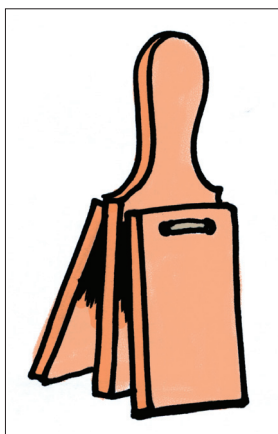


Maltese Folk Percussion Instruments



It-Tanbur (the tambourine) consists of a round wooden frame across which is stretched a dried skin of an animal, usually a goat. Another round wooden band secures the tightness of the skin. Around the width of the frame are often found small round metal cymbals, which give a bell-like jingle when shaken. The Tanbur often accompanies Maltese folk dancing.

lż-Żafżafa/ Ir-Rabbaba (the friction drum) consists of a hollow cylinder which can be a clay pot or a large metal tin covered with animal skin or cloth. Stretched across the top opening is an animal skin, usually that of a goat, with a cane stick passed through a hole in its centre. The end of the cane stick is usually larger, preventing this stick from passing completely out of the skin when played. The sound produced is a particular one, monotonous and coarse. Though a drum, the sound is produced through the friction caused by the movement of this cane stick, in an out of the skin, not through beating. This instrument is often seen during carnival.



lċ-Ċuqlajta (Judas' bones) is common to Maundy Thursday and Good Friday; this wooden instrument varies in size and shape. The more common one is a simple hand wooden clapper, similar to a castanet, though the wooden flaps are larger and flat. Larger wooden instruments are found in some churches' bell towers, replacing the bells during the Good Friday procession. The shape of these larger 'Ċuqlajta' is that of a cross, with hammers on each of the four parts of the wood making up this cross. Through a mechanism, the structure is turned by hand or by a rope producing a loud, flat sound.