

My personal approach of using the Iranian santour

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Successfully executing dynamic accidentals on the double bridges santour

Before addressing this text, I invite the reader to read, in the following order, my three previous texts:

- [Double bridges santour](#)
- [Managing sound universes on the double bridges santour](#)
- [Managing accidentals on the double bridges santour](#)

A well-executed dynamic accidental requires a combination of the following elements:

- Having prepared the bridges
- Having enough time to execute the displacement
- Doing the necessary actions with precision

Preparing the bridges

Lubricating the bridges

The luthiers of wood instruments including bridges are unanimous, the best way to lubricate bridges is to use soap. The soap should be dry (do not use liquid soap) and never pass it under water. I use the Marseille soap in cube format presented in Figure 1. This soap has a flat and large enough surface suitable for lubricating the bridges. A few frictions of the bridges on the soap, two to three times a year, is enough to ensure an easy movement of the bridges on the resonance table of the santour. Be careful to never use a liquid lubricant, that will damage the wood of the santour.



Figure 1

Removing and putting back the bridges

There are string lifters for some instruments that allow the strings to be lifted in order to easily remove the bridges and put them back in place without having to loosen the strings.

I have no knowledge of such an accessory for the santour, which is why I have imagined the use of an object that is easily found on the market. I use a medium-sized padlock, such as shown in Figure 2. Its steel shackle serves as a hook to surround the strings and its body as a handle to lift them.



Figure 2

Give yourself time to execute the displacement

I will illustrate this subject through the example of Moghadame Gerayeli that I mentioned in my text [Managing accidentals on the double bridges santour](#) (page 3 Figure 5) and of which the excerpt that we are interested in is shown below in Figure 3. Here we want to go from a Db^\wedge (D koron) to a D (D natural). The red arrow shows us the last reference to Db^\wedge used in the mordent $C-Db^\wedge-C$. The orange arrow shows us the reez (tremolo) of Bb (including its "takie" [support note], the C). During the yellow arrow, we still need the 2 mezrabs. From that moment on, we can play with the right mezrab and with our left hand liberated, proceed to change the position of the bridge.

While playing the 2 notes with the right mezarab, push the D bridge to the right position with your left hand

Play with the right mezarab and position the fingers of your left hand on the bridge

Figure 3

Do the necessary actions with precision

As illustrated in Figure 3, you must proceed in two stages:

1. As you play the Bb-Ab[^]-G motif with the right mezbab, place the thumb and the middle finger of the left hand on both sides of the white right bridge of the D string, as is shown on Figure 4. This positioning of the fingers would prevent the bridge from turning and passing under the strings during the displacement.
2. While you play the following motif, Bb-C, push the D bridge to the desired location (slightly to the right of the third mark in the way I have chosen the location of my notes - see [Managing accidentals on the double bridges santour](#) - page 3 figure 5)



Figure 4