

DOI:10.29013/EJA-25-3-122-125



## TRADITIONAL AND NEW APPROACHES TO STAGE INTERPRETATIONS OF CLASSIC POEMS IN THE MODERN UZBEK THEATER

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**Cite:** Ismoilov A. (2025). *Traditional and New Approaches to Stage Interpretations of Classic Poems in the Modern Uzbek Theater*. *European Journal of Arts* 2025, No 3. <https://doi.org/10.29013/EJA-25-3-122-125>

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### Abstract

The article examines traditional and new approaches to the stage interpretation of the epics of Alisher Navoi, an outstanding representative of Uzbek classical literature, thinker and poet. In this regard, the plays staged based on the poet's epics "The Wall of Iskander" and "Leyli and Medjnun" are analyzed.

**Keywords:** *Theatre, director, performance, interpretation, classical work, tradition, new approaches*

### Introduction

For several centuries, the poetic legacy of Alisher Navoi has remained the main object of study for scientists and creative figures. The poems included in his work "Khamsa" ("Quintet") are an invaluable source of inspiration for theater directors. Indeed, his poems are valuable, firstly, for their philosophical idea, and secondly, for their internal drama and hidden theatricality. It is difficult to find these facets and embody them on stage, preserving the philosophy of the poetic series. This requires a special understanding, creative approach, and imagination of directors when creating a stage version of this work. To this day, all five poems have been staged on the stage of theaters in Uzbekistan. This process continues today, because they are invaluable material for the creative searches of directors.

### Research methods

Criterion of historicity, analysis, comparative analysis.

### Main part

The play "Iskander", staged by director B. Yuldashev at the Uzbek State Drama Theater based on the poem "Saddi Iskandari" ("Wall of Iskander") by A.Navoi can be considered a bright achievement in this direction. The play expressed Navoi's views on the mortal world, human destinies, the struggle between good and evil. As a result, the play appeared in the form of a philosophical and tragic parable. The director sought to further enrich the character of Iskander (Alexander the Great) and show him as a man with a complex fate. On stage, the image of Iskander appears as a contradictory, intelligent, erudite, comprehensively developed person, at the same time

he is a hot-tempered ruler who boldly conquers his enemies.

“In the play “Iskander” the main goal was to reveal the essence of Navoi’s philosophy” (Sangirov, B., 2017). Pursuing this goal, the director builds the composition of the play with episodes related to the fate of Iskander – seeing off his father on his final journey, his accession to the throne, the war with the Iranian Shah Darius and his death. The appearance of the image of Navoi in the play further enriches the director’s interpretation. This image became an important link in the events of the play.

The director rejects the traditional interpretation of the classic work of the great poet, focuses on two images of Iskander and Navoi, who lived in different eras, revealing the proportionality of their philosophical judgments about life, about man. “The desire for an original solution to the historical theme was also manifested in the fact that the performance was read as a tragedy of historical parallels, repeating from one era to another” (Tulyakhodzhaeva M., 1995, 71). Iskander is tormented by thoughts about the frailty and transience of life, understanding the uselessness of strife, fratricidal wars, conspiracies. Navoi observes the ongoing spiritual world of the heroes and strives to more deeply understand the fate of Iskander. The director is concerned about the thoughts and experiences of these two people. B. Yuldashev generalizes their philosophical judgments and puts forward the idea that a person should live by spiritual and moral concepts.

The internal dynamics of the play are quite intense and tense. It is dominated by the movement of thoughts rather than stage action. The dispute between Iskander and the Iranian Shah Darius is based on a polemic of thoughts, and this polemic flares up and leads to a clash of the parties. Such an approach to the stage reading of a historical work allowed to give the play a philosophical meaning, complicated the acting performance.

In this performance, the director demanded restraint from the actors. The actors not only lived the fates of their heroes, but also commented on their actions. In particular, the actor E. Nasyrov, who played Iskander, as if distancing himself from the image, does not always justify the actions of his hero, he

enters into polemics with him, expresses annoyance at the ill-considered decisions taken in haste by the ruler.

The director set a completely different task for the actor playing Navoi A. Rafikov. The actor comments on the actions, words, decisions of his hero, gives them an assessment. This method of acting gave significance to the image of Navoi, he appeared as a philosopher and thinker.

The tandem of director B. Yuldashev and artist G. Brim served as an important factor in the implementation of the metaphorical scenographic solution of the performance. “The artist came up with a number of symbols, signs, details that served to create a holistic image of the performance” (Kodirova, D., 2009, 148). This was especially clearly manifested in “the transformation of the throne into a coffin, the rank of the ruler into an executioner and, finally, the departure to another world with open empty palms” (Rizayev, Sh., 2007). The scenery included the face of Buddha, symbols of fire worshipers, Christians, as well as a Muslim mihrab, in addition to this, on the portals of the mosque there were inscriptions of verses from the Holy Quran – all this testified to the universal significance of Navoi’s work.

B. Yuldashev managed to convey the poet’s Sufi views, reflected in the poem “Wall of Iskander”, and the philosophical thoughts of the classic work by stage means. Thus, a new director’s reading of Navoi’s poem was proposed, which ensured the artistic integrity of the performance.

Another poem “Leyli and Medjnun”, which is part of the “Quintet” of A. Navoi, can serve as a vivid example of the stage interpretation of the ideas of Sufism. In 2008, the play “Leyli and Medjnun” was staged by director O. Khodjakuliev (staging by Nafas Shodmonov) on the stage of the Kashkadarya Regional Musical Theater named after Mullah Tuychi Toshmammedov, which became another bright page in the theater’s understanding of Navoi’s work.

The play is staged in the form of a philosophical parable. The director explored the issue of divine love in a conventionally metaphorical style. The love of Leyli and Medjnun exposed the internal contradictions between people and brought to the forefront the clashes of such concepts as kindness and cruelty, war and peace, spirituality and meanness.

The plot of the play begins with the first meeting of Qais and Leyli at school. O.Khodjakuliev, relying on the author of the poem Navoi himself, tried to interpret the image of Qais in a philosophical way. The director's main attention is concentrated on the philosophical judgments, reflections, and thoughts of the hero. Thanks to them, the character of Medjnun is revealed, the internal dynamics of the play arise, which determines its pace and rhythm.

O. Khodjakuliev, in order to express the inner states of the characters, events, and the effectiveness of the characters' words, brings an orchestra consisting of makom players and an instrumental ensemble onto the stage.

The director finds an unusual way to express the relationship between the lovers. He fences them with a transparent curtain, not allowing them to look into each other's eyes, otherwise they will be powerless to resist it. But in the scenes when they are not together, they will frantically search for each other, burning in the flames of love.

Medjnun is looking for Leyli, calling her, but he sees only Leyli's face. This is not madness, Medjnun is not crazy, he cannot resist his feelings, the strong, trembling, burning feeling of love.

The play is based on dzikr – the zeal of Muslim Sufi sectarians. "There were two types of zeal: the first was to remember God internally, the second was to openly remember him in words. That is, there is internal and external zeal" (Kodirov, M., 2003). In the play, this is expressed in slow plastic, choreographic compositions. But in scenes where the characters express strong excitement and experience, the tempo of the dances accelerates.

The director's style of interpretation of Navoi's poetic word implies a psychologically

subtle play of actors. In the image of Medjnun, actor F.Muradov embodied a tragic personality. And actress S.Ashurova played the role of Leyli in a lyrical and dramatic way. The viewer saw a person deeply suffering from internal contradictions – the choice between feeling and duty.

The stage design by artist M.Soshina with its conventionally metaphorical style corresponded to the theme and genre of the performance. A small stage made of square planks according to the director's idea became a place for expressing high and pure human feelings. All the details on the stage were conventional. The petals of red roses symbolized the bloodshed of two tribes, and the stylized costumes of the characters did not express any era, only distinguished the difference in color between the two tribes.

The play "Leyli and Medjnun" by O. Khodjakuliev revealed a new directorial view on the expression of eternal themes – love and hate, good and evil, and reflected the search for a stage interpretation of Navoi's classical works through a complex modern theatrical language.

### Conclusion

In the years of independence, Navoi's poems have been interpreted in the Uzbek theatre in accordance with the times, and productions have been carried out through the synthesis of music, dance, plastic and choreographic compositions. "This process shows that a new era of affirmation of new views, methods and aesthetic principles in the production of Navoi's works is beginning" (Rizayev, O., 2012). The performances clearly show the directors' goal to prove that Navoi's works are an invaluable spiritual heritage in the formation of national consciousness and the development of society.

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submitted 08.06.2025;  
accepted for publication 22.06.2025;  
published 31.08.2025  
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