

AZERBAIJAN'S FIRST PROFESSIONAL FEMALE PIANIST KHADIJA GAYIBOVA

As a result of Stalin's repressions in the 1930s, thousands of Azerbaijani intellectuals were arrested and executed and thousands of people lived miserable, deprived lives in exile. Tens of thousands of people mourned the loss of their loved ones who were branded "enemies of the people."

Academician Ziya Bunyadov's famous book "Red Terror" notes that during the first two years of Soviet repression, about 70,000 intellectuals were arrested and executed. Among them were scientists, poets, writers, teachers, engineers, artists, government and party officials who headed educational and cultural institutions (1).

The policy of destroying the nation's thinking brains and its scientists, poets, writers, teachers, cultural and artistic figures also targeted women intellectuals. Among those victims was a beautiful lady and talented musician Khadija Gayibova. A lot has been written about Khadija Gayibova, the first professional female pianist of

Azerbaijan and the first talented piano performer of our mugams. Academician Ziya Bunyadov, professors Rafael Huseynov and Farah Aliyeva spoke about her tragic fate in their research and articles. (2)

Khadija's father, a descendant of the Teregulovs on his mother's side, was a progressive man. He wanted to give his daughter a perfect education and see her as a professional musician. Therefore, he realizes this dream as much as the financial situation of his family allowed. Based on his application to the Caucasus Governor's Office, Khadija enters the St. Nina girls' school in Tbilisi. Distinguished by her special talent from childhood, Khadija receives her first musical education here, studies elementary music theory and learns to play the piano.

In 1911, Khadija completed her secondary education with the "Golden Cross badge" and was awarded a diploma with a golden frame after attending a special course in the piano class of Professor N. Nikolayev. After graduating from school in 1911, Khadija married

Huseyn Afandi Gayibov with his family. Late 19th century



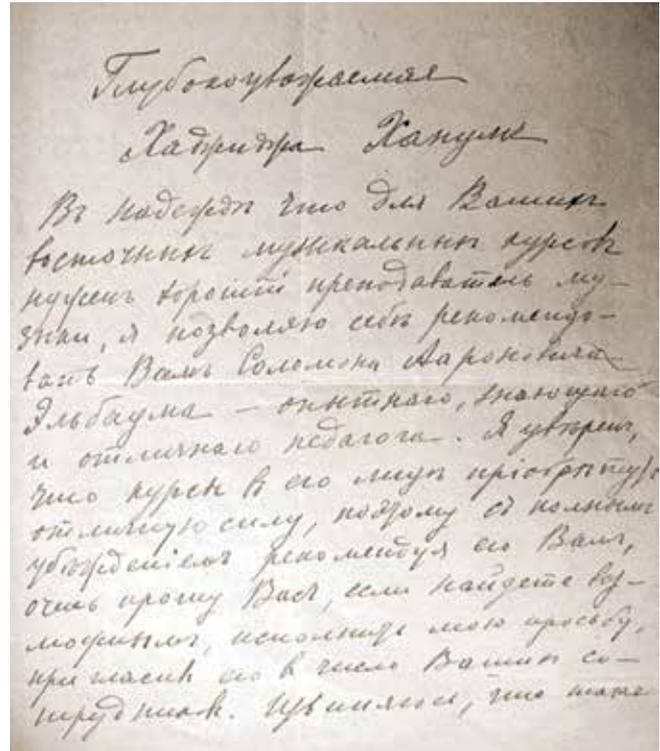


K. Gayibova. St. Nina School in Tiflis. 1911

engineer Nadir Gayibov, the son of Caucasus Mufti Mirza Huseyn Efendi Gayibov. Khadija, who lived with her family in Tiflis (Georgia) for some time, teaches at an Azerbaijani school here and actively participates in social and cultural events.

It should be noted that Huseyn Efendi Gayibov was also one of the initiators of the opening of the Azerbaijani branch at the Gori Teachers' Seminary, which was famous throughout the Caucasus. 20 young people with the surname Gayibzadeh studied at this seminary. Both the Muftizadehs and Gayibzadehs played a great role in the formation of Khadija's outlook and personality. Among Khadija's archives, we also find a photo of Huseyn Efendi Gayibov with his family.

In 1919, the Gayibovs moved to Baku. Of course, this gives Khadija an impetus to expand her career as a musician. She is already performing at concerts. Performing wonderful and interesting improvisations on the piano on the basis of folk songs and mugams, Khadija soon became known in the musical environment of Baku. During the Soviet era, Gayibova was more active in music culture, performing a number of projects in the pedagogical field. This activity in the field of enlightenment is taken into account and she is appointed head of the Oriental Music Department at the People's Com-



missariat of Education. At the initiative of the musician, "short-term Oriental music courses" are organized, and a children's choir is created.

Khadija attached great importance to the music education of Azerbaijani women. At her initiative and with her direct participation, a music and drama studio was established for Azerbaijani women. As a great connoisseur of Eastern and European music, she actively participates in the cultural life of the republic, keeps in touch with U. Hajibeyov, R. M. Glier (Soviet composer), Bulbul, H. Sarabski, M. L. Presman, L. Rudolf, L. Ab, G. Pirimov, and played an important role in the collection of Azerbaijani folk music. The fund also includes a poster of a concert in which Khadija participated with Gurban Pirimov.

In 1927, with the desire to receive higher music education, Khadija entered the history-theory department of the Azerbaijan State Conservatory, where she studied theory and composition from Professor L. Abd. The musician, who played mugam variations on the piano for the first time, was also a public figure and a prominent intellectual of her time. In 1933, she was arrested by Soviet law enforcement on suspicion of espionage and imprisoned for three months. Although she was accused of counter-revolutionary activities and spreading ideas of Turkism, she was released from prison for lack of evidence.

Khadija Gayibova. 1925





Poster for the concert of tenor G. Hajibabayov featuring K. Gayibova and Gurban Primov in Kislovodsk on 21 August 1921

In 1934, Khadija began conducting research at the State Conservatory. Three years later, Khadija and her husband Nadir Gayibov were arrested. Khadija was accused of spying for Turkey and sympathizing with Musavat. The pretext for her arrest was the testimony of A. Farajzadeh, who was detained by the NKVD, beaten and forced to surrender hundreds of people as criminals. This is where a strange “chain” begins; A. Farajzadeh says that he heard the name of Khadija Gayibova from Dadash Bunyadzadeh who had already been arrested, but Dadash Bunyadzadeh did not name the musician in any interrogation. However, in 1937, Gayibova was the ideal target in the “traitor and spy hunt”. Being an active and communicative person by nature, Gayibova had many Turkish officers and foreign guests in her house during the Republican and Soviet years. In 1937, music gatherings began to be held in a political context. The statement of the prisoner, M. Mammadov, who was interrogated as a witness in the investigation of Ali Karimov, arrested in 1937: “Gayibova had a living room in her house; Officials and members of the government - D. Bunyadzadeh, M. Guliyev, Baba Aliyev, A. Karimov, Turkish guests, Kopruluzadeh met here. In his conversations with me until 1930, Ali Karimov said that he had attended Gayibova’s meetings. Gayibova’s first husband’s brother was the secretary of Musavat’s Istanbul office.” Gayibova’s name is “mentioned” by other detainees at the behest of the investigators. R. Akhundov allegedly mentions Gayibova’s counter-revolutionary, espionage activity from Ali Karimov’s words. Chobanzadeh allegedly recalled Zeynalli’s remarks and informed the investigation: “Zeynalli also told me that a counter-revolutionary nationalist organization also used Gayibova’s Turkish connections. Shukrubey, the leader of the Ittihad-Taraggi party, met with Gayibova on his way through the Azerbaijan SSR.” Khadija Gayibova knew that she

would be punished for the false accusations against her, but she never thought that she would be executed.

A few months later, Khadija was taken to the Bayil Prison. Prominent publicist and statesman S. M. Efendiyev’s wife Zivar khanum, who was held in that prison, recalled Khadija: “The prison was full of women. Like me, they were the wives of officials and servicemen who had been arrested because of their husbands. In the cell where I was, there were Khavar Garayeva, Jeyran Bayramova, Frida Shlemova-Akhundova, Maryam Bayramalibeyova, the wife of the first Minister of Health M. Gadirli, the wonderful musician Khadija Gayibova and more than 30 women. Everyone has their own pain, their own sorrow! They were separated from their infants and elderly parents. They cried all day. Sometimes Maryam tried to give us some courage and perseverance and dispel our grief by talking about her favourite Tolstoy and his novel “War and Peace”. Khadija Gayibova was also a very strong-willed and cheerful woman. She had brought a Circassian dress, long-sleeved boots, silk socks, and even a small rug with her. It was as if she didn’t care about the world. Khadija also paid attention to her tidiness in this cramped, stinking cell of the prison, behaved cheerfully, sometimes hummed songs, wore beautiful clothes and danced. We were surprised by her behaviour. We looked at her in amazement and thought, “Unlike us, she doesn’t seem to care about anything”. Once I regained my composure and said: “Khadija, we are drowning in pain, our thoughts are at home, with our children. And you...” Khadija looked at me with a strange look. Her eyes were sad. They were like autumn clouds. She restrained herself from weeping and said, “My sorrow is heavier than yours. I am an artist. My music world is immersed in sorrow. Oh, how much work I could do!” Then she smiled and added: “I need to protect myself, not to be shaken. It’s all right. Even if they send me into exile, I will not perish, I will set up a music club and dance, sing and play there. To the wrath of the ignorant, careerists and bastards! Let them not rejoice!” (9). Khadija Gayibova’s trial lasted only 15 minutes and she was sentenced to death. The sentence was carried out on 27 October 1938.

In 1954, Khadija’s daughter Alangu Sultanova appealed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Azerbaijan SSR and asked for information about her mother.

Professor L. Ab with students. K. Gayibova sitting to the left of the professor



On 28 April 1955, the investigator of the special department of the State Security Committee, A. Menyayev, stated in connection with Sultanova's request: "Khadija Gayibova was exposed with unchecked and superficial testimony. The investigation did not find any material confirming Gayibova's espionage. Therefore, the 19 October 1938 decision of the Special Troika of the Azerbaijan NKVD to execute Khadija Osman gizi Gayibova should be considered unfounded and be annulled, and the case should be terminated because there is no element of crime in it" (10).

According to the 14 February 1956 decision of the Judicial Board, Khadija Osman gizi Gayibova was acquitted, and on 29 February, her daughter Alangu was given a related certificate. Khadija's case is kept in the archives of the Ministry of National Security.

Khadija Gayibova's name has gone down in history not only as the first performer of mugams on the piano in Azerbaijan, but also as a repressed musician. ❀

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