

The Babakhanovs - Holders of the Traditions of Shashmakom Styles

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Abstract: This article is about the Babakhanov dynasty, the great representatives of the Shashmakom song performing style. And there were covered issue, that despite being a representative of another nation, the famous Babakhanovs, who created in the direction of the Uzbek national makom in its original state.

Keywords: Dynasty, Musician, Bukhara, Levi, Moshe, Ari, Shashmakom, Virtuoso Performer, Kashgar Rubab, Jewish, Unique Performance, Safti Zhaloli.

1. Introduction

Amir Timur entered world history as the creator of a huge and prosperous empire, the core of which was Maverannahr with its capital in Samarkand. Being a brilliant strategist, a skillful politician, a firm reformer of outdated social relations, a patron of trade, crafts, science and culture, Timur became the creator of a state based on established laws and customs. During his reign and (1370-1405) no bad attitude towards the Jewish community was recorded. The legends of the Bukharian Jews connect the construction of the first quarter of the Bukharian Jews in Bukhara and the synagogue with the name of Amir Timur. By his order, many Jews were resettled in Maverannahr as skilled dyers and weavers, experienced merchants, financiers and entrepreneurs and artists. Bukharian Jews led an active lifestyle. They were represented in almost all spheres of society. Economic niche: court doctors, bankers, merchants, as well as artisans - weavers involved in dyeing silk and cotton fabrics and making products from them [1]. Tanning and jewelry making can also be attributed to the traditional occupations of Bukharian Jews; they were often caravan guides, tailors, hairdressers, shoemakers, bakers, winemakers, musicians, artists, doctors, and teachers. The Jews of Bukhara occupied a special place in the musical culture. Among them, it is worth noting the singer and musician Levi Babakhan. He was the court singer of the last Emir of Bukhara, Amir Alim Khan (1910-1920). Another singer Borukh Kalhok served at the court of Emir Muzafar Khan. In Soviet Uzbekistan, Tolmas Benyaminov, Izro Malakov became famous as performers of classical singing "Shashmaqom" [2]. Mukhabbat Shamaeva was a performer of Uzbek folk songs and made a successful career in the field of the Uzbek Soviet stage. The names of talented court dancers are also known - Shishakhon, Malkoi Oshma. In the 1920s, such dancers as Kundal, Chervonkhon, Kagigi, Gubur, Tillo enjoyed great success with the audience [3]. Dynasties of musicians are a common and widespread phenomenon in the culture of Central Asia. A special place in the history of the musical culture of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan belongs to the dynasty of Bukhara musicians Babakhanovs.

2. Methods

This study uses comparative historical analysis, literature analysis, analysis of archival materials and documents. During the study, the collection and accumulation of data in the form of conversations, interviews, and analysis of activity documents were used.

3. Results

The Babakhanovs are the keepers of traditions and creators of their own performing styles of the Bukhara Shashmakom. For more than a hundred years they have been making a significant contribution to the development of this classical musical art in one of the oldest centers of culture in Central Asia - Bukhara. The founder of the dynasty - Levi Babakhanov (Levich, 1873 - 1926) - the famous court singer of the last two emirs of Bukhara, the creator of his own vocal style. His son - Moshe Babakhanov (1910 - 1983) - singer and bastakor - composer of music in the tradition of the Soviet era. Ari Babakhanov is a musician, a virtuoso performer of the Kashgar rubab, a composer, an expert and custodian of the traditions of the Bukhara Shashmakom [4]. Shashmakom is a gigantic structurally organized musical cycle based on strict canons and rules. This is his theoretical model. But in practice, from this cycle, generations of musicians in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan creatively interpret the most expressive and loved by the people songs and melodies.

In the 20th century, the Bukhara Shashmakom was “divided” and integrated into the musical cultures of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan as a classical national heritage of the Uzbek and Tajik peoples. In its classical form, Shashmaqom is associated with the art of old great masters - singers and instrumentalists, and can be explained within the framework of the concept of “old Persian culture”. The core of Shashmaqom is the old Bukhara vocal school, headed by the outstanding singer Ota Jalol Nasyrov in modern times (at the end of the 19th - beginning of the 20th century) [5]. Shashmaqom (translated from Persian-Tajik meaning "six maqams") is one of the main genres of classical music of Central Asia, represented in the culture of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan [6]. This is refined instrumental music and highly professional vocal art.

Despite the proximity of certain aspects of the complex concept of Shashmaqom to the ideas of Sufism and the expression of spiritual divine harmony, the history of Shashmaqom is closely intertwined with the political history of Central Asia [7]. And today, the existence and development of this art in Central Asia still largely depends on state support, as well as on the enthusiasm of traditional musicians and the work of dedicated musicologists.

It is reasonable to start talking about such a complex phenomenon as Shashmaqom by clarifying terms and concepts. The fact is that in our time Shashmaqom denotes two different phenomena. In the 20th century in Uzbekistan, on the basis of the synthesis of the Bukhara Shashmaqom and the traditions of the Ferghana-Tashkent maqoms, a nationwide Shashmaqom was formed. It can also be called Tashkent Shashmaqom or Uzbek Shashmaqom [8]. A similar national cycle was formed in Tajikistan - the Tajik Shashmakom. Despite its genetic connection with the Bukhara Shashmaqom, the new kind of Shashmaqom is, of course, another artistic and musical phenomenon. It is a different matter when we talk about Bukhara Shashmaqom as such (that is why it is so important to introduce a clarifying definition - Bukhara!). Bukhara Shashmakom is one of the main types of classical music in Central Asia, which was formed over several centuries in the context of the ancient musical traditions of Bukhara [9]. Bukhara is the birthplace of Shashmaqom, the natural environment for its "habitat" and cultivation. Shashmakom has absorbed the bright traditions and stylistic features of the musical culture of this multi-ethnic city. But one should not limit the essence of the Bukhara Shashmaqom only to the art of Bukhara. The formation of Shashmaqom was influenced by the traditions of maqamat from Iran, Kashgar, Afghanistan, North India and other regions and countries of the Islamic world. Bukhara Shashmaqom is a kind of offshoot of the general Muslim civilizational model of maqamat. It deeply synthesizes both general Muslim and local Bukhara traditions. In the current version of Shashmaqom, we find, first of all, the contribution of three main musical traditions - Tajik, Turkic-Uzbek and Bukharian-Jewish. The decisive contribution to the development of the Bukhara Shashmakom (and this should not be forgotten) belonged to the musical culture of the Tajik people. Bukhara Shashmaqom influenced the formation of other local species in Central Asia - Ferghana-Tashkent maqom melodies and Khorezm maqoms. All types of Central Asian maqomat are interconnected.

The history of the formation of the Bukhara Shashmaqom has not yet been sufficiently studied. Talk about its ancient origin, unfortunately, is speculative, as it is not supported by documentary sources [10]. We do not even have a clear idea of what Shashmaqom was like in the court tradition of Bukhara in the 19th - early 20th century? But the court tradition was the main (but, of course, by no means the only!) center for the cultivation of this art in Bukhara, and important artistic and aesthetic canons of this art were developed in it. Scattered information from medieval written sources suggests that in Bukhara in different periods of history, maqoms were performed in different forms and traditions. The most significant was the common Eastern system of twelve maqams, 24 shu'ba and six avaz (XV-XVII centuries), on the basis of which various regional (“national”) types of maqamat were subsequently formed, including the Bukhara Shashmaqom. The turning point in the history of the Bukhara maqoms falls on the first third of the 16th century. And it is associated with the collapse of the Herat school of maqamat and the relocation of many outstanding musicians - bearers of the maqamat tradition to Bukhara. Among them was Mawlana Najm ad-Din Kavkabi Bukhari (killed in 1532-33), who became the founder of the Bukhara school of maqomat. Within the framework of this school, the Bukhara Shashmakom was later formed [11]. This happened, apparently, in the second half of the 18th - early 19th centuries. In any case, for the first time the term Shashmakom (together with related terms Shash daramad, Shashmakam-i musiki) appears in written sources starting from the middle of the 19th century. The earliest mention of the term Shashmakom dates back to 1847. Until the second half of the 19th century Shashmaqom, judging by the collections of poems for his performance and treatises on music in the Persian-Tajik language, was not unified into a single system. The work to bring it into a single grandiose cycle, known even in our time, was carried out by the outstanding Bukhara musician Ata Jalal (1845 - 1928). Ata Jalal was the last major custodian of the traditions of the Bukhara Shashmaqom, the head of the court maqom musicians under the three emirs of Bukhara. It was he who, relying on strict musical canons, gave the art of Bukhara Shashmaqom a new impetus for development already in the 20th century. The name of Ata Jalal and his contemporaries, numerous students and followers is associated with the bright flowering of the performing arts of the Bukhara Shashmaqom, which falls on the second half of the 19th - the first half of the 20th

century. This is, in general terms, the history of the development of the Bukhara Shashmaqom. Particular attention is paid to the last representative of the dynasty - Ari Babakhanov, who made a significant contribution to the restoration and revival of Bukhara Shashmaqom with his various creative activities. The Central Asian musician Ari Babakhanov of Uzbekistan masters excellently the long-necked lutes tanbur, qashqari rubab and dutar. In 1934 he was born in Bukhara in a Jewish family which can look back on an outstanding dynasty of traditional musicians. It was founded by his grandfather Levi Babakhan, the legendary court vocalist of Alim Khan, the last emir of Bukhara. Levi Babakhanov was born in 1873 in Bukhara and was the court singer of the last two emirs. He died in 1926. Over the years of his life, he gained fame as the author and performer of the Bukhara shashmaqom and other areas of makom. In his performance, thirty musical treatises have come down to us. Today his work is studied in music universities and schools in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In Bukhara itself, there has long been a street bearing his name. Levi Babakhan's son Moshe Babakhanov (1910-1983) was also a famous vocalist who accompanied himself on tanbur and doira [12]. In contrary to his grandfather and father Ari Babakhanov became a pure instrumentalist. After his musical studies according European curriculum at the Tashkent conservatory he graduated in 1959 with the state examination. Because of the Soviet cultural politics using the customary instruments was still permitted but mainly for a European repertoire. By the discrepancy between the monophonic Uzbek music and the European polyphony this constraints led to an artificial cultural hybrid. In spite of his artistic successes in Tashkent Ari Babakhanov returned to Bukhara where he taught for the following 40 years at the music college. With the help of his father and musicians like Maarufjon Tashpulov, Najmiddin Nasriddinov und Aminjon Ismatov he gradually found back to the traditional Bukhara music, the Shashmaqam. He made it his life task to develop this art and achieved a unique contribution for keeping it by writing down an enormous number of notes and texts of Persian Poetry as well as popular Uzbek and Tajik poems. Hereby he revived a series of lost creations which had formerly belonged to the Shashmaqam repertoire. This basis inspired him to compose own instrumental pieces and songs in the traditional style of which several became very popular in Uzbekistan. Ari Babakhanov, Levichi's grandson, did a great job of restoring shashmaqom in its original version, according to the recollections of his father's performance and according to the stories of other musicians. In particular, Ari Babakhanov restored a number of lost melodies. Including "Safti Zhaloli", that is, a composition belonging to Atajalol Nasirov himself. Ata Jalol composed this piece of music, at the request of Fitrat, Ari Babakhanov restored it, and today it is performed in this form. Ari Babakhanov is known not only for his unique performance, but the works composed by him are very expensive for the Uzbek people. In 1991 he founded at the Bukhara Philharmonic Society the *Shashmaqom Ensemble* which grew within a few years from initially 10 to 19 members. Shortly afterwards the group under the artistic direction of Ari Babakhanov performed for the Uzbek radio and TV and established itself in the traditional music scene. In 1998 their CD *Ari Babakhanov & Ensemble - Shashmaqam: The Tradition of Bukhara* was published by *New Samarkand Records* [13]. Because the Bukharian Jewish community of Central Asia has almost dispersed by migration after Uzbekistan's independence Ari Babakhanov's family searched for new future perspectives and moved to Germany where he collaborates with the musicologist Dr. Angelika Jung in a Shashmaqam research project since 2002.

4. Discussion

On August 11, 2021, one of the streets in the Israeli city of Petah Tikva was named after the Bukhara shashmaqom performer Levi Babakhanov. A well-known follower of the famous singer Nishonjon Atamuradov called it an honor for all musicians from Bukhara. In honor of such an event, a literary and educational evening was held in the city, where its mayor Rami Greenberg, Ambassador of Uzbekistan Feruza Mahmudova, members of the World Congress of Bukharian Jews, as well as representatives of the Bukharian Jewish community took part. "Perpetuating the name of the master performer of shashmaqom and a great connoisseur of folk songs Levi Babakhanov will serve to continue the ancient ties between the Uzbek and Jewish peoples and to form a sense of pride in our youth for the heritage of our glorious ancestors," the information resource of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan says. And, of course, Babakhanov also has followers. One of them is the Bukhara musician Nishonjon Atamuradov. He heads two creative teams at once: the Mavrigi ensembles and the Giyokh, created more than thirty years ago. And if the first just performs the Bukhara national folklore, then the second, as they say, is pop folk.

5. Conclusion

One can learn about the contribution of the Babakhanovs to music in the house-museum that Atamuradov has been creating in his own house for four years now. According to the musician, the Babakhanovs did not just perform shashmaqom, they were the founders of this style. "Not everyone takes into account and sometimes disputes this fact. But we know for certain that this is the case. Levy, Mushe and Ari Babakhanovs created with

shashmakom and all the musicians thank them for this, "said the singer Atamuradov. In addition, Babakhanov became one of the first performers who had, as they would say now, a recorded album. According to the musician, in 1909 the Riga studio recorded his songs on a vinyl record. Especially for this, sound recording equipment was brought to Bukhara. The fact that one of the streets in Israel was named after him is a great honor not only for his family, but for all musicians from Bukhara, says Nishonjon Atamuradov.

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