

HERALDING PEOPLE'S JOY AND VICTORIES

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MONUMENTS OF ANCIENT CULTURE, VERSES OF CLASSICAL POETS, MINIATURE ART AND TRAVELER NOTES INDICATE THAT PEOPLE IN AZERBAIJAN HAVE ALWAYS LOVED TO COMPOSE, SING AND LISTEN TO SONGS, MELODIES AND MUGHAM, DANCE ACCOMPANIED BY VARIOUS MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

This is evidenced by the wealth of folk music and a variety of instruments. Written sources dating back to the times of medieval Azerbaijan contain the names of 32 stringed, 23 wind, 16 membrane and 17 self-sounding instruments [1]. Particularly distinguishable among them is wind instrument Zurna, which is also referred to as the "Gara Zurna" (translates as "Black Zurna"). This is explained by the color of its trunk which eventually turns black and the unusually strong sound. Some researchers

indicate that the instrument derives its name from the word "Sur" (joy, celebration) and "Nay" (cane), i.e. an instrument that accompanies holidays, wedding ceremonies and rites. It is not ruled out that the name of the instrument is based on the word "Zorun", which means a sound produced by force.

The Zurna is mentioned in the Book of Dada Gorgud, verses of medieval poets Gatran Tabrizi, Khagani, Shirvani, Nizami Ganjavi, Imadeddin Nasimi, Habibi, Neymatullah Kishveri, etc. It was to the



Traditional Azerbaijani folk instruments, including the Zurna

Zurna tune that Azerbaijani people have sent their sons to defend the motherland. In the days of peace, there are no wedding parties, holidays, folk games, competitions, horse races or cock-fighting events without the Zurna. The charming sound of the Zurna has accompanied processions of the groom's family to the house of the bride, while the bride and her friends were escorted to the bath-house. When the tune "Gelin atlandi" was played, the bride got on a horse and rode to the groom's house, while "Seheri" (Morning) was played at the end of wedding parties. The sounds of the Zurna could be heard during sport game Zorkhana, performances Jidir, Kendirbaz and Kosa ve Gelin, etc. People playing the instrument often featured at parody shows (masgara). The instrument was also played during harvesting and haying seasons. The Zurna was

extensively used in ritual and cult music. Together with Gaval, it was played in mourning rites on the Day of Ashura. It was quite widespread among the Gypsies as well.

The attitude to this instrument has manifested itself through various proverbs: *the sound of the Zurna is pleasant at a distance; if you don't hold your girl firmly, she will marry either a Nagara (drums) or a Zurna player; he who comes with the Dumbul (a type of drums) will leave with the Zurna, etc, and sayings: to play someone after putting him/her inside the Zurna, which means putting someone to shame; if someone's Zurna is left for later, it means that the consequences of someone's actions are still to come; to put the Zurna in someone's hands means to give empty promises; to hang the Zurna means to talk behind someone's back and slander; while to play the Zurna means to engage in*



senseless and empty talk.

Azerbaijan is known for a number of virtuoso Zurna performers whose names are passed down from one generation to another: in Karabakh Najaf Gulu, Mamed, Tanriverdi, Mukhtar Maniyev, Akbar, Cherkez, Oruj, Balakishi, Hashim, Dadash, Garash Allahverdiyev, Ibrahim

Iskenderov, Faraj Kalantarli, Keranali Rajab, Rustam, Suleyman Zumurhacha, Guloglu Bearchina, Abdulla; in Tovuz District Ovalara; in Ganja Tuttek Beylar; in Lachin Bayramali; in Basarkechar Majid Shikhaliyeva; in the Guba-Khachmaz zone Garachi Aga, Gulbaba, Usta Alovzat; in Shirvan Ali Karimov, Mansir Rustamov; in Salyan Hasan Bakhshi oglu. Their performing art has been continued by Habibilla Jafarov, Alafsar Rahimov (Shaki), Abbas Ismayilov, Mu-seib Abbasov, Akbar Hasanov (Tovuz), Mahammad Abbasov (Barda), Mamed Mamedov (Samkir), Nuraga Rahmanov, Agasi Agasizadeh, Amrah Ojagov (Davachi), Abish Abishov (Khachmaz), Ibad Ibrahimov (Ujar), Alish Muradov (Agdam), Agali Aliyev (Ganja), Abdulla Gasimov (Gazakh), Hasrat Huseynov, Rashid Mamedov (Kurdamir), Izzatali Zulfugarov (Gobustan), Manaf Mamedov (Salyan), Alijavad Javadov (Ismayilli) and others.

It is noteworthy that when two US spacecraft Voyager were sent into space in 1977 in an effort to ascertain the existence of other civilizations, they carried special containers with golden gramophone records. Along with compositions by Bach, Beethoven, Stravinsky, Louis Armstrong, Willie Jones, etc., there was a record of an Azerbaijani folk melody performed on the Zurna [2].

Zurna is one of a handful of musical instruments that can truly excite the audience. This is primarily due to the structural features of the instrument. The Zurna consists of a trunk, a plug, a pin, a stick, a socket and a cap. The high-pitched sound of the instrument is explained by the small diameter of the stick, the presence of a pin and wide mensuration.

When playing, the performer holds the Zurna in front of himself, slightly tilting it downwards. The lips touch on the socket and the air passing through the stick, the pin and the plug enters the trunk. The method of sound production is applied (the air is inhaled through the nose and exhaled through the mouth), enabling a sustained and uninterrupted sound. Typically, while playing short melodic phrases the performer breathes through the mouth, and when playing long compositions through the nose. The lungs and the mouth cavity



play the role of a “reservoir” from which the air gradually enters the sound channel of the instrument. Thanks to this breathing technique, the Zurna is capable of producing long melodic lines.

The Zurna compass ranges from B-flat of small octave to C of third octave. But it can also produce C-sharp, D, E-flat, E, F, F-sharp, G of third octave. The most skilled performers can produce C of fourth octave. These sounds are known

among musicians as *sefir sounds*.

According to senior Azerbaijani musicians, there were Zurnas with different trunk lengths in the past. Depending on this, they were called *bash tavar* (trunk length 350-370 mm), *orta tavar* (300 mm, used today), *jure* (250 mm), *orta jure* (200 mm) and *ayag jure* (150 mm). The first sounded a semitone lower and the third a half step above the *orta tavar* Zurna.

Well-known wind instrument artist Alijavad Javadov has designed two Zurna types: *Zil* and *Bem* Zurna. Due to the strong sound produced by the instrument, professional musicians prefer to play the Zurna outdoors.

The instrument is played as part of the Zurna band, which includes the master (who plays the melody proper) and the *demkesh* (who accompanies the master with bourdon sounds). This is where the concepts of *Gosha Zurna* and *Zu(y) tutmag* come from. This duo is accompanied by percussion instrument *Nagara*. In Shaki zone, the Zurna duo is supplemented by two membrane instruments – the *Ana Kos* (large *Nagara*) and the *Bala Kos* (small *Nagara*).

Particularly popular are Zurna bands “Jangi” from Salyan (led by Manaf Mamedov) and Chirag Gala from Davachi (led by Nuraga Rahmanov). “Jangi” has seven Zurnas, a Balaban and four *Nagaras*.

In 1959, a Zurna band consisting of seven performers took part in a campaign of Azerbaijani literature and art in Moscow. In 1962, under the leadership of Alafsar Rahimov, a combined band was organized. It included five masters, five *demkeshes* (two playing the Zurna and three playing the Balaban) and three *Nagara* performers.





Typically, the Zurna plays dance melodies and heroic tunes mainly associated with the name of national hero Koroghlu, as well as marches and instrumental plays that are part of traditional repertoire of the instrument.

Quite unique are suites *Chaharzen Destgahi* from the repertoire of Zurna master Ali Karimov (1874-1962). It includes dance tunes such as *Garabagi*, *Yumma Garabagi*, *Shahperde Garabagi*, *Bayati Garabagi*, *Qahramani*, *Mirzai*, *Bayazi* [3], and *Destgah Koroghlu* performed by Habibulla Jafarov (1896-1987) and consisting of the following components: 1) *Agir Koroghlu*, 2) *Shaki yallisi*, 3) *Koroghlunun Shaki seferi*, 4) *Jangi Koroghlu*, 5) *Koroghlu gaytarmasi*, 6) *Uchbarmag*, 7) *Deli Koroghlu* [4].

Zurna is part of the orchestra of folk instruments as a solo instrument. It is also used in a symphonic orchestra. Uzeyir Hajibeyov has extensively used the Zurna in his classical opera *Koroghlu*. The instrument usually supports heroic and

dance scenes.

Composer Javanshir Guliyev has composed a first play for the Zurna and orchestra. The orchestra of folk instruments highlights the technical and artistic capacities of the Zurna through such works as *Jangi* by U. Hajibeyov, *Gahramani* by S. Rustamov, *Jangi* by A. Geray and *Jangi* by S. Alasgarov.

Although the exact origin of the Zurna has not been precisely established, it is known where it has been used. The area mainly covers the Turkic world, with individual Zurna development centers such as Anatolian, South Turkic (covering Arab countries in the times of the Mamluk dynasty which descended from Turks and peoples of the Caucasus), North Turkic (including Kazan, Chuvash and Balkan centers), Azerbaijani, Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Eastern Turkestan (Mughal and Kalmyk centers) [5]. From there the Zurna was borrowed by neighboring peoples.

Whereas in the western Turkic world there were various types

of the Zurna, including *kaba*, *jura*, *asafi*, *shihabi*, *arabi*, *ajami*, *bakhtiyari* (which differed from each other mainly by the length of their trunks), there were only large-size Zurnas (up to 400-450 mm) in the eastern Turkic world.

Nowadays, the Zurna is known under the same name in also Turkey, Iran, Georgia, Adzharia, Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia, Greece, Macedonia and Arab countries. In Dagestan, it is also called *Zurnay* (by Kumiks), *Zurnau* (by Laks), *Zinrav* (by Dargins), *Surmay* (by Kubachins). In Kabardino-Balkaria it is called *Nakyre* or *Nakira* [6]. Instruments resembling the Zurna are popular in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Karakalpak, where there are called *Surmay*. In Egypt, they are known as *Zamr* and in Algeria as *Zorna* and *Gaita*. The Uigur call it *Sunay* or *Sona*, Kalmyks refer to it as *Bichku* and Buryats know it as *bishkur*. ❀

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