

'NAZIRA' TRADITIONS IN UZBEK MUSIC

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the research problem of the maqom system, along with its creative and performing traditions. The article reveals the significance of the 'Nazira' tradition in Uzbek music and further illustrates features of this tradition known from the history of oriental literature and Uzbek traditional music.

Keywords

Aesthetics, Nazira, Maqom, Canon, Musical treatise

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary musicology devotes particular attention to the issues of studying the theoretical foundations of the maqom system, inclusive of the centuries-old creative and performing traditions that have developed in the medieval Eastern Muslim world. There had been invariable artistic canons in the classical traditions that were created by our talented ancestors that survived up to our times owing to the activities of their adherents. Today, it is becoming increasingly important to study the historical roots of these traditions. First, there is a need to reveal the essence of classical musical culture, which brought into being maqom cycles. Second, it is necessary to identify the place of maqom in the creation of specific music patterns of maqom style.

In the research works of the prominent maqom scholars, the issues of the formal structure, internal canons, and features of the performing traditions of the Uzbek and Tajik peoples' classical musical heritage, such as Shashmaqom, Khorezm maqom, and Fergana-Tashkent maqoms, have been covered to a greater or lesser extent. In this regard, it is worth noting that the study of the creative traditions of Nazira has acquired great importance, which initially appeared and established themselves in the art of *bastakors* (*traditional composers*), and today occupy an essential place in the manifestation of the innate canons of the maqom art in individual melodies (*kui*) and tunes (*aytym*).

The research papers of Radjabov, Vizgo, Gafurbekov, Nazarov, Ibragimov, Yunusov, Matyokubov, and Begmatov contain valuable ideas about Nazira traditions in Uzbek musicology. The most significant scientific observations on this subject belong to the venerable musicologist I. Radjabov. In particular, he was the first to prove, by explicit examples, the vital role of the Nazira tradition in the creation of the second group of the Shashmaqom shuba (Radjahov, 2006: 244, 245, 252).

In her articles, Vizgo put forward the idea that "Nazira," as aesthetics, was considered not only musical composition but also the tradition of the medieval musicology (Vizgo, 1972: 396). Citing the rules of creation of Shashmaqom Savts as an example, Gafurbekov evaluates the phenomenon of 'Nazira' as a creative method. He emphasizes that 'Nazira' initially had manifested itself in literature and only then did its facets find their way in music (Gafurbekov, 1984: 8). Scrutinizing the issue of classical rhyme in his scientific monograph *Farobi and Ibn Sino on the Rhythm of the Music*, Nazarov deduced that "the principle of 'Nazira' was a key factor in the rhythmic development of musical pieces" (Nazarov, 1995: 15). Ibragimov also recognizes the reflection of "Nazira" traditions in the professional music of the East and asserts the existence of the "Nazira" principle in the works created based on certain melodies formulas that have long been known in musical practice (Ibragimov, 2006: 17). Yunusov, referring to

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the work of bastakor Sadykov, notes that the latter left an extremely prolific heritage generated “from the inexhaustible resources of our musical heritage, in particular, koshuk, ashula, katta ashula, yalla, lapar, kuy, maqom shuba, tarona” (Yunusov, 2005: 101–102). In his monograph *Maqomot*, Matyokubov (2004: 400) gives a general concept of the manifestation of the “Nazira” phenomenon in oriental music. Begmatov's article “Ushshok” also contains valuable information on this very subject. The author, in the course of comparative analysis, states that the musical pieces in the interpretation of the ‘Nazira’ style by *hafiz (traditional singers)* Sadyrkhan Hafiz and Mulla To'ychi Tashmukhamedov have been widespread among the peoples of the East (Begmatov, 1994: 32-39).

The ‘Nazira’ tradition has been one of the cornerstones of Eastern Muslim art and the entire culture. To better understand this issue, it is worthwhile to look at the history of the origin of the ‘Nazira’ tradition. It is known from history that during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (first half of the 7th century), his associates measured their actions with the way of life of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), and they sought to follow and imitate him in all their deeds. This state of affairs was important in the formation of stable pillars of the Muslim culture of the East, and accordingly, on this basis, a certain aesthetic system arose in the field of art. This system is known in science as the “aesthetics of similarity (Nazir)” (Plakhov, 1988: 12, 15), which involves the creation of works by normative artistic rules established in the Middle Ages on which they rested (ibid: 87).

In the traditional art of the Eastern peoples (applied and fine arts, architecture, etc.), “Nazira,” in the broadest sense, has been a creative analogy in the form of a response to the art works of predecessors; however, these works bore new artistic forms (Bertels, 2006: 137).

Researchers recognize that in the process of studying oriental art of the ancient and medieval periods, stable artistic conditions such as genre, symbolism, and the general style of the period have been encountered. Such phenomena have been explained by the concept of “canon” (“artistic canon”) in European culture. The purpose of the artistic canon is the creation of aesthetic ideals. Such aesthetic ideals, embodied in the patterns of particular models, served as a kind of model for future works.

Researchers describe ‘Nazira’ in art as pair ratio “canon-improvisation” (“constant-unrestrained”), in other words “invariant-variant” (Azimova, 2008: 118–119; Plakhov, 1988: 27–33; Sultanova, 1998: 67; Dzhanizade, 1987: 101–103; Ulmasov, 1989: 180–181). At the same time, the main requirement for almost all art creators working in the ‘Nazira’ style was to create new content while adhering to primary principles (canon, invariant model). Here it seems appropriate to cite the following opinion of Losev: “The artistic canon does not determine the style of the work created on its foundation, but serves as the basis for its modification” (Losev, 1973: 6–15). Such a complex task finds its solution in other, unique ways, by taking into account the nature of each area of artistic creativity.

In the oriental countries’ literature, the tradition of *hamsa* has been recognized as a classical example of ‘Nazira’ aesthetics (Solihova, 2005: 15–16). It is well known that *hamsa* (Arabic *hams* = five) is a collection of five epic stories. The founder of the cycle was the great Azerbaijani poet and thinker Nizami Ganjavi (1141–1209), who added a new ideologically artistic trend to the development of epics creation (dastan). The poems were arranged in the following sequence: ‘Treasury of Secrets’ (beginning 1170), ‘Khosrov and Shirin’ (1181), ‘Leyli and Majnun’ (1188), ‘Seven Beauties’ (1196), and ‘Iskandar-name’ (1199–1200). Although the author himself did not pursue the goal of creating a single cycle, the five poems he created in different years and combined into one compilation became an unprecedented phenomenon in world literature and became, in every respect, a great pattern to be followed by the poets of the Muslim East. For this reason, in subsequent centuries, the creation of works based on Nizami's “hamsa” became a classical literary tradition. Many creators have embarked on the path of creating “hamsa,” but very few managed to adequately continue this tradition. The history of classical literature knows only three names of powerful talents (poets) who have achieved success along this path: Khusrau Dehlavi (1253–1325), Abdurakhman Jami (1414–1492), and Ali-Shir Nava'i (1441–1501). Thus, Ali-Shir Nava'i being a quite venerable poet in his early forties implemented his creative plan to rise to the challenge and write “Hamsa” in response to Nizami Ganjavi and Khusrau Dehlavi (Bertels, 1965: 498; Konrad, 2006: 127–134; Sultan, 1986: 5–9).

Yet, Hazrat Navoi's intention was not to translate the 'Hamsa' created in the Persian language by previous poets but to create a new unique work in the Turkic language to rank with the previous distinguished works. In his epic "Farkhod and Shirin," Navoi mentioned that merely to "repeat" what his predecessors had written did not befit a poet. Therefore, he showed preference to create an original one (Sultan, 1969: 320). "It would be wrong to consider 'Nazira' as an imitation," writes Bertels, "because the essence of this phenomenon is not in imitation, but in the novelty introduced by the poet into the subject ..." (Bertels, 2016: 28).

There were ready-made themes and storylines within the framework of "Hamsa." However, a high skill level was required for creative interpretation. That is why in Eastern literature, only the most brilliant and talented authors could introduce artistic expression into widely known themes through interpretation. In this regard, the scholars emphasize Goethe's famous saying: "The most important point is not 'what' but 'how.'" The issue is about the use of the same themes by different writers. It does not matter if the plot is the same the most important is how skillfully it is expressed" (Karomatov, 1993: 12).

According to al-Askari: "The most paramount thing in poetry is not to find a new poetic theme, because be it an Arab or a foreigner, a city dweller, or a nomad they are equally capable of doing this. What matters is how it is expressed" (ibid: 11).

Consequently, the aesthetics of similarity in literature is expressed by the word "Nazira,"² which, in a broad sense, means a work created as a specific analogy (or response) to the work of a recognized and outstanding master of the word. The following thoughts of Khayitmetov further clarify the essence of the aesthetics of "Nazira": "Navoi recognized his two predecessors, great poets (Nizami Ganjavi and Khusrav Dehlavi – Ch.E.), as his teachers when he began to create 'Hamsa' in his native language, he learnt the art from them and tried to follow in their footsteps in many way" (Hayitmetov, 1986: 37). Thus, those who chose 'Nazira' for their work approached it creatively by enriching and developing the selected theme, and, if necessary, identifying new problems and introducing fresh ideas, hence demonstrating their aptitude.

Nazira pattern observed in literature can be traced in architecture, fine, and decorative arts (Giyasi & Bairamov, 1990: 256). In particular, in the short bibliographic illustrations created by Kamoliddin Behzod and his followers in the 15th to 17th centuries, literary themes, compositional patterns, and other formal stereotypes were reiterated, but each time they were "invigorated" by different shades and colors (Yusupova, Rakhimova & Ibragimov, 2010: 74–126).

The researchers also argue that in the field of folk art, the precise dimensional patterns passed from master to apprentice have been likewise inextricably linked to the creative rise of masters enriched with new edges and features (Rempel, 1983: 170–171). All these observations of Nazir's aesthetic manifestation in various fields of an art show that perfect works of art are emerging only with the close interaction of centuries-old artistic traditions with genuine talent, skill, and a broad outlook. Lotman's research paper "Canonical art as an information paradox" contains intriguing ideas about the "aesthetics of similarity." It states that Lotman's research paper "Canonical art as an information paradox" contains intriguing ideas about the "aesthetics of similarity": It has been established that there are two types of art in historical poetics. One type is directed at canonical systems ("ritualized art," the art of the aesthetics of identity). The other, on the contrary, violates canons and breaches predetermined norms. In the latter, aesthetic values arise not as a result of the achievement of the canonical, but as a consequence of its violation (Lotman, 1973: 16).

CONCLUSION

'Nazira' as a creative method was widely introduced in literature, fine, and applied arts, and it occupied an important place in medieval oriental music. Musicologist Eolyan states in this regard: "one of the

² The Arabic word "Nazira" means "high example and imitation worthy of imitation."

distinctive features of the music of the near and Middle East is a strict adherence to the artistic canon. This canon embodied not only the ‘aesthetical ideal of the era’, but also firm normativity, steady adherence to the laws and traditions of sublime classical art” (Eolyan, 1987: 265). To support this opinion, there are numerous direct and indirect evidence in historical treatises on music (Vizgo, 1972: 396), along with other written sources, including the studies of musicologists of the 20th and 21st centuries on the history of Eastern musical practice. The most striking evidence of this is making and performing arts, which most strongly embodied the traditions of the musical culture of the past.

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