

DOI:10.29013/EJA-25-4-52-56



CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES IN UZBEK ACADEMIC VOCAL ART

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Cite: Ismoilova M.E. (2025). *Contemporary Interpretation and Educational Issues in Uzbek Academic Vocal Art*. *European Journal of Arts* 2025, No 4. <https://doi.org/10.29013/EJA-25-4-52-56>

Abstract

The article analyzes the current state of academic vocal art in Uzbekistan, its historical development, institutional evolution (exemplified by the Department of Academic Singing and Opera Training at the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan), and globalization processes in vocal education. It examines the synthesis of national traditions (maqom, folk songs) with global vocal schools (Italian, Russian, German) in the context of independence and transnational pedagogy.

Research Objective: To identify key stages in the formation and modernization of the Uzbek academic vocal school during the 20th-21st centuries, analyze institutional mechanisms (department, international cooperation), and substantiate a model of an open, transnational vocal education system that preserves national identity while integrating into the global musical context.

Methods: Historical-analytical, comparative-typological, and institutional analysis based on archival data, works by Uzbek musicologists (S. Begmatov, I. G. Galushchenko, M. Hamidova), official conservatory materials, and observations of contemporary pedagogical practices (master classes, seminars, repertoire policy).

Results: The evolution of the Department of Academic Singing from 1936 to the present is described: from the Soviet period (inclusion of soloists from the Alisher Navoiy Grand Theater) to post-Soviet reforms (integration of international methodologies). Key pedagogues and graduates who ensured international recognition of the Uzbek vocal school are identified. The transformation of a closed national model into an open transnational system through master classes, experience exchange, and implementation of digital technologies in training is demonstrated. A new vocal expressiveness combining Uzbek phonetics, makam intonation, and Western techniques (bel canto, dramatic lyricism) is substantiated.

Scientific Novelty: For the first time, a model of transnational vocal pedagogy in Uzbekistan is systematically presented as a transition from an isolated national tradition to a globally competitive open system. The concept of the “Uzbek synthetic vocal style” (national intonation + global technique) is introduced, supported by analysis of institutional reforms and intercultural competencies.

Keywords: *Uzbek vocal school, academic singing, pedagogy, globalization of vocal education, State Conservatory of Uzbekistan, synthesis of traditions, international cooperation, national identity, vocal methodology*

Introduction

The second half of the 20th century stands out as a period of significant changes and development in Uzbekistan's musical education system, particularly in vocal-musical education. Uzbek vocal performance art emerged through a harmonious synthesis of centuries-old national traditions and the expertise of global vocal schools. In national musical culture, vocal technique plays a pivotal role in performing maqoms, folk songs, and contemporary vocal works.

Uzbek scholar S. Begmatov articulates the following insights: "In the practice of Uzbek traditional singing art, a multitude of voice types are encountered. Specialized singers named them based on their properties and qualities. For example: 'Tik ovoz' (straight voice), 'Dovudiy ovoz' (Davidic voice), 'Kuchli ovoz' (strong voice), 'Xasta ovoz' (ailing voice), 'Dardli ovoz' (sorrowful voice), 'Manqa ovoz' (manqa voice), 'G'alati ovoz' (peculiar voice), 'Baqiroq ovoz' (bellowing voice), 'Mungli ovoz' (melancholic voice), 'Qo'ng'iroq ovoz' (bell-like voice), 'Yoqimli ovoz' (pleasant voice), etc. A singer's voice is characterized not only by its timbre but also by performance range, melodic quality, accuracy of pronunciation, and aesthetic appeal" (Begmatov S., 2007).

Uzbek vocal performance art has developed as a unique aesthetic and technical system integrating centuries-old national traditions with advanced practices from global vocal schools. As S. Begmatov emphasizes, Uzbek traditional singing art is distinguished by its diversity of voice types. These classifications reflect not only the acoustic properties of the voice but also its aesthetic and psychological impact. Evidently, voice quality is determined not solely by timbral characteristics but also by performance range, melodic expressiveness, diction clarity, and aesthetic attractiveness. Uzbek vocal performance is grounded in the synthesis of national traditions with Western vocal schools (particularly Italian bel canto and the Russian vocal school). Folk songs ensure the national identity of Uzbek vocal art, while global vo-

cal schools enhance its competitiveness on the world stage through the introduction of modern operatic and academic singing techniques. The Department of Academic Singing and Opera Training at the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan employs methodologies from the Bologna, Moscow, and Leningrad vocal schools while preserving national vocal traditions. This synthesis adapts the Uzbek vocal school to international standards.

Renowned scholar Professor I. G. Galushchenko offers the following observations on this process: "In the pre-revolutionary period, Uzbek vocal performance culture developed along several trajectories. Notably, professional singers performed cycles of maqoms from Bukhara and Khorezm. The most prominent among them served at khan courts. For instance, at the court of Bukhara's last emir, Sayid Alimkhan, eminent masters of Shashmaqom – the singer Ota Jalol Nosirov and instrumentalist Ota G'iyos Abdug'ani – were active. The lives of court artists were arduous, as they were entirely dependent on the ruler's will and whims. Only on holidays, by the emir's command, did they perform publicly in bazaar squares" (Galushchenko I., 1991).

Professor I. G. Galushchenko's reflections serve as a vital source for illuminating the pre-revolutionary stage of Uzbek vocal performance culture. She demonstrates the development of performance art during this period in close connection with socio-political conditions, cultural milieu, and the role of court art. Indeed, this encompasses the evolution of Bukhara and Khorezm maqom performance traditions and the activities of professional singers within these schools. Information on the training and cultural proficiency of artists capable of performing complex musical heritage such as Shashmaqom attests to the elevated cultural life of that era.

The Main part

The Department of Academic Singing and Opera Training was established in 1936 as a key institutional structure in Uzbekistan's musical education and professional vocal art.

Throughout its operation, the department has made substantial contributions not only to the advancement of Uzbekistan's musical culture but also to securing a prominent position on the international opera stage. Its founding and development reflect critical stages in preserving Uzbekistan's rich cultural heritage, shaping contemporary vocal art traditions, and integrating with global musical education standards.

From its inception, the department cultivated a distinctive pedagogical style and professional approach focused on training highly qualified opera singers and vocal pedagogues. Its activities have gained recognition not only within the local musical education system but also internationally, as department graduates successfully perform in prestigious opera houses worldwide, showcasing the high caliber of the Uzbek vocal school.

A significant phase in the department's activity occurred between "1966 and 1990. During this period, renowned soloists from Tashkent's Alisher Navoi Grand Theater were incorporated into the faculty, including People's Artists of the Republic of Uzbekistan S. K. Qobulova, G. S. Izraelyan, R. B. Laut, S. G. Benyaminov, N. X. Xashimov, G. G. Xanedanyan, Q. Q. Muxitdinov, and V. F. Braun" (Vyzgo T., 1972).

The year 1991-the proclamation of Uzbekistan's independence – marked a historic turning point in the nation's development. From this juncture, comprehensive reforms were initiated across all sectors, including higher education. This process directly impacted vocal education. One of the leading centers in this domain became the "Department of Academic Singing and Opera Training" at the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan.

The renewal and systematic advancement of the Department of Academic Singing and Opera Training constitute a pivotal institutional reform that scientifically underpins the elevation of Uzbek vocal art to the global level. Updated leadership, integration of soloists with extensive practical experience, young specialists, and adaptability to globalization ensured the success of these transformations.

The Department of Academic Vocal and Opera Training at the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan ranks among the conservatory's flagship units. It upholds faculty traditions,

with class concerts and department-level creative evenings holding prominent places. Leading pedagogues – Professors M. K. Razzakova, M. N. Rizaeva, S. A. Tsoy, et al.; Professor G. I. Muhamedova, et al.; Associate Professor E. E. Tursunov; and People's Artist of Uzbekistan O. A. Aleksandrova – actively participate in these events.

During the independence years, the following distinguished pedagogues served at the Department of Academic Vocal and Opera Training: Muhamedova Galina Iminovna (Associate Professor, Department Head); Razzakova Muyassar Qodirovna (People's Artist of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan, Professor); Rizaeva Muqaddas Nishanovna (Cultural Figure of Uzbekistan, Professor); Muhamedova Gulshan Hakimovna (Professor); Neymer Vladimir Borisovich (Mentor of Uzbekistan's Youth, Professor); Hamidova Marfu'a Azizovna (Doctor of Art History, Professor); Tsoy Sofya Anatolyevna (Associate Professor); Jalilov Ismoil To'laganovich (People's Artist of Uzbekistan, Professor); Rajabov Avaz Akbarovich (People's Artist of Uzbekistan, Professor); Sultonov Nurmumin Namazovich (People's Artist of Uzbekistan); Tursunov Egamberdi Ergashovich (et al., Associate Professor); Aleksandrova Olga Alekseevna (Honored Artist of Uzbekistan, Senior Lecturer); Saidmuxamedova Lola Zaynutdinovna (Senior Lecturer); Ahmadjonov Ubaydullo Meliboyevich (Senior Lecturer); Xaydarov Ulug'bek (Senior Lecturer); Rajabov Suxrob (Lecturer); Pardayeva Nilyufar (Lecturer); G'ayibov Sodik Husonovich (Lecturer); Xudoyqulov Bobomurod Abduna'imovich (Lecturer).

In recent years, Uzbek vocal art has evolved into an open system grounded in active international collaboration. Seminars, master classes, and proficiency lessons organized with prominent vocal singers, conductors, and pedagogues from Italy, the USA, Russia, South Korea, Germany, Ukraine, and Czechoslovakia highlight the transnational nature of this process. International creative encounters and seminars extend beyond technical knowledge exchange to broaden musical thinking and aesthetic worldview. Participating in foreign master classes, students and pedagogues: examine methodological distinctions among various vocal

schools (Italian, Russian, German); adopt a comparative perspective on their creative approaches; develop competencies in tolerance, openness to creative diversity, and pluriculturalism through recognition of other peoples' values.

Such musical and cultural interactions reflect the Uzbek vocal school's shift from a closed, insular model to an open, dialogue-ready global paradigm. International experience exchange not only elevates vocal technique but also delineates institutional development strategies. Learning from foreign masters, students and pedagogues acquire: structured methodologies for instructional processes, variations in repertoire policy and dramaturgical approaches, integration of technological advancements (e.g., voice recording and acoustic analysis software) into education, and management models for preparing student achievements for international festivals and competitions. These innovations inherently initiate internal modernization of both departments and the educational system.

These processes evidence the globalization of Uzbek vocal art – the emergence of an artistic system actively engaging with the international cultural environment. This is elucidated in cultural studies through concepts of transnational pedagogy, intercultural competence, and social capital exchange.

Post-independence, the Department of Academic Singing (Vocal) adapted to Uzbekistan's new socio-cultural reality by reevaluating its operational directions. The following core strategic approaches crystallized:

The department sought to harmonize its vocal methodology with the technical demands of international vocal schools (Italian, Russian, French, German) while retaining the phonetic, emotional, linguistic, and spiritual attributes of the Uzbek people. Consequently, a new school of vocal expressiveness began to take shape, rooted in national melodicism, the fusion of Uzbek diction with music, and the harmony of lyricism and dramatic expression.

The curriculum expanded to encompass not only works by Uzbek composers but also exemplary repertoires from global opera literature. This equips students with internationally compliant vocal technique and specialized training across diverse vocal genres.

New methodologies, voice theory, stage movement, choral pedagogy, acting mastery, and foreign language preparation (Italian, Russian, French) were incorporated into the department's refreshed didactic framework.

Discussion

Prominent scholar Professor M. Hamidova states: "If culture constitutes the aggregate of material and spiritual values created and developed by humanity through historical progress – that is, all human achievements in production, social life, and intellectual activity – then the realm of spiritual culture encompasses art, science, enlightenment, and other forms of social consciousness. The development of these domains is largely determined by the material conditions of societal structure" (<https://phsreda.com>).

Professor M. Hamidova's definition unveils the intricate, multilayered structure of culture from the perspectives of cultural studies and social philosophy. In her view, culture – formed through humanity's historical advancement – is not merely a collection of aesthetic or ethical values but a complex system evolving from the conditions of social existence.

This broad, systemic, and historically-economically grounded comprehension of culture enables deeper insight, evaluation, and planning of contemporary cultural policies and educational processes.

The historical vocal potential of New Uzbekistan has begun to be reprocessed in modern formats, emerging as a culturally recognized product on the international stage. The strategic approaches applied to vocal art development during Uzbekistan's independence years exemplify a successful model of engaging with global musical space while preserving national characteristics. This model may serve as a methodological and institutional exemplar for other higher music institutions, theater academies, and creative centers. Future vocal art development is anticipated to proceed along innovative, transnational, and culturally sustainable trajectories.

Conclusion

In summary, the Department of Academic Singing at the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan continues to operate successfully as a central institutional entity within

Uzbekistan's musical education system. Established in 1936, the department has played a crucial role in shaping the Uzbek vocal school, safeguarding national musical traditions, and aligning with global musical standards. The engagement of foreign specialists at the Tashkent Conservatory during World War II, the post-war reconstruction period, and independence-era reforms defined the department's developmental phases. The contributions of renowned artists and pedagogues such as Saodat Qobulova, Muyassar Razzakova, and Nasim Xashimov, alongside the international competition successes of graduates like Abdumalik Abduqayumov, Najmiddin Mavlyanov, and Abbosxon Rax-

matullayev, affirm the high potential of the Uzbek vocal school. Collaboration with the Alisher Navoi State Academic Grand Theater, contemporary methodological approaches, and international experience exchange have enhanced educational quality. Consequently, Uzbek vocal art has secured its niche in the global cultural milieu, evolving into a system of transnational pedagogical and creative communication. The department's future endeavors will focus on advancing an innovative educational model compliant with international standards while maintaining national musical identity, a process expected to further bolster Uzbekistan's prestige in the global artistic arena.

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submitted 16.10.2025;
accepted for publication 01.11.2025;
published 28.11.2025
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