

January 10, 2026

Power of the female voice

in Mongolian
Throat singing

With Cultural Merit Awardee
D. Zolzaya



Workshop at Henosis, Romainmôtier (Switzerland).

Date: January 10, 2026 (10:30 - 20:30)

Location: Henosis, Romainmôtier (Switzerland)

Address: Chem. de Praël 1, 1323 Romainmôtier-Envy, Switzerland

Language: Mongolian (with French translator) + English

This workshop and lecture marks a special moment in the cultural exchange between Mongolia and Europe. For the first time, D. Zolzaya — one of Mongolia's most respected female throat singers and traditional artists — will share her art, story, and teaching methods in Switzerland.

Born and raised in Chandmani, Khovd Province, known as the birthplace of Mongolian throat singing (khöömii), Zolzaya has dedicated her life to preserving and transmitting this unique vocal tradition. As a Merited Cultural Worker (STA) of Mongolia, she performs and teaches at the Drama Theatre in Ulaanbaatar and plays several traditional instruments, including the morin khuur (horse-head fiddle), tovshuur (two-stringed lute), tsuur (overtone flute), and mouth harp.

In collaboration with Rowan Hartsuiker from Altai (The Netherlands), this workshop explores the power of the female voice in Mongolian throat singing: a theme that challenges old stereotypes and celebrates the evolving role of women within this ancient art.

After often receiving the question “Can women learn throat singing?”, we decided to take this step: creating workshops and presentations specifically for female participants interested in discovering more about this tradition. Through this program, we aim to show that the art of khöömii is not bound by gender. Female throat singers like Zolzaya embody this truth, bringing their own story, skill, and vision into this living art form.

This full-day event combines presentations, instrument demonstrations, and hands-on throat singing workshops. It is an invitation to experience Mongolia's living sound culture, and to witness how women today are breaking boundaries in what was once seen as a male-dominated art — the art of Mongolian throat singing.

Program Schedule.

10:30 – Arrival & Welcome

Participants arrive and settle in with tea/coffee and introductions.

11:00 – Opening & Introduction

Welcome by Zolzaya & Rowan – overview of the day, goals, and introduction to Mongolian throat singing.

12:15 – Presentation: Mongolian Music & Throat Singing

Exploring the traditional sounds of Mongolia, with a specific focus on throat singing in both traditional and modern contexts.

12:45 – Demonstration: Traditional Mongolian Instruments

Presentation and live demonstration of the Tovshuur, Tsuur, Mouth Harp, Morin Khuur and Altai Harp.

13:15 – Lunch Break

14:30 – Cultural & Educational Insights

Discussion about how throat singing is taught in Mongolia, and the history and role of women in this tradition.

15:00 - 17:00 – Workshop #1

Practical introduction to throat singing and overtone singing techniques; the first steps into learning the basics of throat singing.

17:00 – Dinner Break

18:00 - 20:00 – Workshop #2

Further development and practice sessions of all throat singing techniques.

20:15 – Closing Session

Reflections, Q&A, and closing words.

Artist Profile.

Damba Zolzaya



Born in Chandmani, Khovd Province, widely known as the birthplace of Mongolian throat singing, Damba Zolzaya (“Zola”) belongs to a new generation of artists carrying the country’s rich vocal heritage into the future. She is among the few professional female throat singers in Mongolia and currently works as a performer at the Drama Theatre of the Mongolian State University of Arts and Culture (Ulaanbaatar).

From an early age, Zola dreamed of becoming an artist, though she never imagined herself as a throat singer. Her journey began when she was accepted into the khöömii department at the Mongolian State University of Arts and Culture (SUIC) — as the only female student among twenty-six. Under the guidance of legendary teachers such as Prof. B. Odsuren, a Merited Artist of Mongolia, and S. Zagd-Ochir, she mastered the demanding techniques of overtone singing and different throat singing techniques. In 2016, she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in throat singing, followed by a master’s degree in Arts Studies (2020), and later earned a second bachelor’s in Law (2023).

Zola’s career reflects a deep balance between artistry, perseverance, and cultural transmission. As a performer with the Khovd Music and Drama Theatre, she has appeared in major stage productions such as Jangar, Galaikhan (the first throat singing opera!). She has also participated in various international film projects.

Alongside her stage work, Zola is passionately devoted to teaching and passing on her craft. Alongside her stage work, Zola is deeply devoted to teaching and passing on her craft. Through her workshops and educational activities, she continues to inspire a new generation — especially (young) women — to discover the depth and beauty of Mongolian throat singing and its living cultural spirit.

A woman with dark hair pulled back, smiling gently at the camera. She is wearing a traditional Mongolian dress (deel) with a vibrant purple and blue patterned bodice and a blue collar. Underneath, she wears a light-colored long-sleeved top. Her hands are resting on her lap. The background is dark and out of focus, with a warm light source visible on the right side.

Contact Information:

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