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"SHASHMAQOM – THE PRICELESS TREASURE OF WORLD CULTURE" – REPORT ON UNESCO ACTIVITIES

*Komiljon Saidov*¹

¹ Department of Maqom Instrumental Performance, Yunus Rajabi Uzbekistan State Institute of Music

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Abstract

This article will talk about the work done by UNESCO and their importance. The effectiveness of the work carried out, its achievements, allowed shortcomings were considered. It is mentioned that there are discrepancies between the state of the Shashmaqom Note Records, which came out on the basis of the UNESCO program, and the previous ones. Every two years, the tradition of holding the festival "taronas of the East."

Keywords: UNESCO, eastern taranas, Shashmakom, Rost, Ushshak, revenue Ushshak, Isfara, Ushshaki Samarkandi, Ushshaki Kalon

It is known that attention to the art of maqom is increasing today. The inclusion of Shashmaqom in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is clear evidence of this. Therefore, special attention is being paid to expanding knowledge and understanding of this invaluable art, and to applying advanced achievements in science, culture, and the arts, as well as historical, national pedagogical, and innovative technologies.

Many nations, with their rich cultural heritage, spiritual values, and significant achievements in science and education, have made substantial contributions to human civilization. Uzbekistan is among these countries. UNESCO, which works in areas like establishing peace, ensuring sustainable development, promoting intercultural dia-

logue through education, advancing scientific fields, and fostering international cultural and knowledge exchange, plays a major role in preserving the intangible cultural heritage within world civilization. This international organization, part of the United Nations, was founded on November 16, 1945. Uzbekistan became a member of UNESCO after gaining independence, on October 29, 1993, and the organization's office was opened in Tashkent in 1996.

The head of UNESCO's Uzbekistan office highlighted during the "Shashmaqom Traditions and Modernity" conference held in Samarkand in 2005 that "The project to preserve Shashmaqom, financed by the Japanese Fund for the Preservation of World Spiritual Culture, is organized in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan." Local specialists on both sides,

including folklorists, musicologists, ethnologists, and artists, were actively involved in the presentations.

“This conference is part of that project. Today, we will reflect on the importance of Shashmaqom in Central Asian culture and deepen our understanding of this musical heritage while ensuring its preservation,” he stated.

In 2003, UNESCO adopted the “Preserving the Classical Music of Central Asia – Shashmaqom” program. Accordingly, many targeted activities were carried out in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan: special literature was published, CD albums were prepared, scientific-creative events were held, relevant materials were published as collections, expeditions were organized, and the master-apprentice traditions were supported.

In 2007, based on the UNESCO program, the first volume of “Rost” maqom, edited by Dr. Asliddin Nizomov, a scholar of art sciences, was published in Dushanbe. This volume differed from previous editions, as it focused on “Rost” maqom instead of Buzruk. The appendix to this volume included well-known and complete maqom songs such as “Daromadi Ushshoq,” “Ushshoqi Kalon,” “Ushshoqi Isfara,” “Ushshoqi Sodirkhan,” “Qashqarchai Ushshoqi Sodirkhan,” “Ushshoqi Hafiz,” and “Ushshoqi Haji Abdulaziz” (“Ushshoqi Samar-kand”) that are famous among both nations.

In neighboring Tajikistan, which achieved independence, attention to the classical musical heritage of Shashmaqom has continued to grow. Leading artists regularly participate in Samarkand’s “Sharq Taronalari” music festivals. A presidential decree in 2000 declared May 12 “Shashmaqom Day” in Tajikistan, and in 2002, the “Maqom Academy,” a non-governmental organization, was established in Dushanbe. A video album collection titled “Shashmaqom,” featuring performances by graduates of this academy, was released in 2006.

Scientific-creative conferences dedicated to Shashmaqom are regularly held, and talented maqom performers conduct tours abroad, participate in international festivals, and give prominent concerts. For instance, the annual Shashmaqom Festival-Symposium in Dushanbe took place in 2016, and a presentation of “Shashmaqom” sheet music collections, and the “Shashmaqom Dictionary” was

organized by Dr. A. Nizomov, the Tajikistan People’s Artist A. Abdurashidov, and others. Additionally, the Shashmaqom International Festival was held in September 2017 in Konibodom, Sogd Province, Tajikistan.

The actions taken based on the UNESCO program have contributed to achieving positive results. Specifically, the long-awaited Shashmaqom sheet music collections, which had become rare over the years, are now being republished. As a result of the planned actions, the Shashmaqom sheet music collection was republished in 2007 under the title “Yunus Rajabi. Uzbek Maqoms. Shashmaqom.”

Firstly, it must be said with special gratitude that many events were planned and implemented under UNESCO’s “Shashmaqom – Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity” program. Among these were specific clauses focused on the republication of relevant sheet music and audio recordings, which was particularly timely. Approximately half of the last forty years passed in a scarcity of such documents. The long-awaited sheet music collection was published in spring 2007, typeset with modern computer programs, spanning 632 pages, and bound into a single, soft-cover book.

It is known that this collection contained numerous inconsistencies and lamentable errors. It caused several inconveniences for performers, proving unsuitable as a teaching aid in practice. In summary, the “Shashmaqom” collection, which was expected to handle scientific, educational, and cultural matters, unfortunately turned out to be a product with many shortcomings.

The newly released audio recordings of “Shashmaqom” somehow remain unrevealed to audiences, which was confirmed at the so-called “International” Shakhrisabz Maqom Festival. It can also be said with certainty that students in the field and performers, as well as teachers, have continued to use old audio recordings during teaching and learning. We know that, due to the efforts of Abdurauf Fitrat, a public figure and the Minister of Education of the Bukhara People’s Republic, the Eastern Music School in Bukhara began teaching the art of maqom by knowledgeable masters in 1921. To help students learn both the musical and theoretical aspects, the composer and ethnomu-

usicologist V. A. Uspensky was invited from Tashkent. Relying on the performances of Hafiz Ota Jaloliddin and tambour musician Ota Giyas, six maqoms were successfully recorded within a year and a half. This invaluable notation collection was published in Moscow in 1924, edited by Fitrat and N. N. Mironov. Although this collection was presented in an instrumental form, with parts of the nasr section left unsung and with shortcomings in terms of rhythmic patterns, notes, and meter, its notational documentation marked a significant event.

Later, from 1950 to 1967, Shonazar Sohobov, Boboqul Fayzullayev, and Fazliddin Shahobov released a five-volume “Shashmaqom” notation, edited by V. M. Belyaev. This version, tied to Persian poetry, can be found in interpretations by Tajik “Shashmaqom” performers. The fruitful results of subsequent research can be seen in the “Uzbek Folk Music” collection, organized by Ilyos Akbarov and published in Tashkent in 1959. Yunus Rajabi’s experience and creative approach, combined with the creation of exemplary and comprehensive performances by his maqom ensemble in 1959, led to a revision and supplementation of previous notations. The updated notations, under the title “Shashmaqom,” were published in six books, edited by Fayzulla Karomatov (1966–1975). After Rajabi’s passing, a book titled “A Glance at Our Musical Heritage” was published, with his comments and corrections added to his earlier editions.

During this productive period, the demand for “Shashmaqom” books among students grew so high that these rare books became difficult to find and essential. UNESCO undertook the responsibility to fill this gap, leading to the release of a 632-page “Uzbek Maqoms: Shashmaqom” notation collection in 2007, condensed into a single book with a thin cover. While it is not the intention to criticize harshly, it must be noted that the poorly produced book did not meet expectations, even though the attempt was com-

mendable. A comprehensive effort of this scale, especially with a cultural treasure of the people, should be handled responsibly, with input from highly skilled specialists and multiple knowledgeable commission members.

Rushing such work only increases the risk of creating a mere “treasured imitation” of true culture. Notably, textbooks for students and university attendees were indeed published. In Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, numerous scientific and practical events took place. Under UNESCO’s patronage, works like “Maqoms” by the well-known maqom scholar Ishoq Rajabov (Tashkent, 2006), “Fakhriddin Sodiqov” by Professor Ravshan Yunusov (Tashkent, 2005), “Fergana-Tashkent Maqoms” by Oqilxon Ibrohimov (Tashkent, 2006), “Uzbek Notation” by Otanazar Matyoqubov, Rustam Boltayev, and Hamidulla Aminov (Tashkent, 2007), “Shixobi Musical” by Farogat Azimova (Dushanbe, 2005), and “Risala of Music” by Fazliddin Shahobov (Dushanbe, 2006) were presented, along with a variety of lecture materials.

UNESCO’s initiatives have greatly contributed to bringing our music culture to foreign countries and to showcasing it through tours in Europe’s prominent nations, thus allowing our classical music heritage to resonate on global stages. One illustrative story in popular circulation is that of master artist Turgun Alimatov, who initially declined UNESCO’s invitation to conduct a master class on his art globally. He reportedly accepted only after being offered substantial compensation, demonstrating his deep appreciation of his art.

In summary, speaking about the UNESCO projects related to “Shashmaqom – A Treasured Heritage of World Culture,” it should be noted that the biennial “Sharq Taronalari” festivals held in Samarkand, along with scientific and practical conferences, numerous projects, and publications, continue to foster the spread and respect of our maqom art worldwide.

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Contact: ilyosarabov@gmail.com