

DOI:10.29013/EJA-24-1-39-47



## STYLISTIC TRENDS IN M. BAFOEV'S PIANO CYCLE

*Osetrova Vlada Anatol'evna*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> State Conservatory of Uzbekistan

---

**Cite:** Osetrova V.A. (2023). *Stylistic trends in M. Bafoev's Piano Cycle*. *European Journal of Arts* 2024, No 1. <https://doi.org/10.29013/EJA-24-1-39-47>

---

### Abstract

The role of piano cycles in the work of M. Bafoev. The amplitude of coverage of plots for M. Bafoev's piano works: from historical figures of both Uzbekistan and other Oriental countries; heroes of folk epics and fairy tales to philosophical discussions about religion and the eternity of Existence. "Bafoev's" vision of India in the context of its ancient history and diverse modern life. The role of sonata form in piano cycles. Features of the interpretation of the theme "Seasons" in the piano cycle. The cycle "Five Fantasy Pieces" is a striking example of neo-impressionism in the composer's work. Study of the stylistic features of M. Bafoev's piano cycles in the context of the historical traditions of piano creativity in conjunction with modern compositional techniques and the national origin of creativity.

**Keywords:** *Composers of Uzbekistan, piano's creation, modern compositional technique, neoclassicism, neo-impressionism*

### Introduction

Program piano music of Uzbekistan at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have its own characteristics. The Republic of Uzbekistan has a rich history, which dates back thousands of years. In this regard, many composers of Uzbekistan dedicate their works to historical figures of the past. The Greatest composer of our time (Kasymkhodjaeva, S.B., 2023), M. Bafoev did not ignore this trend, paying great attention in his work to the role of a historical figure in piano cycles (Frayonov, V.P., 1990). In total, M. Bafoev currently has five cycles for piano. All piano cycles by M. Bafoev are programmatic. Some of his cycles are dedicated to historical figures, as well as heroes of the national epic. The choice of these sub-

jects also predetermined the style in which the composer expressed his thoughts – neoclassicism.

The cycle "According to the Reading of Alpomysh" (Zakirova, V. 2021) is the only one of all M. Bafoev's piano works dedicated to the national epic. The composer unites eras and shows the beauty of the ancient cities of his country. The cycle consists of five scenes. As in the folk epic poem of the same name, the cycle praises the victory of Good over Evil, Love, and Friendship (Osetrova, V.A., 2022).

In this cycle, the elements of dastan and classicism merge in a single impulse: classicism is manifested in the tendency towards sonata (Chinaev, V.P., 1990) and in the creation of an ideal and demonstrative image (in this case Alpomysh), and the elements of dastan –

in programmatic, national origin, lyricism, and fairy-tale themes. This is also the only example in the work of M. Bafoev, where he uses the technique of polythematism: from the initial

thematic grain, diverse images grow, designed in complex two- and three-part forms (Sposobin, I.V., 1984; Mazel, L.A. 1979), (please, refer to musical example № 1).

### Musical example № 1

#### “Bakhshi hikoyasi”

#### Piano teacher

M. Bafoev

**Allegro**  $\text{♩} = 100$

Piano

Pno.

Pno.

Pno.

#### “Barchinoy”

**Vivo**  $\text{♩} = 200$

Piano

Piano

### “Alpomish”

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Alpomish". It consists of four systems of piano notation. The first system features a treble and bass clef with a complex melodic line in the treble and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the bass. The second system continues the melodic development with some phrasing slurs. The third and fourth systems focus on harmonic accompaniment, showing block chords and arpeggiated patterns in both hands. The score includes various musical notations such as accidentals, slurs, and dynamic markings.

The cycle “Dedication to Tagore” is a Bafoev’s way of vision of India in the context of its ancient history and the many-sided modern life, which may not correspond to reality, but is no less interesting and original.

The plot of the cycle is Indian tales told by a wanderer. The cycle consists of four parts and is dedicated to the Indian writer R. Tagore (Kutluchurina, A. 2020) and characterizes the musical culture of Bengal.

### Musical example № 2

This image shows a short musical example, likely a melodic fragment. It is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The melody starts with a trill on a sharp note, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. There are some accidentals and a trill marked with 'tr' and a sharp sign. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

The entire cycle and plays, both individually and as a whole, begin with narrative introductions and have their own conclusions. The composer uses song and dance genres in the cycle. Song motifs in the main parts are replaced by dance ones and vice versa. The form of each “fasl” is three-part, and the prelude and postlude, with their thematic unity, transform the cycle into a

single three-part form. All plays in the cycle are written using folk modes (please, refer to musical example № 2) and rhythmic “usuls” (please, refer to musical example № 3). In general, in the cycle there is a tendency towards theatricality: the composer in his instrumental work tries to outline the historical panorama of an entire people, and at the same time its prominent representatives.

Hence the widespread use of conflict drama-  
tury in the form of a sonata form, in which

the dialectic of opposition contributes to the  
disclosure of each image.

### Musical example № 3

M. Bafoev

Allegro  $\text{♩} = 85$

Piano

*p* poco cresc.

*f* poco cresc.

Throughout his work, M. Bafoev more than once turns to the theme of the Great Silk Road. In the piano cycle “The Great Silk Road” M. Bafoev showed listeners different eras: from Zoroastrianism to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It made me think not only about beauty, but also touched upon a topic that has frightened humanity from time immemorial and is the meaning of the creation of religion – the topic of Life and Death.

The cycle consists of ten poems. In the cycle, in addition to describing the countries through which the thread of the Great Silk Road passed, their great representatives are also shown.

One of the poems is dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad. The poem is philosophical in nature, prompting listeners to think about life and death; in confirmation of these thoughts, the theme of Doomsday runs through the entire poem.

The next poem is dedicated to the great Persian poet Sheikh Hafez (Sadjat, Z., 1976).

A special place among the scattering of images presented by M. Bafoev is occupied by the image of J. S. Bach. A separate poem is dedicated to this great master of polyphony of the Baroque era.

The cycle ends with a poem dedicated to the Great Commander – Amir Temur (Roux Jean-Paul, 2005).

“The Great Silk Road” is united by a single plot. The composer, like a wanderer, having chosen a certain “branch of the Silk Road”, passed through eras and milestones, eventually returning to his homeland. Four great personalities pass through the entire cycle as pillars: the Saint, the Poet, the Composer and the Ruler (please, refer to musical example № 4).

The final poem is a kind of conclusion of the entire cycle, since it accumulates themes that ran through the entire cycle. This is a kind of reprise of everything. Most of the poems in the cycle have the form of a sonata allegro, or have this form as part of the poem, which helps to reveal diverse images through their contrasting comparison.

In this cycle, the composer does not adhere to any single writing style: here there are works written in a classical closed form, as well as works in a free form of presentation. A characteristic of this cycle is the mixing of styles, when the composer places modern writing techniques in a classical form. Modern technology includes aleatoric (the principle of chance and the principle of adaptation), clip thinking, which are freely used by the composer when revealing his ideas.

This cycle, consisting of ten poems, is the largest and most significant cycle of M. Bafoev’s entire piano work.

### Musical example № 4

#### N 1. Secrets of the cosmos. (Prophet Muhammad)

M. Bafoev

Musical score for 'Secrets of the cosmos' (Prophet Muhammad) by M. Bafoev. The piece is in 4/4 time, marked Moderato with a tempo of 70. The score is for Piano and features a *pp* dynamic. The melody is primarily in the bass clef, with some chords in the treble clef.

#### N 7. Dedication to Hafiz

M. Bafoev

Musical score for 'Dedication to Hafiz' by M. Bafoev. The piece is in 6/8 time, marked Andante poetico with a tempo of 50. The score is for Piano and features a *p* dynamic. The melody is primarily in the treble clef, with some chords in the bass clef. There are several 8-measure rests indicated by dashed lines.

#### N 9. J.S. Bach in the Sahara. (Arabia)

M. Bafoev

Musical score for 'J.S. Bach in the Sahara' (Arabia) by M. Bafoev. The piece is in 4/4 time, marked Allegro with a tempo of 130. The score is for Piano and features a *f* dynamic. The melody is primarily in the bass clef, with some chords in the treble clef.

#### N 10. The legend of Amir Timur. (Turan)

M. Bafoev

Musical score for 'The legend of Amir Timur' (Turan) by M. Bafoev. The piece is in 2/4 time, marked Allegro with a tempo of 260. The score is for Piano and features a *pp* dynamic. The melody is primarily in the bass clef, with some chords in the treble clef. There are several 3-measure rests indicated by dashed lines.

Another piano cycle, “The Seasons,” is interpreted in a unique way by M. Bafoev. The reason that the composer begins the cycle with Summer is apparently dictated by the climatic characteristics of the region in which the composer was born. This cycle includes four plays framed by a prelude and a postlude.

The composer’s new approach to his chosen theme also predetermined the unusual

structure (Osetrova, V.A., 2022). In addition to the attention-grabbing sequence order, each individual piece has its own introduction, which is thematically related to the introduction to the first piece and differs only in the variation of development (please, refer to musical example № 5).

### Musical example № 5

#### N 1. The heat of the EZ

M. Bafojev

Andante  $\text{♩} = 60$

Piano

Pno.

Detailed description: This musical score is for 'The heat of the EZ'. It is marked 'Andante' with a tempo of 60 quarter notes per minute. The piece is in 9/16 time, which changes to 3/4 time at measure 21. The score is written for piano and includes two systems of staves. The first system shows measures 1-4, and the second system shows measures 5-8. The piano part features a melody with eighth notes and rests, while the piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and rests in the left hand.

#### N 2. Golden autumn

Andante  $\text{♩} = 60$

Piano

Pno.

Detailed description: This musical score is for 'Golden autumn'. It is marked 'Andante' with a tempo of 60 quarter notes per minute. The piece is in 3/4 time. The score is written for piano and includes two systems of staves. The piano part features a melody with eighth notes and rests, while the piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and rests in the left hand.

#### N 3. Kish ertaklari

Andante  $\text{♩} = 60$

Piano

Detailed description: This musical score is for 'Kish ertaklari'. It is marked 'Andante' with a tempo of 60 quarter notes per minute. The piece is in 3/4 time. The score is written for piano and includes two systems of staves. The piano part features a melody with eighth notes and rests, while the piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and rests in the left hand.

#### N 4. Bahor nafasi

Allegro  $\text{♩} = 180$

Piano

Detailed description: This musical score is for 'Bahor nafasi'. It is marked 'Allegro' with a tempo of 180 quarter notes per minute. The piece is in 3/4 time. The score is written for piano and includes two systems of staves. The piano part features a melody with eighth notes and rests, while the piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and rests in the left hand.

### Musical example № 6

#### Tomchilar-droplets

M. Bafoev

Allegretto ♩ = 90

Piano *pp*

*sim.*

### Musical example № 7

#### Shamans-Shamans

M. Bafoev

Allegro ritmico ♩ = 363 (♩ = 121)

Piano *ff* (*ben maracato*)

This feature gives the cycle as a whole a characteristic roundness. The image of the repeatability of the seasons in a closed cycle is enhanced by the chosen form of the work.

The dramaturgy of the cycle lies in its programmatic and plot combination. In this cycle, the composer, in a neo-impressionist vein, revealed all the delights of each season of Central Asia: sultry Summer, divinely beautiful Autumn, fabulous Winter, joyful and bright Spring. The cycle is characterized by kaleidoscopic images: here song and dance images flash and alternate. All the plays in the cycle are bright, with a pronounced national flavor and are written in such forms that make it possible to reveal a variety of images and, at the same time, compare them in contrast (sonata allegro, variations, complex three-part form). One of the unifying factors is the introductions to each play, which are variations of the very first Introduction. All introductions have one thematic grain, originating in the first play. Developing and varying from play to play, they arrive at the final, established "Hymn to Nature." The extreme works, written in the form of a sonata allegro, in turn echo intonationally. Which is another unifying factor in which the

form of the extreme works archly unites the cycle into a single whole.

A striking example of an appeal to the technique of neo-impressionism is the cycle "Five Fantasy Pieces", consisting of five program plays (Osetrova, V.A., 2022). All the plays in this cycle are written in a technique in which melodic leaps and ragged melody, inherent in the modern direction of pointillism, occupy a huge place (please, refer to musical example № 6).

The first four plays are dedicated to nature and moods inspired by natural phenomena. If "Droplets" and "Breeze" are plays that convey certain sensations (the sounds of falling droplets, a gentle breeze), then "Thunder and Rainbow", thanks to its title alone, attunes the listener to the contrast of images within one work. In "The Underwater World," the composer evokes thoughts about deep-sea creatures, perhaps even mystical, about some secrets hidden from us. And "Shamans" (Veselovskiy, N.I., 1890–1907) is already a whole theatrical action, a separate scene (please, refer to musical example № 7).

All piano works by M. Bafoev are programmatic and brightly theatrical. The themes are

shown clearly, but at the same time, through a kaleidoscope of images and mood changes, the deep philosophical ideas and thoughts of the composer himself are visible. They use a variety of forms: here are simple three-part, complex two and three-part, sonata allegro form and variations. The plots are also varied: natural, religious and philosophical, the theme of Eternity is touched upon. In all his piano works, the composer combines classical form with modern musical techniques.

### Conclusion

The piano work of M. Bafoev stands out for its innovation and diversity among other composers of Uzbekistan. M. Bafoev's many years of experience as a conductor allow him to freely use various musical styles and introduce the sound of folk instruments into piano music. M. Bafoev is one of the composers who is not afraid of experiments and innovative approaches in his piano work.

Based on the study of the composer's works, the following conclusions were made:

1. M. Bafoev masterfully possesses techniques of different styles. In his works one can find traditions of both classicism and romanticism. The composer also uses neo-impressionist thinking techniques in combination with minimalism and sonorics.

2. Program works occupy a significant place in the composer's piano work. Due to the interaction of various forms of spiritual culture, the program clearly illustrates poetic, literary and folklore subjects, predetermining the specifics of musical presentation, since the program for M. Bafoev's music most often serves as literary and theatrical works (the hero of the national epic Alpomysh, Shamans, famous thinkers such as R. Tagore, Ibn Sina, and others). It is from his first piano works and in his works to this day that programming occupies a noticeable and significant place in his work.

3. The technique of interpreting piano music as an orchestral sound is also characteristic of M. Bafoev. The composer, as a professional conductor, fluent in orchestral writing, also gravitates towards concert sound in piano miniatures.

4. The range of subjects covered for M. Bafoev's piano works is wide and varied: here are historical figures from both Uzbekistan and other Eastern countries; heroes of folk epics and fairy tales; and philosophical discussions about religion and the eternity of Being.

5. In many works, the composer uses modern musical techniques of sonorics, aleatorics, polymetricity and polyrhythmism in combination with a national origin.

6. A characteristic technique for M. Bafoev – a complete rejection of the key signs of alteration with an indefinite attraction to any tonality – creates the effect of non-attachment to any foundation, personifying the free meditation of the Eastern sense.

7. From the point of view of form-building, the analysis of M. Bafoev's piano opuses showed that he had developed certain principles of form-building, which evolved as his mastery in the field of piano music accumulated.

8. At the moment, M. Bafoev has written five large-scale piano cycles. In terms of quantity and artistic significance, M. Bafoev's cycles stand out among the piano works of Uzbek composers.

9. M. Bafoev, who entered the 21st century as a mature composer, freely uses all the possibilities of modern musical language. Program piano works by M. Bafoev are a new word in piano music of Uzbekistan. With these works, the composer summarizes the achievements of previous generations of Uzbek composers and introduces the means of expression of the 21st century into the musical language.

### References:

- Mazel, L. A. Structure of musical works. Music, 1979. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, – 535 p.  
Sposobin, I. V. Musical form. Textbook – 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Music, 1984. – 399 p.  
Roux, Jean-Paul. Tamerlane. – M.: Young Guard, 2005. – (Life of wonderful people). – ISBN5-235-02842-2. – 304 p.  
Zakirova, V. Creative interpretation of the epic “Alpamysh” in the works of Mustafafo Bafoev // Saryn art and science journal – No. 3 (32). 2021. – P. 6–15.



- Kutluchurina, A. Dedication t Dedication to Tagore by Mustafo Bafoev (on the problem of studying composer's creativity in the context of monodial thinking). Eurasian music science journal № 1. (2020).
- Osetrova, V.A. Depicting the picture of the modern world through fairy-tale characters from the Uzbek epic using the example of M. Bafoev's cycle "According to Alpomysh" Journal "Bulletin of Science and Education" – No. 7. 2022. ISSN2312-8089
- Osetrova, V.A. The theme "Seasons" in the work of the Uzbek composer M. Bafoev. \ XII All-Russian scientific and practical conference "Dialogues about culture and art" (Perm, October 2022).
- Osetrova, V.A. Modern technique of writing by M. Bafoev on the example of his piano cycle "Five fantasy plays". Electronic magazine "Science Time": materials of international events of the Society of Science and Creativity. Science Time. 2022. – No. 3 (99). ISSN2310-7006. – P. 5–15.
- Sajjad Zaheer. The genius of Hafiz // Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Institute of Oriental Studies, Institute of Africa "Peoples of Asia and Africa": Journal.– Moscow: "Science", 1976. – No. 5. – P. 96–102.
- Kasymkhodjaeva, S. B. "Mustafo Bafoevning izhodida zamona belgilari." / Magazine "Musika" – No. 2. 2023. – P. 12–18.
- Chinaev, V. P. Sonata // Musical encyclopedic dictionary / chief editor Keldysh. G.V. – M.: Soviet encyclopedia, 1990. – ISBN5-85270-033-9. – P. 529–530.
- Frayonov, V. P. Cyclic forms // Musical encyclopedic dictionary / chief editor Keldysh. G. V. – M.: Soviet encyclopedia, 1990. – 615 p. ISBN5-85270-033-9.
- Veselovsky, N. I. Shamanism // Encyclopedic Dictionary of Brockhaus and Efron: in 86 volumes (82 volumes and 4 additional). – St. Petersburg, 1890–1907.

submitted 22.08.2023;  
accepted for publication 20.09.2023;  
published 8.10.2023  
© Osetrova V. A.  
Contact: vao21081990@mail.ru