

Musical Instruments

Explain how Europe benefited from [cultural diffusion](#) during the period c. A.D. 1000 - 1500.

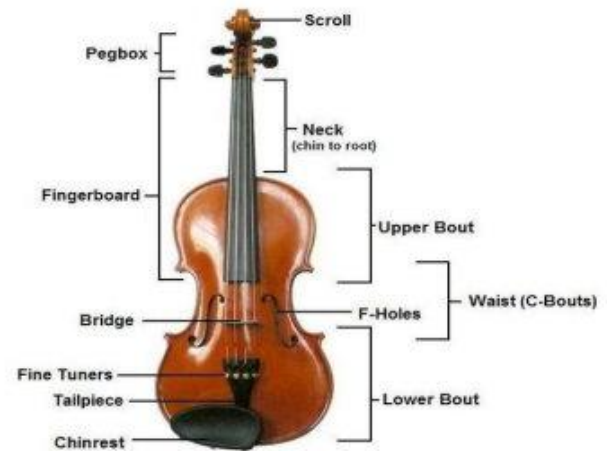
Violin

The earliest stringed instruments were mostly plucked. Bowed instruments may have originated in the equestrian cultures of Central Asia, an example being the Mongolian instrument **morin khuur**.

It is believed that these instruments eventually spread to China, India, and the Middle East, where they developed into instruments such as the **erhu** in China, the **rebab** in the Middle East, and the **esraj** in India. The violin in its present form emerged in early 16th century in Northern Italy, where the port towns of Venice and Genoa maintained extensive ties to central Asia through the trade routes of the silk road.

The modern European violin evolved from various bowed stringed instruments which were brought from the Middle East. Most likely the first makers of violins borrowed from three types of current instruments: the **rebec**, in use since the 10th century (itself derived from the Arabic **rebab**), the Renaissance **fiddle**, and the **lira da braccio**.

The violin family appeared in essentially its modern form in northern Italy, specifically in Brescia and Cremona, c. 1550. Andrea Amati (c. 1511 - 1580) of Cremona was among the first generation of makers to add a fourth string to the violin and to create the standard sizes of cello, viola, and violin in their classic modern shapes.



The construction of the violin.

The violin immediately became very popular, both among street musicians and the nobility. By 1600, Cremona was the undisputed center of violin making in Europe.

During the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth, a new form of music emerged in western Europe, emphasizing the soloist's ability to express emotion and to dazzle with virtuosity. The growing importance of the violin played a significant role in this change, both as a solo instrument and as a component of the nascent string orchestra.

Guitar

The modern guitar is descended from the Roman **cithara** brought by the Romans to Hispania around 40 AD, and further adapted and developed with the arrival of the four-string **oud**, brought by the Moors after their conquest of the Iberian peninsula in the 8th century.

By A.D. 1200 AD, the four string "guitar" had evolved into two types: the **guitarra morisca** (Moorish guitar) which had a rounded back, wide fingerboard and several soundholes, and the **guitarra latina** (Latin guitar) which resembled the modern guitar with one soundhole and a narrower neck.

The Spanish **vihuela** or **viola da mano**, a guitar-like instrument of the 15th and 16th centuries is, due to its many similarities, usually considered the immediate ancestor of the modern guitar. It had lute-style tuning and a guitar-like body.

The **vihuela** enjoyed only a short period of popularity as it was superseded by the guitar; the last surviving publication of music for the instrument appeared in 1576. It is not clear whether it represented a transitional form or was simply a design that combined features of the Arabic **oud** and the European **lute**.

The Vinaccia family of luthiers is known for developing the **mandolin**, and may have built the oldest surviving six string guitar. The dimensions of the modern classical guitar (also known as the Spanish guitar) were established by Antonio Torres Jurado (1817-1892), working in Seville in the 1850s.



Spanish Guitar