

# Esraj & Dilruba



**SIES100**  
**Esraj**



**SIDI100**  
**Dilruba**

With a tradition of 200 years the Esraj belongs to the younger generation of Indian stringed instruments, though it is not as famous as the Sitar or Tambura. The Esraj is mostly played in Bengal, Bangladesh and central India. In the north it is known as the Dilruba, whose construction is also slightly different. The Dilruba is bigger and has a larger sound box, therefore the sound is louder and more sonorous. The Esraj charms the listener with the gentle delicate sounds that gave it the name “robber of the heart”.

Both instruments are rich in overtones as they have a lot of sympathetic strings, a typical sign for Indian instruments. The Esraj and Dilruba have four main strings but the melody is played with a bow only on the first, and the others just resonate. The heavy curved metal frets are fixed with a cord and can be moved for tuning. Usually the musician sits with crossed legs on the ground and holds the instrument in front of himself. The neck leans against the shoulder. Traditionally the Esraj is played as an accompanying instrument but its meditative vastness makes it perfect for playing melodies. In the West it became famous by the Indian musician Sri Chinmoy who played it on all of his numerous concerts. Under his influence the Esraj developed further so that its sound has reached a fascinating expressiveness, stronger than traditional instruments offer. Both instruments are sold with an Indian style bow but can be played with a common violin bow, which is easier to handle for most of the Western players. Cases are sold separately.