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Traditional musical culture of kazakhstan at the turn of the centuries

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Abstract

This article examines the song tradition of the northern region of Central Kazakhstan at the turn of 20th century. In the course of this study songs of Nurzhan Naushabayev were closely observed, were identified their stylistic features and rhythmic patterns. As a result, being an example for the younger generation, the above-mentioned composers motivated many performers and creative personalities to actively develop their musical material. In conclusion, the influence of written culture and Eastern poetry played a major role in the formation

of artistic taste of Nurzhan and became a style distinctive feature that can be traced in his works.

Keywords: Kazakh Traditional Music, Musical Culture, Composer.

La cultura musical tradicional de Kazajstán a finales de los siglos

Resumen

Este artículo examina la tradición de la canción de la región norte de Kazajstán Central a principios del siglo XX. En el curso de este estudio, las canciones de Nurzhan Naushabayev fueron observadas de cerca, se identificaron sus características estilísticas y patrones rítmicos. Como resultado, siendo un ejemplo para la generación más joven, los compositores mencionados motivaron a muchos artistas y personalidades creativas a desarrollar activamente su material musical. En conclusión, la influencia de la cultura escrita y la poesía oriental desempeñaron un papel importante en la formación del gusto artístico de Nurzhan y se convirtió en un rasgo distintivo del estilo que se puede rastrear en sus obras.

Palabras clave: música tradicional kazaja, cultura musical, compositor.

1. INTRODUCTION

What holds communities together and sustains them is the culture of that community itself. Communities are responsible for protecting their own cultures and transferring them to future generations, and thus they struggle to achieve both present and future within a social collectivity possessing the spirit of unity (Özdek, 2015). An important part of all identity formation is the making of

boundaries; music can be used to draw boundaries between groups, thereby shaping and strengthening social identities. Music may provide social cohesion; members can, despite their differences, unite around common expressive music practices (Erol, 2012). Music and other areas of the arts are a product of the surrounding world in response to their own historical context (Habecker, 2018).

The authenticity and uniqueness of the musical culture of any ethnic group consist of a number of features that have been able to form over a long historical path. In this regard, the Kazakh musical culture is no exception. Having passed a long stage of formation, today it is an organic whole, which includes the established traditions. The Kazakh song art, for example, differs not only in a variety of performances, but also in regional features which are presented by several professional schools among which the largest and most studied are: West Kazakhstan, Sary-Arka (the Central and Northern part of Kazakhstan), Kyzylorda (the southern part of Kazakhstan) and Zhetysu (East region).

Identity in most of these cases seems to be about collective self-understanding as represented by various characteristics, activities, and customs, including music. Musical performance provides the opportunity for communities sharing an identity to see themselves in action and to imagine others who might share the same style of performance. Music has multiple functions; it can allow people to understand themselves, form and maintain social groups, engage in emotional communication, and mobilize for political purposes, among

other functions. Music can be used as a symbolic identifier of a social group, both by the group's members, but also by the surroundings (its non-members) (Lidskog 2016). Folk music, from the birth of the idea of the nation-state, has been one means of expressive culture used to generate, define, and reinforce national identity (Morrison, 2003).

2. METHODOLOGY

During the study all available material was comprehensively observed: a significant number of musicological, philological, historical, ethnographic, including published collections of Kazakh traditional songs and other works. The musical transcription of the musical folklore of Zatajevich 1000 songs of the Kazakh people and Naushabayev's songs recorded and notated by the author during expedition trip are especially valuable among them. An important contribution to historical and philological foundations of the study are the works of Levshin, as well as works of Kazakh scholars Zhubanov and others. The objectives of the present study are:

- 1) Study of the song traditions of the Northern region of the Central Kazakhstan on the example of works of folk professional composer Naushabayev;

- 2) Study of genre and thematic classification of musical and poetic heritage of N. Naushabayev;

3) Identification of stylistic features and rhythmic foundations of the songs, the ways they were composed;

4) Defining the role of N. Naushabayev in the history of Kazakh musical culture.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Song tradition of the Northern region of Central Kazakhstan, as part of the musical culture of Sary-Arka

Zatayevich, a prominent Kazakh folklorist is one of the first who drew attention to the distinctive features of the songs of Central Kazakhstan or Sary-Arka. It is known that the researcher collected and recorded about 2,300 folk songs and instrumental compositions – Kyuis. As a result, on the basis of the collected material two fundamental collections were published: 1000 songs of the Kazakh people in 1925 and 500 Kazakh songs and kyuis in 1931. Up to this day these books are valuable resources of the Kazakh musical folklore, eminent rarity. Collections of Alexander Zatayevich embody a rich source of musical samples of the Northern region of Kazakhstan, important information about the performers and their artistic portraits that is so essential for recreation of the historical situation of the past period (beginning of the 20th century) and the region. It was in the first half of the 20th century, that the researcher began to collect folklore.

In order to study the Northern region of Central Kazakhstan, we addressed the musical notes of the Turgay region songs contained in the collection of Zatajevich's 1000 songs of the Kazakh people. The songs of Kostanay and Turgay regions (from the beginning of the 20th century) were given the following characteristics, the outstanding beauty and richness of the songs of Kostanay group, softness and heartfelt warmth, referring to Turgay songs:

It was they, recorded by me at the beginning of my collecting activities (in the winter of 1920-1921), that were actually the first significant gold strike, which instigated me to delve with exceptional energy into the depth of the initiated developments hoping to reveal more and more new gems (Zatajevich, 2004: 12).

Indeed, the songs of this region can be recognized by the distinctive features of performance: the instrumental dombra accompaniment, being in accordance with kyui-shertpe tradition, and both declamatory and cantilena intonations inherent with the melodies. In terms of the study objectives, we examine the songs of Turgay region only and provide an example of short analytical remarks of two songs of this region. The collection 1000 songs of the Kazakh people comprise only 62 Torgay songs (no. 788-850). Relying on the existing musical notes, the following genre systematization of the songs was made.

As can be seen, among the songs of Turgay region, the majority are songs of lyrical content and are of exceptional interest from the view of their artistic value. Each of them is individual. Let us consider

no. 804 Khalálim and no. 810 Kyzyl tilim. This choice is motivated, first of all, by that they are included to the category of folk professional songs by content, structure, form and mode/tonality pattern. In addition, in these samples there are pronounced stereotypes of author tunes, inherent to this region. They contain a prototype and genre designations of the Kazakh lyrical song (Kuzembayeva, 2006). No. 804 Khalálim. This song belongs by its style to Sary-Arka folk professional singing school. This is evidenced by the presence of characteristic features for the songs of Turgay region:

It is a form of chant: solo + chorus; a wide range – the song is written in the ninth interval; base pitches: I-V-IV-V-I; accentuation on the top I degree: a) its long recitation; b) its chanting;) successive proceeding to the top I degree (V-VI-VII-I) or AMF (Akyn melodic formula) (Elemanova, 2000); then, leaps to fourth, fifth; the variability of the metre; occasional syncopations; dotted notes; a change of pace. Since the poetic text of this poem is not recorded by Zatajevich, one more important feature follows from the above list – it is the asynchrony of the verse and the melody. The solo part (C-dur) consists of two poetic lines and thus forms one stanza (1-11 bars). This melody interval contains one musical idea, and it is clearly manifested. The main intonation here is a repetition of the upper I degree and its per-second chanting I-VII-I-II-I.

Long repetition of the upper degree gives an invocatory and solemn tone to the chant. As a completion and regular upper base pitch amplification, there is a positive addition to the completed stanza (12-

13 - beginning of 14 bar). The solo and the chant are joined together in a wide leap from the upper I degree (C of the two-line octave) to the II degree (D of the one-line octave). Then, as a lyrical digression, comes to contrast chorus, which represents a lower register chanting. In general, the song is characterized by melodic and intonation development and a wide range.

No. 810 Kyzyl tilim. Ehe poetic text of this song, unfortunately, was not recorded by the ethnographer. In terms of artistic means of expression, peculiar for the songs of oral and professional composers, this melody can be classified into this category. Evidence of this is the form of the chant: solo + chorus; wide range, the song is written in the octave; base pitches: steady degrees, II degree. I and V degrees are more distinguished; accentuation on the upper degree: a) long duration of the sound; b) its chanting; C) leap to the I degree; occasional leaps to fourth, sixth; the variability of the metre; a change of pace. It should be noted that there is the variability of the fifth ratio in the melody: I and V degrees (A-dur) contrast to each other, which is typical for the Kazakh song. The base pitch is A, at the same time V degree interacts with it. The character of the song is lyrical, peaceful, and gentle.

The solo part of the melody is a repeated half-stanza. This is evidenced by the content of the solo: it is repeated twice. The 1st musical line originates from the invocatory forth leap from the V degree to the upper I degree. Then a long consisted tone of the pitch. This initial intonation, as is known, is typical for Arka folk-professional songs. The further development of the melody is based on

the gradual proceed to the upper V degree and ends with a leap from the III to the V degree. 2nd music line is less dynamic compared to the 1st line. Its development is based on the movement of the melody down to the V stage. The refrain of the song is a summary of the entire chant. The solo part was preceded by a fourth leap, and it is filled in the refrain, i.e. it has rising sound: V – VI – VII – I. The third stage is then chanted. And in the retrograde downward movement, from I to V degree: I – VII – VI - V ends the whole chant.

From a brief analysis of the songs considered, it should be noted that they are characterized by the following: the form of the melody: solo + chorus; base pitches of I-V and II degrees; fourth and fifth leaps; wide range; variability of meters. Zataevich in the preface to his collection notes the difficulties he faced recording these songs: through repeated listening to the song I was trying to trace. Thanks to the work of Zataevich, we familiarized ourselves with the songs of the Turgay region and gained an idea about them. In addition, they were recorded by the researcher at the beginning of the 20th century, at a time when the songs of representatives of national and professional art, outstanding Kazakh oral and professional composers of the tradition of Sary-Arka – Birzhan, Akhan, Zhayau-Musa, Madi, Ybyray, Aset, Abai, etc. – were still preserved and performed in the public environment.

Over the years, the developed style in their artistic activity reached its peak in the 19th century and later became widespread throughout the territory of Central Kazakhstan. Being an example for

the younger generation, the above-mentioned composers motivated many performers and creative personalities to actively develop their musical material, to develop and grow productively as a professional in the field of improvisation and writing. Thus, the foundations laid in the song tradition of Sary-Arka continued to improve. For example, N. Naushabayev is a representative sample of the observed process.

3.2. N. Naushabayev as a folk-professional composer of the early 20th century

Nurzhan (Nurmukhambet) Naushabayev (1856-1919) is a Kazakh poet and oral professional composer of the late 19th early 20th centuries, who is a contemporary of Birzhan, Akhan, Madi and Abai. This is a unique personality that deserves academic understanding and study. For his time, he was one of the most educated and gifted people, he was well-known in the public environment not only as a poet, but also as a composer and performer. His works were popular and pressing. Grateful memory of admirers of N. Naushabayev preserved his name and songs, nazyms (work of a philosophical nature, the form of Oriental poetry), termes, edifying words and verses that have now acquired a classical value.

N. Naushabayev is one of the brightest followers and successor of the tradition of the Sal-seri (its specific features are noted by (Tursunov, 1999). In the traditional culture of the Kazakhs Sal and Seri are representatives of musical and poetic art, that were many-sided personalities, they could be a poet and an improviser, a composer, a singer, an artist at the same time. They had a quaint behavioral pattern

and chose bright clothes (Tursunov, 1999). Such diversity of the same person was noted by the Harvard University Professor Lord: “Singer, performer, composer and poet are one under different aspects but at the same time” (Lord, 1976: 20).

From the biography we know that his artistic taste was formed among the admirers of Kazakh folklore, where they reverently treated oral traditions and songs (the grandmother was telling him old legends, made poems; the uncle taught him songs and how to perform on *dombra*). Closer to adulthood, Nurzhan reaches a fairly good level in songwriting and free improvisation in verbal competitions. During his lifetime, Islamic faith was widely spread on the territory of Kazakhstan and religious education was considered the most important one. Naushabayev received his initial education from the aul mullah, having studied with him for four years. In 1872 he entered the madrasah of Wasif in Troitsk. Nurzhan aspired to self-development and believed that he had lack of knowledge:

“I wish I could drink from the ocean of knowledge” (Abraham, 2010: 17). And at the end of the study in madrasah, he decided to learn ancient Arabic, Persian, Chagatai languages on his own, while actively studying Oriental literature. At the same time, he tries to write the first poetic works, develops abilities in the field of *akyn* improvisation (*akyn* - folk poet improviser and singer in Turkic speaking peoples) and songwriting.

Nurzhan's creative activity flourished at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries. By that time, he had mastered the art of poetic improvisation. His terms, nazyms, poems, edifying songs and lyrical songs were appearing on quick succession. In 1903, within his lifetime, was published his book *Mañzumat Kazakııa* (Kazakh poems) in St. Petersburg. In 1908 and 1910, the following Nurzhan's collections of poems were published in Kazan (Nurgaliyev, & Ashymov, 1991).

By this period Nurzhan Naushabayev had become already known, his works had gained wide popularity and demand in a public environment. The first researchers of his works also appeared at that time. In 1911, the journal *Aikap* (no. 3) published first responses about his book *Alash* in the article named *Published new books*. In 1928 journal *Zhańa ádebiet* published Bartoǵauly's article *Nurzhan akyn* (Bartoǵauly, 1928). In 1940 in the book *Songs of steppes*. The anthology of Kazakh literature was written a brief note about N. Naushabayev *Nurzhan Naushabayev is an Akyn, who lived in the Kostanay region in the late 19th – early 20th century*. Most of his songs were printed during his lifetime in the Kazan printing house in the old Arabic alphabet (Sobolev, 1940).

Many of the poet's works are in the Eastern style of didactic genres. In this regard, the words of S. Mukanov should be mentioned: "Nurzhan is certainly a talented akyn... Nurzhan preferred a written record of his works than their oral transmission. The previous akyns who wrote in Chagatai language must have been an example to him"

(Mukanov, 1950: 10). Famous Kazakh writer Magauin in his book *Kobyz and spear* notes that the Kazakh akyns from early 20th century were mostly improvisers and are characterized by the movement “from region to region, where they sang at festivals and celebrations” (Magauin, 2003: 12).

He reveals the similarity of akyns’ creative works with the medieval minstrelsy. In fact, wandering was a distinct feature not only of minstrels, but of troubadours and trouveurs as well. For example, Mary Abraham in her work gives the following description: “The troubadours were no wandering musicians, casually improvising their songs as they strolled from town to town, but trained artists who lovingly crafted their songs to please and woo their listeners” (Abraham, 2010).

4. CONCLUSION

Songs of Nurzhan Naushabayev are lyrically-melodious, concise and moderate. They are imbued with religious principle and philosophically deepened. A distinctive feature of his style was the implementation of the spiritual atmosphere and contemplation, as well as following the genres and forms of written Oriental poetry. Along with this, he continues to develop the traditions of *Tolgau* and *Terme* and bring a new genre to them – *Nazym*. His artistic personality organically combines akyn-improviser, vocal performer, and folk professional composer. He was an intelligent, educated and deeply

spiritual personality, all these qualities were reflected in his work and became a defining feature of his style, as the term author's style is a manifestation of the character of a creative personality, it "serves for creator's recognition" (Nazaikinskiy, 2003: 19).

In addition, the musical and stylistic features of the composer combine the traditions of Arka songs and Western folk professional songs. Since Kostanay region is located next to the neighboring regions of Western Kazakhstan, the musical outline of some works of Nurzhan reflects the intonation of the Mangystau recitative tradition. At the same time, instrumental accompaniment and its patterns correspond to Arka style. The influence of written culture and Eastern poetry played a major role in the formation of artistic taste of Nurzhan and became a style distinctive feature that can be traced in his works.

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