who are now revitalising important musical repertoires throughout Central Asia by transmitting their traditions to students. It also introduced the Music Touring and Festivals Programme, which was created to celebrate Central Asian musical traditions in regions where they are little known. It was also intended to integrate leading exponents of these traditions into the global network of music presenting institutions.

The Music Initiative has also undertaken a long-term collaboration with the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage of the Smithsonian Institution, the national museum and research complex

of the United States, to create a ten-volume Anthology of Central Asian Music as part of its documentation and dissemination efforts.

It has also maintained a creative partnership with the Silk Road Project, which has resulted in festivals, concert tours, recordings and innovative collaborations. The Silk Road Project and its performance unit, the Silk Road Ensemble, both founded and directed by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, are devoted to exploring musical tradition as a resource for innovation and creativity.