

THE FORMATION OF UZBEK STAGE ART AND THE HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES OF ITS PROMINENT REPRESENTATIVES

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Abstract: This article summarizes the history of the introduction and formation of variety art in Uzbekistan, as well as the historical activities of its prominent representatives. Moreover, facts related to the repertoire of outstanding figures in Uzbek variety art have been analyzed.

Key words: Stage art, art, culture, orchestra, representative, music, singer, opera, World War II, dynasty, repertoire, folklore, ensemble, composer.

Before discussing Uzbek estrada art, it is appropriate to first touch upon the lexical meaning of the word "estrada." The word "estrada" is derived from the French word "estrade," meaning a wooden platform or a podium.

Estrada is a type of art that unites performers of various forms, including musicians, singers, artistic readers, dancers, circus performers, and other artists. This is thoroughly explained in I. Akbarov's book *"Musical Dictionary."*

In Uzbekistan, the formation of musical estrada groups mainly dates back to the war years. In 1942, an estrada orchestra was formed under the leadership of Leonid Samal at the “Labor Army” base located at military construction site No. 351 on Samarqand Street in Tashkent. L. Samal, who studied at the Rostov School of Music, was a masterful player of the saxophone and piano. The orchestra included figures such as L. Lis, L. Samal, V. Panorovsky, and A. Kravets. However, in the difficult post-war years, the orchestra disbanded[1].

In the post-war years, variety orchestras were established at cinemas in Tashkent. The first such orchestra was formed in 1946 at the *Iskra* cinema under the leadership of A. Pozdnyakov [14]. Subsequently, similar orchestras were organized at the *Yosh Gvardiya* and *Vatan* cinemas, as well as in parks and restaurants. These orchestras played a unique role in the spread and development of variety art in Uzbekistan. Figures such as D.I. Shtern, L.I. Sukhov, D.M. Sokolov, V.F. Koptevsky, B. Bogarov, and N.I. Slezkin played an important role in the development of this genre. From 1949, the orchestra at the *Iskra* cinema was led by D.I. Shtern. This orchestra worked productively until the 1966 Tashkent earthquake, gathering the most talented musicians. D.I. Shtern recounts: *“The basis of our orchestra’s repertoire,”* Shtern

recalls, “*was Soviet variety music as well as Uzbek melodies, which we tried as much as possible to adapt into variety arrangements. I often wrote the arrangements myself, and we ordered orchestrations from Moscow. There were many selections and fantasies based on the songs of I.O. Dunaevsky, B. Mokrousov, and V. Solovyov*” [14].

The fans of Tashkent loved these orchestras and attended the concerts with great enthusiasm. Later, the orchestra of the *Iskra* cinema gained the status of the most skillful ensemble in Tashkent. The repertoire also expanded. Concert programs began to include classical works, arias from operas and operettas, excerpts from the musical drama *Tohir va Zuhra*, works by S. Yudakov, and so on. However, the main goal of the ensemble was to promote Uzbek variety music. Among the members of the ensemble were artists such as Nasim Khashimov (People’s Artist of the Uzbek SSR), Asad Azimov (People’s Artist of the Uzbek SSR), Sasson Benyaminov (People’s Artist of the Uzbek SSR), Neyla Khashimova (People’s Artist of the Uzbek SSR), Kommuna Ismailova (People’s Artist of the Uzbek SSR), Sattor Yarashov (People’s Artist of the Uzbek SSR), and Nazira Akhmedova (People’s Artist of the Uzbek SSR), who became the best singers in the republic [14].

In 1958, the orchestra of the *Vatan* cinema merged with the “Uzbekistan Variety Orchestra,” which was established under the Variety Theater. New works also began to appear in the creative activities of V. Koptevsky. He began creating works based on Uzbek folk music melodies. On this matter, L.I. Sukhov says: “*Koptevsky, for the first time in Uzbekistan, took folk melodies, composed them for the trumpet, and then, using European instruments, turned them into concert pieces, which was certainly innovative. After that, many others began creating similar arrangements. Thus, a new Eastern direction in variety music was founded*” [14].

V. Koptevsky worked for many years at the R. Glière Music Boarding School in Tashkent, where he trained many students. Among them were D. Khasanov (teacher at the music boarding school), Yu. Gribov (member of the Union Radio and Television Orchestra), N. Ivashchenko (the first trumpeter of the Uzbekistan Variety Orchestra), and Yu. Parfyonov (one of the world’s greatest trumpeters).

The contribution of the Zakirov family to the development of Uzbek musical art is invaluable. The founder of the dynasty, Karim Zakirov (1912-1977), was known for his versatility. He masterfully performed Uzbek musical folklore, classical music samples, and European opera roles. During his creative career, K. Zakirov performed in musical dramas such as *Halima*, *Farhod va Shirin*, *Layli va Majnun*, and *O‘zbekiston Qilichi*, as well as operas like *Bo‘ron*, *Gulsara*, *Ulug‘bek*, *Mahmud Torobiy*, *Dilorom*, and *Maysaraning Ishi*. His contribution to opera was of great importance in shaping the Uzbek national opera performing school [9].

Karim Zakirov’s children — Botir, Luiza, Navfal, Farrukh, Ravshan, and Jamshid Zakirov — made significant contributions to Uzbek national musical art,

particularly in the variety music genre. Botir and Farrukh Zakirov gained fame as exceptional singers with rare voices and authors of several songs [9].

Botir Zakirov (1936-1985) was one of the representatives of modern professional Uzbek variety singing. He became a prominent figure in professional variety singing by performing Uzbek songs for the first time accompanied by a variety orchestra. On his initiative, the Uzbekistan State Variety Orchestra was established in 1958 based on the *Yoshlik* ensemble [2]. B. Zakirov enriched Uzbek vocal art with new traditions through collaboration with musicians from neighboring republics. For example, together with Alexander Ginzburg, he developed a project that brought folk art and variety music closer together. He astonished many by performing French composer and singer Enrico Macias' songs *Do'st Haqida Qo'shiq* and *O'lkam Qizlari* in French. French newspapers compared him to the famous French singer Charles Aznavour. In 1972, B. Zakirov established the *Music-Hall* variety orchestra for the first time in Central Asia. At that time in the Soviet Union, there were only two *Music-Hall* orchestras — in Moscow and Leningrad [2].

In 1959, Botir Zakirov actively participated in the Uzbek Literature and Art Decade held in Moscow, where he performed "*Arab Tangos*" by the Arab composer Dorish Al-Attash, which brought him widespread fame [3]. As the founder, soloist, and artistic director of the Tashkent Music Hall, he elevated nearly all the songs he performed to the level of complete, deeply lyrical-dramatic works. In B. Zakirov's creative career, the romances and songs of Uzbek composers held an important place. He skillfully performed songs such as M. Burkhanov's "*Maftun Bo'ldim*", "*Namedonam Chi Nom Dorad*", I. Akbarov's "*Yor Kel*", "*Ra'no*", "*Gazli*", "*Seni Eslayman*", and S. Jalil's "*Majnun Monologi*", "*Kechalar Yulduz Sanab*". Additionally, he performed Indian, Iranian, Lebanese, Italian, and French songs. He also performed musical works by French composers E. Macias and J. Brel, Indian composers Chowdhury and R. Shankar, and Egyptian composer Farid al-Atrash [12].

Farrukh Zakirov (born in 1946) is one of the brightest stars of Uzbekistan's variety art. Since 1976, he has led the *Yalla* variety ensemble. He included Uzbek folk *lapar*, *yalla*, and songs into the ensemble's repertoire, such as "*Yo'l Bolsin*", "*Yallama Yorim*", "*Ghayra-Ghayra*", "*Handalak*", "*Qilpillama*", and "*Ganja Qarabog'*". He made significant contributions to utilizing musical folklore genres in variety art [12].

In the years of independence, the state implemented several measures to develop the national variety music field [10], create mature musical works that serve to educate the youth with a spirit of love for the homeland, and enable the professional and moral growth of young variety singers. In the variety music field of Uzbekistan, stars such as Farrukh Zakirov, Nasiba Abdullayeva, Yulduz Usmonova, Kumush Razzokova,

Ravshan Komilov, Gulomjon Yoqubov, Ozodbek Nazarbekov, Hosila Rahimova, Azim Mullahonov, Larisa Moskalyova, and others made their mark.

To develop the variety music field, special attention was given to its education. For instance, in 1996, the Variety Music Faculty was established at the Tashkent State Conservatory named after M. Ashrafi, the Variety-Circus College was founded on the basis of the Variety-Circus Studio under the Ministry of Culture, and variety departments were opened in several art schools in the regions.

One of the most serious issues in the field of pop music has been the increasing number of works created in a "superficial," "pirated" style of composition and performance. In the years of independence, in order to curb negative trends in national pop music and raise the field to world standards, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a decree on June 26, 2001, with the number 272, titled "On the further development of pop music performance" [11].

In the activities of a number of singers working in the pop music genre, it is possible to observe the harmony with traditional national music culture. However, there are also cases of blind imitation of Western music and the disruption of our national traditional music culture.

In order to develop this direction of music, the National Pop Music Development and Coordination Council was established. The responsible secretary of the Council, Yuldosh Norbutayev, said the following about the council: "The main task of the council is to continuously analyze Uzbek pop music, further develop it, create favorable conditions and necessary opportunities for young artists to fully showcase their talent and skill, provide material and moral encouragement, promote deep, artistically high works, and prevent the spread of weak and superficial works that may negatively affect the youth's morality and do not align with our national values" [8].

Based on the regulations of the National Pop Music Development and Coordination Council, it collaborates with the regional departments of the Council of Culture and Education of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, provinces, and the city of Tashkent, as well as with the regional branches of the "Uzbeknavo" pop association. The council consists of qualified pop singers, composers, directors, poets, masters of spoken word, musicologists, journalists, and representatives of organizations and institutions responsible for the field of culture and education. Regional departments of the National Pop Music Development and Coordination Council have been established. At the same time, in order to enrich, regulate, and promote the repertoires of famous pop singers, as well as to recommend artistically high musical works for major national events, a "Pop Song Phonotheque" was established under the Pop Music Development Fund. To date, more than 5,300 works by over 220 singers have been collected [8].

In the history of Uzbekistan's music culture, the introduction of the pop music genre and the development of Uzbek pop art have achieved certain successes. In the

development of the field, the role of prominent representatives of Uzbek pop art is invaluable. In this regard, the famous figures of pop music and their creative works play a distinctive role in the development of music, especially pop art, among the younger generation today. It is important to note that while preserving the purity of the art, it has undergone a unique transformation, and today Uzbek pop art is also reaching the world stage.

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