
UOT 782/785

Sevil Farhadova
D.Sc. (Art Study), Professor
Institute of Architecture and Art of ANAS

sevil.farhadova@gmail.com

**REVIVAL OF THE MUGHAM TRADITIONS IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE REALITIES OF THE MODERN WORLD
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF ALIM GASIMOV'S WORK)**

*“Mugham is a gift to the whole world. For me personally,
mugham has become a kind of revelation, a path to myself.
Mugham is a path to another, transcendent, magical world and
this is one of those concepts that are imperishable, eternal”.*

Yo-Yo Ma

Abstract. The proposed work is aimed at the feasible correction of some of the established views regarding the essence and significance of the mugham tradition and music in general. An attempt to understand the problem from a slightly different position is dictated by the need to revive them in the previous full-scale format.

One of the clearest examples of the revival of the tradition of mugam singing today, the activity of xanende – ustad Alim Gasimov, known in the world for his creative talent, is in the focus of research.

Key words: Mugham-dastgah, spirituality, creativity-enlightenment, harmony, life, conceptuality.

Introduction. The need for national self-identification, which has become aggravated since Azerbaijan gained sovereignty, echoed with the need for an in-depth study of the basic phenomena of national culture. One of the main tasks is to be unbiased, free from ideological shackles and scientific and theoretical clichés imposed from the outside. It is necessary to comprehend

comprehensively the mugham tradition as a cultural phenomenon with the subsequent reduction of the positions and views that developed in the 20th century in relation to the mugham tradition to a common denominator. The solution to this difficult task was stimulated by the increased attention to tradition and its main component - the mugham of responsible persons and the state support provided for the study and preservation of the treasury of the national culture. One of the effective measures carried out by state structures until recently – the periodic holding of festivals and scientific symposia in Azerbaijan – had a multifaceted positive significance. The most revealing and effective side was the very possibility of combining the performing practice and the scientific experience of its study in a single cultural space of the mugham festival, which revealed the common facets of modern mugham construction that did not coincide with the eastern worldview platform, creating unforeseen “gaps” in the floors of a single building. The above mentioned led unwittingly to another little-studied issue of the interaction and relationship between science and performing practice in the development of the mugham tradition. It is known that these, two inseparable sides of a single creative process (hence the name “Elm-əməl”, i.e. “science-implementation”, which was fixed in the distant past for handwritten works), diverge subsequently and live apart. Mugham art is interpreted in the “mirror” of secular scenic art during the development of Azerbaijani traditional culture in line with the synthesis of cultures. This is how it is presented to the mass listeners from the concert stage within the framework of the airtime. Mugham still remains a spiritual phenomenon and thinking focused on a special inner perception only in the depths of the consciousness of experts and subtle connoisseurs. But the “special perception” has a genetic and not a scientific background even in this case. Since the time when mugham was considered as an art form, the most important spiritual component, which determines the phenomenality of this phenomenon essentially, is not included in the range of studied issues, mainly related to the constructive parameters of the mugham text. Meanwhile, no matter how valuable the research carried out in this regard from the point of view of studying mugham as a historically developing cultural phenomenon, it should be admitted that they could not be so significant for the professional growth of the performer – khanende, who speak in the mugham language from childhood. As a rule, the artistic fate of the khanende was determined and are determined, first of all, by the cultural

environment, the teacher – ustad, personal qualities – the voice received from nature as a gift, creative intuition, genetic memory and sensitivity to the spiritual codes contained in mugham.

The interpretation of the main material. Mugham, which transformed into an art form with rare exceptions (which is due to the modern non-systemic method of teaching mugham), usually appears (in a masterful performance) as a “monument” of traditional medieval culture, which is impressive in its scale and grandeur, illuminated by the interpreter’s gift of the performer – “khanende”. As a result, the most significant side for any creative accomplishment - improvisation - becomes less pronounced and, over time, weakening in the performance of mugham. In other words, the performance of mugham-dyastgah from a living, creative process becomes, even if it is masterful, but just a performance in the original interpretation of the already well-known mugham-dastgah. In the rarest case, the performer creates simultaneously a ritual action of spiritual growth - elevation, who is guided by the intuitive process of crystallization of creative thought expressed by the dynamics of the alternation of spiritual states. This is exactly what distinguishes the high skill of performing mugham by “khanende” -ustad, currently unsurpassed Alim Gasimov.

Alim Gasimov’s creative phenomenon is related directly to the incomprehensibility of mugham, which keeps the secret of spiritual rebirth – enlightenment. Alim acquired the skills of balancing between the visible and invisible worlds, which is necessary for mugham creativity, from early childhood. The first experience is the “mystical” recovery of a hopelessly ill baby after renaming him from Panah to Alim (according to folk belief, the cause of a child’s illness is sometimes a conflict between his original destination and his name). It is not given to know what saved the baby - the new (like no other corresponding to his creative phenomenon) name Alim (all-knowing) or the granted ability to accumulate and manifest the energy of life. Further difficulties of an unsecured existence taught Alim that the life process is a balancing between life and death, concentration of strength, tension, overcoming. Life brought up in Alim the most valuable qualities for the khanende – ustada. The difficulties of life sharpened intuition, hardship hardened the will. The laws and norms of the creative process as a spiritual act were comprehended through the practice of inner concentration and overcoming. Creative concentration and manifestation of spiritual energy, which increase to an ecstatic breakthrough into the world of Harmony

and Light, is the essence and content of mugham-dastgah and at the same time, life as a cognitive act. The path leading to the heights of Truth goes initially all enlightened humanity through straining the will and overcoming the difficulties of the path. Transcendental comprehension of the universal laws of the universe is a universal beginning. Mugham belongs to the whole world in this sense. It is no coincidence that today it is recognized as a single spiritual source of the culture of Azerbaijan and a masterpiece of the world intangible heritage.

Cognition as the birth of a thought-idea at the peak of the creative process is the position of the Orient. The Orient is initially oriented towards movement, towards living things, towards life. Similarly to the fact that the criterion of the truth of life is living life, the criterion of the truth of the creative process is the creative practice. That is why, even today, teaching mugham is not a mechanical learning from a sheet music, but a living process of oral transmission of the text from mouth to mouth, from heart to heart. That is why mugham does not get old, it is renewed every day, it is revived with every heartfelt creative performance. Mugham imagines as an endless world process, eternity, the path of Light in this eternity. Each master - ustad creates his own hologram of the search for a “stained-glass window” of meanings, he is looking for his own reality corresponding to his inner world until the end of his life.

The first manifestations of creative practice are ritual circles – “circles of life”. The source of mugham is ritual. Ritual practice is the practice of a rope-walker balancing between the invisible and visible worlds. A kind of life-death game, only a rope-walker holds intuition in his hands instead of a pole in a ritual game – the balance between the worlds. Intuition is an internal “compass” that is sensitive to the “light” of thought. Alim Gasimov was generously rewarded with the gift of intuition. And one more rare gift is an active genetic memory. Genetic memory can be likened to a computer “hard disk”, the health of which depends on the productivity of the computer and its user. Alim is given to extract the memory of the earliest hearing of the world of sounds from the “hard disk”. He distinguishes and reproduces intuitively the universal worldwide language of rhythm-codes, which are transformed into rhythm-codes of historical time, into the mode-tone dictionary of a separate ethnic and national culture, etc. over time.

As a teenager, Alim, who was inspired by singing at weddings, attracts the attention of both performers and listeners. The atmosphere of the

wedding awakened an inner energy bursting outward that was concentrated by Alim's strident voice, which transforms an imaginary ideal world into a real world. However, Alim, who was sophisticated in the wedding repertoire, in the intricacies of the ritual ceremony, became a singer much later, going through the school of the famous tar players Hajy Mammadov and Bahram Mansurov. Along the way, it should be noted that the wedding "rating" of the performer depends not only on the possession of a technical arsenal. The possibilities and degree of development of the voice, the performance from memory of voluminous sound and poetic material, knowledge of the metro-rhythmic rules of pronunciation of the text, etc. – this is only the outer side of singing. This is what is taught. There is also something that is connected with the sacred essence of the ritual - an inner feeling of the dynamics of the wedding process, the ability to communicate to each of its stages. This cannot be taught. Knowledge of the rules for managing spiritual energy by "crossing" internal-external and vice versa external-internal comes only with the experience of ritual performance and in the presence of acute intuition.

In the past and today, participation as a mugham performer in wedding and other rituals is associated not only with the need to earn money, but also with the opportunity to polish his skills. The importance of the "wedding experience" is also determined by the fact that everything happens alive and often extempore in the rituals. Then the performer that has gained fame completes his ensemble. It happened so with Alim. Alim often met with the members of the ensemble right at the wedding celebration. What happened was the exclusive privilege of the ritual act – an ensemble – a monolith was cast from a dissimilar material.

Mugham as a tradition exists in performing practice. How science was studied by thinkers - encyclopedists, who derived their knowledge about the universal from the conceptual content of mugham. Besides performing skills, the stage of maturity of "khanende" is also determined by the comprehension of the philosophy of mugham in the past and now. Besides natural musical data, the inherited prepossession to philosophizing is also important here. Alim's unique pitch that distinguishes the "tone of the earth" is initially tuned to a philosophical note, so, the land on which he was born – ancient Shemakha – is the homeland of thinkers and poets raised by the mugham tradition. The world famous Imadaddin Nasimi, Khagani Shirvani, Seyid Azim Shirvani and others are among them. For centuries,

the philosophical atmosphere continued to be fueled by musical and poetic collections – “majlis” for a long time.

In fact, memory that goes back centuries is an unlimited space for creative self-realization. It is not surprising that Alim is unbearably cramped within the framework of the classical performance of mugham – dastgah. His amazing gift is the need to reproduce the harmony of spirituality, which overflowing in sounds, colors, smell and taste palette, outwardly changing without boundaries, with his voice. The spirit strives for freedom in true creativity. The essence of improvisation is creative freedom, freedom of choice in a rhythm set by the spiritual search. In this case, the musicians – performers are united by the internally felt rhythm of the search. It is not the language of music that is universal, but the rhythm of movement – growth given by spirituality. This is what makes it possible to bring together performers of different types of thinking, nationality and other characteristics into one ensemble. Alim is equally comfortable in the classical national and multi-ethnic mixed ensembles. His repertoire includes a wide range of genres – right up to ballet, where the plasticity of a dancer’s movements is born with his voice. Nevertheless, the singer’s choice stops at genres that allow for improvisation. For example, a lot is predetermined by the concept, distributed roles in opera, even in mugham opera. Alim’s attitude towards opera can be destined by his statement: “Opera is not for me. Opera for those who prefer the visible – sensually perceived voice, the stage – over the invisible, internally felt” [1, 89]. His following thoughts are also curious: “I have repeatedly performed the role of Majnun in U. Hajibeyli’s opera “Leyli and Majnun”. Frankly speaking, it was cramped for me to express myself within the framework of the opera. The name of my creative credo is freedom. Freedom of voice, freedom of expression, freedom of flight, change of spiritual states” [1, p. 57].

The following creative attitudes of the khanende also lend themselves to scientific interpretation from the eastern point of view: “I have to read Fizuli’s “Leyli and Majnun” in my own way. For a month, a year, ten years ... I don’t know. I must become Leyli and become Mejnun and Zeid and Nofel and Ibn Salam, become their fathers and mothers... I must fall to pieces so that the creative burning of Fizuli with the language of sound returns to the spirit of the ustad [1, p. 57]. The peculiarity of the above statement concludes in the defining role of the mugham drama of Fizuli’s work, which is built by balancing between the real and the imaginary worlds, coupled with a change in spiritual states leading to the beyond.

The freedom of creative search, which is preached by Alim Gasimov, manifests itself in a slightly different (in terms of well-established, recognized norms) performance of mugham-dastgah. It is important that any deviation from the norms in Alim's work is not a momentary decision, but the result of inquisitive work. He is often preceded by various experiments carried out in his performing practice, as well as the search for lost meanings in the practice of predecessors and their implantation into the fabric of mugham improvisation. In fact, Alim was doing what could be called "mugham archeology". Search and repeated listening of old gramophone records, archival audio and video materials. At first, imitation of the great ustad and finding their own performing "handwriting" over time. Digging into the layers of the history of mugham performance, Alim discovered the dynamics of adaptation of the language of eternity to specific musical and cultural realities in general. He learned to recognize what is inviolability (canon), and what is constantly in motion, renewed (improvisation), learned to transform what has long been known into the modern. Hence the flexibility of thinking and the ability to pliantly be included in the creative process, regardless of what language and by what means it is carried out. In any situation, the main thing for Alim is to catch the burdening tone – the rhythm-tone of thinking, more precisely the tone of conceptual thought, regardless of who and what it is given by the poetic word or the sound of the instrument, etc. The rest is done by intuition. However, not only intuition, but also what is learned with "mother's milk" is borrowed from our own and centuries-old experience of generations – fluency in the vocabulary of national rhythm-intonations, knowledge of the norms of compiling their own musical "stained-glass window" – "guram". He also has what is obtained by hard work – a virtuoso performing technique, trained incredible endurance on stage, the ability to implement creative attitudes by trial and error.

Talent multiplied by work is the formula for success. Today the world applauds the Azerbaijani mugham performed by Alim Gasimov. The language of Azerbaijani mugham is understandable for the diverse, multinational, confessionally varied audience. It is understandable because Alim Gasimov's voice broadcasts spirituality itself. The world initially knows not the language, but the spirit of mugham, the spirit of creative irradiation – enlightenment. With Alim's voice, spirituality transforms those present into a resonating orchestra of living sounds, force in upward,

into the world of Harmony and Light. The action performed on the concert stage is often not the performance of mugham. Alim Gasimov does not perform, he does mugham. Mugham performed by Alim Gasimov is an act of exaltation and unity, an act of Faith. This is probably Alim's voice sounds from the minaret of the mosque, in the Catholic and other eastern churches today. It sounds in the temple even when it is heard from an ordinary stage, since the creation of the temple takes place in itself and at the same time, in the performed mugham - dastgah. In exceptional cases, mugham-dastgah is not just a sound structure, but a contracting swelling energy field that broadcasts a living creative process. Not everyone succeeds in such a rare performance of mugham and related mugham music. There were not many names in the world that could fill the sound temple with vital force. Pakistani Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Iranian singer Mohammed Rza Shajarian, Indian singer Ravi Shankar and others are among them. The Azerbaijani performer Alim Gasimov's name occupies a worthy place in the same row.

The demand for the study of mugham as a science and practice in the present is associated primarily with the need to restore the balance between the invisible inner and outer sides of a single cultural process. The demand for the study of mugham as a science and practice in the present is associated primarily with the need to restore the balance between the invisible inner and outer sides of a single cultural process. The weakening and then the loss of the connection of the external side with a single spiritual core, which manifests and organizes life according to the law of Harmony, became the reason for a change in the direction of the movement of cultural development, now directed not vertically or horizontally, but sliding into the abyss of ignorance. According to the concept of spirituality, it is the return to the sacred source of knowledge, i.e. the return to music in its original high meaning – the meaning of the science of World Harmony, that can pave the Turkic community and together with it, the whole of humanity a path to the cultural future in the current situation.

REFERENCES

1. Kamil V. Səs. Muğam işığında tək səsli, çoxsəsli düşüncələr. – Bakı, 2011.
2. Əzimli F. Muğamat dünyasının sultanı. – Bakı, 1997.
3. Фархадова С.М. Исторические корни азербайджанского мугам-дастгяха. – Баку, 2018.

Sevil Fərhadova (Azərbaycan)

**MÜASİR DÜNYANIN GERÇƏKLİKLƏRİ KONTEKSTİNDƏ
MUĞAM ƏNƏNƏSİNİN DİRÇƏLİŞİ**

(Alim Qasımovun yaradıcılığı nümunəsində)

Oxucunun diqqətinə təqdim olunan iş muğam ənənəsinin və ümumiyyətlə, musiqinin mahiyyəti və əhəmiyyəti ilə bağlı mövcud baxışların imkan çərçivəsində korrekləşdirilməsinə yönəlmişdir. Problemin bir qədər fərqli mövqelərdən dərk edilməsi cəhdi onların əvvəlki tammiqyaslı formatda canlandırılması zərurəti ilə diktə olunur.

İndiki dövrdə muğam ifaçılıq ənənəsinin dirçəlişinin bariz nümunələrindən biri olaraq, dünyada yaradıcılıq istedadı ilə tanınan xanəndə-ustad Alim Qasımovun fəaliyyəti araşdırmanın diqqət mərkəzində durur.

Açar sözlər: muğam-dəstqah, ruhani, yaradıcılıq-nurlanma, ahəngdarlıq, həyat, konseptuallıq.

Севи́ль Фа́рхадова (Азербайджан)

**ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ МУГАМНОЙ ТРАДИЦИИ
В КОНТЕКСТЕ РЕАЛИЙ СОВРЕМЕННОГО МИРА**

(на примере творчества Алима Гасимова)

Предложенная вниманию работа нацелена на усиленное корректирование некоторых устоявшихся взглядов в отношении сущности и значимости мугамной традиции и музыки в целом. Попытка осознания проблемы с несколько иных позиций продиктована необходимостью их возрождения в прежнем полномасштабном формате

Как показательный пример одного из совершаемых в настоящем актов возрождения мугамной исполнительской традиции рассматривается получившее мировое признание творческое дарование ханенде-устада Алима Гасимова.

Ключевые слова: мугам-дастгах, духовность, творчество-озарение, гармония, жизнь, концептуальность.