

## THE INSTRUMENTS OF SRAZHALYS

The triangular-shaped instrument played by the members of Srazhalys is called a balalaika (literally means: 'plaything'.) The round-shaped instrument is called a domra. The predecessors to both of these instruments are believed to have been brought to Russia by the Mongols in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> Century. They became popular village instruments in Russia for centuries, especially used by skomorokhi. The skomorokhi were wandering minstrels of sorts who were prone to criticize the Tsar, the Church and Russian society. This led to the instruments being banned at different times. Even when not banned they were generally scorned by the Russian upper class as instruments of the peasant class until the late 1800's when a nobleman named Vassily Andreyev brought the instruments to popularity with concert-goers and the Court. The instruments can now be heard in classical orchestras as well as in folk ensembles.

The domra and balalaika used by Srazhalys are stamped "Leningrad" (a city now known by its original name "St. Petersburg"). The instruments made a heroic trip from Russia to the U.S. by boat in 2002.

## HORACE GREELEY THE LESSER

Local musician, Horace Greeley the Lesser appears on Flyhard Jenkins' February 2005 show. Though Flyhard will not get a chance to interview Greeley on his show, they did have a brief interview off-stage.

Flyhard (F) : Why are you called the 'Lesser'?

Horace (H) : Go North, young man. Go East, young man. Go South, young man. If I say that, then they'll say 'go to Hell, old man'. Now Horace Greeley of the 1800s, he said: 'Go West, young man' and some did. So he gets the "Greater" title.

F: Your song I am and I am Not has enigmatic lines like: 'I am a meat-eating vegetarian.'

How is it possible to be such?

H: The song doesn't have that line.

F: It doesn't?

H: Actually it does. And actually it doesn't. Do you see what I mean?

F: Actually, I don't.

H: And you do – you do and you do not.

F: You sure like your word play.

H: Words are reality's bones...at least social hopscotch-jump-from-square-to-square reality.

I prefer my hopscotch on the rocks.

F: Well, how about the song you sing:

May the Cow Jump Over You. What is the cow supposed to signify?

H: It's best just to moo. Mooooooo. Mooooooo.

Go ahead, you try it.

F: I'd rather not.

H: No, and I'd rather not signify, but here goes - Signifyyyy. Sig-ni-fyyyyy. See what I mean?

F: So I'm wondering Horace, could you lay down the straight line if you wanted to?

H: And would Straight bring along his friend Narrow? Likely, highly likely. Now Squiggly generally hangs out with Broad. So if I give it to you squiggly, there's broader room to scoop out some gems. See?

F: I see a thread of reason in what you're saying, but it's a challenge to sew it together.

I do thank you though for the interview.

H: You can keep the change.

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