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THE CONTRIBUTION OF FEMALE VOCALS TO THE NATIONAL UZBEKISTAN OPERA ART

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Abstract

Women are receiving increasing attention at the political level today, yet their significant contribution to art has always been undeniable. This importance has remained constant throughout the centuries.

The article examines the role and significance, information about opera singers who have taken their place in the Uzbek opera art and their work, and also examines the classification of the parts they performed and their new interpretations.

Keywords: *composer, opera, libretto, vocals, maqom, conductor, director, singer, aria*

The images of many remarkable, intelligent, and well-educated women have been portrayed in various forms on major theater stages, while their life journeys and honorable, exemplary deeds continue to be vividly reflected in theatrical productions.

Uzbek women actively participate in many areas of musical art. Their contributions are especially notable in instrumental performance, solo singing, musicology, and in leading large ensembles. They have also achieved success in complex and demanding fields such as conducting, directing, and choirmastering. Among these areas, opera performance holds a special place, where talented female singers captivate audiences with their expressive voices, charm, and versatility. Many women who have devoted themselves to the opera genre – which brings together diverse images and artistic

directions – have skillfully demonstrated its wide-ranging possibilities and continue to do so at a high academic level.

One of the most notable figures in Uzbek singing art is the talented opera artist Halima Nasirova (1913–1986). Renowned for her powerful and beautiful voice, she was a gifted actress who excelled in the art of opera performance as a lyrical-dramatic soprano. Halima Nasirova began her career with the Uzbek State Model Troupe (now known as the Uzbek State National Academic Drama Theater). In 1939, she joined the Alisher Navoi Opera and Ballet Theater as a leading soloist, where she created numerous memorable roles and earned recognition as a distinctive artist.

Her impact is evident in how she helped the opera genre flourish in Uzbekistan, championing the education and empowerment of

women in the musical arts. The training of young singers and musicians in Uzbekistan today can be traced back to pioneers like Nasirova, who showcased that women could achieve extraordinary feats and gain recognition on esteemed stages.

Furthermore, Halima Nasirova serves as a symbol of cultural pride, successfully blending traditional Uzbek music with the broader elements of opera, thereby enriching the art form and enhancing its diversity. Her legacy is celebrated not only through performances but also through her continued support for women's involvement in the performing arts, fostering a community that nurtures and values female creativity.

The character Akjunus in E. Brusilovsky's opera "Er-Targin" marked the debut opera role of H. Nasirova. Following that, she performed the roles of Norgul in the first Uzbek operas, including S. Vasilenko and M. Ashrafiy's "Buron" ("The Tempest"), as well as Norgul and Layli in R. Glier and T. Sodikov's opera "Layli and Majnun."

During World War II and the subsequent years, Halima Nasirova portrayed notable characters such as Xin Dun Fan in V. Kozlovsky's opera "Ulugbek," Carmen in J. Bizet's "Carmen," and Zuhra in T. Jalilov and B. Brovtsyn's "Tohir and Zuhra." She also played a leading role in R. Glier and T. Sodikov's opera "Gulsara." Nasirova's impressive vocal range and capabilities allowed her to uniquely interpret the character of Maysara, intended for a mezzo-soprano, with a satirical flair in the opera "Maysara's Work." Her mastery of singing extended beyond academic performance, as she brought a distinct interpretation to various Uzbek characters, infused with their national essence. She performed numerous classical, folk, and contemporary songs, such as "Ushshoq," "Dugoh," "Kel ertaroq," "Munojot," "Chaman ichra," "Feruz," "Gulyor," "Tanovar," "Uzganacha," "Fiqon," "Men uzbek qiziman," and "Mehnat ahli," all of which continue to resonate with audiences and delight art enthusiasts.

Halima Nasirova's extensive and impactful artistic career has garnered numerous accolades. She was bestowed the title of "People's Artist of Uzbekistan" and received the State Prize on two occasions, in 1940 and 1951. In recognition of her significant contri-

butions to the advancement of Uzbek national culture, she was awarded the Order "For Great Services" on the 9th anniversary of the Republic of Uzbekistan's independence.

Another notable figure in the realm of vocal opera art is Nazira Akhmedova (1913–1964). Throughout her career, N. Akhmedova made significant contributions at various esteemed institutions, including the Uzbek Theater of Working Youth (1930), the Uzbek State Academic Drama Theater named after Hamza (1931), Republican Radio (1932), the Uzbek Musical Theater (1935), and the Uzbek State Opera and Ballet Theater named after A. Navoi.

Throughout her remarkable career, N. Akhmedova portrayed leading roles in a variety of beloved dramas and operas, crafting vibrant and compelling characters. A dedicated and skillful coloratura soprano, Nazira Akhmedova was deeply passionate about her art and her country.

In addition to her extensive work in operas, she also excelled in musical dramas. She showcased her exceptional talent in the operas of R. Glier and T. Sodikov, taking on roles such as Asal Laili in "Laili and Majnun," Tatyana in P. I. Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin," and Norgul in M. Ashrafiy and S. Vasilenko's "The Tempest."

Nazira Akhmedova was not only a gifted actress but also possessed a gentle, beautiful voice that resonated with audiences. She brought traditional folk melodies to a wider stage with great enthusiasm and skill. In the current focus on national folklore art, the exemplary contributions of Nazira Akhmedova – an outstanding creator – remain significant.

The classical and folk songs, contemporary tracks, and opera arias he performed continue to resonate with music lovers even today. His songs, including "Kormadim," "Ishqida," "Tong koshighi," "Jonim mening," "Obod olkam," "Rano bolsam," "Ishonma," "Hayolim senda," "Dilbarimo," and "Mevaram," are particularly well-regarded.

Listeners of N. Akhmedova's songs, delivered in a graceful and enchanting voice, often referred to her as the nightingale of Uzbekistan. She was blessed with an extraordinary voice and remarkable talent. Another significant figure in the evolution of Uzbek opera

during the transitional period was Saodat Kobulova (1925–2006), who upheld the tradition of mentorship between teachers and students.

She explored the foundational elements of Uzbek musical heritage and national singing traditions through the works of Tokhtasin Jalilov, Ganijon Tashmatov, and Jurakhon Sultanova. In Moscow, she learned about the fundamentals of Uzbek opera, singing techniques, and “aytim” vocal styles from instructors like Belyavskaya and Goldman, mastering these skills and showcasing her talent on large stages.

In 1954, Saodat Kobulova became a soloist at the Alisher Navoi Opera and Ballet Theater, debuting as Laila in T. Sodikov and R. Glier’s opera “Laila and Majnun.” She later excelled in various roles, including Masha in M. Ashrafiy and S. Vasilenko’s “Ulug Kanal,” Zuhra in T. Jalilov and B. Brovtsin’s “Tohir and Zuhra,” Khuri in T. Sodikov, B. M. Zeidman, D. Zokirov, and Y. Rajabiy’s “Zainab and Amon,” Sanobar in S. Boboev’s “Hamza,” Dilorom in M. Ashrafiy’s “Dilorom,” Asal in T. Sodikov and R. Glier’s “Gulsara,” Oikhon in S. Yudakov’s “Maysara’s Work,” and Gulnor in R. Hamroev’s “Zulmatdan Ziyo.” With her remarkable performances as Dilorom, Oikhon, and Khuri, she established herself as one of the leading opera artists, earning widespread recognition for her well-rounded talent.

S. Kobulova was the first Uzbek opera singer to adeptly take on leading roles in foreign classical operas performed in Russian. Her portrayals of characters such as Laila in Bizet’s “Les Perles Des Perles,” Butterfly in Puccini’s “Cio-Cio-San,” Rosina in Rossini’s “The Barber of Seville,” Gilda in Verdi’s “Rigoletto,” and Iolanta in Tchaikovsky’s “Iolanta,” delighted Russian-speaking audiences.

In addition to her operatic repertoire, Uzbek classical maqom and contemporary songs hold a significant place in S. Kobulova’s performances. She is a master of national melismatics (nola, qochirim), showcasing a rich artistic imagination and successfully blending Uzbek and European bel canto styles in her singing.

She is a talented individual who has significantly contributed to the art of maqom. At present, our President is making decisions

to enhance and promote national Uzbek art, particularly in the realm of maqom. The masterpieces of maqom, performed by Saodat Kobulova and recorded on magnetic tapes, include works such as “Bayot 1, 2, 3, 4,” “Talqini bayot,” “Sarakhbori oramijon,” “Samarkand ushshagi,” “Chapandozi navo,” “Duguh,” “Iraqi Bukhara,” “Etmasmidim,” “Bu kongildir,” along with many other songs. Additionally, several pieces feature Alisher Navoi’s ghazals and romances by Uzbek composers, all of which will remain timeless in their artistic value.

S. Kobulova passionately showcased the songs of various European and Asian cultures, including those of the Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, Tajik, Azerbaijani, Armenian, and Mongolian peoples. She traveled extensively to countries such as India, Burma, Kampuchea, Thailand, Afghanistan, Poland, Canada, and Mongolia, where she enthusiastically performed rare examples of Uzbek musical heritage, thereby promoting our national song tradition.

Since 1970, Saodat Kobulova has been teaching at the Tashkent State Conservatory, where she serves as a professor and plays a significant role in nurturing young talent. She established her own school of vocal art, which emphasizes two key directions: the national maqom “aytim” and academic vocal performance. This unique approach led to the creation of a distinct Uzbek national vocal performance art. Her legacy continues through the talented singers she has trained, including M. Razzokova, T. Boyjonova, M. Mamatova, and N. Parpieva.

Muyassar Razzakova, a distinguished People’s Artist of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan, is a professor in the Department of “Academic Singing and Opera Preparation” at the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan and serves as a soloist at the Alisher Navoi State Academic Bolshoi Theatre (SABT). Born in 1964 in Beruniy, Karakalpakstan, she pursued her studies at the Opera Department of the M. Ashrafi Tashkent State Conservatory, learning from renowned instructors Rosalinda Laut and Saodat Kobulova. In 1988, she embarked on her career as a solo opera performer at the Alisher Navoi SABT.

Throughout her career, Razzakova has portrayed leading roles in both Uzbek and international classical operas staged at the

theater. Her performances include Oykhon in S. Yudakov's "Maysara's Case," Feruza in M. Bafoev's "Umar Khayyam," Dilorom in M. Ashrafiy's "Dilorom," Layli in R. Glier and T. Sodikov's "Layli and Majnun," as well as renowned characters such as Violetta in G. Verdi's "La Traviata," Gilda in "Rigoletto," Oscar in "Un ballo in maschera," Rosina in G. Rossini's "The Barber of Seville," Lucia in L. Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor," and Marfa in N. Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Queen of Spades," among many others. Her impressive body of work highlights her dedication and talent in the field of opera.

Muyassar Razzakova has caught the attention of the broader cultural community with her enchanting songs that bring solace to the soul. Initially, she followed in the footsteps of her mentor, Saodat Kobulova, performing lyrical pieces with passion, such as "Bir Qamar," "Dugonalar," "Oq Kaptar," and "Sevimli Yorim." As she embarked on her own artistic journey, she gained popularity for her uplifting songs, including "Vatan," "Iftihor," "Men Uzbek Qiziman," "Ulkam," "Vatan Azizdir," "Valsy of Flowers," "Bahor Nafasi," "Vatan Madhi," "Sevgi Axshi," "Mehring bilan yashaymiz, Vatan," "Jahonda Uzbekiston," "Millat Bayroghi," "Uzbek Davlati," and "Nurli Orzular." These songs celebrate Independent Uzbekistan and convey themes of patriotism, honoring the homeland, and reinforcing independence.

These lyrical pieces, created in collaboration with noted poets like Jumaniyaz Jabbarov, Normurod Narzullaev, Abdulla Aripov, Omon Matchon, and Husniddin Sharipov, as well as composers such as Mustafa Bafoev, Rustam Abdullaev, and Anor Nazarov – along with Muyassar Razzakova – reflect the spirit of the independence era and have become exceptional examples of 90s musical artistry. The deep connection these songs have established with listeners is a testament to the remarkable talent of Muyassar Razzakova, blessed with a beautiful voice.

Muyassar Razzakova has performed in countries such as Germany, France, the USA, Spain, Italy, Hungary, and Turkey, participating in creative tours where she showcased her talent by singing arias from renowned classical operas as well as Uzbek national songs. Her performances have captivated

international audiences and garnered the attention of art enthusiasts. Throughout her career, she has participated in both national and international competitions, earning numerous prestigious awards. Razzakova won the Republican Competition of Opera Artists in 1989 and secured third place at the M. Glinka International Competition of Young Opera Artists the same year. In 1990, she received the second prize at the Vocal Performers Competition in Hungary. Additionally, in 1997, she was selected as one of thirty participants in the Strong Opera Performers Competition held in Italy, where she achieved laureate status.

The remarkable talent of opera soloist and enchanting singer Muyassar Razzakova has been rightfully recognized, as she was awarded the esteemed title of "People's Artist of Uzbekistan" in 1998. Following in her footsteps is the talented soprano Masuma Boltaboyeva, an Honored Artist of Uzbekistan and recipient of the "Nihol" State Prize, who serves as a soloist at the A. Navoi State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater. Boltaboyeva has brought to life the leading roles of Oykhon in S. Yudakov's "Maysara's Tricks," Zuhra in B. Brovtsyn and T. Jalilov's "Tohir and Zuhra," Kumush in M. Makhmudov's "Kumush," Zulfiya in R. Abdullaev's "Sadokat," Guli in M. Bafoev's "Alisher Navoi," and many other characters from both Uzbek and global operas.

Talented representatives of the Uzbek opera singing tradition, including international and national competition winners like Saida Mamadalieva, Malika Normatova, Aziza Mukhamedova, Feruza Yusupova, and Gulmira Nurmetova, are currently performing at the A. Navoi State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater. Their exceptional portrayals of principal characters in Uzbek national operas have garnered enthusiastic applause from audiences. Additionally, emerging talents such as Shirin Mamatova, Milena Madmusaeva, and Shakhnoza Yakubjonova are also making significant contributions to the field.

A deeper exploration of their work is essential, as it not only highlights and preserves national values but also examines the artistic contributions of these opera singers as vital elements of musical history. We believe that the influence of female vocalists within

these operatic art forms is profound, and the characters they portray and reinterpret serve as catalysts for fostering the spirituality of youth, inspiring them to strive for personal excellence through engaging with their performances.

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