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## TASNIF IS A REPRESENTATIVE GENRE OF MUGHAM OF AZERBAIJAN

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### Abstract

**The purpose of the research** is to reveal in the diachronic aspect some principles of development of the mugham genre *tasnif*. The research aims also to study some features of the musical language of *tasnifs* and investigate the role of singers and performers of folk instruments in the development of the mugham of Azerbaijan. **The research methodology** is aimed at using the methods of historical musicology and the application of certain methodological principles of ethnomusicology in the study of the musical language of *Tasnif*. **The scientific novelty of the research**. The article presents some new facts related to the creation and implementation of *tariffs*. **Conclusions**. *Tasnifs* are vocal-instrumental musical works with a certain point basis, melodic and formal structure. Outstanding Azerbaijani singers played an important role in the development of this genre. In the Soviet period, *tasnifs* created by singers were presented under the name of folk songs.

**Keywords:** mugham of Azerbaijan; *tasnif*; *dastgah*; *Bulbul*; *Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu*; *Rast*; *Shur*; *Segah*

### Introduction

The rapid development of the traditional music of Azerbaijan in the 21st century gave stimulus to its international recognition. UNESCO included the Mugham of Azerbaijan in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008. Preservation, living, transmission from generation to generation, teaching, research, and promotion of this art became one of important issues of our musical culture in the modern age.

### Purpose of the article

*Tasnif* is one of the genres of mugham art, and it attracts attention with its unique specifications. The purpose of our study is to reveal in the diachronic aspect some principles of development of the mugham genre – *tasnif*. The research also aims to study some features of the musical language of *tasnifs* and investigate the role of singers and folk instrument performers in the development of the Azerbaijani mugham.

### Recent research and publications analysis

Singers and performers of folk instruments played a great role in the development of the mugham of Azerbaijan. We also know from the history of our musical art that many of our singers and instrumental performers were also creative artists, creators of many tasnifs, lyrical songs, mughams, and zarbi-mughams. Performance and creativity in song art are related concepts.

The prominent singer Bulbul, who made great contributions to the development of the musical culture of Azerbaijan, highlighted the role of songsters in the art of music in his articles. He wrote about this: "Singers skillfully performed Azerbaijani mughams and empirically created an original school of singing that passed from century to century" (Bülbul, 1968, p. 82).

Besides being mugham singers, the songsters have left a mark in the history of music as creators of new versions of mughams. At the same time, along with the tasnifs they inherited, they created new tasnifs and influenced the development of the genre.

Professor Ramiz Zohrabov writes about this: "For a professional folk artist, the performance is always considered personal creativity. High talent, rich imagination, and good taste are very important for this kind of performer. Even some songsters and musicians with bright talent create new traditions, original styles, and even schools within the framework of the laws necessary for this art..." (Zöhrabov, 2013, p. 18).

### Main research material

The teaching of mugham art was carried out for centuries based on oral traditions, the master-pupil basis, and the transfer of knowledge preserved in memory from generation to generation. The tradition of teaching orally, based on memory, is continued even today. This is one of the ways of keeping the art of singing alive. This aspect also applies to the performers of folk musical instruments. Thus, mughams, zarbi-mughams, and tasnifs that form the main part of the repertoire of both songsters, and performers of folk musical instruments are appropriated by memory voicing and transmission.

Based on the traditions rooted in oral traditional music culture, the development of creative freedom is a way of crafting that came to us from ancient times. Even today, it is remarkable that every performer obtains new creative achievements based on his knowledge, musical sense, and imagination.

In the modern era, when information technologies are developing, in the situation of the application of new methods in teaching, of course, the use of audio recordings, music sheets, and teaching means are important conditions in the art of songsters, along with oral teaching methods in songsters art. From this point of view, it is necessary to write new teaching aids to expand the knowledge of students, introduce them to the performance traditions of our classical singers, and improve the art of performance.

Mugham dastgahs are large-scale series of structured works aroused from the connection of various genres. It includes all genres related to mugham – sections of

mugham, tasnif, and zarbi-mughams. However, mugham sections, zarbi-mughams, and tasnifs are related to vocal-instrumental, and colors belong to the instrumental type of music.

It is clear that the vocal-instrumental and instrumental style of performance is widespread in mugham art. Vocal-instrumental mugham dastgahs are created by playing singers and folk instruments. The composition of the ensemble accompanying the singer may be different: from the trio of tar, kamancha, and gaval to multi-volume compositions featuring various instruments. Such performance compositions are also used during the performance of small mughams, zarbi-mughams, and tasnifs.

Tasnif performance is of special importance in songster art. Tasnif is one of the genres of mugham art, and it attracts attention with its unique specifications. Tasnifs are performed both independently and within the instrument. In each case, tasnifs differ in performance specifications and application aspects. The appropriate mugham section is necessarily played at the beginning, middle, or end of the tasnif during an independent performance.

Tasnifs have several duties within the Dastgah. Before bardasht or instead of bardasht, it is possible to perform a tasnif based on its structural features, after the mugham sections; by performing the tasnif, you can conclude that section and move to the next section. The mugham dastgah can be concluded with a tasnif. In all the mentioned cases, the performed tasnifs should be coordinated with the specifications of that part of the mugham.

Tasnifs are vocal-instrumental musical works with a certain magam basis, melodic, and form structure. The tasnifs are closely related to the mugham sections, adopting their name, and are related to the specifications of the magam and melodic structure. In this regard, for example, if Rast tasnifs generally mean tasnifs based on the Rast mugham, they are divided into types such as Maya Rast tasnif, Vilayati tasnif, and Arak tasnif related to any section, and they are represented by numerous examples.

While examining the main aspects of the tasnif performance, we consider appropriate grouping them by mugham families.

Mugham family means a set of mugham dastgahs, small volume mughams, zarbi-mughams, tasnif, and colors based on the same magam. In the mugham performance, three main mugham families, such as Rast, Shur, Segah occupy a large place and differ in their size. These mugham families included the main mugham dastgahs and their various types, examples with specific genre specifications. *Chahargah*, *Bayati-Shiraz*, *Shustar*, and *Humayun* were formed in one type as the main mughams. Several zarbi-mughams, numerous tasnifs, and colors related to them were also created. These can also be considered Mugham families formed according to magam basis. From this point of view, we have tried to determine the role of tasnifs in mugham instruments and analyze their performance specifications.

In traditional music creativity, mugham dastgahs, small mughams, zarbi mughams, tasnifs, and works related to the genres of lyrical folk songs are considered to be the product of songster's creativity. Professor Ramiz Zohrabov writes about this: "The only performer word is less for such kind of artists; meanwhile they are also creative artists. It is not accidental that both the art of performance and composition are organically combined and intertwined in their creativity..." (Zöhrabov, 2013, p. 18). Ex-

plaining his opinion, R. Zohrabov writes that every singer changes the same mugham dastgah or its section during the performance with certain additions and reductions, so, he participates in this process as a creative artist. At the same time, the tasnif creativity of songsters is also very interesting. Many tasnifs were created in the singer's work. While songsters perform mugham dastgahs, they choose the tasnif according to their wishes.

Songsters and performers of folk instruments actively participated in the creation and preservation of the rich musical heritage of Azerbaijan. Prominent songsters – Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu, Seyid Shushinski, Khan Shushinski, Gulu Askarov, Abulfat Aliyev, Islam Rzayev, Arif Babayev, Alibaba Mammadov, and others created many tasnifs. Songsters accept the concept of tasnif in a broader sense and use folk songs, composer's songs, and sometimes love songs as tasnifs aside from classical tasnifs. This is only related to the creative process; it comes from the taste of the performers and the demand of the audience.

The recording has a particularly important essence in Azerbaijani music. The performances of Azerbaijani songsters are engraved on most of the gramophone shafts of the beginning of the 20th century, released by recording companies such as Ekstrafon, Sport-Rekord, Pate, and other foreign recording companies stored in various archives of the republic. The legacy of the recordings widespread since the II half of the twentieth century, especially at the beginning of the 21st century. Also, the realization of note writings of mughams attracts attention as one of the important issues. The recording of mughams on CD-DVD discs with modern technical means and the publication of music sheets ensure their preservation and transmission to future generations with all their richness.

Albums containing CDs and DVDs, such as *Garabagh singers*, *Mugham encyclopedia*, *Songsters of Azerbaijan*, *Azerbaijani mugam*, also numerous discs containing recordings of individual songsters, are important means of preserving our mughams and classifications published by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation.

It can be said that the most extensive knowledge about the creative heritage of songsters who lived and created for more than a century, specifications of performance, mugham performance of that time, instruments included in the repertoire of songsters, zarbi-mughams, tasnifs, colors, and folk songs can be obtained through the examination of audio recordings. Today, we have the opportunity to listen to the recordings of, for example, Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu, Kechachioghlu Mahammad, and the classical singers of that time at the beginning of the 20th century, and get an impression of their performance, voice, improvisation, and transition ways, and compare it with the specifications of modern performance of songsters.

The repertoire of the singers of that time was reflected in the gramophone shafts. Mughams, zarbi-mughams, and tasnifs are widely represented. The list of recordings of Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu, Mahammad Kechachioghlu, Mashadi Mammad Farzaliyev, Islam Abdullayev, Alasgar Abdullayev, Majid Behbudov, Gasim Abdullayev, Seyid Shushinski, and many other songsters contain several mughams and tasnifs that were widespread examples in the performance practice of that time.

In addition to examples of songsters singing solo, accompanied by an instrumental ensemble, the gramophone records also reflect the joint singing of songsters that

is called a chorus in those recordings: *Khuraman tasnifi*, *Tello*, *Turkish choir*, *Gula-gula*, *Nation tasnifi*, *March of the Oppressed*, "Kabin choir" recorded on a shaft in a joint performance of Gasim Abdullayev, Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu, Mashadi Mammad Farzaliyev, also *Bisutun tasnifi*, *Our Soltan tasnifi* were recorded on a shaft in a joint performance of Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu and Seyid Shushinski.

As the volume of the first gramophone shafts was small, it contained only 2-3 minutes of recording. Therefore, the songsters were content with reading one mugham section and one tasnif on the gramophone shafts. For this reason, it is possible to obtain recordings of the samples of numerous tasnifs on gramophone shafts.

Based on listening to their recordings, one gets an impression of how the same mugham or tasnif was sung by different songsters in different periods. This is the method that paves the way for the development of mugham. Every songster should constantly improve the art, search for new ways, and enrich their knowledge. The most appropriate way to do this is to listen to the recordings of master singers, learn their performance style and apply it in practice, and in this way enrich own performance style with a new method.

For many of our master songsters, listening and obtaining the recordings is a real school of craftsmanship. Thus, it is known from the biographies of some songsters that their contact with mugham began by listening to gramophone shafts (or recordings played on radio and television). Even during the years of study and after commencement to independent creativity, listening to the recordings of master songsters and benefiting from them, further improving the performance gave good results. An important stage in the development of songster art is related to the name Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu.

Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu acted at the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. He was a student of the Garabagh mugham performance school and grew up in Shusha city, which is called the "Conservatory of the Caucasus". His fame spread to all parts of Azerbaijan gradually, and beyond the borders of our country, he became known abroad – in Russia, Iran, Germany, and other countries.

Recording companies operating at the beginning of the 20th century were the first to record the voice of Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu, and later of other singers, on gramophone shafts and released their catalog.

The tasnif genre had a special place in the creativity of Jabbar Garyaghdioghlu. From them we can mention *Mahur tasnif*, *Dashti tasnif*, *Mani tasnif*, *Bayan Oldu tasnif*, *Anvar Bay tasnif*, *Garghamisham tasnif*, *Khumar tasnif*, *Bisutun tasnif*, *Majnun tasnif*.

These samples are called tasnifs in gramophone shafts. Usually, the name of the tasnifs corresponds to the name of the mugham sections. Here we can only mention the accordance of Mahur, Dashti, and Mani tasnifs with mugham names, also other tasnif names are shown as such based on the content. This may also be related to the fact that the songsters also called the lyrical folk songs they sang among the mugham sections.

Since several tasnifs related to the name of the same mugham section are spread in musical practice, the songsters gave them specific names to distinguish the most loved and remembered tasnifs. From this point of view, the tasnifs named Bayan Oldu, Anvar Bay, Ga Even during the years of study and after commencement to indepen-

dent creativity, listening to the recordings of master songsters and benefiting from them, further improving the performance gave good results, *Khumar*, *Bisutun*, *Majnun* are major. These are usually *tasnif* names that are often repeated in the catalog of gramophone shafts and the repertoire of other songsters.

It should be noted that in the Soviet period, the *tasnifs* created by songsters were presented under the name of folk songs. In this sense, it is difficult to clarify who owns many classifications. Of course, even if we don't know the authors of the classifications from ancient times, their variants have been passed down from generation to generation through memory. In the 21st century, the development of sound recording techniques allows identifying of the authors and performers of those classifications. Reviewing the classifications used in the Azerbaijani *mugham* instruments reveals the diversity of their musical content, allowing us to explore the unique structural features and study the performance issues related to them. Of course, classifications have an important essence in the art of singing. For many years, the *tasnifs* created by the prominent songsters of Azerbaijan have entered the musical experience in various interpretations of performance and live in the memories even today. Songsters play a great role in preserving all this and passing it on from generation to generation. At the same time, it is very important to protect the *tasnifs* through audio and musical notes. All these are the tools that facilitate the promotion of Azerbaijani musical heritage to the world.

### Conclusions

Summarizing, we note that one of the genres of *mugham* art – *tasnif* attracts attention with its unique specifications. The *tasnifs* are closely related to the *mugham* sections and their melodic structure. Songsters and performers of folk instruments actively participated in the creation and preservation of *tasnifs*. Every singer changes the same *mugham dastgah* or its section during the performance with certain additions and reductions, so, he participates in this process as a creative artist. Many *tasnifs* were created in the singer's work. While songsters perform *mugham dastgahs*, they choose the *tasnif* according to their wishes. An important stage in the development of songster art is related to the name Jabbar Garyaghdiohlu. In the Soviet period, the *tasnifs* created by songsters were presented under the name of folk songs.

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## ТАСНІФ ЯК ПРЕДСТАВНИК ЖАНРУ МУГАМУ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНУ

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### Анотація

**Мета дослідження** – розкрити в діяхронічному аспекті деякі принципи розвитку мугамного жанру тасніф. Дослідження спрямоване також на вивчення особливостей музичної мови тасніфів і визначення ролі співаків і виконавців на народних інструментах у розвитку мугаму Азербайджану. **Методологія дослідження** спрямована на використання методів історичного музикознавства та застосування окремих методологічних принципів етномузикології у вивченні музичної мови тасніфів. **Наукова новизна дослідження**. У статті запропоновано деякі нові факти, пов'язані зі створенням та виконанням тасніфів. **Висновки**. Тасніфи – це вокально-інструментальні музичні твори з певною точковою основою, мелодичною і формальною будовою. Важливу роль у розвитку цього жанру відіграли видатні азербайджанські співаки. У радянський період тасніфи, створені співаками, подавалися під назвою народної пісні.

**Ключові слова:** мугам Азербайджану; тасніф; дастгах; Бюльбюль; Джаббар Гарягдіоглу; «Раст»; «Шур»; «Сега»

