

VARIABILITY

IN AZERBAIJANI MUGHAM MUSIC: A STUDY EDUCATIONAL OF VOCAL AND NOTATIONAL DYNAMICS

VARIABILIDAD EN LA MÚSICA MUGHAM AZERBAIYANA: UN ESTUDIO EDUCATIVO DE LA DINÁMICA VOCAL Y DE NOTACIÓNAhsan Allahverdi Ahmadov ¹E-mail: ehsen.ehmedov@gmail.comORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-6521-1015>¹ Baku Choreographic Academy, Azerbaijan.

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an educational inquiry into the pedagogical aspects of Azerbaijani mugham music, with an emphasis on its variability and instructional implications. The research assesses contemporary scholarly discussions and pedagogical approaches to mugham, focusing on how these inform current teaching methodologies. The study investigates the pedagogical potential of vocal and notational forms of Azerbaijani mugham, drawing from a historical analysis of gramophone records and the impact of evolving sound recording technologies on music education. By examining the vocal interpretations by Azerbaijani artists and the written compositions documented by composers and musicologists, the article provides an educational framework for understanding the melodic nuances of mugham. It also explores how these nuances can be integrated into music curricula to enrich students' appreciation of cultural diversity and musical expression. The findings emphasize the importance of melodic variation in teaching mugham, underscoring its role in fostering both the form's coherence and its rich variety, thereby enhancing the educational experience in the study of world music traditions.

Keywords: Performance Characteristics, Comparative Analysis, Gramophone Records, Musical Notations, Melodic Variation.

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta una investigación educativa sobre los aspectos pedagógicos de la música mugham azerbaiyana, con énfasis en su variabilidad e implicaciones didácticas. La investigación evalúa los debates académicos contemporáneos y los enfoques pedagógicos sobre el mugham, centrándose en cómo estos informan las metodologías de enseñanza actuales. El estudio investiga el potencial pedagógico de las formas vocales y de notación del mugham azerbaiyano, basándose en un análisis histórico de los discos de gramófono y el impacto de las tecnologías de grabación de sonido en evolución en la educación musical. Al examinar las interpretaciones vocales de los artistas azerbaiyanos y las composiciones escritas documentadas por compositores y musicólogos, el artículo proporciona un marco educativo para comprender los matices melódicos del mugham. También explora cómo estos matices pueden integrarse en los programas de música para enriquecer la apreciación de los estudiantes de la diversidad cultural y la expresión musical. Los hallazgos enfatizan la importancia de la variación melódica en la enseñanza del mugham, subrayando su papel en el fomento tanto de la coherencia de la forma como de su rica variedad, mejorando así la experiencia educativa en el estudio de las tradiciones musicales del mundo.

Palabras clave: Características de interpretación, Análisis comparativo, Discos de gramófono, Notaciones musicales, Variación melódica.

INTRODUCTION

The Azerbaijani mugham art, within the context of the oral tradition of professional music among Eastern peoples, occupies a distinctive place and contributes significantly to the enrichment of the mugham heritage. The dissemination and research of Azerbaijani mugham, included in UNESCO's list of "Intangible Cultural Heritage," have consistently garnered attention.

Particularly in the 21st century, numerous remarkable initiatives undertaken by the Azerbaijani government for the preservation, development, and global promotion of mugham stand as notable examples. The "Mugham World" International Mugham Festival, organized under the auspices and coordination of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, stands out as one of the most significant endeavors in this regard. This festival, which brings together mugham-makam performers and musicologists-scholars from many countries, has opened new chapters in the field of mugham heritage through video recordings of its concert performances.

The exploration of performance variations within the realm of mugham art underscores the profound importance of both video and audio recordings, as well as musical notations. This esteemed heritage, in all its richness, serves as a remarkable tapestry that interweaves ancient traditions, distinctive performance styles, and a kaleidoscope of mugham genres.

Throughout the centuries, mugham art, which traces its origins back to the Middle Ages, has seen the development of rigorous and methodical principles. These principles, integral to the creative endeavors of mugham performers, have been carefully transmitted from master to apprentice, often relying on the faculty of memory to bridge the generations (Mammadov, 1981).

Over the expanse of time, the custodians of mugham, both practitioners and diligent researchers, have ardently contributed to the embellishment of this art form. Renowned musicologists, whose names are etched into the annals of cultural history (Ambrazevičius, 2023), have eternally enriched the legacy of mugham by crafting its theoretical foundations within the pages of their scholarly treatises (Burcet, 2017; Pérez-Aldeguer, 2013; Estruch et al., 2007).

However, the primary characteristic of mugham lies in its creation through the artistry of performance, rooted in oral traditions. The preservation and conservation of various variants of mugham modes, compositions, classifications, and hues, as well as other genre exemplars related to mugham, have been made possible through the process of oral transmission during live performances (Istvanek et

al., 2023; Clark & Arthur, 2022). Nonetheless, to evaluate the voices of vocalists, their performance expertise, and the finesse of accompanying ensembles, it remains crucial to listen to them, document their performances, and engage in research (Bulbul, 1968).

Over the years, mugham modes, diminutive mugham pieces, rhythmic mugham forms, classifications, hues, and lyrical folk songs performed by vocalists and mugham ensembles have been transcribed onto gramophone records, magnetic tape, CD-DVD discs, and musical notations. These recorded expressions of mugham have been transformed into cultural treasures that enrich the heritage of the people. All of these endeavors play a significant role in preserving mugham traditions and passing them on to future generations. Moreover, written records and notations serve a pivotal role in the study of mugham art. These materials, reflecting interpretations of mugham performance by various artists from different eras, provide an opportunity to trace the development history of mugham and its performance variations.

In the context of researching the issues of variability in mugham, several directions manifest themselves in the conduct of comparative analyses. Among these, research based on written texts, vocal recordings, and musical notations of mugham compositions, comparative studies of mugham art across different regions (Bresler, 2021; Weiß et al., 2021), and the investigation of performance variants of individual mugham compositions are proposed as relevant areas of inquiry (Baugh & Conway, 2024; Edelman, 2020; Abramo & Campbell, 2019).

Gramophone records and musical notations play a significant role in the exploration of performance variants of mugham and *təsnif* (smaller-scale compositions). Each artist possesses unique performance characteristics, and the rendition of the same mugham by various performers allows for the highlighting of both shared and distinct facets of their interpretations. Research on the performance variants of mugham in Azerbaijani music is a substantial and diverse domain, capable of pursuing various avenues of exploration.

Hence, the tracing of the development trajectory of Azerbaijani mugham from the Middle Ages to the present day based on written sources, investigations involving vocal and musical notations that emerged in the 20th century, the study of the performance characteristics of mugham schools that have emerged in different regions, and the continuation of these traditions into the modern era, along with comparative research on mugham art among various ethnic groups to unveil both commonalities

and distinctions in comparison to Azerbaijani mugham, all stand as pertinent and compelling topics in musicology.

Beginning from the Middle Ages, the structured regulations of the established art of mugham have evolved and been passed down from master to apprentice through memory, eventually reaching us. Over many centuries, mugham performers and scholars have enriched this art form. In the 20th century, research on the historical and theoretical aspects of Azerbaijani mugham, including the investigations by prominent scholars such as Badalbeyli (2017); Hajibeyli (2010); Zohrabov (2002, 2013); Ismayilov (1984) and others, has played a crucial role.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The objective of the research is centered on uncovering the fundamental aspects concerning the comparison of performance variants of mugham, encompassing the examination of compositional structure and issues related to melodic variation. One of the facets associated with the evolution of mugham throughout its historical development is its connection to the element of performance. Therefore, investigating the role of variability in the gradual refinement of mugham during its historical progression stands as one of the primary objectives of this research.

The research primarily relies on methods such as historical, theoretical, and comparative analysis. Additionally, well-established theoretical principles and scholarly theoretical concepts within musicology form the methodological foundation of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mugham-Dastgahs

It is well known that mugham-dastgahs, smaller-scale mugham pieces, rhythmic mugham forms, classifications, and hues constitute the core of the repertoire of mugham performers. During the interpretation of oral traditional musical works, each performer becomes a creative interpreter. In this regard, the musicologist Zohrabov (2013), wrote:

For the folk-professional artist, performance is always considered a personal act of creativity. High talent, rich imagination, and refined taste are crucial for such a performer. Some exceptional vocalists and instrumentalists, possessing brilliant talents, create new traditions, original styles, and even, one might say, schools within the framework of the established rules of this art... For such artists, the term 'performer' alone is insufficient; they are, at the same time, creative artists. It is not coincidental that in their creativity, both the art of performance and composition merge seamlessly and intertwine physically. (p. 54)

The personal artistry of vocalists and instrumentalists, precisely tied to their traditional style, is intimately connected with improvisation. This improvisational approach has led to the creation of various variants of mugham. All of these elements find their reflection in the compositions of vocalists.

Azerbaijani mugham performers, in a pioneering move within the Muslim East, ventured into foreign countries for the first time in the early 20th century. Their performances in the West, in front of an audience with entirely different worldviews and aesthetic tastes, garnered significant attention. Consequently, they were invited by several prominent recording companies in Europe to record their performances on gramophone records. The gramophone records of vocalists played a pivotal role in the development of mugham performance art. These records have played an exceptional role in the dissemination of Azerbaijani music and its recognition on a global scale.

Within just the first two decades of the 20th century, numerous European recording companies, including the UK's "Gramophone," France's "Pathé," Germany's "Sport-Record," Russia's "Zavod Nogina," and others, produced gramophone records featuring Azerbaijani mugham, tasnif (smaller-scale compositions), and hues.

The voices of renowned vocalists were immortalized on these gramophone records. Performers such as Jafar Qaryaghdiloglu, Kechechioglu Muhammad, Mashadi Muhammad Farzaliyev, Islam Abdullayev, Majid Behbudov, Qasim Abdullayev, Seyid Shushinski, and many others graced these recordings. They performed various mugham modes and tasnif pieces as part of the mugham trio.

The catalog of vocalists' records, compiled by recording companies, provided essential information about the musicians and their respective performances. This cataloging effort significantly contributed to the recognition of Azerbaijani mugham performers in various countries.

Gramophone records from the early 20th century are preserved in various archives, including the Archives of the State Sound Recordings of Azerbaijan, the collections of the Azerbaijan State Museum of Musical Culture, and other archival holdings. It should be noted that these recordings are highly valuable sound documents that provide insight into the performance styles of past vocalists. Therefore, their study is of great significance, both for researchers and for aspiring young vocalists.

A portion of these antique gramophone records, preserved in archival collections, has been restored by the collaborators of the "Musical World" journal and subsequently

digitized and made accessible through the “Azerbaijani Discography” website. Furthermore, they have been integrated into the “Azerbaijani Traditional Music” portal (Zohrabov, 2013). This endeavor currently plays a substantial role in promoting Azerbaijani mugham art to internet users worldwide, contributing significantly to the dissemination of our national musical culture. The website also provides a comprehensive catalog containing extensive information about these gramophone records.

An examination of the catalogs available on the website reveals that there is a substantial number of gramophone records, particularly from the years 1906 to 1912. These records feature vocalists performing a wide array of mugham modes, including “Rast,” “Rehab,” “Bayati-Shiraz,” “Dugah,” “Mirza Huseyn Segahi,” “Mahur,” “Qatar,” “Bayati Kurd,” “Bayati-Qachar,” “Manandimuxalif,” “Dashti,” “Vilayeti,” “Kurdi-Shahnaz,” “Sarenc,” “Zabul,” “Ashiran,” “Choban bayati” modes, as well as “Mansuriyya,” “Qarabag shikesti,” “Arazbari,” “Semayi-Shams,” “Heyrati,” “Osmani,” “Heyrati-Kabili,” “Shikesti,” “Heyrati,” “Ovshari” zerb (rhythmic) mugham compositions, numerous tasnifs (smaller-scale compositions), and lyrical folk songs, all of which reflect the diversity of Azerbaijani musical traditions.

The Transcriptions of Mugham and Folk Music Samples

The transcriptions of mugham and folk music samples were undertaken at the Azerbaijan State Conservatory (now known as the Baku Music Academy named after Uzeyir Hajibeyli) between 1932 and 1943 under the leadership of Bulbul in the Scientific-Research Music Cabinet. In this cabinet, renowned vocalists, instrumentalists, and ashugs (folk poets and singers) performed mugham, tasnif (smaller-scale compositions), folk songs, dances, and ashug creativity examples, which were then recorded onto phonograph records.

Subsequently, these recorded samples were transcribed into musical notation, cataloged, and published by the cabinet's staff. This effort held significant scholarly importance and became a subject of research for musicologists. It's worth noting that the first publications of mugham transcriptions emerged during this period through the activities of the Scientific-Research Music Cabinet. During that time, the cabinet's colleagues and composer duo Tofiq Guliyev and Zakir Bagirov transcribed and published “Rast,” “Zabul,” and “Dugah” mugham modes performed by the maestro-style singer Mirza Mansur Mansurov (Azpetrol Oil Company, 2004).

Audio Recordings

Furthermore, it should be noted that in the context of researching the performance variants of mugham, it is imperative not only to investigate the transcriptions of vocal renditions but also to facilitate their notation. In this regard, it is evident that musical notations are relatively scarce. Although in the latter half of the 20th century and the early 21st century, musical transcriptions by researchers like Nariman Mammadov, Arif Asadullayev, Akram Mammadli, and other musicologists have been published, these notations represent only a handful of variants taken from a few mugham performers. To advance research efforts, it is crucial to generate an even greater number of musical notations. Naturally, amidst the proliferation of vocal transcriptions, the implementation of notation plays a significant role in the study of mugham.

In the latter half of the 20th century, the production of gramophone records witnessed a broader scope. Particularly, the “Melodiya” label released a substantial quantity of audio recordings, and the gramophone records of mugham performers were distributed in mass quantities. This development played a significant role in enriching the repository of audio recordings related to mugham heritage.

During this period, several initiatives related to audio recordings were implemented. In 1971, the “Azerbaijani Music” vinyl record, part of the “Music Anthology of the East” series, was included in the UNESCO collection “Collection of Traditional Music of the World,” consisting of 50 albums. Additionally, eight vinyl records featuring performances by Bahram Mansurov constituted the basis of two albums from the “Music of the East” and “Music Atlas” series.

In the modern era, particularly in the 21st century, the volume of audio recordings related to mugham has significantly expanded. Performances of mugham artists are captured using contemporary technical means, recorded on audio and video cassettes, and uploaded to internet platforms. All of these developments serve to broaden the audience of mugham performers and increase the number of enthusiasts for Azerbaijani mugham art among people from different nations around the world.

Regarding the creation of audio recordings for the mugham heritage, the significant contributions of Professor Tariyel Mammadov, the editor-in-chief and publisher of the “Musiqi Dunyasi” journal and an honored artist, deserve mention. Under his initiative and leadership in 1989, a series of vinyl records titled “Azerbaijani Mugham Dastgahs” featuring performances by mugham singers Arif Babayev, Yagub Mammadov, Janali Akbarov, Agakhan Abdullayev, and Alim Qasimov covering all Azerbaijani mugham modes were recorded. This series was published with booklets

in Azerbaijani, Russian, and English languages. The booklets contained texts about Azerbaijani mugham modes, mugham singers, and traditional musical instruments. The author and compiler of these texts is Tariyel Mammadov.

In 1991, under the leadership of Tariyel Mammadov, Azerbaijani mugham singers Cabbar Qaryagdioglu and Kechachlioglu Muhammad's gramophone records were restored and released on vinyl discs. Tariyel Mammadov later expanded his activities in this field, becoming involved in the restoration of gramophone records. A portion of the vintage gramophone records preserved in archival collections was restored by the colleagues of Tariyel Mammadov, who served as the editor-in-chief of the "Musiqi Dunyasi" journal. These restored records were then made available on the "Azerbaijani Traditional Music" website (n.d.), which, at present, plays a significant role in promoting Azerbaijani mugham art to internet users worldwide, thereby contributing to the dissemination of our national musical culture.

The publication resulting from collaborative creative efforts between the editorial team of the "Musiqi Dunyasi" journal and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the Karabakh (2005), CD and photo album set, deserves special attention. This project encompasses sound recordings, information, and photographic materials related to twenty-four khanende (traditional Azerbaijani singers) from various generations of the Karabakh mugham school.

One of the most significant projects dedicated to Azerbaijani mugham is the "Mugham Encyclopedia" (Aliyeva, 2007), created by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the "Music World" journal. The president of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Aliyeva (2007), serves as the head of the publication's editorial board and chief editor, with Mr. Tariyel Mammadov as the responsible editor.

Comprising two volumes, this encyclopedia not only consolidates comprehensive information regarding mugham but also presents Azerbaijani mugham performances by various khanende (traditional Azerbaijani singers). The majority of the sound recordings produced in the 20th century are documented within the "Mugham Encyclopedia," which holds great significance in terms of advancing the mugham and promoting it on a global scale.

The "Mugham Encyclopedia" consists of five CD albums: Karabakh Khanende; II. Mugham Dastgah; III. Young Khanende; IV. Master Khanende-I (male xanendler); V. Master Khanende-II (female xanendler). The titles of these CD albums directly indicate their content. Within them, a wide range of muqams, zerb-muqams, and tasnifs performed by both renowned master khanende and young khanende with the accompaniment of mugham ensembles

can be found. Additionally, the albums gather the most successful vocal interpretations of mugham dastgahs by khanende.

All the aforementioned sound and sheet music recordings are considered primary sources for the study of mugham art in musicology. Based on these sources, the analysis of vocal-instrumental and instrumental renditions of muqams becomes a crucial matter. The comparative analysis of the performance variants of muqams highlights their diversity as well as their common and distinct features.

Researching the vocal-instrumental renditions of each muqam in the musical heritage reveals that khanende (traditional Azerbaijani singers) interpret muqams in various ways, adapting them to their vocal abilities and creative imagination. Concurrently, the accompaniment by instrumental ensembles plays a significant role in shaping the muqam dastgah. Moreover, the joint performance of khanende and instrumental ensembles adheres to traditional principles and realizes the consecutive performance of muqam sections, tasnif (instrumental pieces), and r ng (vocal pieces) in the structure of the muqam dastgah.

In all cases, the melodic expression of themes in muqam sections, along with their developmental characteristics, should be noted as recurring aspects. During the performance of a muqam dastgah, the themes that constitute the core of muqam sections are traditionally preserved. This aspect is retained in the performance variants of all khanende and forms the essence of the musical content of the muqam. These elements represent the consistent and shared facets of muqam performance variants.

Furthermore, the development of the themes that constitute the core of muqam sections in performance variants reveals diversity. This diversity arises from the vocal timbre and stylistic choices of the khanende. Changes in the volume of muqam sections, which are integral components of the dastgah, introduce a dimension of variation. Additionally, the recitation of verses by different poets during muqam performances also contributes to variability. One of the traditional performance techniques of muqam sections relies on the application of additional syllables and words, which in turn leads to melodic improvisational variation. As it becomes evident, all of these aspects are of significant importance in the realization of performance variants for each muqam.

The comparative analysis of performance variants created by khanende and instrumental ensembles consistently reveals their unique compositional characteristics. The comparison between vocal-instrumental and instrumental performance variants illustrates the comprehensive and concise execution of muqam dastgahs. In each

case, the trajectory of muqam's development is directed towards revealing the musical content, with shobas and güşes based on the modal-tonal framework. The comparative analysis of muqams shows that the dastgah form manifests itself as a sequential arrangement of core shobas across all performance variants. In this context, the variation in the melodic and intonational structure of muqams holds significant importance.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, in the study of performance variants of muqams, both vocal recordings and musical notations constitute invaluable source materials. Examining individual khanendes' renditions of muqams and even comparing different renditions of the same muqam by a single khanende performed at different times allows for the identification of common and distinctive features among them – both traditional and unique facets.

Therefore, a comprehensive comparative analysis of the various performance variants of each muqam dastgah, including small-scale muqams, zerb-muqams, tasnif, and colors, opens the door to extensive research in the field of muqam, addressing a wide range of issues related to its exploration.

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