



THE MUSIC OF CENTRAL ASIA

EDITED BY

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CHAPTER 18 *Maqom* Traditions of the Tajiks and Uzbeks

WILL SUMITS AND THEODORE LEVIN

Music scholars in Central Asia have coined the term “professional oral tradition music” to refer to a vast domain of sophisticated art song and instrumental music that has evolved over at least a millennium in a variety of local and regional “dialects” in the Eastern Mediterranean, Iraq, Iran, Azerbaijan, North Africa, and Central Asia. These geographically diverse but musically kindred traditions share broadly cognate features of musical form, melodic and rhythmic structure, aesthetics, affect, and terminology—the latter including their very names: *maqom*-*maqām*-*makam*-*muqam*-*mugham* (*maqām* in Arabic means “place,” “position,” “station”).



Jamshed Ergashev and Kamoliddin Khamdamov from the Academy of Maqom.

Photo by Sebastian Schutysler. Courtesy of Aga Khan Music Initiative.

TWO MEANINGS OF MAQOM

In music, the word *maqom* has had two principal meanings. One of these can be rendered most closely in Western music theory by the concept of “melodic mode” or “melody type.” Melodic modes figured prominently in the music of ancient Greece, and may well have existed in the music of even older civilizations—Pharaonic Egypt, ancient Babylon, Achaemenid Persia. A melodic mode is similar to a musical scale, i.e., a sequence of ascending or descending pitches that can provide the basis for melodic improvisation, extemporization, or composition. Modes are widely perceived by acculturated listeners as having the power to evoke a particular color, emotion, or affect, which arises not only from the sequence of pitches but from a specific set of conventions and constraints that collectively constitute the structure or “syntax” of the mode. For example, a mode may allow certain melodic motifs but prohibit others. It may emphasize certain scale degrees and de-emphasize others.

As the primary building blocks of melody, the *maqom* modes were a central aspect of music theory for many centuries in the Middle East and Central Asia.

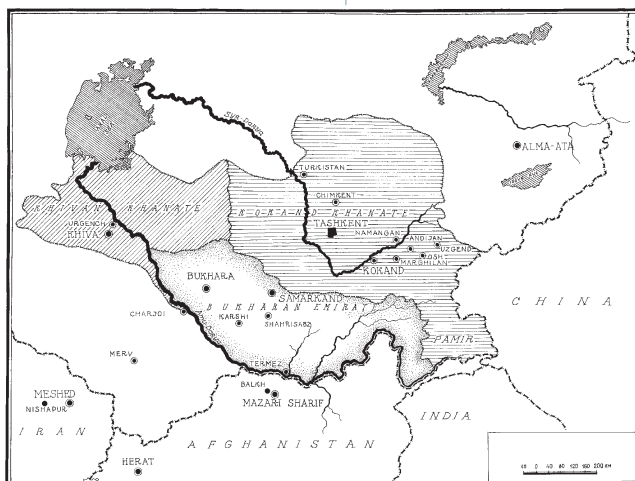
But at least since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the term *maqom* has acquired a second meaning in Central Asia. This second meaning refers to a suite of musical pieces sequentially organized by melodic mode, metrical pattern (the temporal organization of a succession of rhythmic pulses), and rhythm. Such suites came to be referred to as *maqoms*, and nowadays, when musicians in Central Asia speak about *maqoms*, they typically have in mind one or another of these suites.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF CENTRAL ASIAN MAQOM

In Central Asia, *maqom* (as it is commonly transliterated into Latin script in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) has been primarily the province of urban musicians, and the tradition of *maqom* has particularly strong historical ties to the cities of Bukhara, Khiva, and Qoqand. These cities served as the cultural and political centers, respectively, of the Bukharan Emirate, and the Khanates of Khiva and Qoqand. The power of the three contiguous city-states waxed and waned over a period of four hundred years, from the early sixteenth century until 1920, when the Bukharan Emirate and Khivan Khanate became part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the Qoqand Khanate was dissolved in 1865, and its territory absorbed into Russian Turkestan). The Bukharan emirs and the khans of Khiva and Qoqand supported retinues of master artisans, craftsmen, and entertainers, among whom musicians played a prominent role under the patronage of certain rulers. As these musical masters transmitted their knowledge and skills to talented disciples, the performance of *maqom* in each of the three city-states evolved over time into three distinct musical traditions, each with its own characteristic performance style and local repertoire.

The three, primarily urban, principal traditions of Central Asian *maqom* are as follows:

- Shashmaqom (six *maqoms*): most strongly associated with the city of Bukhara, and also performed by musicians in nearby Samarkand.
- Alti-yarim Maqom (six and a half *maqoms*): associated with the city of Khiva and also performed by musicians in the nearby city of Urgench. Khiva and Urgench are the largest cities in Khorezm, a culturally autonomous region in the northwest of Uzbekistan, and the Alti-yarim maqom is often called the Khorezm or Khorezmian Maqom.



The three khanates of Transoxania around 1850.



- Chormaqom (four *maqoms*): associated with the territory of the Qoqand Khanate, which included the Ferghana Valley and the city of Tashkent, now the capital of the nation of Uzbekistan. This *maqom* tradition is also widely referred to as the “Ferghana-Tashkent Maqom”—a designation often used nowadays as a synonym for Chormaqom.

Though the three Central Asian *maqom* traditions have their own distinctive features, they share many common characteristics of musical form and overall sound. For example, the form in which songs are composed is very similar, and the same kinds of musical instruments are used. Moreover, the three *maqom* traditions exemplify aesthetic ideals that were widely shared by musical connoisseurs in Bukhara, Khiva, Qoqand, Samarkand, Khujand, and other centers of urban culture, and the persistence of these aesthetic ideals reaffirms the status of *maqom* as “classic” or “classical” music. The individual songs that presently compose the *maqom* suites have arguably been in the repertoire of *maqom* performers for well over a century, and reflect a musical aesthetic that is even older.

The *maqom* traditions are also a part of the classical literary heritage of Central Asia. The poetry of Mavlana Balkhi (better known as Rumi), Hafez, Shams-i Tabrizi, Jami, Hiloli, Saʿdi (Saadi), Sayyido, Yusuf Andijani, Bedel (also Bedil or Bidel), Navoʻi (also Navāʻi or Nawāʻ ī), Fuzuli, Sabri, and many other great poets is set to music in the *maqom* suites. In order to properly match the metrical scheme of texts composed in poetic genres such as *ghazal* and *rubāʻī* with the metrical scheme of the melody to which it is sung, singers must possess a thorough understanding of the complex system of verse meters known as *aruz*. Indeed, many of the musical rhythms that shape melodic form in the *maqom* suites developed alongside the verse meters

Masters of Persian Mystical Poetry: Rumi and Hafez

Khwaja Shams ad-Din Muhammad Hafez-e Shirazi (c. 1320–1389), known simply as Hafez, was born in Shiraz, a cultural center of medieval Persia (modern Iran). Hafez, a devout Sufi, is thought to have written over 5,000 poems, whose overarching theme is longing for union with the Divine. He is revered in the Persian-speaking world for his sublime lyricism and mystical symbolism as well as for the complex puns that permeate

his poetry. Generations of singers have set Hafez’s poems to music, and in Central Asia, texts attributed to Hafez appear frequently in the repertoire of traditional singers in Badakhshan as well as in the vocal suites of the Tajik Shashmaqom.

Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207–1273), known to his followers as Mevlana (Our master), produced a prolific corpus of poems that express the Sufi ideal of mystical union with the Divine. Born in Balkh, in what is now

northern Afghanistan, Rumi spent most of his life in the Anatolian city of Konya, where he is buried. Following his death, his disciples created the Mevlevi Sufi order, which cultivated the practice of mystical dance and music as a central element of *zikr*, the Sufi ceremony of remembrance. The appeal of Rumi’s poetry has reached across religions and cultures, with translations of his poems appearing in many languages.



of *aruz* to accommodate the performance of sung texts. Thus the rhythmic pulse of melody and that of sung poetry are inextricably intertwined in *maqom* performance.

Aruz has been a core element of classical Arabic, Persian, and Turkic-language poetry for more than a millennium, and is still part of a living artistic practice. Poets composing text within the *aruz* system draw from a complex of quantitative meters in which syllables are classified by vowel length (long or short) and linked together into poetic feet characterized by a fixed pattern and specific number of long and short syllables (usually three or four). Poetic feet are in turn sequenced into lines of text according to the conventions of one or another poetic form. Analogues of *aruz* exist in the quantitative verse meters of classical Greek and Latin poetry, such as iambic pentameter and hexameter. (In English-language hexameter or pentameter, rhythm is expressed through the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables rather than long and short vowel lengths, as in classical verse.)

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MAQOM IN CENTRAL ASIA

Music has a long history of patronage within the courts of the khans and emirs who ruled over the Central Asian city-states. Patronage of urban music and musicians reached its peak during the fifteenth century as a result of socio-economic policies that allowed for tax exemptions, land grants, and pious endowments to be given to artists, musicians, and scholars. Husayn Bayqara (ruled 1469–1506), the last ruler of the Timurid dynasty in Central Asia, whose court was in Herat, provided an ideal model of royal patronage of the arts for later rulers in Central Asia as well as for the royal courts of the Ottoman and Mughal empires. Husayn Bayqara's patronage of the arts was so generous that several of the poets and musicians in his court and ministry themselves became wealthy patrons. The great poet 'Ali Shir Navo'i (1444–1501), for one, was a minister and close advisor to Husayn Bayqara, and Navo'i also became an important patron of the arts and music and contributed significantly to the development of *maqom* practice and theory.

During the Timurid and subsequent Shaybanid era, many theoretical treatises were written about the “science” of music. These theoretical treatises discussed melodic modes, song genres, rhythms, and other aspects of music from both a theoretical and practical perspective. While treatises on music theory played an important role in developing the conceptual basis of melodic mode from the thirteenth through the seventeenth centuries, theoretical treatises ceased to be written after the seventeenth century. Adumbrations of this cultural turn were apparent during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when treatises on music began to focus increasingly on musical practice rather than on the “science” of music.



Musical entertainment at a scholar's house. Folio from a late-sixteenth-century manuscript of the *Akhlaq-e Nasiri* (*Ethics of Nasir*) by Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 1274).

From the collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan. Courtesy of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.



The *tanbur* is the fundamental accompanying instrument for performances of Shashmaqom.

In the seventeenth century, the performance of musical suites consisting of pieces representing different *maqoms* (i.e., *maqom* in the sense of “melodic mode”) assumed a position of cultural importance because such suites exemplified in musical practice the intellectual prestige of music theory itself. In the seventeenth century, these modal suites were known as the *chahor shadd* (four suites), each of which consisted of a collection of pieces that progressed through a sequence of several different melodic modes. The *chahor shadd* were widely performed, and it is likely that they eventually led to the formation of the *maqom* suites during the eighteenth century. Despite a paucity of sources from the eighteenth century, one can infer that the performance tradition of the four *shadd* continued to expand and develop during the seventeenth century, and that at some point these suites began to be referred to as *maqom*.

The absence of musical treatises in eighteenth-century Central Asia reflects a decline in the patronage of artists and musicians, which may have been the result of the general political turmoil and instability of the period. It may further reflect the imposition of a more conservative Islamic rule that came to question the permissibility of music as a profession. While music continued to be played and to develop throughout the eighteenth century, it was only in the nineteenth century that it re-emerged more fully from the shadows.

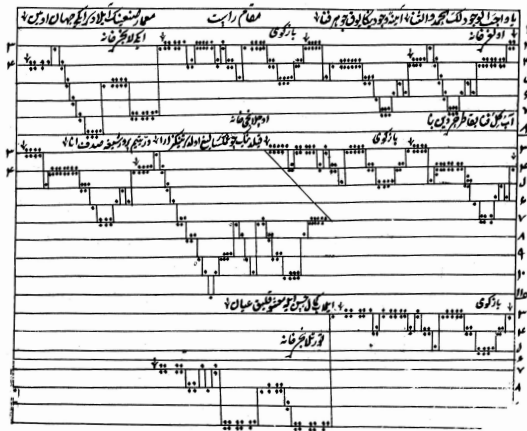
The nineteenth-century musical literature of Bukhara, Samarkand, and Khiva revolves around the practical tradition of *maqom* performance, with scant attention to the erstwhile focus on the “science of music.” Many treatises were composed in the form of compendiums of poetry, called *bayāz*, which contain poetic texts that particular performers set to the melodies of the *maqom* suites. Some of these *bayāz* compiled in Bukhara in the early nineteenth century are the first documents that refer to the Bukharan repertoire of six *maqom* suites as Shashmaqom: “six *maqoms*.”

Meanwhile, in the city of Khiva, musicians in the service of the khan in the second half of the nineteenth century developed a unique system of written musical tablature specifically designed for the performance of the *Alti-yarim Maqom* suites on the *tanbur* (long-necked lute). This *tanbur* notation represents the first effort to develop a standardized written notation system for music in Central Asia, and provides the first evidence of actual melodic content in the nineteenth-century *maqom* suites. Yet, despite the availability of music notation, Central Asian *maqom* music continued to be transmitted orally well into the twentieth century. Oral transmission was facilitated by the abiding cultural prestige of the *ustod-shogird* (master-disciple) model of musical pedagogy in which aspiring musicians depended on older masters to initiate them into the subtleties and intricacies of singing and playing instruments.

The *maqom* traditions of the nineteenth century were carried into the twentieth century by a constellation of musicians who are remembered today as patriarchs

An example of 19th-century *tanbur* notation for the Alti-yarim Maqom. The notation is read from right to left. Horizontal lines represent the musical scale of the *tanbur*. Dots indicate where to place fingers of the left hand on the neck of the *tanbur*. Vertical lines are provided for ease of reading and don't represent a musical sign. The poetic text corresponding to each line of *tanbur* accompaniment is written above the line.

Photo courtesy of Otanazar Matyakubov, from manuscript compiled in the 1920s in Khiva by the poet, musician, and calligrapher Muhammad Kamil Devani (1887–1938).

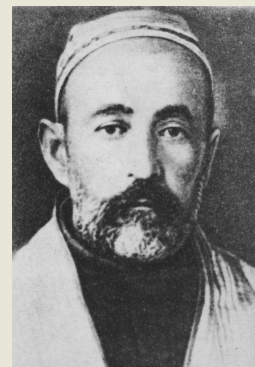


Early Sound Recordings from Central Asia

The history of sound recording in Central Asia dates to the first decade of the twentieth century, when recently founded record companies based in Europe and the United States sent sound engineers to record well-known musicians in Asia, Africa, and Latin America with the aim of building local markets both for records and for the gramophones and cylinder phonographs used to play them. These early recordings—many of which have been preserved in archives and personal collections—offer a remarkable portal to the global sounds of a bygone era. In Central Asia, recordings released by the London-based Gramophone Company and Paris-based Pathé Brothers Company illustrate pre-Soviet performance styles that were later transformed under the influence of Soviet culture policies.

Political turmoil in Central Asia curtailed recording activities in the years surrounding the Russian Revolution of 1917, and recording did not recommence in earnest until the 1930s, by which time the entire Soviet recording industry was managed

by a state-controlled monopoly. In the 1930s, however, many master musicians who had come of age in the late nineteenth century were still active, and records from this era preserve their voices with remarkable clarity. One of these musicians was



Domla Halim Ibadov.

Courtesy of Aleksandr Jumaev.

Early Sound Recordings from Central Asia (CONTINUED)

Domla Halim Ibadov (1878–1940). Domla Halim, as he was known (“domla” means teacher or master), learned the art of Shashmaqom from his neighbor Sharafkhan, an old singer in the court of Emir Alim Khan, the last emir of Bukhara, and from Ota Jalol Nasirov (1845–1928), who

served as head court musician to the last three Bukharan emirs, and who was a key figure in the transmission of Shashmaqom. Domla Halim’s 1935 recording of “Navruzi Sabo,” a classic piece from the Shashmaqom, is reproduced here. In the recording, Domla Halim sings alone to the

spare accompaniment of *tanbur*, played by Shohnazar Sohibov, and frame drum—a notable contrast to the ensemble style of Shashmaqom performance that became standard during the Soviet era.

LISTEN

Example 18.1. “Navruzi Sabo,” performed by Domla Halim Ibadov, vocal and *dutar*, and Shohnazar Sohibov, *tanbur*, with unknown *doira* player. The six-minute recording is evenly divided into two sections of three minutes, each corresponding to the length of one side of the record. Musicians in the era of 78 rpm records were accustomed to adapting performances to the constraints of the three-minute side. In this recording, Domla Halim ends the first part of “Navruzi Sabo” precisely at the three-minute mark. The record was produced at the Noginsk record factory in Noginsk, Russia. The number 909 on the label dates the recording to 1935 though the label design is one associated with records pressed by the Noginsk factory in 1939–1940. While the label text notes that Domla Halim both sings and plays the *dutar*, the *dutar* is inaudible. Domla Halim may simply have held the *dutar* during the recording session and intermittently strummed or plucked it lightly to orient himself to the proper pitches.

and consummate masters of *maqom* performance. These musicians witnessed and participated in one of the most far-reaching social and cultural transformations of the modern era: the consolidation of Soviet rule over the vast Eurasian colonial empire pieced together by the Russian czars, and the rapid rise of the Soviet Union as a world power. Unlike other imperial powers, whose rulers exercised their authority indirectly through control of local political proxies while leaving indigenous culture more or less intact, the architects of Soviet cultural policies viewed arts and culture as an obligatory and essential domain of political intervention. Even the most remote villages and settlements of Central Asia were not immune from the efforts of Soviet “culture workers” to reorganize artistic and cultural practices according to priorities mandated by Soviet culture policies. One of the most visible of these priorities was the so-called “struggle against the past,” which, by its very definition, challenged the authority of tradition in all domains of cultural life, including music (see chapter 1).

Performer Profile: Barno Ishakova (pronounced Is'hakova)

Barno Ishakova (1927–2001) was one of the leading Shashmaqom singers of the 20th century and remains an enduring model for female performers of Tajik and Uzbek *maqom* repertoires. Ishakova was born into a Bukharan Jewish family in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and later moved to Tajikistan, where she built her singing career, performing as a member of the Shashmaqom Ensemble created in 1947 under the aegis of Dushanbe's state radio station, and teaching at the Mirzo Tursun-Zade Institute of Arts. In 1992, Ishakova emigrated to Israel. Though Barno Ishakova was not the first female singer to break into

the traditionally male cultural space of Shashmaqom performance, she became the most revered. The warm lyricism, broad tonal range, delicate ornamentation, and sheer dynamic power that characterize her vocal style, combined with her refined expression of the poetry she sang made her a musical icon among connoisseurs of Shashmaqom music—widely imitated, but never equaled.

A framed photo of Barno Ishakova wearing medals she was awarded for artistic achievement hangs in the Tajik National Conservatory.



While Soviet cultural policies radically reconfigured popular culture, concert life, music education, and music scholarship, *maqom* masters continued to perform their traditional repertoire in private gatherings of friends and at festive family celebrations. Beginning in the late 1940s, and continuing into the 1950s, the performance of *maqom* began to reemerge into official cultural life with the establishment of a *maqom* ensemble under the aegis of the state-controlled radio stations in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (1947), and Tashkent, Uzbekistan (1958). Meanwhile, musicologists began to transcribe *maqom* music from the performance of the most authoritative master musicians and publish systematic collections of the various *maqom* repertoires in Western staff notation. These publications created canonical versions of *maqom* music that became the basis for the study and performance of *maqom* traditions during the remaining years of the Soviet era as well as in the post-Soviet era.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, *maqom* music has become a highly visible symbol of national cultural identity in both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In 2008, UNESCO inscribed Shashmaqom music on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on behalf of both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.¹ Musicians and music scholars have prepared new redactions of several *maqom* repertoires (see “Further Reading, Listening, Viewing” section on the companion website), and in Tajikistan, an academy was opened to train a new generation of musical leaders in the performance of *maqom* music.



Title page of Viktor Uspensky's 1924 edition of the Shashmaqom. The title reads “Six Musical Poems (Makom) Transcribed by V. A. Uspensky in Bukhara.”

Courtesy of Aleksandr Djumaev.

The Academy of Maqom

ABDUVALI ABDURASHIDOV

These days, no one in Tajikistan needs to be convinced of the extraordinary importance of Shashmaqom—the classical music heritage of the Tajiks and also the Uzbeks. Much of the credit for this should go to the president of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon. His understanding, vision, and decisiveness in creating a new approach to the Shashmaqom have energized our society at the beginning of the twenty-first century. At a time when the Shashmaqom seemed to be fading, the president took sensible and timely steps to provide support. He funded new artistic and educational organizations, created a special “Day of Shashmaqom,” and mandated the organization of children’s studios throughout the country devoted to the study of Shashmaqom.

Like other forms of classical music in the East, Shashmaqom was traditionally taught and learned through a system of “master-disciple” (*ustod-shogird*) oral pedagogy. The master-disciple system not only facilitated the transmission of knowledge and experience but also provided a framework for musical creativity and evolution. Beginning in the late 1920s, however, Soviet cultural strategists introduced European musical forms and genres into Central Asia—symphony, opera, ballet, oratorio—together with a system of music education in which students learned music from notation, rather than by ear. The Soviet Union’s official cultural



The Academy of Maqom models itself on an older ideal of Islamic learning, in which the study of music is inseparable from the study of poetry, prosody, metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics.

Photo by Sebastian Schutyser. Courtesy of Aga Khan Music Initiative.

establishment viewed this new musical life as a promising substitute for “backward” indigenous music. Now we understand that this model was misguided. Classical music from Asia and Europe both have their own unique qualities, their own self-contained worlds of thought and feeling. And how fortunate are those who have a place in their soul for *maqom* as well as Mozart!

The erosion of the traditional master-disciple system had an adverse effect on our classical music, and it was the idea of reanimating this system in a contemporary setting that inspired me to found the Academy of Maqom. I observed that in Iran, India,

Azerbaijan, and other Asian nations, many master musicians have their own schools, and students are free to choose whichever school best suits them. I wanted to create a school where students would learn not only to perform *maqoms* of the past but to master the principles and techniques that would allow them to compose new *maqom* music. In the academy, I emphasize that the seeds of musical creativity and evolution are contained in the knowledge passed on to us by our musical forebears. A fundamental aspect of the academy’s curriculum is the study of *maqom* as a musical cycle or suite. I learned from my own experience that performing and

The Academy of Maqom (CONTINUED)

listening to the *maqom* as an integral cycle can lead to an entirely different understanding and experience of the music—to a kind of self-purification. You cannot get that experience simply by listening to individual pieces extracted from the cycle, which is how *maqom* is mostly performed these days.

In the twenty-first century, much has changed, but traditions more than a thousand years old continue to thrill and delight us. They reflect the variety of the world and enrich our ability to transmit to one another our most beautiful and precious feelings and thoughts, while filling us with optimism

and hope for the future. The art of Shashmaqom has emerged on the world stage and is enjoyed by listeners in many countries of Europe, North America, and Asia. The Academy of Maqom is proud to contribute to the preservation, development, and dissemination of this remarkable art.

THREE PRINCIPAL FORMS OF CENTRAL ASIAN MAQOM

The following section describes each of the three principal forms of Central Asian *maqom* and illustrates them with listening examples.

Shashmaqom

Shashmaqom takes its name from the six *maqom* suites that constitute the core of the classical repertoire most closely tied to Bukhara, which is also performed in Samarkand and across northern Tajikistan. The first mention of Shashmaqom occurs in a musical treatise written in Bukhara in the first half of the nineteenth century. Even in this earliest description of Shashmaqom, it appears to be a well-developed tradition that probably dates back at least to the eighteenth century, and resembles the earlier performance tradition of the modally organized *chahor shadd* (described above) that became widespread during the seventeenth century. The poetry set to the melodies of the various pieces that make up the Shashmaqom suites was most frequently drawn from the Tajik-Persian literary heritage, but many Shashmaqom singers have been bilingual in Tajik and Uzbek, and have also sung poetic texts written in Uzbek or Chagatay, a Turkic language that is a precursor of modern Uzbek.

Each of the six Shashmaqom suites consists of some forty individual pieces. Performed in its entirety, each suite can last up to several hours, but opportunities for the performance of an entire *maqom* are rare today. Performers typically perform individual pieces or mini-suites created from the *maqom* repertoire. The six principal suites have also spawned several secondary suites, which are most likely a product of the mid-nineteenth century.

The melodic structure and development of the Shashmaqom suites is closely linked to the *tanbur*, the long-necked plucked lute on which Shashmaqom singers typically accompany themselves. The tuning system of the *tanbur* and the

arrangement of frets on the instrument's neck define the melodic contours of the Shashmaqom repertoire, making it likely that the performance of Shashmaqom has been linked to the *tanbur* since the earliest stages of the Shashmaqom's development.

Each Shashmaqom suite includes both instrumental and vocal sections. A *maqom* begins with the instrumental section, which usually consists of six to ten instrumental compositions in distinct rhythmic patterns. Following the instrumental section, the vocal section of the *maqom* begins. The main vocal musical compositions in a *maqom* suite are often joined together by brief songs called *tarona*, which are typically sung in unison by two or more vocalists. Through the course of a *maqom* suite, the melody progresses through several contrasting melodic modes, thus giving each suite its own distinct color and emotional character. The melodic development of a *maqom* suite often follows an ascending pattern in which the musical compositions rise to higher pitches before returning to the pitch in which the *maqom* suite first began. Some suites also integrate compositions that reside in the lower register of the melodic mode. The pattern of gradual ascent and descent, and eventual return is mirrored in the melodic structure of individual compositions within each suite.

LISTEN

Example 18.2. “Talqincha-i sabo,” performed by the Academy of Maqom. From *Invisible Face of the Beloved: Classical Music of the Tajiks and Uzbeks*, vol. 2 of *Music of Central Asia* (SFR, 2006), track 15.

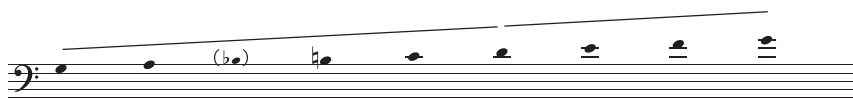
“Talqincha-i sabo” is a song from the Shashmaqom suite Maqom-i Rost. In the recording featured in example 18.2, the performers are members of a small ensemble consisting of seven singers accompanied by the *tanbur* (plucked long-necked lute), *dutar* (strummed long-necked lute), *sato* (bowed long-necked lute), and *doira* (frame drum). The word *talqincha* in the song title refers to a reoccurring rhythmic pattern or cycle, called *usul*, while *sabo* refers to a melodic mode. “Talqincha-i sabo” thus means “a song in the rhythmic pattern *talqin* composed in the melodic mode *sabo*.”

Listen to the instrumental introduction at the beginning of “Talqincha-i sabo” (0:00–0:26) and attune your ear to the percussive sound of the *doira* (frame drum), whose player beats out the *usul* pattern. One cycle of *usul* consists of five drum strokes, which are conventionally transcribed according to the scheme shown below. Strokes to the center of the drum, which produces a lower pitch, are placed below the solid line, while strokes to the rim, which produces a higher pitch, are placed above the solid line.



Talqin is an example of an asymmetrical *usul* in which regularly reoccurring groups of beats have uneven length. In the case of *talqin*, the first two drum strokes belong to one group, and the second three drum strokes belong to another group (the two groups are indicated in the time signature as $3/8 + 3/4$). Asymmetrical rhythmic patterns occur not only in the Shashmaqom, but in other *maqom* repertoires, notably Uyghur *muqam* and Ottoman *makam*, where combinations of binary and ternary rhythmic groups are classified as *aksak*: “limping” (see chapter 19). So-called “limping” rhythms are also common in various genres of folk music of Turkey, the Balkans, West Asia, and Central Asia, perhaps revealing an old genetic relationship between what are now geographically disparate repertoires.²

As for the melodic component of “Talqincha-i sabo,” the song is composed in a melodic mode called *sabo*, which is one of several different modes that occur in the “Rost” suite of the Shashmaqom. The basic scale of this mode is illustrated below:



Musicians conceive of *sabo* not as an octave scale, but as the combination of a pentachord and a tetrachord. The lower five pitches create the pentachord, and the upper four pitches create the tetrachord. The highest pitch of the pentachord is the same as the lowest pitch of the tetrachord, thus providing a “hinge” between the pentachord and the tetrachord.

The third scale degree occurs both as $B\sharp$ and $B\flat$ —in ascending phrases, it is typically sung as $B\sharp$ and in descending phrases, it is sung as $B\flat$. The sixth scale degree, E, is also sometimes sung as $E\flat$ in descending phrases. The juxtaposition of natural (\natural) and flatted (\flat) versions of the third and sixth scale degrees contributes to the distinctive modal character or “color” of *sabo*. (The performance in example 18.2 is pitched approximately a semitone lower than the pitches indicated in the schematic scale above. As long as intervals between successive pitches are maintained, the actual pitch level at which the piece is performed may shift up or down, depending on the preference of performers, which typically depends on the pitch level at which their voices and instruments sound best.)

The poetic text of “Talqincha-i sabo” is attributed to Hafez and speaks of the sublime joys of love, and the pain caused by separation from the beloved. The song’s melody is set to eight lines of poetry consisting of four couplets, or



two quatrains. Each quatrain is taken from a different poem. The verse form of both quatrains is *rubāʿī* (plural form: *rubāʿīyat*, or *rubaiyat*), a canonical genre of Persian poetry, later adopted by poets writing in other languages, whose most common rhyme scheme is aaba. This is indeed the rhyme scheme of the two *rubāʿī* quatrains that make up the text of *Talqincha-i sabo*, which is transcribed and translated below (the final word of each line is in boldface to show the rhyme scheme).

Rubāʿī is characterized not only by its end rhyme scheme but by adherence to one of a set of standard *rubāʿī* verse meters that are part of the *aruz* system described earlier. The verse meter for each line is indicated by short (˘) and long (–) marks separated into poetic feet by a diagonal slash (/). The first four lines each have a slightly different verse meter while lines 5–8 all share a single meter. The conventional name of each meter appears to its right (these names are in Arabic, for *aruz* originated as a prosodic system for Arabic poetry).

– – ˘ / ˘ – – – / – – – / – (Hazaj musammani axrabi
 (1) *Rū-ze, ki fi-roq az tu du-ram so-zad,* muxannaki abtar)

– – ˘ / ˘ – ˘ – / ˘ – – – / – (Hazaj musammani axrabi
 (2) *Vaz haj-ri ru-khi tu no-sa-bu-ram so-zad,* maqbuzi abtar)

– – ˘ / ˘ – ˘ – / ˘ – – ˘ / ˘ – (Hazaj musammani axrabi
 (3) *Gar chash-m ba sū-yi di-ga-re bo-z ku-nam,* makfufi majhuf)

– – ˘ / ˘ – – ˘ / ˘ – – – / – (Hazaj musammani axrabi
 (4) *Haq-qi na-ma-ki hus-ni tu kū-ram so-zad.* makfufi abtar)

– – ˘ / ˘ – ˘ – / ˘ – – – / – (Hazaj musammani
 (5) *Man ban-da-yi on ka-sam, ki shav-qe do-rad,* axrabi maqbuzi abtar)

(6) *Bar gar-da-ni khud zi ish-q, tav-qe do-rad.*

(7) *Tu laz-za-ti ish-qu o-shi-qī kay do-nī?*

(8) *In bo-da ka-si khū-rad, ki zav-qe do-rad.*

(1) The day when separation shall cut me off from you,

(2) When absence of your face shall intensify my longing for you,

(3) If I shall open my eyes to behold another,

(4) I would transgress loyalty to you, and for this crime, your beauty shall strike me blind.

(5) I am a slave to the one who is charged by love's longing, and its ache,

(6) The one who wears the token of love's bondage around his neck, as others would a necklace.

(7) What do you know of the lover's joy, happiness, and bliss?

(8) Only one who has refined taste drinks this wine, but the intoxication all others will miss!



As set to music in the song, each line of poetry corresponds to a self-contained melodic segment—or, to use an analogy to language, a complete melodic “sentence.” As the song progresses from one line of poetry to the next, some poetic lines are set to a melodic segment that has previously been heard, while other lines of poetry are set to new melodic segments. Following most lines of poetic text, the singers add additional vocables (sounds or words without a conventional meaning), such as “o,” or words such as *yoram* (“my friend”), *jona* (“soul”), *nozanimam* (“beautiful one”), *sarvinozam* (“my cypress”—a metaphor for a slender figure)—all of which imply a mystical reference to the Divine. These extra syllables stretch the vocal lines so that they correspond to the length of the melodic segments, which tend to be a little longer. Part of the art of setting a poem to music in the Shashmaqom is to arrange the text so that long and short syllables of text are matched with long and short musical notes.

Table 18.1 shows the relationship between lines of text and melodic segments (columns 2 and 3 in the table). Melodic segments identified by the same number are identical, or almost identical. The terms in column 4 designate sequential structural sections of the song that each play a specific role in the development of the melody: *sarkhat* is the opening section, sung in a low tessitura (vocal range); *dunahr* begins an octave above *sarkhat*, propelling the melody higher, before descending to the initial low register; *awj-i Zebopari* introduces a melody composed in a different mode and marks the melodic and emotional culmination of the song (*awj* means “apogee” or “zenith”); *furovard* (“descent”) modulates back to the original melodic mode, *sabo*, and descends to the original low vocal register, bringing the song to a conclusion.


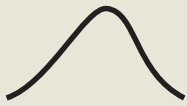




Listen to “Talqincha-i sabo” and try to hear the beginning and end of each melodic segment and each structural section (you can refer to the time code in the left column if these beginning and ending points are unclear). Listen for melodic repetition where it is indicated in the table.

Each of the melodic segments that compose “Talqincha-i sabo” can be described by a contour that represents the rise and fall of successive pitches in the melody. These pitches can move in one of three ways:

1. Ascending
2. Descending
3. Maintaining same pitch level

Now listen to “Talqincha-i sabo” again, focusing on the melodic contour of each segment. Listen for the way the melody ascends and descends, and how it does so. Does it move in a straight line? Or are there zigzags, twists, and turns?

TABLE 18.1. RELATIONSHIP OF TEXT, MELODY, AND MELODIC CONTOUR IN “TALQINCHA-I SABO”

TIME CODE	TEXT LINE	MELODIC SEGMENT	STRUCTURAL SECTION OF SONG	MELODIC CONTOUR
0:00–0:26	Instrumental Introduction	1	Sarkhat	
0:26–0:53	1	1		
0:53–1:21	2	1		
1:21–1:47	3	2	Dunahr	
1:47–2:14	4	3		
2:14–2:53	5	4	Awj-i Zebopari	
2:53–3:33	6	5		
3:33–4:01	7	6	Furovard	
4:01–4:27	8	3		

Just as each melodic segment has a contour that describes its movement through melodic “space,” the entire piece also has a contour that represents its overall melodic shape. Like many songs in the Shashmaqom suites, the melodic contour of “Talqincha-i sabo” looks like an arc:



Now listen once more to “Talqincha-i sabo,” this time focusing on its overall melodic shape. Note how the initial pitch of some melodic segments is higher than the final pitch of the segment that precedes it.

Analyzing the process by which musicians set poetry to music in the Shashmaqom shows that this process is a highly artistic one rooted in a thorough knowledge of melodic and rhythmic elements of Shashmaqom as well as the *aruz* system of quantitative verse meters. The ability to perform and ultimately to compose new music according to the rules and constraints of *maqom*, *usul*, and *aruz* is what was cultivated in the traditional *ustod-shogird* pedagogy of Shashmaqom.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. After which melodic segment(s) does the subsequent melodic segment begin from a higher initial pitch?
2. In which line of poetic text does the song reach the highest pitch level?
3. Based on your experience of listening to the performance while following the long and short syllable markings of the *aruz* verse meter in the transcription, would you say that the singers consistently align short and long rhythmic values in the music with syllables scanned as short and long in the *aruz* pattern, or are there inconsistencies? If so, to what do you attribute them?

ALTI-YARIM MAQOM OF KHOREZM

The *maqom* suites rooted in the culturally autonomous region of Khorezm, in northwestern Uzbekistan, have been called Alti-yarim Maqom (six and a half *maqoms*) because, in addition to six suites that include both an instrumental and vocal section, the Alti-yarim Maqom has a partial seventh *maqom* with only an instrumental section—the “half” of the six and a half *maqoms*. In Khorezm, the Alti-yarim Maqom occupies a social and musical niche analogous to that of the Shashmaqom in Bukhara as a much-respected tradition at the center of what is commonly glossed as “classical” music. Indeed, the two repertoires appear to be closely related. Written sources and oral tradition both attest that in the early nineteenth century, a well-known musician from Khiva named Niyozjon Khoja brought the Shashmaqom tradition from Bukhara to Khorezm. While studying in Bukhara, Niyozjon Khoja learned the Shashmaqom suites in their entirety, and when he eventually returned to Khiva, he began to pass the tradition on to his students. Some of these students not only performed the repertoire they had learned from Niyozjon Khoja but also created their own original compositions. Among them are the instrumental pieces that constitute the “half” *maqom* in the Alti-yarim Maqom: Panjgoh. Table 18.2 shows the names of the *maqom* suites in the Bukharan Shashmaqom and Khorezm Alti-yarim Maqom, listed in their traditional performance order.

TABLE 18.2. SEQUENCE OF MAQOM SUITES IN SHASHMAQOM AND ALTI-YARIM MAQOM

BUKHARAN SHASHMAQOM	KHOREZM ALTI-YARIM MAQOM
Buzruk	Rost
Rost	Buzruk
Navo	Navo
Dugoh	Dugoh
Segoh	Segoh
Iroq	Iroq
	Panjgoh

With the exception of Panjgoh, the names of the suites in the Shashmaqom and Alti-yarim Maqom are identical, however, the specific songs and instrumental pieces that compose the suites are largely different in the two traditions.³

The *maqom* tradition continued to develop in Khiva, acquiring its own local color, repertoire of songs and instrumental pieces, and performance techniques. In the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth centuries, the musicians of Khiva sang Persian-Tajik poetic texts to the musical performance of the Shashmaqom suites, but because Khiva was located in the heart of the Turkic-speaking world, *maqom* performers gradually began to sing lyrics drawn from the works of poets who wrote in a variety of Turkic literary languages and dialects, such as Navo'i, Ogohi, Mashrab, and Fuzuli.

While the “six and a half” *maqom* suites of Khorezm include several hundred individual pieces, there are also several smaller groups of suites created for specific solo instruments. One such group of instrumental suites is performed on the *dutar*, and is known as *dutar maqomlari*. Another group is performed on the *surnai*, a loud clarinet best known for its use in festive celebrations. These instrumental pieces are called *surnai maqomlari*. Although the instrument-specific *maqom* repertoires share features of melodic mode and formal structure with the Alti-yarim Maqom, their actual melodies are different, and thus they constitute a distinct *maqom* tradition.

LISTEN

Example 18.3. “Muqaddima-i segoh,” performed by Farhod Davletov (vocal and *tar*), accompanied by Shuhrat Razaqov (*dutar*), Habibulla Kurambaev (*doira*), and Murod Norkuziev (*ghijak*). From *In the Shrine of the Heart: Popular Classics from Bukhara and Beyond*, vol. 7 of *Music of Central Asia* (SFR, 2010), track 7.



“Muqaddima-i segoh” is a well-known song in the Khorezmian *Alti-yarim* Maqom tradition—specifically, in the suite *Segoh* (see table 18.2, above). *Muqaddima* means “introduction” or “prologue,” and *segoh* is the name of the principal melodic mode in the eponymous suite, *Segoh*. Thus “Muqaddima-i segoh” means “Introduction to the suite *Segoh*” or “Introduction to the melodic mode *segoh*.” The basic scale of *segoh* is illustrated below:



As in melodic type *sabo*, melodic type *segoh* includes a scale degree (in *segoh*, the sixth) that may be rendered either as a natural or flatted pitch (in this case, B \flat or B \natural). Both pitch options are used in ascending as well as descending melodic motifs.

Farhod Davletov, the vocalist whose gripping performance of “Muqaddima” is presented in example 18.3, sings lyrics from a *ghazal* by Feruz Khan, the last ruler of the Khanate of Khiva, who was an avid poet and musician as well as a great supporter of artists and musicians. True to the *ghazal* genre, the theme of the poem revolves around love, beauty, and longing. The *ghazal*’s Uzbek text is transliterated and translated below. Note the end rhyme scheme, which is a defining feature of the *ghazal* genre: aa ba ca da and so on.

<p><i>Gul yuzing ochib, ei gul, majlisim guliston qil,</i> <i>Mehri orazing uzra kokiling parishon qil.</i></p>	<p>Unveiling your face, oh rose, turn my gathering into a garden, Dishevel your hair like clouds around the sun of your face.</p>
<p><i>Ilkingga olib soghar, nosh etib mayigulrang,</i> <i>Jonfizo tabassumdin lablaringni khandon qil.</i></p>	<p>Taking a cup in your hands and drinking rose-colored wine, Put a smile on your lips, which torment my soul.</p>
<p><i>Kozinga chekib surma, yuzinga urib ghoza,</i> <i>Lola birla nargisin ul ikkovga hayron qil.</i></p>	<p>Adorning your eyelashes with <i>surma</i>, and your face with powder, Make them the envy of the tulip and the narcissus.</p>
<p><i>Hasrat otiga kuysin qomating korub shamshod,</i> <i>Qaddi nozparvardin noz ila khiromon qil.</i></p>	<p>Let boxwood burn with jealousy from seeing you, Make your walk as tender as a tree in the wind.</p>



<p><i>Lutfetib agar yoring kelsa bazmingga, Feruz, Bu aziz joningni maqdamiga qurbon qil.</i></p>	<p>If your beloved comes to your feast out of politeness, oh Feruz, Then sacrifice your dear life to her steps.</p>
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“Muqaddima-i segoh,” like “Talqincha-i sabo,” can be divided into structural sections that distinguish successive blocks of melodic activity, as illustrated in table 18.3.

The brief *daromad* is repeated several times throughout the piece and introduces the melodic phrase to which the first line of text is sung. The first two lines of text and their accompanying melody constitute the *sarkhat*, and it is this section that establishes the melodic and poetic themes of the piece. The next section, *miyonkhat*, begins an octave higher than the initial pitch of the *sarkhat* (the *miyonkhat* section was absent in “Talqincha-i sabo”—a rare departure from the typical formal structure of a Central Asian *maqom* song). The *dunasr* section repeats the melody introduced in the *sarkhat* section, but is sung one octave higher. Following *dunasr*, the vocalist stretches to reach the *awj*, the highest point of the melodic line, which serves as the melodic and rhythmic culmination of the entire piece. After the *awj*, the melody gradually descends in the *furovard* toward its initial starting point, where the piece ends.

FERGHANA-TASHKENT MAQOM (CHORMAQOM)

The Ferghana-Tashkent Maqom is most closely tied to the cities of Tashkent and Qoqand, the seat of the former Qoqand Khanate, and is performed throughout the greater Ferghana Valley as well as in northern Tajikistan. While the musical culture of the Ferghana Valley has its own distinct color and flavor that reflect local

TABLE 18.3. FORMAL STRUCTURE OF “MUQADDIMA-I SEGOH”

TIME CODE	TEXT LINE	MELODIC SECTION
0:00–0:19	Instrumental Section	<i>Daromad</i> (entry, prelude)
0:19–1:08	1 and 2	<i>Sarkhat</i> (principal level)
1:08–2:06	3 and 4	<i>Miyonkhat</i> (middle level)
2:06–3:06	5 and 6	<i>Dunasr</i> (2nd vocal section)
3:06–3:46	7 and 8	<i>Awj</i> (apogee)
3:46–4:38	9 and 10	<i>Furovard</i> (descent)

geography, language, and lifestyle, it has also integrated elements of the musical cultures of surrounding regions. Ferghana has long been a cultural crossroads within Central Asia, and the *maqom* traditions of Ferghana reflect an intermingling of musical styles. For example, in the early nineteenth century, one of the best-known music masters in the Ferghana Valley was a man known as Khudoberdi Ustaz. Oral and written histories recount that he was originally from Kashgar, the old city on the eastern side of the Tian Shan Mountains in what is now the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, and that he spent eighteen years in Khorezm, where he studied music with Niyozjon Khoja, the musician who is believed to have brought the Shashmaqom tradition from Bukhara to Khiva.

The Ferghana-Tashkent Maqom, however, is not simply a transplanted version of the Bukharan or Khorezmian *maqom* suites but a unique repertoire. Musicians call the Ferghana-Tashkent repertoire Chormaqom (four *maqoms*), suggesting that it once consisted of four *maqom* suites. The present-day repertoire, however, is considerably larger. The name Chormaqom is likely a vestige of an earlier time, perhaps the eighteenth century, when the tradition may have indeed centered around four principal *maqom* suites. The current repertoire includes numerous small suites consisting of two to six pieces as well as individual pieces unaffiliated with a suite that performers nonetheless consider a part of the *maqom* tradition.

Compared to the Bukharan Shashmaqom and the Khorezmian Alti-yarim Maqom, the formal structure of the Ferghana-Tashkent Maqom is conceived on a smaller scale. The repertoire as a whole is smaller; each suite includes fewer pieces, and the pieces themselves tend to be shorter and less structurally complex, with fewer modulations to different melodic types. A typical suite includes three to four pieces that follow a progression from slow to fast rhythm and tempo, all in the same melodic mode. The Ferghana-Tashkent Maqom also includes a sizeable repertoire of instrumental music. One of the best known of these instrumental pieces is “Nasr-i segoh,” presented in example 18.4.

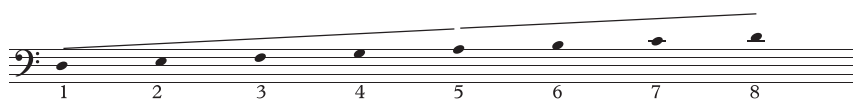
WATCH

Example 18.4. “Nasr-i segoh,” arranged and performed by Turgun Alimatov. Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 1993.

“Nasr-i segoh” exemplifies the element of the Ferghana-Tashkent Maqom repertoire described above as “individual pieces unaffiliated with a suite that performers nonetheless consider a part of the *maqom* tradition.” “Nasr-i segoh” was composed



by one of the great modern masters of *maqom* instrumental music, Turgun Alimatov (1922–2008), and beautifully represents the laconic Tashkent-Ferghana style. These days it is performed by many of Alimatov’s former students and acolytes, frequently in the arrangement for *tanbur* and *dutar* presented in example 18.4 (see “Performer Profile: Turgun Alimatov”). Like “Muqadimma-i segoh,” presented in example 18.3, Alimatov’s “Nasr-i segoh” is composed in melodic type *segoh* and uses the same basic scale, with one small difference: whereas the melody of “Muqadimma-i segoh” includes both a flatted and natural sixth scale degree (B \flat or B \natural), “Nasr-i Segoh” uses exclusively B \sharp for the sixth scale degree, yielding the modal scale widely known in Western music as “Dorian.”



Like the vocal songs discussed earlier in this chapter, instrumental *maqom* music can also be divided into structural sections that describe blocks of melodic activity. The names of these sections, however, are different than those used to describe vocal music.

“Nasr-i segoh” consists of two formal sections called *khona* (house) and *bozgui* (refrain), which alternate throughout the short piece. *Khona* is the dynamic, developmental element in the piece, while *bozgui* provides a stable frame that links together the various *khona* episodes. The formal principle of episodic development linked by a recurring refrain is widespread in the music of both East and West—for example, in the *peshrev* instrumental genre of Ottoman classical music, and in the rondo form of Western classical music, whose formal structure is typically expressed as: a b a c a d a . . . Table 18.4 presents the sequence of *khona* and *bozgui* sections in “Nasr-i segoh.”

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. After listening to the three different regional varieties of *maqom*, which one do you find most accessible? Which one do you find the most difficult to listen to and assimilate? What explanation can you offer for each of your responses?
2. The two vocal compositions presented in the listening examples—“Talqincha-i sabo” and “Muqad-dima-i segoh”—are performed by different ensembles and represent different approaches to the performance of Central Asian *maqom*. How would you characterize these differences?
3. Differences in performance style notwithstanding, what similarities do you perceive among the three examples of Central Asian *maqom*?



TABLE 18.4. FORMAL STRUCTURE OF “NASR-I SEGOH”

TIME CODE	SECTION	DESCRIPTION OF MELODIC ACTIVITY
0:00–0:20	<i>khona</i>	Introduces principal melodic theme in melodic mode <i>segoh</i>
0:20–0:39	<i>bozgui</i>	First occurrence of refrain
0:39–1:07	<i>khona</i>	2nd <i>khona</i> set at higher pitch level
1:07–1:31	<i>bozgui</i>	Beginning at 1:17, melody is slightly different than in the first <i>bozgui</i> , reflecting the ever-higher pitch level of the piece
1:31–1:59	<i>khona</i>	Melody begins an octave above initial pitch of the first <i>khona</i>
1:59–2:31	<i>khona</i>	Includes brief melodic excursion outside <i>segoh</i> melodic mode then returns to <i>segoh</i> for melodic culmination (<i>awj</i>)
2:31–3:00	<i>bozgui</i>	Melody descends to final appearance of refrain

Performer Profile: Turgun Alimatov, an Innovator in Tradition

THEODORE LEVIN

Turgun Alimatov (1922–2008) was a master performer on the *tanbur*, *dutar*, and *sato* (bowed *tanbur*). He was also a unique musical innovator who created a repertoire of new compositions that are rooted in the melodic modes of the Tashkent-Ferghana *chormaqom* (four *maqom*) tradition, yet speak in a distinctive and immediately recognizable musical language. Alimatov’s music has been widely performed, recorded, and imitated by younger musicians, and remains a strong influence among Uzbek and Tajik performers of classical *maqom* music.

Turgun Alimatov was not only a great musician but an original thinker and lively conversationalist. Like a Sufi sheikh, he conveyed



his ideas through didactic stories and epigrammatic explanations, and drew on notions such as *saz* (harmony), *ishq* (love), *dard* (passion), *halat* (state), and *kaif*

(intense pleasure or delight) to explain his views.

I was fortunate to have many conversations with Turgun Alimatov. Following are some excerpts

Performer Profile: Turgun Alimatov, an Innovator in Tradition (CONTINUED)

(translated from Uzbek and Russian).

Ted Levin (TL): I want to write about how you took *maqom* and, from it, created your own new music.

Turgun Alimatov (TA): I didn't create music. I took what existed, ready-made, and I played it. I listened, I played, listened, played. I didn't compose melodies. Why search for new music when there's so much ready-made music?

TL: But you took *maqom*—and what you play, your style, it's not similar to the Bukharan Shashmaqom. You changed something. You don't consider that you created new music?

TA: No. One person builds a house and leaves that house. I come to that house and remodel it. And that remodeling will be valued for a long time. And then a still better master will come along and do another remodeling. He'll take down certain parts and build them up again in his own way. It will be still better. That's how I understand it. I'm not the one who built the house. I just did the remodeling. I can't say that it's mine. Whoever sees this house says that a workman gave it a good paint job. He doesn't say that the workman built it. If I play *segoh*, it doesn't mean that I wrote it; but people know that I play well. They know when they hear me that Turgun-aka is playing. And that's enough.

The way I play *maqom*—that's the spirit in which all *maqom* should be played. Each *maqom* should be taken by a musician and worked

up into something beautiful. You shouldn't just make a copy of what someone else does. If you just make a copy, there won't be any growth, any progress.

TL: Then what is tradition? On the one hand, you say that your tradition was beaten up and broken by the Communists. On the other hand, you say that each person should find his own style of performance. If you find your own style, why do you need tradition?

TA: In every tradition, there are two poles: the individual and the collective; that is, many individuals who, through the centuries, create a direction. Tradition has its laws, its regularities. A person who wants to be in a tradition has to take account of those regularities.

TL: Did you have an *ustaz*—a teacher?

TA: No. I never went to anyone to learn how to play. I just listened to records and to the radio. I listened, and then I figured out how to play the music myself. I began playing the *dutar* in 1929 or 1930 when I was around nine years old. Later, when I was fifteen, I added the *tanbur*. There were a lot of musicians who played the *dutar* and *tanbur*. They played the same way that people played before them. They took something from those who came before them and gave it to those who followed them. That's what a tradition is. But I play not the way that everyone else plays, but the way I myself want to play. I didn't take into account any of these outer conditions, but played the way my soul told me to play—both

on the *dutar* and the *tanbur*. People who watch me play are interested in the way I move my hands, because I don't follow the usual forms and techniques of movement. What I do is completely different.

TL: Do you teach students yourself?

TA: Now I go to the [Tashkent] Conservatory, and the students—they have my records at home—they listen to them, and they come to me and say, "I want to learn to play *chogh*." I play a little bit, and then I say, "Okay, you play it." He plays it, and then I play it again. He plays it exactly the way I play it, because he wants to learn to play the way I do on my records. So students listen to musicians who play and sing well, and they follow after them. That's also tradition. There are recordings of other *tanbur* players. They don't go to them. They come to me. People always search for the best; if students knew that there were a better *tanbur* player than me, they'd go to him. It's not necessarily that I'm good, but I'm the last. Ideally, there should be a lot of musicians like me. But the tradition has been broken.

TL: Do you think that these students ought to be creating their own music, as you did?

TA: If you plant four kinds of plum trees, one there, one five meters farther, one five meters farther, and so on, they'll live in the same weather, the same sun, the same earth and water; yet when they grow up, they'll be different. Each has its own place. But only one will be high, the others will be low. And musicians are like that.

NOTES

1. Information about the inscription is available on UNESCO's website at: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&RL=00089#identification>
2. For a detailed analysis of *aksak*, see Simha Arom, "L'aksak: principes et typologie," *Cahiers de musique traditionnelles*, 17 (2004): 11–48.
3. For a more detailed presentation of the suite principle in Central Asian *maqom*, see Theodore Levin and Razia Sultanova, "The Classical Music of Uzbeks and Tajiks," in *The Middle East*, vol. 6 of *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 909–920.

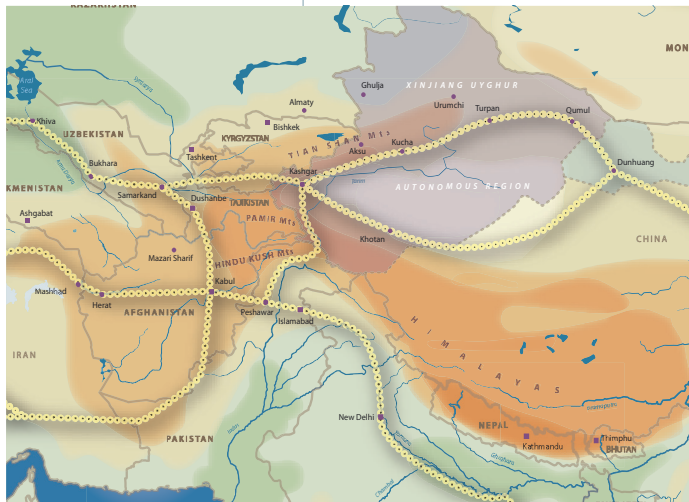


CHAPTER 19 The Uyghur Muqam

RACHEL HARRIS

The Uyghur *muqam* consists of a group of distinct but related repertoires of large suites that include sung poetry, stories, dance tunes, and instrumental sections. *Muqams* are typically performed by a small ensemble of singers led by a *muqamchi* (lead singer) and accompanied by plucked or bowed long-necked lutes (*satar*, *tämbür*, and *dutar*), sometimes a spike fiddle (*ghijäk*) or violin, and one or more frame drums (*daps*). *Muqams* may also be played in purely instrumental form by kettle drum-and-shawm (*naghra-sunay*) bands. Many of the lyrics of the *muqam* are drawn from the classical Central Asian poets, and are strongly flavored with Sufi imagery and ideals.

The performance of *muqams* is not restricted to an exclusive group of professional musicians; historically, they were performed in folk contexts as well as in the courts of the local nobility, and today they cross the boundaries of rural and urban life, and professional and popular musical domains. Playing *muqam* is sometimes regarded as a spiritual, even physical need. One old folk singer explained it like this: “During the Cultural Revolution I was forbidden to sing the *muqam*, and I could feel it building up inside me with great heat. Finally I got on my donkey and rode into the desert. I rode until I was far away from all people, then I started to sing. I sang all the *muqam* I knew, and then I went back. If I had not done this, I would have become



Uyghurs inhabit the northwestern borderlands of China, comprising the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. East-West trade routes (the “Silk Road”) skirted the edge of the region’s Taklamakan Desert.



ill.” Listening to *muqam* is often said to serve a religious and meditative function, especially in the context of religious festivals, while the lighter pieces towards the end of the suites are commonly used to accompany dancing.

Contemporary scholars identify four distinct but related regional genres: the Twelve Muqam of the Kashgar-Yärkänd region; the Turpan Muqam; the Qumul Muqam; and the Dolan Muqam, which is performed by the Dolan Uyghurs who live in the region northeast of Kashgar. Here I introduce two of these traditions (the Twelve Muqam and the Dolan Muqam) and discuss aspects of their music, performers, and contemporary performance contexts.

THE TWELVE MUQAM

The number twelve has important symbolic meaning to the Uyghurs, as is evident in folk sayings such as “twelve months in a year, Twelve Muqam, twelve strings of my *satar*.” This symbolism is sometimes traced back, via the Islamic tradition, to ancient Greek notions of the twelve melodic modes.

The Twelve Muqam (*on ikki muqam*) are the most prestigious of the regional *muqam* traditions, and today are generally regarded as the Uyghur national tradition or canon. Often the roots of the Twelve Muqam are ascribed to the seventh or eighth centuries (the Tang dynasty period of Chinese history), but the evidence for such old roots is tenuous. Uyghurs attribute this tradition somewhat more reliably to the sixteenth century and the court of the Yärkänd Khanate, where one Amanissa Khan, wife of the khan, is said to have been responsible for collecting and ordering the Twelve Muqam in the form we know them today. Each *muqam* in this repertoire has its own characteristic mode, melodic patterns, and modulations, but a *muqam* is basically a suite structure consisting of up to thirty-six vocal and instrumental pieces that begin with a meditative unmetered introduction (*muqäddimä*), move through a series of metered pieces in contrasting rhythms, and culminate in fast dance pieces (*mäshräp*). Such a suite would last around two hours if played from start to finish—which happens rarely.

LISTEN

Example 19.1. *Nawa muqäddimä*, performed by Abliz Shakir, 1997.

This track is sung by Abliz Shakir, one of the region’s most celebrated senior *muqam* performers, who appears regularly on television, works with the official state-sponsored Muqam Ensemble, and has released a series of popular and



Cover of Abliz Shakir's 1980s cassette release, *Nawa and Ajäm Muqam*.

influential recordings of the Twelve Muqam. Born in 1939 in the town of Ghulja¹ in the northern Ili Valley, he began to learn the Twelve Muqam during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, while he was undergoing reform-through-labor—the fate of many prominent musicians at that time. He tells stories of secretly listening to old recordings in order to learn the repertoire when he should have been loading mule carts.

The Uyghur Muqam is today a fixed repertoire, unlike the improvisatory Azeri *mugham*, for example, but if there is any vestige of an improvised tradition in the Twelve Muqam, then it would be these opening, unmetered *muqäddimä* sections, which are structured like an exploration of the melodic mode. They are always sung solo, accompanied by the bowed *satar* or the plucked *tämbur*. They rise in pitch and intensity phrase by phrase toward a climax (*äwäj*), then descend more rapidly toward the original pitch. The melody is highly melismatic, and modally this is the most complex section of the suite. In Nawa Muqam, as in several of the Twelve Muqam, one or more of the important tones of the mode are unstable in two ways: they are always played vibrato, and they change in pitch depending on the direction of the melodic movement. Local musicologists have coined the term “lively notes” to describe them.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Listen to example 19.1: Abliz Shakir singing Nawa Muqam *muqäddimä* accompanied by bowed *satar* and plucked *tämbur*. Using the chart and timings below, follow the development of the phrases, noting how they rise in pitch and intensity towards the *äwäj*, then fall back to the original pitch range.

äwäj (climax: 3:53)

kutirilmä (rising: 2:22)

qaytish (return: 4:25)

kutirilmä (rising: 1:35)

chushirilmä (falling: 4:59)

bashlanma (beginning: 0:50)

chushirgisi (end: 5:21)

chalgu (instrumental introduction)

2. Now listen in more detail to the opening couplet of the first sung phrase (*bashlanma*: 0:50). If you read musical notation, look at the transcription on the following page, which shows 0:33–1:12. Abliz Shakir sings: “*bela deshti ara majnun, meningdek, meningdek kormemish devran.*” Listen closely to the first “-dek” of “*meningdek*” (0:57–1:03). Note how melismatic this is, i.e., how many notes are sung to the same syllable. Can you hear how the singer moves in a mini arc up to the D and down again? On the way up his vibrato falls on B[♯], on the way down it falls on the slightly lower pitch of B[♭]. These are the “lively notes” that define the mode of Nawa.

be la desh ti a ra maj nun

mening dek me ning dek kor mem ish dev ran

Nawa Muqam Muqaddimä,
performed by Abliz Shakir,
0:33–1:12.

OUR NATIONAL TREASURE

In the early 1950s, soon after the People’s Republic of China (PRC) had established its rule over the Uyghur region and renamed it the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, the new authorities set up a project to “rescue” the Twelve Muqam. They chose one musician to provide the raw material for this project: a respected *muqam* performer named Turdi Akhun. His biography tells, in the classic revolutionary style of the time, that the “old society” did not value his art, and he wandered, *satar* on his back, through the cities of Kashgar, Yärkänd, and Khotän for fifty years before the “masses,” led by the new Chinese authorities in Xinjiang, accorded him the respect he deserved. He participated in recording sessions in the mid-1950s during which he selflessly handed over all his precious musical knowledge.

Staff transcriptions of the Twelve Muqam, based primarily on these recording sessions, were published in 1960 in impressively bound volumes, with a foreword by the Xinjiang regional chairman Säypidin Äzizi, who wrote: “The ‘Twelve Muqam’ are a great treasure created through the hardship, struggle and experience of generations of our ancestors, the Uyghur laboring masses. . . . [T]he reason why they are a treasure is that their content is deep and broad, they contain practically all the Uyghur national artistic forms, and they are a full set of twelve suites. . . .” Since that time a succession of transcriptions and recordings—both audio and video—of the Twelve Muqam have been produced. A state-funded Muqam Research Committee and a Muqam Ensemble employing 120 musicians pursue research, reworking, and performance of the Twelve Muqam. In 2005 these efforts were rewarded when the Uyghur Muqam was recognized by UNESCO as one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

An aesthetic gulf has developed between the performance style of the rough-and-ready village bands and the precision and polish of the Muqam Ensemble. The latter professional musicians, formally trained in the conservatories set up under



Turdi Akhun with his pupils.



Muqam Ensemble from the
1980s.

Photo from *Anthology of Chinese Instrumental Music: Xinjiang* volume.

the PRC, now perform the Twelve Muqam from written scores in a large orchestra of instruments newly created or modified since the 1950s, alongside a choir of mixed male and female voices. Women singers and instrumentalists are prominent in the professional ensemble, though not in traditional contexts. In large ensemble performances, a string section of treble bowed instruments (*khushtar* and *ghijäk*), and a bass line (cello or bass *ghijäk*) playing in counterpoint with the main melody, aim to reproduce the sound of the Western orchestra.

Similar changes in performance style can be found throughout the world where folk traditions have been transformed into national treasures. The professional style has dominated Uyghur music at a national level (though not, of course, in the villages) for the last fifty years, but beneath the polished surface it is still easy to find the rich roots of this musical world.

WATCH

Example 19.2. Muqam Ensemble musicians perform a short suite-within-a-suite from Öjal Muqam. Filmed at the Bath International Festival, 2003.

Example 19.2 shows a small group of professional musicians; the instrumental arrangement is simpler than some of the large orchestral renditions, closer to folk renditions, but the musicians' training and professionalism are evident in the polished style of their performance. From left to right, the performers are playing a *tämbur* (plucked long-necked lute), *ghijäk* (spike fiddle), *dap* (frame drum), *qalon* (plucked zither), *diltar* (double-necked plucked and bowed lute—a unique

contemporary creation), and *dutar* (strummed long-necked lute). On the far right is a singer. The dancer performs a choreographed version of the traditional “tea bowl” dance.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Listen to the rhythm. This clip contains three metered pieces and an unmetered coda: *jula* (0:00–2:22), *sänäm* (2:23–3:45), *chong säliqä* (3:46–5:08), and *chushirgisi* (5:09–5:39). Can you hear the changes in meter between the three pieces? Listen to the five-beat meter in the *chong säliqä*. If you read music, the notation will guide you.
2. Now listen to the melody. Can you hear that the same melody is being stretched in different ways over the three different meters?

jula ♩ = 54

D T T T D D T

sanam ♩ = 80

D T D T

chong saliqä ♩ = 120

D T T D T

MÄJNUN: THE INTOXICATED FOOL

In 2001, I spent several months working with Abdulla Mäjnun, a brilliant musician and colorful character who was then working in the Muqam Ensemble. You can see Abdulla playing *dutar* in example 19.2.

The word *mäjnun* came to Central Asia from Arabic. It denotes intoxication or infatuation, most famously in the tragic tale of Leila and the lovesick Majnun, which is retold and referred to in countless poems and sung lyrics across the Islamic world. Among the Uyghurs, a *mäjnun* is a type of musician akin to the dervishes or *ashiqs*, the religious mendicants who can still be found singing for alms at the festivals held at the holy shrines dedicated to Islamic saints that are scattered across the Taklamakan Desert.



Abdulla Mäjnun playing his *dutar*.

Photo by Feng Li.

LISTEN

Example 19.3. Chahargah Muqam *māshrāp*, performed by Abdulla Mäjnnun. From *Borderlands: Wu Man and Master Musicians from the Silk Route*, vol. 10 of *Music of Central Asia* (SFR, 2011), track 14.



Ashiq at a shrine festival in southern Xinjiang.

Photo by Rahile Dawut.

In this fourteen-minute abridged version of Chahargah Muqam, Abdulla Mäjnnun sings the opening *muqāddimā* and final *māshrāp* sections, accompanying himself on *tāmbur* (he later overdubbed a *dutar* track in the last *māshrāp*), with Yasin Yaqub playing the *dap* (frame drum). Mäjnnun sings solo, which is somewhat unusual for *māshrāp* sections. The *māshrāp* (“gathering”) concluding section of a *muqam* suite consists of three to five short sung pieces in fast 7/8 and 2/4 rhythms. This section of the *muqam* is for dancing. From a musical perspective, these final *māshrāp* sections of the Twelve Muqam are similar to the *hikmāt* (prayers) sung in Sufi rituals and by mendicants (*ashiqs*) when they beg for alms. “This *muqam* is for *ashiqs*,” Abdulla said. “Their *māshrāps* are the most lovely and intoxicating. They play like they’re going to war, like they are drunk on it, with their wild hair everywhere. When they sing this at the festivals, everybody cries.” Indeed, many of the older professional musicians, among them Mäjnnun, claim to have learned this part of the repertoire from *ashiqs*. Even Turdi Akhun’s son has said this of his father:

He would go to a *gül[kh]an*, which is a house where they sold meat and tea and smoked *nā[sh]ä* [hashish]. . . . He went with the intention of learning *mā[sh]rāp* songs, but they would not let him in if he did not smoke *nā[sh]ä*. All the performers were [*a*]shiqs.²

The lyrics of the third *māshrāp*, beginning at 5:48 on the recording, are transcribed and translated below.

Yarning köyida män diwanä boldum
aqibät alla
Khälqi aläm aldida alla biganä
boldum aqibät alla
Bir zaman chäktim japa alla qilargha
säbrim qalmidi alla

My love’s flames, I have become a
 beggar, indeed Allah
 Before the whole world I stand
 alone, indeed Allah
 I have suffered for an age, Allah, my
 patience is ended, Allah



<p><i>Ay yuzning shäwqigä alla pärwanä boldum aqibät alla</i></p> <p><i>Äy yaranlar yaru wäslä alla meni äyläp dil khumar alla</i></p> <p><i>Ishtiyaqing käypidä alla mästanä boldum aqibät alla</i></p> <p><i>Mustisil astanidä alla mäykhanä boldum aqibät alla</i></p> <p><i>Khälqi aläm aldida alla wäyranä boldum aqibät alla</i></p>	<p>I have become a moth drawn to the beauty of your face, indeed Allah</p> <p>Oh lovers, your desire, Allah, my heart is addicted, Allah</p> <p>I revel in your pleasure, Allah, I have become a drunkard, Allah</p> <p>In the city, Allah, I have become a wine shop, indeed Allah</p> <p>Before the whole world, Allah, I have been ruined, indeed Allah</p>
--	--

In the recording, following the unmetered introductory *muqäddimä* section (0:00–5:47), the first *mäshräp* begins (5:48), marked by the entrance of the *dap*. This *mäshräp* is in the striking *aqsaq* (limping) rhythm characteristic of sections of the Twelve Muqam and some Uyghur folk songs. It is usual practice in Uyghur musicology to transcribe *aqsaq* in 7/8 meter, but a “limping” six-beat meter (i.e., with the first two beats played slower) might be a more natural way to conceive it. The following table aligns the basic pulse of the *aqsaq* rhythm—represented in the conventional 7/8 time signature—with the rhythm played on the *dap* in the first *mäshräp*. In the line showing the *dap* rhythm, downward-pointing note beams represent the low-sounding “*dum*” stroke to the center of the drum head while the note beams pointing upward represent the higher “*tak*” stroke near the rim of the drum.

dap	
pulse	

Limping rhythms are believed to help listeners enter a trance state during Sufi rituals. The lyrics of the *mäshräp* sections of the Twelve Muqam are usually attributed to classical poets, and are imbued with the ecstatic religiosity of the Sufi tradition.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Listen to the audio clip, and try to beat out the basic “limping” six-beat pulse of the first *mäshräp*.

THE DOLAN MUQAM

Compared to the Twelve Muqam with its courtly roots and contemporary professionalization, the Dolan Muqam has a pure village style—the rough, raw end of



Uyghur music. The Dolan were traditionally the poorest, most despised class of Uyghurs. Under Chinese Imperial rule, they served the Chinese administration as indentured serfs, and they were well known for their enthusiasm for rebellion.

At only eight minutes in length, a Dolan Muqam suite is very different from the weighty Twelve Muqam, but many aspects of these two repertoires are shared, from the general structure and instrumentation to specific melodies and rhythms. The locally handmade Dolan instruments—*qalon* (plucked zither), Dolan *ghijäk* (spike fiddle with a single horsehair playing string and metal sympathetic strings), and Dolan *rawap* (plucked lute with sympathetic strings)—differ from those now used in the Twelve Muqam, which have been modernized and tend to be factory produced. The Dolan Muqam has been dubbed “Central Asian jazz” thanks to its syncopated riffs played on the melodic instruments. These instrumental riffs float over the top and seem to bear no direct relation to the sung melody, which is belted out by singers who also play frame drums (*daps*). The lyrics are folk love poems, and they are full of the inflamed passion that is typical of Uyghur poetry:

Can she be mine who is loved by another?
You have planted a dagger in my soul
Black eyes laughing
My love is like sugar . . .

Over the last few years, the Dolan Muqam has become quite a media phenomenon in China, where “authentic performance” is becoming more fashionable, and has even started to enter the global “world music” market. Since the video in example 19.4 was taken in 2000, this village group has performed in Beijing, Japan, and Europe; but the home of this music is still poor and dusty villages in the oasis belt between the Tarim River and the Taklamakan Desert.

WATCH

Example 19.4. Musicians from Mäkit play Dolan Muqam, 2000.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Listen to the changes in rhythm beaten out on the frame drums. Can you identify the drum patterns?
2. Listen to the melodic instruments. What do you think they are doing? Are they playing the same melody as the voices?
3. What do you think of the style of the voices? Compare it to the vocal style in example 19.1.

For the Dolan villagers, as for most Uyghurs, music making revolves around the *māshrāp* (a gathering or party), where people come together for food, music, and dancing. The *māshrāp* lies at the heart of village life. Häkhät Tokhti, who plays the *rawap*, says, “After a week of labor in the fields, the villagers make a *māshrāp*, and the people are as happy as if they have killed two sheep.”

A *māshrāp* is also a kind of informal court—an occasion when villagers who have done something wrong are called to account—and it is the musicians who act as court officials and clowns. At the *māshrāp*, they punish lapses in morality by ritual humiliation for the delight of the crowd. A man might be “fined” for flirting, for example, by being “married to two wives”: two mincing musicians in women’s head scarves lie on each side of him in the middle of the dance arena and take turns smacking his face, hard! In example 19.5, the unfortunate victim of justice is made to act the role of the grinding mill for wheat, while Häkhät Tokhti clowns as the water buffalo who turns the mill.

The *māshrāp* culminates with a remarkable competitive whirling circle dance, accompanied by the musicians playing the Dolan Muqam. They go through various rhythms including different kinds of *aqsak* (limping) rhythms beaten out on the *dap*, which gradually become faster and faster. Dancers gradually drop out, tired or dizzy, until one winner is left in the arena performing high victory leaps.



Dolan musicians at a rural *māshrāp* held in Qizil Awat, southern Xinjiang.

Photo by Rahile Dawut.

WATCH

Example 19.5. Mäkit *māshrāp*, clowning, 2000.

NOTES

1. Ghulja is the traditional Uyghur name of the town—now a city with close to half a million inhabitants—whose Chinese name is Yining.

2. Quoted in Nathan Light, *Intimate Heritage: Creating Uyghur Muqam Song in Xinjiang*, vol. 19 of Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology/Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia, ed. Chris Hann, Richard Rottenburg, and Burkhard Schnepel (Berlin: Lit Verlag Dr. W. Hopf, 2008), 286.



CHAPTER 20 **New Images of Azerbaijani *Mugham* in the Twentieth Century**

AIDA HUSEYNOVA

AZERBAIJAN AND CENTRAL ASIA: CULTURAL AND MUSICAL DIMENSIONS

As ought to be clear from many of the examples in this book, Central Asia as a region of shared cultural practices, historical links, and ethnic consanguinities extends well beyond the conventional geographic borders commonly used to define it. The rationale for including Azerbaijan in this imagined greater Central Asia is particularly clear from the perspective of music, for despite Azerbaijan's geographical

separation from the core region of Central Asia, Azerbaijani music shares many common elements with the musical traditions of both historically nomadic and sedentary-dwelling peoples in Central Asia proper.

Other aspects of culture and history link Azerbaijan to Central Asia. For example, Azerbaijani is a Turkic language that belongs to the same large language family as Central Asian Turkic languages, e.g., Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Uzbek, and Uyghur. Historically, Azerbaijanis have been followers of the Shi'a branch of Islam, which has many adherents in Central Asia, in particular in the Pamir Mountain region of eastern Tajikistan and northeastern Afghanistan.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Azerbaijan and Central Asia both came under the rule of the Russian Empire and, following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Union, with the consequence that Azerbaijanis, like Uzbeks, Tajiks, and other Central Asian peoples, experienced more than a century of colonial rule.



Azerbaijan is separated from Central Asia by the Caspian Sea, yet closely linked to it by language and culture.



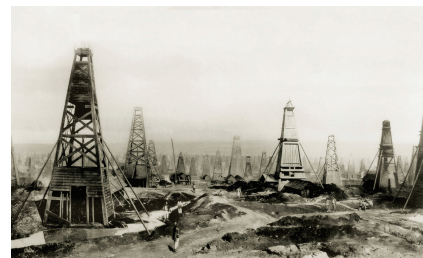
Azerbaijan's rich and versatile traditional music and literary heritage shares at least two phenomena with Central Asia. The first is *mugham*, Azerbaijan's variant of the transnational tradition of canonized, modally organized music that, in a variety of local forms, has been cultivated by professional musicians in Central Asia, Turkey, the Middle East, and North Africa (see chapter 18). The second shared phenomenon is the bardic tradition of the *ashig*, which involves singing, playing instruments, and telling epic stories. Azerbaijani *ashigs*, like Kazakh *kyraus* and Turkmen *bagshys*, embody the cultural traditions of nomadic pastoralists, which in Azerbaijan no less than in Central Asia have long existed in a symbiotic relationship with the cultural traditions of sedentary dwellers.

At the same time that Azerbaijan preserves strong links to Central Asia, it is also distinguished from Central Asia by its strategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. The proximity of Transcaucasia to Europe has provided Azerbaijan with abiding contact with European cultural values and institutions. Particularly after the oil boom of the mid-nineteenth century, when the world's leading oil companies began drilling operations in and around the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan experienced intense Westernization in all domains of culture and social life.

Music responded to these globalizing processes immediately. Traditional music came into close contact with forms and genres of Western music, and by the first decades of the twentieth century, this fusion had already yielded fruitful results. In 1911, an Opera and Ballet Theater opened in Baku, Azerbaijan's largest and most cosmopolitan city, and alongside Russian and European classics it presented operas and operettas by local composers on themes drawn from Azerbaijani history and contemporary life. Soviet culture and nationalities policy, one of whose aims was to bring Russian and European cultural values to the non-Slavic peoples of the vast Soviet empire, stimulated the processes of East-West fusion in Azerbaijani music. However, a solid foundation for this fusion process as well as several notable artistic achievements that resulted from it pre-dated the Soviet era. The history of Azerbaijani music in the twentieth century provides valuable case studies of cultural fusion and the reimagination of tradition, and offers insight into similar processes that occurred in other parts of the former Soviet Union. This chapter focuses on three very visible genres of East-West fusion that emerged in twentieth-century Azerbaijan: *mugham* opera, symphonic *mugham*, and jazz *mugham*.

MUGHAM: THE QUINTESSENCE OF AZERBAIJANI MUSIC

Mugham is an integral part of Azerbaijani culture. The embellishments of *mugham* melodies are often compared to the beautiful metaphors in classical Azerbaijani poetry, the detailed patterns of Azerbaijani carpets, or the architectural design of ancient Azerbaijani dwellings. The power of *mugham* has long been recognized



Oil derricks in Balakhani, a suburb of Baku, at the beginning of the 20th century.

Courtesy of *Azerbaijan International* magazine, Betty Blair, editor-in-chief.

beyond Azerbaijan as well. In the early twentieth century, international record labels, including the Gramophone Company and Sports Records, released recordings of prominent *mugham* performers largely for local markets. In 1977, a short piece of Azerbaijani *mugham* was included on the United States spacecraft Voyager I and Voyager II as they journeyed into interstellar space. The *mugham* excerpt was among twenty-seven pieces of music—Bach, Beethoven, Peruvian panpipes, Navajo night chants—that represented the variety of earthly musical traditions.

Mugham is usually performed by a trio consisting of a singer and two instrumentalists. One of the instrumentalists plays the *tar* (long-necked lute) and the other, the *kamancha* (spike fiddle). Singers typically accompany themselves on a frame drum (*gaval* or *daf*). The composition of *mugham* is based on the alternation of *shoba*—improvised parts where singers demonstrate their creativity and virtuosity—and fixed interludes that are either dance-like (*rang*) or song-like (*tasnif*). These set pieces give both performers and listeners an opportunity to rest before the *mugham* proceeds to the next stage of improvisation, which is usually higher in pitch and more dynamically intense. It takes years to master the art of *mugham*. For centuries, *mughams* have been performed at small gatherings of music lovers, but since the early twentieth century they have also found their way to the stage of concert halls and theaters—sometimes fused with forms of Western music.

MUGHAM OPERA



Uzeyir Hajibeyli, the founder of the composer tradition in Azerbaijan and the father of *mugham* opera.

Courtesy of the State Museum of Azerbaijani Musical Culture and Dr. Alla Bayramova, Director.

In the early twentieth century, a cohort of young intellectuals emerged in Azerbaijan who considered the fusion of native heritage with forms of Western art and music a desirable objective for the development of national culture. Among these young intellectuals was the composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli (1885–1948), now respected by Azerbaijanis as a national genius who turned a new page of Azerbaijani music history.¹ In 1908, he wrote *Leyli and Majnun*, a musical-dramatic work that pioneered the genre later known as “*mugham* opera.”

The textual origins of Hajibeyli’s *Leyli and Majnun* (also transliterated into English as *Layla and Majnun*) can be found in a classical Arabic tale about a seventh-century Bedouin named Qays ibn al-Mulawwah who fell in love with Layla, a girl from the same tribe, and began composing love poems dedicated to her. Prevented from marrying by Layla’s father, the two lovers parted. Qays subsequently went mad and spent the rest of his short life wandering in the desert, becoming known among locals by the sobriquet *majnun* (“madman,” or by extension, “love-crazed”). The story was later appropriated by Persian and Turkic poets, and Hajibeyli based his opera libretto on an epic poem by the sixteenth-century Azerbaijani poet Fuzuli.

The dramaturgical structure of *Leyli and Majnun* draws in obvious ways on opera: it is divided into several acts, solo pieces alternate with small ensembles and

choruses, and singing is accompanied by an orchestra. The musical concept, however, is almost totally based on *mugham* in its original non-notated and improvised form. The composer's score indicates only the names of *mughams* and the lyrics to be performed, and performers are expected to improvise the actual music on stage.

Hajibeyli seamlessly incorporated *mughams* into the musical structure of the opera and its emotional lexicon. He chose particular *mughams* based on the emotion or ethos associated with them. For instance, to express the love that seizes Leyli and Majnun, Hajibeyli used *mugham* Segah, which is always associated with romantic feelings. By contrast, *mugham* Chahargah perfectly conveys the tragic essence of the scene in which Majnun's parents try to dissuade him from his dangerous love.

Hajibeyli's knowledge of Western cultural history as well as traditional Azerbaijani music and spiritual culture enriched *mugham* opera with eclectic sources that extend beyond *mugham* itself. For example, *Leyli and Majnun* includes numerous ensembles and choruses that are mostly based on authentic folk melodies and were appropriated and arranged by Hajibeyli. Choruses are of particular interest because they feature four-part vocal writing, which is unknown in traditional Azerbaijani music. The chorus in *mugham* opera often comments on events, like the chorus in ancient Greek tragedy. For example, the opening chorus in *Leyli and Majnun*, called "Shabih-Hijran" (Parting night), predicts the tragic ending of the story by foretelling the lovers' separation before the story even begins. This episode features the strong influence of *shabih* (also called *taziyah*)—a form of traditional liturgical drama that is a part of Shi'a Muslim rituals and is performed during Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar and a traditional period of mourning. A performance of "Shabih-Hijran" is reproduced in example 20.1.

LISTEN

Example 20.1. "Shabih-Hijran" (Parting night) from *Leyli and Majnun*, composed by Uzeyir Hajibeyli. Performed by the orchestra and choir of the Azerbaijan State Opera and Ballet Theater, Kazim Aliverdibeyov, conductor. From Uzeyir Hajibeyov, *Leyli and Majnun*, AICD 1301, STATOIL and *Azerbaijan International*, 2001. Courtesy of Betty Blair and *Azerbaijan International*.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What features of tempo, rhythm, and melody in this chorus indicate that it is rooted in the traditional mourning ritual of *shabih*?
2. Are all four parts of the vocal texture of this chorus equally important, or does the melody dominate other voices? How does this arrangement of voices compare to the typical texture of traditional music from Azerbaijan?



Azerbaijan Opera and Ballet Theater, the first opera house in Central Asia.



The Silk Road Project's production of "Layla and Majnun."

After *Leyli and Majnun*, Hajibeyli wrote five more *mugham* operas: *Sheykh Senan* (1909), *Rustam and Sohrab* (1910), *Shah Abbas and Khurshud Banu* (1911), *Asli and Karam* (1912), and *Harun and Leyla* (1915). Encouraged by the success of Hajibeyli's productions, other Azerbaijani composers turned to this genre as well. Zulfugar Hajibeyli's *Ashig Garib* (1916) and Muslim Magomayev's *Shah Ismayil* (1919) presented new interpretations of *mugham* opera. Although the number of *mugham* operas composed in Azerbaijan is not large, the genre itself has historical significance as the first manifestation of opera not only in Azerbaijan but in the entire Muslim East.²

A remarkable breakthrough in the history of *Leyli and Majnun* occurred in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The Silk Road Project, an educational and cultural initiative under the artistic direction of the American cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and its performing group, the Silk Road Ensemble, prepared a new chamber arrangement of Hajibeyli's opera that became one of the highlights of the Project's repertoire. The Silk Road Ensemble's version of *Leyli and Majnun*, arranged and scored by violinists Jonathan Gandelman and Colin Jacobsen, condenses Hajibeyli's three-and-half-hour work into a tautly conceived forty-five-minute performance. In contrast to the large cast of Hajibeyli's opera, the Silk Road Ensemble's chamber

version focuses entirely on the two protagonists, who were played by Alim Qasimov (b. 1957), an outstanding master of *mugham* often referred to as a "Living National Treasure of Azerbaijan," and Fargana Qasimova (b. 1979), his daughter and student, and a wonderful *mugham* singer in her own right (see "Artist Profile: Alim and Fargana Qasimov").

From a musical perspective, the Silk Road Ensemble's arrangement merges elements of improvised *mugham* and notated music. Episodes of notated music that were originally performed strictly from the score are now quasi-improvised, with each member of the ensemble adding extemporized melodic gestures. Moreover, in the Silk Road Ensemble version, the *mugham* sections are performed by the entire ensemble of ten players, whereas in Hajibeyli's opera they are performed by singers supported by traditional instruments while the orchestral instruments remain silent.

Excerpts from the Silk Road Ensemble's adaptation of Hajibeyli's opera are reproduced in examples 20.2 and 20.3. The Ensemble represents the historical setting of *Leyli and Majnun*—a story told and retold in the lands of the Silk Road—by performing it with its own eclectic consort of Silk Road instruments: European strings, Azerbaijani *tar* and *kamancha*, a variety of Eastern and Western percussion, Chinese *pipa* (plucked lute), and Japanese *shakuhachi* (bamboo flute). The excerpts illustrate the dynamic way in which the characteristic sounds of two different

mughams are woven into the texture of the Ensemble's performance. Both excerpts illustrate solo expressions of the protagonists, which in Western music would be operatic arias. In example 20.2, Alim Qasimov sings in *mugham* Shahnaz, representing Majnun's passionate declaration of his troubled love and suffering. In example 20.3, Fargana Qasimova, as Layla, sings sorrowfully in *mugham* Bayati Shiraz before her death.

WATCH

Example 20.2 and 20.3. Uzeyir Hajibeyli, *Layla and Majnun*, adapted and arranged by Jonathan Gandelsman and Colin Jacobsen for the Silk Road Ensemble and performed by the Silk Road Ensemble, Artistic Director Yo-Yo Ma. Harvard University New College Theater, November 29, 2007. Courtesy of the Silk Road Project.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the combination of Western and non-Western instruments within the Silk Road Ensemble. How are these voices from different cultures smoothly integrated?
2. Name two non-Western instruments that play short solo parts in the introductory section.
3. What musical features of the excerpt depicted in the video reveal that it is derived from an opera? Can you think of any Western operatic aria or song whose literary contents and music could be compared to Majnun's "Shahnaz"?

SYMPHONIC MUGHAM

In 1948, Azerbaijani composer Fikrat Amirov (1922–1984) composed two works—"Shur" and "Kurd Ovshari"—that fused *mugham* and symphonic music to create what came to be known as "symphonic *mugham*." Amirov was well qualified for his fusionist undertaking. His father, Meshadi Jamil Amirov (1875–1928), was an outstanding *mugham* singer and *tar* player, and Fikrat grew up surrounded by the sounds of *mugham*. As an aspiring composer, he recorded and notated *mugham* music at the same time that he studied composition at the Azerbaijan State Conservatory (now Baku Music Academy). Fikrat Amirov was himself an outstanding *tar* player, and throughout his life he maintained close links with great masters of *mugham*, such as the singer Khan Shushinski (1901–1979) and the *tar* player Gurban Pirmov (1880–1965). This precious knowledge became a principal source of inspiration and a solid base for developing the concept of symphonic *mugham*. In 1973, twenty-five years after the appearance of "Shur" and "Kurd Ovshari," Amirov wrote another symphonic *mugham*, "Gulustan Bayati Shiraz."

In “Shur,” Amirov followed the formal scheme of his *mugham* model, in which improvised *shoba* episodes alternate with fixed *tasnif* (or *rang*) sections. Amirov fully notated the *shoba* sections of his “Shur,” since they were played by a symphony orchestra. At the same time, he retained the spirit of improvisation by writing sections of the piece that were free of strict metric and rhythmic control.

The symphonic *mugham* “Kurd Ovshari” is modeled after the eponymous *mugham* “Kurd Ovshari.” “Kurd Ovshari” represents a *mugham* sub-genre called *zarbi-mugham* (rhythmic *mugham*) in which melodic improvisation occurs over a steady rhythmic background. Amirov’s “Kurd Ovshari” consists of four sections:

Performer Profile: Alim and Fargana Qasimov

THEODORE LEVIN

Alim Qasimov (b. 1957) and his daughter Fargana (b. 1979) exemplify the explosive artistic energy that results when a powerful musical model ignites the spark of young talent.³ “To be a musician, there has to be a fire burning in you,” explained the elder Qasimov. “It’s either there or it isn’t. I’m convinced that if young people have this spark—call it inspiration, call it spiritual fire—they can perform any kind of music. It could be pop, folk, or classical, but whatever it is, they’ll stand out.”

Alim Qasimov’s authority on matters of artistic creativity derives from his position as one of Azerbaijan’s most beloved musicians. A walk with Qasimov down any street in Baku, Azerbaijan’s capital city, confirms his renown. Greeting well-wishers, shaking hands, and making small talk, he is ever polite and humble. It is when Qasimov sings that his own inner fire burns brightest.

Fargana Qasimova’s talent gravitated naturally toward the music she heard from her father: Azerbaijani classical music (*mugham*) and the

repertory of popular bardic songs sung by *ashigs*—singer-songwriters who accompany themselves on the *saz*, a strummed long-necked lute. “There was never any question about my being given to a teacher,” Fargana recalled. “Music was always just a part of everyday life—I sang with my father for fun, and it was only when I was around seventeen years old that I seriously understood that I’d be a musician.”

“We never put before ourselves the aim of singing *mugham* in the form of a duet or carrying out any kind of reform,” said Alim Qasimov of the sinuous vocal arrangements he performs with Fargana.

“Rather, what we do appeared spontaneously in the process of rehearsing. We liked it, and we started to practice it. Nowadays, *mugham* is always performed by a single vocalist, but there used to be a way of performing where one singer would begin a phrase and another singer



Photo by Sebastian Schutyser. Courtesy of Aga Khan Music Initiative.

would finish it, and they’d alternate like that through a whole piece. We do the same thing: I begin a line, and Fargana continues it, and the effect is as if one person is singing. In places our voices overlap, so there’s a kind of polyphony. I can’t explain why it turned out that way—perhaps because Fargana is my daughter and we live in the same house. But I think it’s that spiritually we’re very close. We understand each other in an inner sense, and this is how our understanding is expressed. It all comes from singing together, and it’s

Performer Profile: Alim and Fargana Qasimov (CONTINUED)

spontaneous. We can do it one way in a rehearsal, and then in a concert, it will turn out completely differently.

“When I started performing with Fargana, there was no small amount of criticism but now there’s less and less. People have started to accept our ‘experiment’ because they feel that it’s sincere, and that it’s our spiritual discovery. In fact, it’s not an experiment. The way I sing and the way I improvise represents my soul at that moment. It represents my *hal*: the state of my soul.”

The term *hal*, an Arabic word that is also commonly used in other Turkic languages and in Persian, has strong associations with Sufism, the mystical dimension of Islam. For Sufis, *hal* is a state of spiritual awakening that creates openness to the mystical presence of the Divine. Qasimov, translating *hal* into the language of art, defines it as “inspiration.” “It’s not something you can pull out of your pocket,” he emphasized. “I can’t command myself to get inspired at a particular moment and perform something. Moreover, you have to transform the musicians you’re playing with so that they can share that inspiration, and then give it to the audience. When I meet with the musicians in my ensemble, it’s almost like a gathering of dervishes. There’s an atmosphere that starts to nourish us that comes from beyond our own will, and that’s the source of the unpredictability in our music. It’s almost a feeling of ecstasy that leads to some kind of meditation. There isn’t any point in performing *mugham* without *hal*.”



Photo by Sebastian Schutyser. Courtesy of Aga Khan Music Initiative.

The musicians in Alim Qasimov’s ensemble include not only performers on the *tar* and *kamancha*, as in a conventional *mugham* trio, but also on the oboe-like *balaban*, on a variety of hand drums, and, at times, on the oud. The expanded ensemble is also an example of Qasimov’s search for the fullest expression of *mugham*’s range of moods and emotions. “If it were up to me, I’d invite not four or five musicians but an entire chamber ensemble, and I’d create wonderful compositions for them that would be performed in the world’s most prestigious concert halls,” Qasimov said. “I observed that in Turkey and Iran, they have ensembles with violins, cellos, flutes—real orchestras that aren’t restricted to

just the local instruments. I can only imagine what you could do with our *mugham* if you had those instruments. But since I don’t work with musical notation, it’s hard for me to do arranging, and performing with a large ensemble has remained only a dream.”

“*Mugham* is an elite art,” Alim Qasimov concluded. “It’s for a select group—for people who have some kind of inner spirituality, who have their own inner world. These days ‘elite’ refers to something more commercial than spiritual—for example, to the kind of people who can buy a new car every year. But that’s not what I have in mind. An elite person is one who knows how to experience, how to endure, how to feel, how to listen to *mugham*

Performer Profile: Alim and Fargana Qasimov (CONTINUED)

and begin to cry. This ability doesn't depend on education or upbringing, nor on one's roots. It's something else. It's an elite of feeling, an elite of inspiration. These kinds of listeners

aren't always available. I can't speak about the distant past, but it's clear that *mugham* hasn't developed in a straight line. There were lapses and dips and ascents, and surely it will

always be like that. I can't say whether we're in a dip or an ascent—it's not for me to judge—but I think there will always be an attraction to this music until the end of humanity."

WATCH

Example 20.4. Excerpt from documentary film about Alim and Fargana Qasimov by Saodat Ismailova and Carlos Casas in *Alim and Fargana Qasimov: Spiritual Music of Azerbaijan* (DVD), vol. 6 of *Music of Central Asia* (SFR, 2007).

LISTEN

Example 20.5. Mugham Chargah: "Bardasht," performed by Alim and Fargana Qasimov (vocal) on a text by Seyyid Azim Shirvani (1835–1888), with Rafael Asgarov (*balaban*), Rauf Islamov (*kamancha*), Ali Asgar Mammadov (*tar*), and Natiq Shirinov (percussion). From *Alim and Fargana Qasimov: Spiritual Music of Azerbaijan*, vol. 6 of *Music of Central Asia* (SFR, 2007), track 1.

Mugham Chargah (Persian: Chahargah) is one of the seven principal suite forms of Azerbaijani classical music. Each *mugham* suite consists of a conventional sequence of pieces (*shu'be*) that take listeners on a journey through varied musical and emotional terrain. The great Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli (1885–1948) believed that *chargah* excites the passions and conveys pride, virility, and a martial spirit. Throughout the suite, high dramatic tension contrasts with moments of repose and *détente*.

Bardasht (from Persian: "summing up") is a generic compositional form that serves as a short overture to a *mugham* suite. This lively *bardasht* begins with a rhythmic instrumental introduction that prepares the dramatic, high-register entrance of the vocalists with the signature melodic interval of *chargah*: an upward leap from *la* to *do* (*la* is slightly flattened). Alim and Fargana Qasimov render the opening verses of Shirvani's *ghazal* antiphonally in free rhythm over an embellished drone provided by the *kamancha*, *tar*, and *balaban*.

The final four lines of "Bardasht" gradually descend a full octave to the initial pitch of the subsequent piece, "Maye." The text of "Bardasht" begins:
Oh friend, do not drag me to the edge of that desert today,
That moon is not here, so do not take me to this empty spectacle.
I became love-crazed from the fairies' braids,
What excuse can I give to Adam, who brought me into this world?

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe the vocal sound of Alim and Fargana Qasimov in "Bardasht"?
2. What connection do you feel between the meaning of the lyrics and the vocal sound?
3. For the instrumentalists, what kind of skill is involved in working with the Qasimovs?
4. What is your own response to the Qasimovs' "experiment" with antiphonal (responsorial) singing?

“Ovshari,” “Shahnaz,” “Kurdi,” and “Maani,” just as in its traditional model. Example 20.6 reproduces a brief introduction to the entire piece followed by an excerpt from the first section, “Ovshari.” It opens with a clarinet playing a slow and melancholy melody based on an authentic folk tune. The preeminence of the melodic line is maintained throughout this section; however, the composer creates new melodies that emerge in the orchestra and enter into a beautiful dialogue with the principal melody. This sort of polyphonic texture represents a compositional innovation not found in traditional performances.



Fikrat Amirov, the author of the first symphonic *mugham*.

Courtesy of the State Museum of Azerbaijani Musical Culture and Dr. Alla Bayramova, Director.

LISTEN

Example 20.6. “Kurd Ovshari,” composed by Fikrat Amirov and performed by the Azerbaijan State Symphony Orchestra, conductor Yalchin Adigozalov. From *Symphonic, vol. 1 of Classical Music of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan International* (1997), track 1. Courtesy of *Azerbaijan International* magazine editor-in-chief Betty Blair.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What elements of music in this symphonic *mugham* reveal links with traditional *mugham*?
2. Does Amirov prefer to mix the timbres of different instruments in the symphony orchestra or present them separately? Overall, how is his score influenced by traditional *mugham* performances?
3. Comment on the role that repetition of melodic and rhythmic patterns plays in this music. Are such repetitions typical for the source music, i.e., *mugham* in its original form?

Fikrat Amirov’s symphonic *mughams* have been well received beyond Azerbaijan. In the 1950s, “Shur” was performed by the Houston Symphony Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski, and “Kurd Ovshari” was performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Charles Munch. In 1997, Michelle Kwan, the celebrated American figure skater, included Amirov’s symphonic *mugham* “Gulistan Bayati Shiraz” in her program at the World Figure Skating Championships. Symphonic *mughams* by other Azerbaijani composers have also entered the symphonic



Vagif Mustafazade, founder
of jazz *mugham*.

Courtesy of the State Museum of
Azerbaijani Musical Culture and Dr. Alla
Bayramova, Director.

repertory: Niyazi's "Rast"; Tofig Bakikhanov's "Humayun," "Nava," and "Rahab"; and Suleyman Alasgarov's "Bayati Shiraz."

JAZZ MUGHAM

Jazz has long been a significant part of the Azerbaijani musical landscape, and in the early 1960s, jazz players in Baku began experimenting with the fusion of *mugham* and jazz.

Though jazz and *mugham* arose in completely different cultural spheres, they share many common features. Both are musical forms based on egalitarian improvisation shaped by an array of structural constraints. Both are typically performed by small ensembles or "combos," in which soloists take turns displaying their virtuosity against the backdrop of the group. In Azerbaijan, both jazz and *mugham* experienced difficult times during the Soviet era because the architects and implementers of Soviet cultural policies viewed them as misaligned with the values and aims of socialist art. At the beginning of the Soviet era, jazz was denounced as the "voice of the capitalist world," while *mugham* was labeled a "relic of the past" and an exemplar of "feudal court music." Both genres were finally admitted to the domain of officially recognized Soviet art and culture; however, they were placed under strict ideological control.

Jazz arrived in Azerbaijan in the early twentieth century, at the time of the oil boom. Westerners enjoyed listening to the European musicians who played jazz in Baku's cafes and restaurants, and in those days, Baku's jazz scene depended heavily on imported talent. This situation changed in the late 1930s with the founding of the Azerbaijan State Jazz Orchestra. Local composers Tofig Guliyev (1917–2000); Rauf Hajiyev (1923–1997); and Niyazi Tagizade-Gajibekov, known professionally simply as Niyazi (1912–1984), contributed works to the orchestra's repertory. Unfortunately, the group didn't exist for long as a jazz orchestra. In 1941, after the Soviet Union entered World War II, it was reconfigured as a military orchestra and its repertory shifted to patriotic songs and military marches. During the so-called Khrushchev Thaw of the early 1960s, when the strict ideological control of the Stalin era was partially relaxed, Azerbaijanis, like other citizens of the Soviet Union, gained access to previously forbidden recordings, musical scores, books, and radio broadcasts. Artists and musicians embraced a spirit of experimentalism, and among these bold experimentalists was the pianist and composer Vagif Mustafazade (1940–1979), who created the first fusion of *mugham* and jazz. Jazz *mugham* has been shaping the creative explorations of Azerbaijani musicians ever since. A recording of Vagif Mustafazade's "Composition-2" is reproduced in example 20.7.

LISTEN

Example 20.7. “Composition-2,” composed by Vagif Mustafazade. From *Vagif Mustafazade* (2-DVD set), *Azerbaijan International* magazine (2007). Sponsored by the Ministry of Communication & Informational Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Courtesy of *Azerbaijan International* magazine editor-in-chief Betty Blair.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What features of the original *mugham* are clearly represented in this excerpt?
2. Can you relate Vagif Mustafazade’s performance style to any existing jazz styles that you know (e.g., swing, bebop, “free jazz,” etc.)?

In 1978, Vagif Mustafazade was awarded First Prize at the International Competition of Jazz Themes in Monaco—a remarkable accomplishment in the Cold War era. In 1966, Willis Conover, the well-known Voice of America radio broadcaster whose program *Jazz Time* reached millions of listeners in the Soviet Union, characterized Mustafazade as an “extraordinary pianist.” Conover said, “It is impossible to identify his equal. He is the most lyrical pianist I have ever known.”⁴

Rafiq Babayev (1936–1994), another Azerbaijani pianist and composer, contributed significantly to the development of jazz *mugham*, though with a somewhat different approach than Mustafazade. For Vagif, *mugham* was the main source of inspiration, and the primary source of fusion material. By contrast, Rafiq maintained the prevalence of jazz idioms and incorporated elements of *mugham* such as traditional instruments and modes into Western jazz forms.

These two masters paved the way for many performers of jazz *mugham* who are active today. Pianists Salman Gambarov (b. 1959) and Shahin Novrasli (b. 1977) meld the timbres and modal idioms of traditional instruments with the harmonic language of contemporary music from the West and post-bop jazz styles. Pianist Jamil Amirov (b. 1957) is a proponent of jazz-rock fusion with a strong ethnic component. His proclivity for authentic “roots” music is not accidental, for Jamil represents the next generation of the Amirov dynasty, known for their impeccable knowledge and dedication to Azerbaijan’s musical heritage. Emil Afrasiyab (b. 1982) is a direct heir of Vagif Mustafazade’s fusion experiments. The same is true of Aziza Mustafazade (b. 1969)—Vagif’s daughter—whose singing and piano playing fuse jazz with traditional music idioms as well as with music of the European baroque and romantic eras. At the age of eighteen, Aziza won third prize at the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition in Washington, D.C. Since



Jazz Center at the Baku Music Academy.

then, she has released recordings with prestigious companies and collaborated with a host of contemporary jazz stars.

Nowadays, both elements of jazz *mugham*—jazz and *mugham*—are enjoying a revival in Azerbaijan. Not coincidentally, this revival is occurring simultaneously with a new oil boom that provides a powerful impetus for the development of art and music. Contemporary Azerbaijani jazz musicians keep current with new trends and developments among their counterparts in the West. In contrast to their predecessors in the Soviet era, they tour internationally and host prominent jazz musicians at home. Azerbaijani jazz musicians have competed successfully in international

events, including at the prestigious Montreux Jazz Festival (Switzerland), where pianist-composer Isfar Sarabsky (b. 1989) was a co-winner of the 2009 jazz solo piano competition. Azerbaijan itself has hosted international jazz festivals that have featured luminaries such as Al Jarreau, Herbie Hancock, and Joe Zawinul.

Mugham is also enjoying a revival, and many large-scale projects that involve the performance, recording, study, and promotion of *mugham* have been initiated in Azerbaijan—a number of them under the personal patronage of the President, Ilham Aliyev, and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva. *Mugham* continues to inspire the creative explorations of Azerbaijani composers and jazz musicians, and in so doing, underscores the abiding vitality of East-West fusion in Azerbaijani music.

NOTES

1. Uzeyir Hajibeyli is also known under the russified forms of his last name, Hajibeyov, Hajibekov, or Gadzhibekov.
2. Opera was presented earlier in the Middle East, for example, in Cairo, Egypt; however, the works presented there were neither written by native composers nor based on indigenous traditional heritage. Hajibeyli's experience was unique in this regard, since the plot and music of *Leyli and Majnun* were entirely derived from the traditional heritage of Azerbaijan.
3. This text was previously published in the booklet notes for *Alim and Fargana Qasimov: Spiritual Music of Azerbaijan*, vol. 6 of *Music of Central Asia*, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 2007.
4. Quoted in Vagif Samadoglu, "The Emergence of Jazz in Azerbaijan," *Azerbaijan International* 5 (Winter 1997): 74.