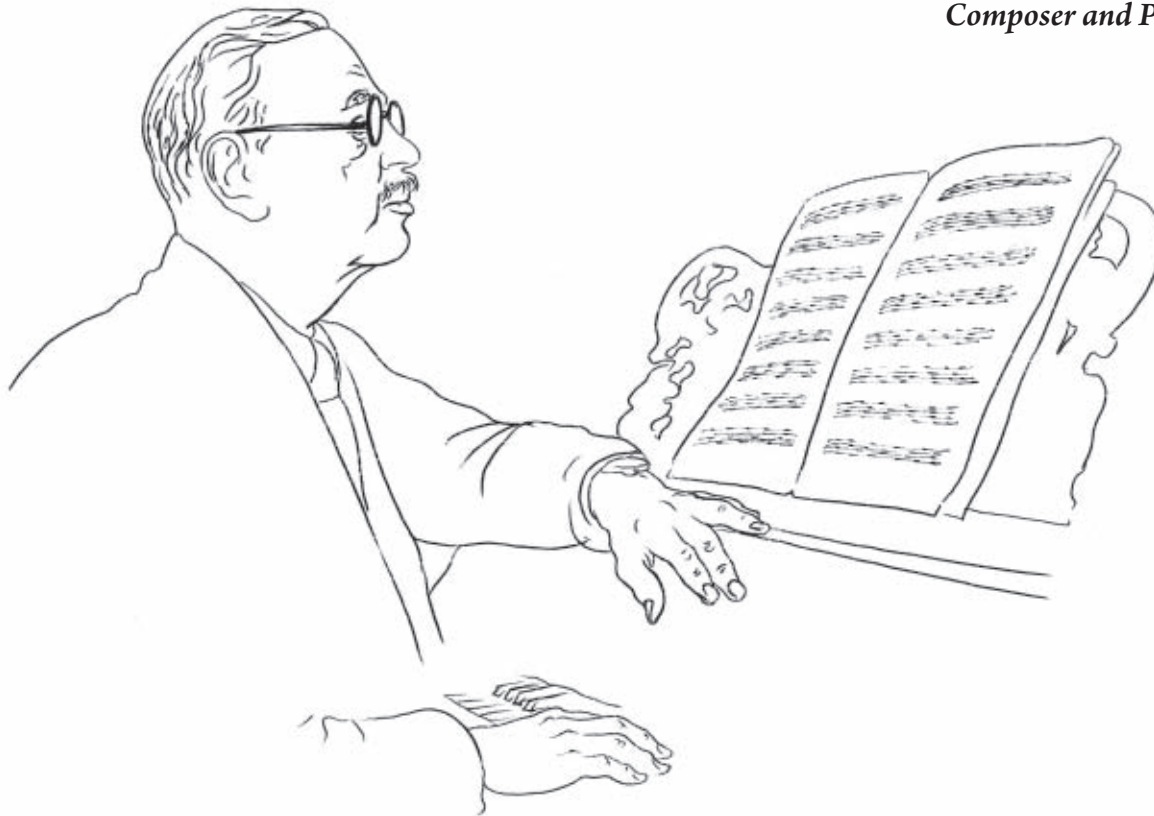


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PRECEPTS OF UZEYIRBAY

THE GENIUS OF A PERSON IN THE HISTORY OF CULTURE IS DETERMINED NOT LEAST BY THE IMPACT HE HAD ON SUBSEQUENT GENERATIONS.

In this sense, the role of Uzeyir Hajibayli in the development of Azerbaijani music and our entire culture is difficult to overestimate. After all, being a pioneer of music, so to speak, in written tradition in Azerbaijan, which initiated the process of rapprochement and mutual enrichment of two different cul-

tures - East and West, he showed on the example of his creative work not only the possibility of such a synthesis, but also determined the very principles and guidelines for this process.

In this sense, his legacy deserves careful study not only as a monument and a sample of bright artistic discoveries in art, but also in terms

of the proclamation of in-depth approaches to the development of national musical culture. Moreover, it applies to composers' creative work and science. Indeed, the emergence of the "Foundations of Azerbaijani Folk Music" is not accidental. If all the works of Uzeyir Hajibayli, whether it is the opera "Layla and Majnun" (on the



Ismayil Mammadov. Layla and Majnun

basis of mugam) or "Koroglu" (ashug sources), are a sample of the national language, which was its only way of expression, the "Foundations..." is an attempt to put it on a theoretical foundation and find some patterns that underlie national musical thinking. In general, isn't the real value of any scientific research determined by their practical value for art?! The

whole history of European music is evidence of this interaction of theory and practice. Suffice it to recall the monks of the Dutch school who worked diligently drawing up the laws of strict counterpoint; as a result, today, knowledge of these laws is the basis for any European composer - a technology knowledge of which makes it possible to freely express a

composer's ideas. It is the same with knowledge of the laws of functional harmony, without which it is impossible to create a European opera or symphony. And such a first attempt to combine theory with practice in Azerbaijani music was the "Foundations..." by the Great Teacher.

Most importantly, such a link is actually shown by his work. Here is



Koroglu. Chanlibel chorus



how the composer himself puts it: "The strict laws and rules that underlie the art of music, which I followed while writing my opera, not only restrained the impulses of my creative ideas, but rather, as a strong foundation, gave me more courage, widely illuminating the endless expanse of free creative imagination." (3.S.6)

I will cite one example of the creative fulfillment by the composer of such "strict laws and rules" of counterpoint combined with the equally rigid foundations of the ashig "divan":

Here is the scheme of the famous choral fugato, where the first answer is not in a fifth higher as is customary to write according to the European tradition, but in a seventh, and it is followed by the second answer a quart below. Thus, there appears the sound model Fis - E - H, which corresponds exactly to the modus of

the well-known ashig qayda "Divan".

And now I will cite a second example:

Here, the first half of the wonderful melody of the aria is a counterpoint to its continuation, i.e. the second half. I should note that this is a prime example of complementary polyphony with elements of simulation. Do I have to talk about the great artistic impact of the above musical examples on listeners? One cannot help recalling the words of the great Austrian Anton von Webern: "Even the most virtuoso contrapuntal and other tricks are not worth a farthing, if they have no strong artistic influence and do not serve a single purpose – music."

Meanwhile, if we cast a look at the entire path of 20th century Azerbaijani music, we will see that the creative work of our composers, be-

ginning from A. Zeynalli, is essentially the development of only one branch of the huge tree of Uzeyirbay's ideas. And it is absolutely natural: after all, the process of cultural development is not only to replicate what has already happened, but to ensure that new shoots grow on the existing solid foundation. So it happened that all the post-Uzeyirbay composers' art, though it demonstrates the very idea of a national and European synthesis, is still fundamentally different from Hajibayov's. I mean the principle which, in general terms, with all the differences of individual styles, dominates the art of G. Garayev, F. Amirov, S. Hajibayov and many other Azerbaijani composers of the 20th century and includes national elements in the system of musical language and forms of European music. It is known that in this respect, Uzeyir Hajibayli strongly supported young Azerbaijani composers, encouraging their creative aspirations. At the same time, sending the most talented students to study in Moscow (incidentally, it is also a very important aspect in his approach to music education), the rector resolved an important issue – to educate and nurture national professionals.

It seems to me that at this stage of the development of compositional creativity in Azerbaijan, we can talk about the end of this extremely fruitful stage in its development and the launch of a new rethink of Uzeyirbay's traditions. And here, the generation of composers' ideas is inseparable from the scientific basis. In his "Foun-



dations...”, Hajibayli said: “Despite the freedom of rendition and the complexity of the musical texture of the opera “Koroglu”, it makes more sense for the Azerbaijani audience than some of the works that abundantly copied original Azerbaijani folk tunes and melodies, for the opera “Koroglu” was written in the native musical language of the people.” (3.C.6).

In her monumental work “Hajibayov’s opera Koroglu”, Isabella Abezgauz studies the uniqueness of this original language, which is not only based on the mode intonations and rhythms of traditional music, but demonstrates the organic relationship of intonation and shape-generating processes subject to the logic of national thinking. Analyzing features of the style and the language of the composer, the scientist sees them as a component of an integral “melodic thinking” system, focusing on the specific manifestations of universal shape-generating techniques such as variance, sequence, etc., in Azerbaijani music. The author convincingly proves on numerous examples how the specifics of national mentality manifest themselves at all levels of musical language, cementing melodic, rhythmic and syntactic and compositional levels.

Of course, not all of Abezgauz’s ideas can be taken without reservations, and it is connected with the fact that the author approached Hajibayli’s music from outside, not from inside. But maybe, it was this view, supported by encyclopedic knowledge of European music, that allowed the author to show the differences between what is called Orientalism and original national idea. In addition, on the pages of her book, the scientist notes that the lack of studies on in-depth patterns of mugam and ashig music greatly nar-



rowed the boundaries of the study (1.S.15) and that in studying Hajibayli’s creative work, there is a need to identify not only the similarities but also the differences between his mu-

sic and folk music.

Unfortunately, many problems of Azerbaijani traditional music related to the practical rules of composition have yet to be researched by our



scientists. But these manuals, which explore the patterns of shapes, structures and rhythms of Azerbaijani traditional music, would go a long way with modern composers. The same applies to the theoretical study of Uzeyirbay's creative work. For example, with regard to the same opera "Koroglu", the link to the ashig epic remains at the level of statements, and the problem of "our own and traditional" remains unexplored.

Generally, in our musical science – this applies, of course, to its historical and theoretical aspects - there are a lot of blind spots and gaps. This is related to incorrect approaches to problems, the clearly outdated methodology of analyzing artistic events of the past and present with our musical culture, and finally, the lack of adequate elementary terminology and other objective factors.

Hajibayli's "Foundations..." is the first attempt to systematize knowledge of the Azerbaijani mugam system. It is an indication that the extensive system of mugams and other modes should be the object of close and painstaking study.

"The mode (read mugam or modus) is fixed only in the books of music." (Academician B. Asafyev) (2.S.14)

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The main genre in Hajibayli' creative work is musical theater in its various forms. And he created great musical and theatrical works precisely because he had a remarkable talent and flair as a musical dramatist. In their artistic value, all three of his masterpieces can be put in the same row as global achievements of theater. Take "Layla and Majnun", whose staging can be likened to the explosion of all the musical and cultural situation of that time (1908). A momentous thing was primarily the

appeal to the music and theatrical genre, which was democratic in its essence. After all, a musical theater, due to its entertainment and accessibility of perception, can be visited by representatives of all social strata of the population. It was impossible to achieve this with symphonies or, say, art exhibitions. And for the cultural formation of society, there was a need for the only right approach, because theater is a syncretic phenomenon, that is, there is room for everything there: prose, poetry, painting, music, and dances. No wonder that the first staging brought together so many wonderful people. The circle of those involved was broader than the circle of associates - and the circle has been expanding for one hundred years.

Regarding the choice of the original source, here too, everything was thought out and weighed. What kind of skill was required to stage an enormous poem that is complex in its poetic language, still be able to choose from the huge text what sounded later in the opera, concentrate and make it dynamic without departing from the basic idea?! Uzeyirbay could



take any work as a basis for the plot of the opera, but it was "Layla and Majnun" that was the closest subject to the people: ashigs told dastans about two lovers, and the legend was known and revered. Uzeyirbay knew perfectly well that many people sensed Fizuli almost at the genetic level. You didn't have to understand him, but it was absolutely impossible not to love Fizuli. The opera also contained childhood memories, when Karabakh khanandas arranges scenes supposedly near the grave of Layla to ensure that the voice sounds more sensual. But the main point is the use of mugam art in all its splendor and fullness. After all, as is known, mugam is an art form which is perceived subconsciously and has great power to influence. Having made mugam the basis of a large scenic genre, Hajibayli not only found the shortest and surest way to the hearts of his countrymen and not only created a unique example of coexistence of oral and written traditions in an artistic phenomenon. Bringing mugam to the stage, he created a new generator to save it, breathed a new life into the people's favorite tunes and into many genres of Azerbaijani music that prevailed at the time, including examples of religious music. (By the way, the opera has many choral variations of the composer). You can draw an analogy with the symphonies of Haydn, which voice and save a huge reservoir of domestic dance genres of the time for posterity.

Moreover, in turn, "Layla and Majnun" gave a new impetus to the development of mugam. Indeed, in addition to educational purposes, the very idea of the movement toward European culture, which began from Mirza Fatali and was picked up by Azerbaijani educators of the early 20th century, contained a desire to



Yashar Samadov's "Karabakh symphony"

preserve their identity in its subtext. Implicitly, they realized that only in conjunction with a diametrically opposite culture, is it possible to avoid being dissolved in "eastern" unification and to preserve one's identity. First and foremost, this applies to Azerbaijani mugam, which got a new dynamic impulse thanks to "Layla and Majnun". Musicians, who previously were simply carriers of the tradition, began to think about drama and composition of the dastgah. After all, how is the composition of the opera built? It first comes in rast, then in chargah, then in shur, later in Bayati-Shiraz, etc. That is, of all the varieties of mugams that existed at the time, Uzeyirbay focused on the mugams that were the most suitable to his concept and dramaturgy, which were, incidentally, the most popular with musicians. Figuratively speaking, if prior to the Hajibayli there were different trends in mugam (Shirvan, Karabakh, Baku schools, etc.), after "Layla and Majnun", it became possible to speak about Azerbaijani mugam as a holistic phenomenon. Thus, the rather elite art, in the form of an opera, got a chance for wider and mass distribution among the people, which was proved by all subsequent practices.

The personality and creative work of Uzeyirbay show remarkable seamlessness and consistency in the embodiment of the ideals that were dear to him and that he preached both in his educational activities and music. Metaphors and set phrases from his musical comedies still live among the people because the burning problems of the time became an art form that contained a reservoir of universal and timeless elements. Recall the famous scene when Mashadi Ibad tried on his hat in front of the mirror and finally decided to aban-



don it altogether only for everyone around and the object of his longing to regard him as "educated"! If we recall that the hat symbolizes honor for Azerbaijanis, it is a terrific metaphor showing how one abandons his roots in favor of imaginary and momentary values! The anomaly or the paranoia to look "educated" existed before Uzeyirbay. Take, for example, the long list of used or allegedly used parts of a dastgah whose names are difficult or impossible to translate. So the playwright's irony is understandable and makes us all think.

Uzeyirbay himself never betrayed his ideals and was able to overcome rather difficult situations with credit. For example, the creation of "Koroglu" cannot be separated from the social situation of the time. But Uzeyirbay, creating an opera about a people's avenger, carried out a social order under the watchful eye of the Bolsheviks. Nevertheless, he managed not only to create a sample of a highly artistic work, but, turning to the music of ashigs, just as it was with the mugams in "Layla and Majnun", he infused fresh blood into it, thereby contributing to its preservation and development, and made it available to world culture.

The national essence of the language of "Koroglu" has already been mentioned. But in the drama itself, there is a clear link with the principles of the eastern theater, where objects play a huge role. We may recall scenes from Shakespeare's "Othello", where everything is based on a scarf (Othello is an Eastern character), we may recall "The Vizier of the Lankaran Khan" by Akhundov - it all starts with the purchase of a nimtənə (something like a peignoir) for his beloved wife there, and the fate of the fledgling khan in the finale is decided by the same item - lötkə (yacht). In "Koroğlu", such a motive for action is the horse Qırat (black horse) - a creature that is present in all five acts, being the cause of all events. And isn't the introductory tone of the overture the image of a prancing horse? And then (first topic), he trots ahead all the time... throughout the entire overture and opera. Now let's remember that for the Azerbaijani people, the horse is a symbol of achieving a cherished desire, i.e. Murad. If we also remember that Hajibayli was one of the active members of the Turkic world's first democratic republic, it turns out that under the difficult rule of Stalin, the great democrat created a work in which he was able to encrypt his people's cherished dream of freedom. 🌟

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