Aboriginal Clapsticks

Aboriginal Clapsticks were once the most common and important musical instruments throughout Australia. In many areas they were often the only musical instrument, with voices providing all the melody. Clapsticks may be single and beaten against some other object (e.g. The ground, trees, weapons, bark) or paired and beaten against each other. In some areas stones are used instead of wood.

There are two basic kinds of clapsticks - Sticks and Boomerangs. Sticks are sometimes shaped according to the songs they are used for. This pair of clapsticks, which are decorated in poker work, are played by beating the smaller one against the larger one.

Boomerangs are used as clapsticks mainly in the north of Australia. They are played by beating the ends together (as pictured below).