A musical Family from the high mountains of Kyrgyzstan

KUT is a family ensemble made up of a husband, wife and four sons, aged 6 to 19. They are a shepherd family based in the village of Bokembaeva on the shore of Lake Issyk-Kul in northern Kyrgyzstan. The husband and wife also run the village music school. The members of KUT are accomplished musicians who play all the instruments of the region and who have a calling for the preservation of their traditional music.

The name KUT means spirit, soul or life force in the Kyrgyz language. The family folklore group was founded in 2000. Since then, KUT has participated in various festivals and is a winner of many music competitions in Kyrgyzstan.

The father’s name is Akylbek Serkebaev, he plays komuz, kyl kyiak, temir ooz komuz and the chopo choor. He is also a vocalist and epic singer. Anara Serkebaeva is a mother, she plays kyl kyiak, komuz, temir ooz komuz, jygach and the ooz komuz. She is also a vocalist. Nurbek Serkebaev is the eldest son. Nurbek plays komuz, kyl kyiak, temir, jygach, ooz komuz, choor, sybyzgy, chogoino choor and the chong chogoino choor. Adilet Serkebaev is the second son. He plays the komuz, choor and guitar. Kuttubek Serkebaev is the third son, he plays temir ooz komuz, asa t'aiak and the dool. All of the three sons are vocalists.
Kyrgyzstan is a small beautiful country in Central Asia. Land-locked and mountainous, it borders Kazakhstan to the north, Uzbekistan to the west, Tajikistan to the southwest and China to the southwest. Kyrgyzstan means the “Land of the Kyrgyz.” The mountainous region of the Tian Shan covers over 80% of the country, the remaining territory is valleys and basins. Kyrgyzstan is occasionally referred to as “the Switzerland of Central Asia”. Lake Issyk-Kul in the north-west is the largest lake in Kyrgyzstan and the second largest mountain lake in the world after Titicaca. Peak Jengish Chokusu, at 24,400 feet (7,439 m), is the highest point.

Kyrgyzstan has a lot of Russian influence due to the Soviet Union’s reign. Soviet power was initially established in the region in 1919. On December 5, 1936, the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic was established as a full republic of the Soviet Union. Kyrgyzstan became independent state in 1991, joining the new Commonwealth of Independent States. In 1992, Kyrgyzstan joined the UN and the CSCE.

The climate varies regionally: from subtropical in south, dry continental to polar climate at Tian Shan foothills.

Kyrgyzstan is divided into seven provinces, oblast, administered by appointed governors. The capital of the country is Bishkek. According to July 2005 estimates, the population was 5,264,000. The nation’s largest ethnic group is the Kyrgyz (69.5% of the population). Other ethnic groups include Russians (9%), Uzbeks (14.5%) living in the south. Small but noticeable minorities include Tatars (1.9%), Uyghurs (1.1%), Kazakhs (0.7%).

Kyrgyzstan is one of two of the five former Soviet republics in Central Asia to retain Russian as an official language (Tajikistan is the other). It added the Kyrgyz language to become an officially bilingual country in September 1991. Kyrgyz language is a member of the Turkic group of languages.

About 75% of the population are Muslim, mostly Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school. Islam in Kyrgyzstan is more of a cultural background than a devout daily practice for most. The main Christian churches are Russian Orthodox and Ukrainian Orthodox. A small minority of Germans are protestant Christians, mostly Lutherans or Baptists.

Kyrgyz cuisine is delicious, consisting of a lot of meat and vegetables.