



SAUMA [DESIGN AS CULTURAL INTERFACE]



ELECTROACOUSTIC SITAR GUITAR, 12-STRING MODEL



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The object of this hybrid, stringed instrument design is to combine the traditional Indian sitar, the steel string acoustic guitar and the resonator guitar. The materials used are aluminum and ecological hardwood. The innovative instrument will be a challenging tool for open-minded musicians. It allows one to create in interesting new acoustic and artistic spheres.

The basis for the idea is an acoustic, twelve-string sitar guitar that Kari Nieminen developed as early as the second half of the 1970's.

There is no documentation of any other acoustic sitar guitars, not even with fewer strings.

In addition to the traditional body materials, Kari Nieminen has already for years been using Finnish heat treated wood, i.e., aspen and common alder. This model has been made of these materials, as well. Heat treating stabilizes the wood and reduces its sensitivity to changes in humidity and temperature. The treatment also improves the resonance of the instrument. Finnish alder has an especially responsive sound quality as such, superior to its American



cousin. It produces clear and freely resonating balanced bass, middle and treble ranges.

The material is at the same time both new and ecological. Compared to the traditional use of endangered tropical wood, the use of Nordic coniferous and deciduous wood is also less expensive.

As Nieminen's model is electroacoustic, he has chosen to use electrodynamic microphones. They are rarely used in string instruments. He has added a thin aluminum sheet to the the surface of the body. This solution adds new and unorthodox sound qualities to the instrument. Yet the sitar guitar has a contemporary look.

Kari Nieminen is an industrial designer who designs and builds guitars in his one-man company, Versoul. He specializes in exclusive string instruments, which have a wide international market among professional musicians. With these hi-end products, he wants to develop guitarmaking further while respecting guitar-making traditions.