

Section 3. Theater

DOI:10.29013/EJA-25-4-96-100



THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESSES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF KARAKALPAK MUSICAL DRAMA ART

*Allanbaev Rudakiy*¹

¹ Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts and Culture

Cite: Allanbaev R. (2025). *The Evolutionary Processes in the Development of Karakalpak Musical Drama Art*. European Journal of Arts 2025, No 4. <https://doi.org/10.29013/EJA-25-4-96-100>

Abstract

The purpose of the research: is to analyze the historical evolution of Karakalpak musical drama art from its inception in the 1930s and 1940s to the present day. The study aims to trace the key stages of this genre's development, its transformation under various historical conditions, and its role in preserving and transmitting national cultural heritage.

Research methods: employed in this study are historical-chronological analysis and descriptive analysis. The paper examines the genre's development through different periods, including its initial amateur phase, the professionalization process with the arrival of GITIS graduates, the establishment of the "musical theatre" status, and its modern development during the years of independence.

Research results: show that Karakalpak musical drama has undergone a complex and continuous evolution. Initially, it faced challenges such as a lack of professional personnel and relied on folk traditions. Over time, it adopted professional theatrical methods, introduced new genres like opera and ballet, and was enriched by the contributions of professional composers, conductors, and actors. The post-independence era marked a new creative phase, with the restaging of classic works and the creation of new musical productions that synthesized national traditions with modern approaches.

Practical application: of this research lies in its potential to serve as a valuable resource for theatre scholars, directors, composers, and students of art. The study provides insights into the creative processes and historical context of the genre, offering a foundation for future research and the development of new theatrical projects. It also highlights the importance of expanding the national repertoire to ensure the continued vitality of Karakalpak musical theatre.

Keywords: Karakalpak musical drama, theatre, evolution, opera, ballet, dramaturgy, national culture

Introduction

The basis of the theme and its actuality: Musical drama art is one of the most frequently staged and historically oldest genres within Karakalpak theatre creativity. In particular, Karakalpak musical drama began to take shape during the 1930s and 1940s, under complex and challenging historical conditions. At that time, the demand and necessity for the musical drama genre were especially high, as people strove to represent their national values, historical events, traditions, and spiritual experiences on stage in both musical and dramatic forms. Consequently, the number of musical drama works gradually increased. However, during this period, the republic lacked sufficiently qualified and experienced performing artists in the field of musical drama. Therefore, numerous debates and questions emerged among playwrights, directors, and musicians concerning the directions in which musical drama should develop, which genre elements should be given greater emphasis, and which dramaturgical and musical forms ought to be utilized.

The object and subject of the theme: Musical Drama Performances Staged at the Karakalpak State Academic Musical Theater Named after Berdakh.

The aim and duties of the theme: This article discusses the achievements in the theatrical art of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the musical drama works staged there.

However, the history of the development of the musical drama genre demonstrates that it never remained stagnant; on the contrary, it continuously evolved and renewed itself. Creators of musical drama accumulated their experiences, mastered new stylistic approaches, and widely adopted contemporary methods and principles of stage art. Through this process, they sought ways to develop themes more profoundly, to introduce innovations in the art of directing, and to further refine stage visuals, costumes, and theatrical decorations. Each historical period left its distinctive imprint on the evolution of the musical drama genre. For instance, during the initial stages, the genre relied largely on oral folk traditions and customary musical elements, whereas later it became harmonized with the methods of professional theatre art. In the Soviet era, musical drama

embraced new dramaturgical and musical forms, expanded significantly, and secured one of the central positions in the repertoire of Karakalpak theatre. In the years of independence, new forms emerged based on the synthesis of modern technologies and the traditions of folk art.

The text uses a historical-chronological method to trace the development of Karakalpak musical drama. It analyzes the evolution of the genre by period, from its initial amateur stages to its professionalization and modern forms.

Key data points and sources include: The establishment of the Karakalpak State Theatre in 1930. The arrival of GITIS graduates in 1939, which is highlighted as a new chapter. Mention of specific playwrights and composers (S. Majitov, B. Tumanyan, N. Davqar-aev, V. Shafrannikov) and their works.

Analysis of the roles of different theatre professionals (directors, conductors, choir-masters, and instrumentalists) over time. Reference to the theatre being granted “musical theatre” status in 1989. Discussion of key productions staged in the post-independence era (e.g., *Tirsekler* in 2005, *Alpamis* in 2007).

A specific footnote referencing a scientific journal article for one of the historical facts presented. The author synthesizes these historical milestones to build a narrative of the genre’s growth, highlighting the challenges and successes at each stage.

After the Karakalpak State Theatre obtained official status in 1930, the demand for qualified and professional personnel in the field of theatre increased significantly. The earlier amateur style of performance – lacking in-depth knowledge and professional skills – had to be replaced by professional-level acting and directorial mastery. In this process, not only actors and directors but also composers and musicians played a crucial role. They ensured the quality of the musical component on stage and contributed to leaving a profound impression on the hearts of the audience. Since the 1930s in Uzbekistan was a period when radio, television, and cinema art had not yet developed, the theatre served not only as an artistic but also as an informational medium. Therefore, theatrical performances combined not only dramatic but also concert elements, exerting influence over wide layers of the audience.

One of the brightest representatives of this period was the renowned playwright S. Majitov, whose work “Bag‘dagul” was adorned with musical compositions created by composer Tumanian. Likewise, M. Daribaev’s work “Kóklen Batır” also achieved great success in the theatre’s repertoire. The arias and musical fragments from these works became highly popular among the Karakalpak people and were frequently performed in concert programs as well. Theatre artists demonstrated their creativity not only on the stage of performances but also at various cultural events, becoming an integral part of the cultural life of the people. This period laid the foundation for the professionalization of Karakalpak theatre, for the expansion of creative potential on stage, and for the synthesis of musical and dramatic art (“Oriental Art and Culture”. 2021).

During this period there was also a strong demand among the public for musical works. For this reason, more musical performances were staged. Among them were N. Davqaraev’s “Alpamis” (composer V. Shafrannikov), S. Khojaniyozov’s “Súymegenge súykelme” (composers O. Khalimov, J. Shamuratov), “Rawshan” (composer O. Khalimov), J. Aymurzaev’s “Aygul-Abat” (composer O. Khalimov), and A. Begimov and T. Allanazarov’s “Garip Ashiq” (composers J. Shamuratov, O. Khalimov). The music composed for these works continues to be performed by singers to this day. The invited composers – B. Tumanyan, O. Khalimov, and V. Shafrannikov – became closely acquainted with the lifestyle, national culture, and musical art of the Karakalpak people, and created immortal works that won a place in the hearts of the nation. The prominent bakhshi and later composer Japaq Shamuratov played a significant role in the success of these works. He would accompany the visiting composers on the *dutar*, introducing them to the classical music of the Karakalpak people. As a result, they created music that was close to the people and rich in national spirit (Allanbaev R. 2025).

Beginning in the 1950s, Karakalpak composers began to take an active role in creating music for stage productions. This period marked an important stage in the development of Karakalpak music and theatre. Talented composers such as A. Khayratdinov, Q. Turdiqulov, A. Sultonov, and S. Palvanov distinguished themselves with their unique

styles, bringing a distinctive spirit to each performance. By composing music for plays such as “Tiklengen tuw”, “Jaylawda Toy”, “Qızlar házili” and “Qádirdan doctor”, they made significant contributions to their success. Their creative approaches enriched the content of the performances and helped them resonate deeply with audiences. Each composer left his personal signature while further enriching Karakalpak musical heritage.

The 1980s marked the beginning of a new era for Uzbek and Karakalpak stage art. During this period, the transition from simple, small-scale productions to more complex, large-scale works requiring advanced stage technologies became possible. In particular, important steps were taken to enrich the stage with national opera and ballet, raising the musical taste of the people. It was in these very years that the Karakalpak stage underwent a historic turning point. In 1987, for the first time in the history of Karakalpak musical theatre, a monumental work in the national opera genre – Ajiniyoz, an opera by N. Mukhammadinov – was staged. This was not only a significant cultural event but also a milestone in the entire artistic life of the region. The opera Ajiniyoz opened a new direction and introduced a new genre in local theatre, marking the beginning of the formation of the classical opera tradition in Karakalpak art.

After independence in 1991, profound transformations began in the fields of culture and art. National values, oral folklore, classical heritage, and modern artistic forms were synthesized, rising to a new level. In particular, the art of musical theatre began to search for its new path of development during this period. Between 1991 and 2005, a number of major and significant stage productions were presented on the Karakalpak stage. Among them were the opera Ájiniyaz, inspired by Karakalpak national literature and history; Maysaramín Hiylesi, one of the brightest examples of Uzbek classical dramaturgy; Aleko, an opera created on the basis of Russian classics; Ayjamal, a ballet composed in the national spirit; and musical dramas such as Aqmaq Patsha. These works generated great interest among art enthusiasts; however, during this period, no entirely new national musical stage works were composed. This situation revealed a shortage of new drama-

turgy and compositional work in musical theatre, highlighting a creative hiatus in the genre (Allanbaev R., 2024).

The year 2005 marked a new turning point in the history of Karakalpak musical theatre. That year, the musical comedy *Tirsekler*, written by O. Abdirahmonov and directed by N. Ansatbayev, was successfully staged. Reflecting the everyday life, character, and social issues of the people, the play had originally been presented in the 1980s in the genre of drama. However, its reworking in 2005 as a musical comedy testified to the director's distinctive artistic vision. In the new interpretation of the play, special arias were composed to deepen the characters and enhance its dramatic strength. Composer Q. Zaretdinov created original melodies imbued with a national spirit for these musical parts. Thus, *Tirsekler* entered history as the first national musical drama created during the years of independence. One of the artistic achievements of the performance was the enthusiastic reception it received from audiences. The production combined comedically expressive character portrayals, folkloric imagery, and musical harmony with the sincerity of the actors' performances and new directorial approaches. Organic unity and artistic integrity dominated the play, distinguishing it as a unique work of art.

In 2007, the Karakalpak Musical Theatre enriched its repertoire with a new, large-scale project – the musical drama *Alpamis* by N. Davqaraev. This production was a landmark not only for theatre art but also for the entire cultural life of the nation, as it presented a renewed stage interpretation of *Alpomish*, one of the most ancient and beloved epic poems of the Karakalpak people. The immense artistic and ideological potential of the epic – with its themes of heroism, patriotism, justice, and love – demanded a distinctive artistic and musical style in performance. The task of musical dramaturgy for this production was both complex and highly responsible. Initially, music for the work had been composed by the talented composer V. Shafrannikov. However, as time passed, some sections and musical pieces were lost, creating serious challenges in realizing this grand project. At this critical stage, the distinguished composer N. Mukhammadinov,

who had made invaluable contributions to the development of Karakalpak music, was engaged in the project.

In 2008, the musical comedy “*Súymengege súykelme*” by S. Khojaniyazov was restaged and warmly received by audiences. K. Rakhmanov's musical drama “*Yar diydari*” and A. Oteniyazova's musical work “*Qızın arnamısıñ*” staged in 2009, also became part of the theater's repertoire. In 2010, P. Tilegenov's musical drama “*Hújdan*” was revived under the direction of then-chief director J. Sultanbayev. This work, which reflected the events of the stagnation period of the 1970s–1980s, penetrated deeply into the hearts of audiences with the immortal music created by composer S. Palvanov and aroused great interest among them. The play's theme addressed the complexities of contemporary life and issues of humanity, while its musical expression left a profound impact on spectators. Composers with considerable experience in musical theater sought to create works that resonated with the tastes of contemporary audiences by deeply understanding their demands. For this reason, K. Rakhmanov's musical dramas “*Laqqılar emlew xanada*” and “*Yar diydari*” employed a renewed style and an updated musical language. These productions distinguished themselves with their unique interpretations and musical approaches, successfully attracting modern audiences.

In recent years, under the leadership of chief conductor and composer Q. Zaretdinov, the Karakalpak Musical Theatre has presented a number of new large-scale works: in 2013, the opera *Tumaris* (libretto by I. Yusupov); in 2015, the ballet *Qırq Qız* (libretto by J. Turdimuratov); in 2016, the musical dramas *Berdaq* (by Q. Matmuratov) and *Edige* (by K. Rahmanov); in 2017, the musical drama “*Muhabbat samalı*” (by K. Rahmanov) as well as the opera “*Xalıq ushın*”. In 2019, the premiere of the opera “*Gulayim*” by the esteemed composer N. Mukhammadinov was successfully staged and received widespread acclaim (Allanbaev R., 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that the most pressing issue for contemporary theatre is enriching and expanding the national

repertoire to meet the demand for national dramaturgy. Pursuing this goal is essential for the further development of theatrical art and the elevation of our national culture. The theatre's present creative identity is directly and closely connected with its past experiences and earlier stages. Every modern and advanced theatre is strengthened through its traditional roots, the dedicated work of past artists, and their creative achievements.

Indeed, the artistic works currently being carried out – creating and staging new musical productions – are laying a solid foundation

for the future of the theatre. Where qualified specialists and a strong creative ensemble are present, works of deep meaning, rich spirituality, and contemporary relevance will continue to be created and presented to audiences. This process not only contributes to the growth of our national culture but also serves as a decisive factor in elevating theatre art to a new stage. Therefore, efforts aimed at producing and staging musical works at the highest level must be intensified, and new creative projects should be continuously supported.

References:

- “Oriental Art and Culture” Scientific-Methodical Journal – Volume 2. Issue 4 / December 2021
ISSN 2181-063X 319. URL: <http://oac.dsmi-qf.uz>
- Allanbaev R. “Qoraqalpoq kompozitorlari asarlarida musiqiy dramalar”. Вестник музыки и искусства – 5 (1). 2025.
- Allanbaev R. “Musikalı shıǵarmalardıń qaraqalpaq teatrında tutqan ornı”. Вестник музыки и искусства – 1 (4). 2024.
- Allanbaev R. “The role of working in voice ustida in the formation of musical theater actors”. Young scientist. 2019.

submitted 14.09.2025;
accepted for publication 28.09.2025;
published 28.11.2025
© Allanbaev R.
Contact: saubetpirnazarov92@gmail.com