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Development of Mongolian *Khöömii*: From Ritual to Repertoire

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Abstract: *Khöömii* is a distinctive Mongolian vocal art that produces multiple harmonic tones simultaneously through precise control of the vocal and respiratory systems. Originating from oral tradition and ritual practices, *khöömii* was originally used to praise nature, express reverence, and evoke spiritual connection. Over time, it has evolved into a refined stage art influenced by modernization and institutional training. The two main styles – *shakhaa* (pressure-based) and *kharkhiraa* (growl-based) – serve as the foundation of various advanced techniques, expanding its expressive possibilities. This study explores the development of *khöömii*, focusing on its evolving repertoire, which now includes traditional nature imitations, folk songs, praise chants, and complex operatic works. Professional training has been crucial in this transition, shaping both technical skills and creative composition. The research investigates the thematic and formal diversity of *khöömii* pieces, their cultural significance, and their potential for collaboration with other musical forms. Ultimately, the study shows how repertoire expansion reflects artistic innovation and highlights the contemporary relevance and sustainability of this ancient vocal tradition.

Keywords: Throat singing; *magtaal*; *kharkhiraa*; *shakhaa*; performing art; *khöömii* (*khöömii singer*)

Khöömii: *khöömii singer* and performer of *khöömii*.

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1 Introduction

Scholars have suggested various origins for singing, music, and dance, often linking these art forms to humans imitating sounds and movements. Humans perceived environmental stimuli, such as animal calls and natural rhythms, and expressed these through vocal and physical imitation. For example, Herbert Spencer theorized that the origins of music lie in “the emotional modulations of human speech” (Grew 1928, n.p.), while Charles Darwin attributed it to birdsong and the mating calls of animals, suggesting that sexual selection played a significant role in shaping songs among many species, including human ancestors and closely related primates (Kleinman 2014). Furthermore, Mehr et al. (2020) argued that music evolved primarily to attract caregivers’ attention in infant care and to support social coalitions. In Mongolia, *khöömii* is a specialized vocal art focusing on imitating musical instrument sounds with the voice (*khöömii lökh*) rather than being about music itself. *Khöömii lökh* “(Throat singing) is a kind of whistling with tongue tip and cutting teeth, creating beautiful adorned tone [and] at the same time making vocalization of continual melody by resonance in the depth of mount or larynx area. This deep tone resonance suits perfectly with the simultaneous high voice” (Kherlen 2022, 39). This form enables the production of two or more simultaneous harmonic vowels, facilitated by the vocal and respiratory organs. The art of *khöömii* encompasses various techniques, primarily derived from two fundamental styles: *shakhaa* (pressure) and *kharkhira* (growl). Originally, this intangible cultural heritage involved chanting praise to nature, but it has since evolved into a professional performance art.

In this article, we aim to explore the development and progression of the art of *khöömii*, focusing on its transformation from a cultural practice embedded in daily rituals to a stage art form enriched by a growing repertoire of creative works. Research data was collected from scholarly presentations, journal articles, monographs, books, and manuals, which were analyzed through observation, comparative evaluation, and critical synthesis. Regarding the development, current state, and future trends of the art of *khöömii*, several notable contributions have been made by scholars and researchers. These include academic presentations and articles by musicologists J. Enebish, A. Tseden-ish, G. Gantsetseg and E. Zultsetseg; art researchers L. Kherlen, S. Zagd-Ochir., and M. Amarjargal; cultural scholars E. Duuriimaa and J. Dolgorsuren; as well as Inner Mongolian researchers and *khöömii* practitioners S. Serenbayar and O. Khiimorit. Additionally, doctoral dissertations and monographs by various researchers provide comprehensive overviews and analyses of the evolution of *khöömii*.

For this study, key sources included A. Tseden-Ish’s 2006 paper, “Some Pressing Issues in the Development of the Art of *Khöömii*”; cultural scholar E. Duuriimaa’s

(2021) article, “Mongolian *Khöömii* as a Ritualistic Cultural Heritage”; French ethnomusicologist Johanni Curtet’s 2013 dissertation, *The Transmission of Höömij, an Art of Vocal Timbre: Ethnomusicology and History of Mongolian Overtone Singing*; and E. Duuriimaa’s 2024 dissertation, *Interdependence of Khöömii and Performing an Epic*. To ensure the accuracy of the data, additional archival materials were reviewed, including A. Tsenden-ish’s 2020 book, *The National Academic Theatre of Performing Arts: A Legacy of the People*, based on the archives of Mongolia’s National Academic Theatre of Performing Arts, as well as the catalog of audio recordings from the Mongolian National Public Radio archive. Based on this foundation, we propose the following research questions:

- What key factors have contributed to the transformation of *khöömii* into a stage art form?
- How has the repertoire of *khöömii* expanded in terms of themes and content?
- How has the integration of musical accompaniment in *khöömii* performances evolved over time?

Based on these research questions, the topic of this paper has been titled: “Development of Mongolian *Khöömii*: From Ritual to Repertoire.”

2 Ritualistic Elements in the Art of *Khöömii*

The foundation of *khöömii* art lies in its ability to imitate the sounds of nature, including the echoes of mountains, the flowing of water, and the breathing of the wind. The history of Mongolian *khöömii* spans hundreds of years, and its popularity among Mongolians has emerged from the close interaction between the natural environment and human culture. Ethnomusicologists studying *khöömii* highlight its integral role in the ancient pastoral lifestyle, which continues to this day. This unique vocal art has evolved to replicate the sounds of animals, nature, wind, and water, embodying the deep connection between humans and their surroundings.

Researcher E. Duuriimaa (2024) interprets this phenomenon through the lens of B. Malinowski’s theory that “ritual arises from the indispensable needs of human culture” (Duuriimaa 2024, 22). Accordingly, the development of *khöömii* reflects the human need to connect with and make sense of the natural world through cultural expression.

As a traditional art form, *khöömii* is “indivisibly connected not only to its nature, environment, geographical system, but also with its inhabitants’ traditional customs, features of physiology, anatomy and their language and culture” (Kherlen 2022, 31). It exists in close cohesion with the daily life of the Mongolian nomads. They perform *khöömii* in a variety of social occasions ranging widely from grand state ceremonies

to household festive events, associated with respective rituals and customs. *Khöömii* is not only performed in social events; performances are often found during the herding, when lulling the baby to sleep, as well as in the evenings in the ger (a Mongolian traditional round felt tent) in a domestic context. Among the Western Mongols, it was a common tradition to seek rain during times of drought by worshipping sacred mountains and cairns (*ovoo*), offering praise, whistling melodies, and performing *khöömii*. Elders in these regions pass down oral accounts of such practices. For instance, on auspicious days like the first day of the Lunar New Year, communities would appease and worship sacred mountains, perform rituals with instruments like the *tsuur* (flute) and *tovshuur* (lute), narrate epics, and use the melodies of *khöömii* to express reverence for nature, appease spirits, and entrust the prosperity of their children, livestock, and livelihoods to the sacred Altai Mountains (Odsuren 2023).

French scholar A. Leroi-Gourhan remarked that “the method of evoking spirits through echoes and sounds is not a random occurrence but rather an imitation of hidden forces, emerging from collective consciousness to connect with the world of intuition, dreams, and foresight” (Kherlen 2010, 33). Similarly, researcher Duuriimaa (2021) highlights that the art of *khöömii* originated as “a ritualistic form imbued with healing and shamanic practices, arising from the idea of mimicking natural sounds to appease the spirits residing within” (Duuriimaa 2021, 143). These insights underscore *khöömii* as not only an artistic tradition but also a cultural practice deeply intertwined with spiritual and environmental harmony.

Among the people living along the Altai Mountains, it is a customary ritual to praise and honor their mountains and waters by reciting the “Altai Magtaal” (Altai Praise) at the beginning of heroic epics. This practice is often recounted by elder *khöömii* artists such as D. Tserendavaa and Ya. Toivgoo. As Ormiston (2014) notes, “Singing epics means creating a connection to the invisible world, to the supernatural forces that govern and sustain the world, such as the mountain spirits (*Ezed, lus, savdag*), by praising nature and surroundings before the epic song begins... Typically, singers of heroic epics chant the *Altai Magtaal* and accompany it with the *tovshuur* (Uriankhai, western Khalkh), horse fiddle, or *ekel* (Khalkh); some even recite it without an instrument” (11). This tradition is depicted in the following image (Figure 1).

This suggests that in ancient times, the *khöömii* tradition was utilized in the form of chanting and songs as part of the ritual needs of everyday life. However, there are various regional versions of the tradition, passed down orally, with names such as “Altain magtaal,” “Jargalant Altain magtaal,” “Altai Khangain Magtaal,” “Altajhany magtaal,” “The Praise of Altai mountain,” “Sacrify to Altai,” “Altai & Khangai mountain praise,” and “Praise to Altai mountains.” These versions have likely



Figure 1: The process of singing praises to mountains and cairns. Source: D. Myagmarjav, *Aya Egsigiin Ohi Manlai* (Selenge Press LLC, 2015), 181.

evolved and enriched with local dialects and pronunciations, with some words and verses possibly lost or altered over time.

In addition to the traditions of praising mountains and waters, Mongolians have also used melodic calls and chants to communicate with animals during hunting and while herding their five types of livestock. For example, when a mother animal is calling her offspring, *khöömii* melodies are often employed. Elder *khöömii* artist D. Tserendavaa recalls, “In our area, when a mother animal calls her calf, she hums a long song, then adds *khöömii* sounds, and the calf responds by coming to her” (Duuriimaa 2024, 39). However, nowadays, the tradition of praising mountains and calling animals has become rarer, and *khöömii*, epic singing, and praise singing are now predominantly practiced as stage arts. Yet, the strong intervention of modern culture and civilization into Mongolian society and the active process of worldwide globalization leads Mongolian culture to interact with other cultures, creating a combined space of the world’s classical art alongside national culture (Dolgorsuren 2013, 65).

3 Development of the Repertoire of *Khöömii*

Mongolians used their vocal organs to a high degree and developed the art of *khöömii* as a unique form of musical expression (Ormiston 2014, 12). The historical moment when *khöömii* first echoed on stage is often linked to the early 1950s. During this time, S. Tsedee from Khovd province participated in a three-day cultural event in the provincial capital, where he introduced the novel phenomenon of *khöömii* to the public, marking the beginning of its development as an art form (Tseden-Ish 2009,

133). In 1950, the *Khovd* Theatrical Club became a musical drama theater, and Dambyn Luvsansharav was appointed as the choir conductor. In 1954, the theater staged its first “Art Three Days” event in Ulaanbaatar, where D. Luvsansharav enriched “*Altain Magtaal*” with *khöömii* embellishments and performed as a renowned solo choir. During this performance, S. Tsedee from Chandmani soum, who was a local of Khovd, performed *Khöömii* (Khovd Music and Drama 2021, 9), and it was recorded in the history of the theater. Since then, artists have continued to adapt and perform “*Altain Magtaal*” in various forms, incorporating *khöömii* and evolving it as part of stage performances. French ethnomusicologist Johanni Curtet (2013) conducted an interesting study on who has sung and performed *Khöömii* in “*Altain Magtaal*” (Curtet 2013, 479).

As part of our research project, we aimed to compile a comprehensive registry and catalog of *khöömii* recordings and songs preserved in the archive collection of Mongolian National Radio prior to the year 2000. The radio archive holds over 50,000 magnetic tapes, which include daily broadcast material such as folk songs (both long and short songs), foreign songs, composed songs, music and arts programs, and direct field recordings (transcriptions) from rural areas. From this extensive collection, we reviewed and documented the catalogues of 106 tapes containing music and arts programs and 3,270 tapes of folk song recordings, and we present our findings as follows:

The *Khöömii* sung by S. Tsedee was learned by G. Chimeddorja, a notation writer and choir singer from the State Music and Drama Theater (formerly known as such), and it is noted by prominent researcher J. Badraa that the introduction of *Khöömii* into Mongolian folk song was an unexpected advancement for art (Sandagjaw 2009, 40–41). According to records, in 1957, G. Chimeddorj had a phonograph recording made, and the piece was awarded a gold medal at an international festival. Further research into the Mongolian Radio archives reveals the first *khöömii* recordings made in 1962 by G. Chimeddorj (Table 1).

Meanwhile, *khöömii*ch D. Sundui, during his work at the *Khovd* Music and Drama Theater, recorded the following works for the Mongolian Radio archive (Table 2).

However, *Khöömii*ch D. Tserendavaa performed a total of 12 works solo and recorded them for the radio in 1983 and 1991 (Table 3). These include:

During his tenure with the State Ensemble of Folk Song and Dance, *khöömii*ch D. Ganbold recorded nine folk songs in 1985 and 1987, performing both solo and in ensemble formats. Of these, six songs were accompanied by the *yatga* (Mongolian zither) and *yochin*, without multiple *khöömii* versions; two songs were recorded in ensemble with other singers (Table 4).

During his tenure with the Hovd trade organization, *Khöömii*ch R. Davaajav performed a total of seven folk songs for the radio in 1982 and 1983 (Table 5). These include:

Table 1: List of khöömiich G. Chimeddorj’s recordings in the radio archive.

№	Title of composition	Archives number	Date	Duration	Musical expression
1.	<i>Tsombon tuuraitai khuren, Gunan khar, Shargyn shargyn joroo</i>	№. 3664	1962.01.06	00:04:00	Yochin- Ts. Dashdavaa
2.	<i>Gunan khar</i>	№. 3511	1962.06.01	00:01:26	No music instrument
3.	<i>Goviin öndör</i>	№. 3510	1962.06.01	00:02:20	
4.	<i>Khuder dungui nutag</i>	№. 3496	1962.06.03	00:02:00	
5.	<i>Tsombon tuuraitai khuren, Gunan khar, Durvun nastai khaliun</i>	№. 31359	1962.06.05	00:04:31	Yochin-Ts. Dashdavaa
6.	<i>Buural mori</i>	№. 3509	1962.07.01	00:01:38	No music instrument
7.	<i>Mandakh nar</i>	№. 3501	1962.06.10	00:01:05	
8.	<i>Khonin joroo mori</i>	№. 3508	1962.06.15	00:00:54	
9.	<i>Altai khaany magtaal</i>	№. 3497	1962.06.28	00:01:25	
10.	<i>Durvun nastai khaliun</i>	№. 3499	1962.06.28	00:02:26	

According to the data presented in the table above, the song *Tsombon tuuraitai khüren* was recorded twice in 1962, while *Gunan khar* was recorded three times in the same year. These recordings notably feature prominent accompaniment by the yochin (hammered dulcimer).

Table 2: List of khöömiich D. Sundui’s recordings in the radio archive.

№	Title of composition	Archives number	Date	Duration	Musical expression
1.	<i>Goviin undur</i>	№. 31254	1962.05.11	00:01:01	No music instrument
2.	<i>Ekhiin ach</i>	№. 31257	1962.11.29	00:01:25	
3.	<i>Gooj Nan ai (Gooj Nanaa)</i>	№. 31660	1962.10.25	00:00:56	
4.	<i>Shiden huar</i>	№. 31778	1963.10.01	00:01:06	Morin khuur- M. Dovchin
5.	<i>Durvun nastai khaliun Gooj Nanaa</i>	№. 31904	1965.07.18	00:02:55	Yochin -J. Mend-Amar
6.	<i>Tsombon tuuraitai khuren</i>	№. 31349	1969.05.22	00:01:50	Morin khuur- I. Tsogbadrakh
7.	<i>Tooroi bandi</i>	№. 31406		00:01:40	
8.	<i>Khuren tolgoiin suuder</i>	№. 31063		00:02:02	
9.	<i>Eruu tsagaan boljmor</i>	№. 3544		00:01:27	

G. Alimaa, singer with the State Ensemble of Folk Song and Dance, recorded a total of seven songs incorporating *khöömii* in 1998 and 2000. These were accompanied by the *morin khuur* (horsehead fiddle) and small folk ensembles, as detailed in the following list (Table 6):

In addition to these, we have consolidated and summarized information on individual artists who recorded between one and five *khöömii* pieces solo for the radio archive, presented as follows (Table 7).

Table 3: List of khöömiich D. Tserendavaa's recordings in the radio archive.

№	Title of composition	Archives number	Date	Duration	Musical expression
1.	<i>Altai Magtaal</i>	№. 32275	1983.01.23,	00:06:12	Magtaal, tovshuur
2.	<i>Altai khailakh tuuli magtaal</i>	№. 32276	1983.01.21	00:06:08	Tovshuur
3.	<i>Mongol geriin magtaal</i>	№. 32291	1983.01.24	00:02:40	
4.	<i>Tooroi bandi</i>	№. 32290-1	1983.01.24	00:01:34	No music instrument
	<i>Serevger khadny zereglee</i>	№. 32290-2		00:01:37	
	<i>Bayankharkhan</i>	№. 32290-3		00:01:31	
	<i>Siilen buur</i>	№. 32290-4		00:01:42	
	<i>Arvan tavny sar</i>	№. 32290-5		00:01:42	
5.	<i>Unchin tsagaan botgo</i>	№. 33132	1991.05.25	00:06:35	Morin khuur- I.
	<i>Talyn tavan tolgoi</i>				Tsogbadrakh
6.	<i>Erdene uul</i>	№. 33133	1991.05.25	00:05:42	
	<i>Uuriin nutag</i>				
7.	<i>Durvun nastai khaliun</i>	№. 32888	1987.12.07	00:05:15	Khuuchir-O. Boldoo
	<i>Gooj Nanaa</i>				
	<i>Khumuun turukhtun</i>				
	(humanity)				

Table 4: List of khöömiich D. Ganbold's recordings in the radio archive.

№	Title of composition	Archives number	Date	Duration	Musical expression
1.	<i>Alag mori</i>	№. 32602	1985.05.29	00:02:47	Yochin- B. Altantuul,
	<i>Buural mori</i>				Yatga- G. Gantuya
2.	<i>Sunder uul</i>	№. 32773	1987.06.23	00:05:30	Morin khuur- I. Tsogbadrakh
3.	<i>Yunden gugu</i>	№. 32884	1987.09.11	00:07:07	Yatga (Tserenkhoro, B. Altantuul)
	<i>Siilen buur</i>				
	<i>Namryn khongor</i>				
	<i>salkhi</i>				
	<i>“Uuriin nutag</i>				
4.	<i>Mongol khöömiin</i>	425 CD song	2012.06.14-	00:04:21	Morin khuur (“Ayalguut saikhan
	<i>ayalguu</i>	#10	Media archive		Altai nutag min” album)

Looking at the *Khöömii* works archived by the radio from the 1960s to the 1980s, the works of G. Chimeddorj, D. Sundui Pürevdorj, N. Sengedorj, S.Khas-Ochir, D. Tserendavaa, T. Ganbold, and P. Tserendorj are preserved as solo and ensemble recordings of Mongolian folk songs and praise songs. As for the recordings after 1990, a comprehensive review of these recordings is still ongoing, and thus, full information is not yet available.

Table 5: List of khöömii R. Davaajav’s recordings in the radio archive.

No	Title of composition	Archives number	Date	Duration	Musical expression
1.	<i>Durvun nastai khaliun</i> <i>Gooj Nanaa</i>	No. 32206	1982.01.18	00:01:26	No music instrument
2.	<i>Tsombon tuuraitai khuren</i> <i>Durvun nastai khaliun</i> <i>Khuren khaalgatai delguur</i> <i>Tooroi bandi</i>	No. 32297	1983.01.24	00:01:10	
3.	<i>Siilen buur</i>	No. 32436	1983.12.19	00:04:39	

Table 6: List of khöömii G. Alimaa’s recordings in the radio archive.

No	Title of composition	Archives number	Date	Duration	Musical expression
1.	<i>4 types of Mongolian khöömii</i>	No. 33245	1998.01.20	00:03:32	Morin khuur- D.Ariunbold
2.	<i>Durvun nastai khaliun</i> <i>Awgyn tsagaan uul</i> <i>Gooj Nanaa</i> <i>Buyant gol</i> <i>Khonin joroo mori</i> <i>Durvun uul</i>	No. 33256	2000.10.10	00:02:49 00:01:45 00:00:56 00:01:48 00:00:48 00:01:52	Ensemble of folk music

The development of the *Khöömii* repertoire cannot be represented solely by the works recorded in the radio archive. The process of *Khöömii* art becoming stage-oriented can be seen through concert programs and archival materials from professional art organizations in regional and local areas as well as the capital city. In this regard, musicologist A. Tseden-Ish’s collection *National Art Theatre Named After Our People* (2020), based on archival documents, provides an insightful perspective. The work includes original versions of annual concert programs with new compositions, which are particularly interesting. For example, *khöömii* artist Sundui. D performed *khöömii* in 1977 during the concert “Song of the brothers” dedicated to the sixtieth anniversary of the October Revolution, featuring P. I. Chaikovsky’s *Neapolitan Song* (Tseden-Ish 2020, 315). This marked the first instance of *khöömii* being performed alongside a foreign song.

With D. Sundui’s introduction of *khöömii* into foreign musical scales, he incorporated Western gammas, particularly the use of semitones, into his performance. His aim to apply *khöömii* within Western scales led to a more refined technique of adjusting the *Khöömii* melodies to fit the tonal structure (Curtet 2018, 143). Furthermore, in 1982, during the “Folk Melody” concert, D. Sundui collaborated with

singer A. Nergui to perform arrangements of two Mongolian folk songs in a choral *khöömii* style (Tseden-Ish 2020, 354). The influence and tradition of Sundui's *khöömii* not only extended within Mongolia but were also internationally recognized (Tseden-Ish 2009, 113). In the 1986 concert *We Are All People of One World*, *Khöömii* artist T. Ganbold performed the Yugoslavian *Song of the Partisans* and the German folk song *Village Wedding*, accompanied by a zither, continuing the trend of blending *Khöömii* with global musical traditions (Tseden-Ish 2020, 398).

The practice of learning *khöömii* by imitation gradually evolved into a form of “home training” and “mentorship,” laying the foundation for the “methods of teaching *Khöömii*” that modern scholars now discuss (Munkhjargal et al. 2024, 293). From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, interest in learning *khöömii* significantly increased, establishing the basis for formal *Khöömii* training.

In addition, *khöömii* artist Sundui's successors – T. Ganbold, N. Sengedorj, Ya. Toivgoo, L. Bazarvaani, D. Khosbayar, D. Gantulga, T. Gereltsogt, S. Zulsar, D. Tserendavaa, R. Davaajav and S. Gantulga – played key roles in promoting and spreading Mongolian *khöömii* internationally, gaining global recognition within a short period (Tseden-Ish 2009, 114). These renowned *khöömii* artists made invaluable contributions to the development of the Mongolian *khöömii* repertoire, as evidenced by their works. Notable examples include S. Gantulga's *Mongolian Khöömii Melodies* (1985) and T. Ganbold's *Four Types of Mongolian Khöömii* (1988), both now considered integral parts of the *khöömii* repertoire.

Another indicator of the growth in the skill of *khöömii* artists and the development of their repertoire is the formation of new bands in addition to solo and collaborative performances. *Khöömii* artists such as Ya. Toivgoo, L. Bazarvaani, N. Sengedorj, T. Ganbold, S. Zulsar, S. Gantulga, D. Khosbayar, E. Sandagjav, N. Ganzorig, G. Ashid, B. Bold-Erdene, S. Zagd-Ochir, N. Naranbadrakh, M. Saruultugs, Ts. Tsogtgerel, L. Lkhamragchaa, J. Mendbayar, B. Luvsantseren, and twin *Khöömii* artists T. Altantsooj and T. Munguntsooj have incorporated Mongolian folk songs, long songs, praises, and new compositions into their concert programs.

In addition to individual artists, numerous Mongolian national arts ensembles – such as Jamuukh, Jargalant Tsuurai, Mandukhai, Egshiglen, Altai Orgil, Khokh Mongolia, Altan Urag, Hosoo & Trans Mongolia, Uyanga, Börte, Jonon, Domog, Khösögtön, Altai, Delkhi, The Hu, and Arga Bilig – have contributed to expanding *khöömii*'s repertoire. These groups have gained recognition not only in Mongolia but also in European countries. One notable example is Hosoo & Trans Mongolia, who have created their music while touring European countries. Their works preserve the national style, blending thought-provoking and imaginative compositions. Furthermore, foreign artists have collaborated with Mongolian musicians to create new works, as seen in the collaborations of the Nomadic Voice – Sardinia & Mongolia ensemble, the French Meikhaneh, and the Australian Eguus, Horse & Wood

Table 7: List of performers who recorded between one and five *khöömii* pieces solo for the radio archive.

№	Name	Title of composition	Archives number	Date	Duration	Musical expression
1.	Zamzai (Bayan-Ulgii)	<i>Altain magtaal</i>	№. 31162	1967.07.11	00:02:45	Dombor
2.		<i>Khos khuren</i>	№. 3675	1967.07.11	00:01:16	(stringed instrument resembling a lute)
3.	Rysbek (Bayan-Ulgii)	<i>Janai Erka</i> (Kazakh)	№. 3326	1971.06.30	00:01:27	Dombor
4.		<i>Yamar I amrag ve?</i>	№. 3839		00:01:15	
5.	Purevdorj (Zavkhan)	<i>Gooj Nanaa Gunan khar</i>	№. 3287	1971.07.03	00:01:23	Guitar
6.	Н. Сэнгэдорж (Khovd)	<i>Gooj Nanaa Buyant gol</i>	№. 3723	1979.12.21	00:01:38	Yochin-Enkh-Amgalan
7.		<i>Durvun nastai khaliun</i>	№. 31602	1979.12.07	00:00:51	
8.	S. Khas-Ochir	<i>Durvun tsagiin tal</i> (L. Murdorj)	№. 4054	1983.01.19	00:01:13	No music instrument
9.	Purevee (Bayankhongor)	<i>Eeven golyn ursgal</i>	№. 32300	1983.01.20	00:01:55	Not included in the media archive
10.	<i>Garyn arvan khuruu</i>					
11.	<i>Goviin undur</i>	№. 32302	1983.01.20	00:00:56		
12.	<i>Durvun nastai khaliun Khonin joroo mori</i>	№. 32516	1984.10.02	00:02:37	Ensemble of folk music	
13.	Munkhsanaa (Uvs)	<i>Tsenkherlen kharagdakh uuls</i>	№. 32309	1983.01.20	00:04:20	Not included in the media archive
14.	<i>Tooroin tsagaan els</i>					
15.	<i>Minii khongor khotod bii</i>					
16.	<i>Buural mori</i>					
17.	S. Minjeesuren (Khovd)	<i>Durvun uul</i>	№. 32437-1	1983.12.20	00:00:39	No music instrument
18.	<i>Khonin joroo mori</i>	№. 32437-2	00:00:42			
19.	<i>Gunan khar</i>	№. 32437-3	00:00:42			
20.	<i>Gooj Nanaa</i>	№. 32437-4	00:00:34			
21.	Dashdavaa (Khuvsgul)	<i>Khadat Toom</i>	№. 32687	1986.12.31	00:02:45	Not included in the media archive
22.	<i>Arvan tavny sar</i>					
23.	<i>Dund Toom</i>					
24.	Ts. Tserendorj (Zavkhan)	<i>Eeven golyn ursgal</i>	№. 32958	1988.06.25	00:02:05	No music instrument (kharkhiraa)

Table 7: (continued)

№	Name	Title of composition	Archives number	Date	Duration	Musical expression
25.	E. Sandagjav (Zavkhan)	<i>Durvun nastai khaliun</i>	№. GA-40-5	1994.12.24	00:01:20	Ensemble of folk music
26.	<i>Gooj Nanaa</i>					
27.	E. Sandagjav (Railway men's song and dance ensemble)	<i>Manduul khaany magtaal</i>	№. 33250	2000.01.21	00:02:30	Ensemble of folk music
28.	A. Bat-Ochir (state folk song and dance ensemble)	<i>Durvun kholboo</i>	№. 33251	2000.05.22	00:04:20	Morin khuur

All italicized values are the assigned names of the works.

(Tsevegsuren 2023, 169). The blending of national music with modern trends began with groups like Altai Orgil (1993) and Börte (2000), which paved the way for ensembles like Altan Urag (2004) to incorporate folk rock elements into their compositions. Altan Urag combined national instruments, long songs, and *khöömii* with rock rhythms. Similarly, the group *Khösögtön* merged national instruments such as the guitar, dombra, African djembe, and violoncello with *khöömii* and ballads. The Hu created a new genre known as Hunnu rock within the heavy rock genre, reflecting the fusion of modern styles with Mongolian traditions, as highlighted in the scholarly work of Tsevegsuren (2023).

One more significant factor contributing to the development of the *khöömii* repertoire is the establishment of higher education programs for *khöömii* artists at the Mongolian National University of Arts and Culture. As the curriculum evolved over the years, demand grew for new works and an expanded repertoire for training purposes. To meet this need, the first major work in Mongolian *khöömii* art, “*Khöömii – Morin Khuur – Choral Music Concert*,” was composed by the state-honored artist Ts.Natsagdorj.

In 2017, to mark the fifteenth anniversary of higher education for *khöömii* artists, a project was implemented to enrich the repertoire for advanced *khöömii* training. As a result, eight new compositions were created and incorporated into the cycle of artistic works, further enhancing the breadth of the *khöömii* repertoire (Table 8).

In 2018, the initiative to create an opera with *khöömii* melodies and elements of operatic art was spearheaded by People's Artist and *khöömii* teacher B. Odsuren. With the active participation of teachers, students, graduates, professional artists, and the school's administration, the opera *Galaykhan* (The Lord of Fire),¹ a mini-

¹ Galaykhan: In shamanism, this term is used to refer to the Fire Deity, carrying the meaning “master of the fire.” (Dambajav 2010, 381).

Table 8: Repertoire of advanced-level *khöömii* training.

No	Title of composition	Composer	Musical expression
1.	Khuvch khangaid	Ariunbold, D.	Khöömii, Tsuur, Piano, Timpani
2.	Khuumii turleg	Ariunbold, D.	Khöömii, Piano Duet
3.	Khuumiin ayaz	Erdenebat, Tsen.	Khöömii, Piano
4.	Uulsiin tsuurai	Ulziibayar, Sh.	Khöömii, Piano
5.	Yelden salkhi	Chumad, Kh.	Khöömii, National ensemble
6.	Khuumii solo	Bodi-Erdene, G.	Khöömii, Zither, horsehead fiddle
7.	Oyrad buuvei	Byambabayar, B.	Khöömii, Piano
8.	Nutag mini	Mend-Amar, B.	Khöömii, Piano

opera in three acts and seven scenes, was created. The libretto for the work was written by Erkhembayar. Kh, and the music was composed by Ariunbold. D. This composition features sounds and techniques such as whistling, shouting, screeching, squeezing, and other natural or non-traditional sounds. The work includes parts like the “Solitude Blind Man’s Reflection Aria” (written in the aria style), “*Khöömii* Duet,” “Moon Song” (*khöömii* Trio), “*Khöömii* Recitativo” (opera’s recitativo), and “*Khöömii* Choir,” among others (Ariunbold 2018, 6).

In 2022, as part of an innovation project for musical instruments, composer G. Otgonbayar’s new work “Khökh Tengeriin Uuls” (The Mountains of the Blue Sky), composed for *khöömii* and national choir music, was added to the *khöömii* repertoire. The creation of such large-scale *khöömii* works marks a significant development, which is closely tied to the growth and progress of professional training in the field. These innovations further enrich the scope and depth of Mongolian *khöömii* music and its integration with other forms of national music.

4 Conclusions

The development of Mongolian *khöömii* from a ritual practice to a recognized musical repertoire illustrates a dynamic cultural trajectory shaped by performance, education, and policy. Historically rooted in solo, spiritual expression, *khöömii* has undergone significant transformation, expanding its aesthetic and functional scope through creative adaptation and institutional integration.

The incorporation of *khöömii* into formal performing arts education has not only facilitated technical refinement and broader access but also reinforced its cultural legitimacy. Performance practices evolved through collaborations with folk, orchestral, and multidisciplinary ensembles, creating new artistic expressions while preserving traditional elements. Simultaneously, cultural policy initiatives – such as

national festivals, training programs, international competitions, and heritage recognition – have contributed to the systematic documentation, professionalization, and global dissemination of the art.

This research underscores the importance of balancing innovation with authenticity. While contemporary interpretations and artistic hybridity offer new opportunities for *khöömii*'s sustainability, maintaining its intrinsic ties to nature, ancestral memory, and embodied knowledge remains essential. The case of *khöömii* demonstrates how living heritage can adapt and flourish within modern frameworks without losing its cultural soul.

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