

TUKHTASIN JALILOV AND THE FORMATION OF UZBEK MUSICAL DRAMA

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Abstract. The creative work of Tukhtasin Jalilov is considered in the context of the development of Uzbek musical theatre in the 20th century. Particular attention is given to his role as a composer, performer, and organizer, as well as to his contribution to the formation of the genre of musical drama. The study highlights the interaction of folk traditions and professional art in his works, revealing the principles of integrating national melodic material into theatrical practice. Jalilov's activity is interpreted as a significant stage in the evolution of Uzbek musical culture.

Keywords: Tukhtasin Jalilov, Uzbek musical theatre, musical drama, folk music, folk traditions, national melody, Uzbek culture, 20th-century music

Uzbek folk and professional musical culture is renowned for its rich oral traditions, unique artistry, distinctive performance practices, and the formation of its own musical schools, as well as for the names of many outstanding performers. Among them are Shorakhim Shoumarov, Mulla Tuychi Toshmukhamedov, Matekub Kharratov, Khoji Abdulaziz Rasulov, Domla Halim Ibodov, Yunus Rajabi, and, notably, Tukhtasin Jalilov.

Tukhtasin Jalilov is one of the prominent representatives of Uzbek national musical art and a successor to the great masters of performance tradition. He stands out among folk musicians due to the versatility and breadth of his creative activity.

People's Artist of Uzbekistan Tukhtasin Jalilov entered the history of national culture as an outstanding virtuoso instrumentalist, a composer-melodist, an exceptional connoisseur and interpreter of folk and classical musical heritage, and a passionate advocate of its preservation and dissemination. He also proved himself to be a talented organizer and theatrical figure who played a significant role in the formation of professional Uzbek stage art in the twentieth century.

As the author of remarkable melodies, songs, and musical dramas—such as Tahir and Zuhra, Nurkhon, Muqimi, and Ravshan and Zulkhumor—he embodied a truly folk spirit in his works, characterized by nobility and deep human compassion. His creative work celebrates courage and heroism, portraying the struggle of men and women against injustice and both moral and physical oppression. His music—vivid and emotionally — constitutes the living fabric of theatrical performance, expressing the soul of each character. These images call for goodness and creativity, nurturing aesthetic sensitivity and drawing strength from the deep sources of folk wisdom.

Jalilov’s love for art manifested itself early in his youth, when he would listen with fascination to the melodies and songs performed by renowned musicians from the Fergana Valley, who frequently visited his native Andijan during festive occasions. His first lessons on the dutar were given by the well-known master Yusufjon Changchi. He later mastered the ghijak and tanbur independently, bringing his performance to a high level of refinement. Possessing an exceptional musical memory, a keen ear, and a naturally expressive voice, Jalilov carefully studied the techniques of traditional singing, continuously his vocal skills.

Between 1918 and 1920, Tukhtasin Jalilov performed as a ghijak player in various agitational ensembles alongside leading instrumentalists and singers such as Ashurali-dutorchi, Yokubjon-changchi, Zokir-doirachi, Orifjon-dutorchi, Berkinbay-hafiz, Dekhkanbay-hafiz, Rustam-surnaychi, Ismat-karnaychi, and Sayfi-kayrakchi. His repertoire included folk and classical melodies such as “Yallolashaylik,” “Aylanaman Yorlarim,” “Ishonma,” “Girya,” “Gulyor,” “Shakhnoz,” “Rabbano,” “Kora Sochim,” “Mirza Davlat,” “Surnay Navosi,” and “Oraziy,” as well as Uyghur, Russian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani folk songs.

The popularity of the young artist grew steadily, and no cultural event in Andijan took place without his participation. In 1919, together with Orifjon, Berkinbay, and Mukhiddin Najmiddinov, he took part in the “Eastern Evenings” (Sharq Kechalari) organized by Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy. In 1923, alongside such masters as Mukhiddin Kari-Yakubov, Tamara Khanum, Usto Alim, Yusuf-qiziq, Akhmadjon Umrzakov, Abduqodir Ismoilov, Domla Halim, and Mulla Tuychi, Jalilov captivated Moscow audiences during the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition.

In 1925, as part of a group of Uzbek artists, Jalilov toured Paris; in 1927, he performed in Moscow, Leningrad, Kazan, and Ufa; in 1935, he appeared in London;

and in 1937, he returned to Moscow for the Decade of Uzbek Literature and Art. Later, he toured cities across Russia and Ukraine, presenting authentic Uzbek folk art to international audiences.

In 1926, T. Jalilov, as an unsurpassed virtuoso ghijak player, was among the first to be admitted to the ensemble of folk instruments of the Uzbek Concert and Ethnographic Troupe, which brought together the finest creative forces of the republic, including Khait Akhun, Davlat Akhun, Madaminjon Alimkhanov, Jurakhon Sultanov, Mamat Bobo, Otakhoja Saidkhodjaev, and others. Folk songs (khalq qo‘shiq-lari) such as “Azizim,” “Gulyuz Uzra,” and “Naylaram,” large-scale vocal compositions (katta ashula) such as “Yovvoyi Chorgoh,” “Yovvoyi Ushshoq,” and “Bebokcha,” as well as instrumental pieces (kuylar) including “Mirza Davlat,” “Layzon Gul,” “Kari Navo,” “Suvori,” and “Sarbozcha,” performed by this ensemble, were deeply imprinted in the memory of the future composer and later found their way into his theatrical works.

Through Jalilov’s efforts, in 1937 an ensemble of song and dance was established at the Uzbek State Philharmonic. Its importance is difficult to overestimate, particularly due to the participation of such eminent masters as Safo Muganni, Khoji Abdulaziz Abdurassulov, Domla Halim Ibadov, Sheroziy, and Bola Bakhshi. As representatives of different regional traditions, they possessed a unique body of musical knowledge and performance practice. They transmitted their experience to younger performers and enriched the ensemble’s repertoire with such notable works as “Yalang Davron,” “E, Nozanin,” “Jonon,” “Hosilim,” “Ul Parivash,” “Abdurahmonbegi,” “E, Guzal Farg‘ona,” as well as fragments from maqom cycles such as “Segoh” and “Navo.”

A profound admiration for the art of distinguished musicians, deep respect for their talent, and personal as well as creative involvement in their lives enabled T. Jalilov to penetrate the subtleties of the musical craft, to grasp its nature, depth, and philosophical foundations. This experience significantly enriched his understanding of the national melodic tradition and contributed to the refinement of his performance mastery.

Tukhtasin Jalilov was not only a popular composer of songs but also one of the founders of a new genre in Uzbekistan—the musical drama—which became one of

the most beloved forms of stage art among the people. He authored more than forty works in this genre.

Jalilov's theatrical career began in the 1920s with the selection and adaptation of musical material for plays such as *Lolakhon* by K. Yashin and *The Kashgar Girl* by S. Abdulla, staged by the amateur troupe "Kizil Guncha" in Andijan. By the late 1920s, the range of productions for which he provided music had expanded considerably. These included *Erk Bolalari*, *Bahor*, *Tuygunoy*, and *Khalima* by G. Zafari, as well as *Leyli and Majnun* and *Farhad and Shirin* by Khurshid, *Khujum* by V. Yan and *Cho'lpon*, and *The Gardener's Daughter* by S. Abdulla. In these works, a wide variety of folk song material and professional oral traditions were employed.

Marked not only by the diversity and expressiveness of the borrowed material but also by its close correspondence to dramatic situations, the musical texture of these productions was characterized by distinctly theatrical qualities, lending vivid emotional and psychological depth to both the characters and the dramatic action.

In his subsequent works on contemporary themes—such as *Comrades* by K. Yashin, *Storm (Purtana)* by S. Abdulla, and *Inside (Ichkarida)* by K. Yashin and M. Mukhamedov, written in the early 1930s—Jalilov increasingly turned to widely распространённые rhythmic patterns (*usul*) and simple strophic song forms. Examples include "Chamanda Gulzor," "Dust Yalli, Yalli Dust," "Olmacha," "Urgilay," "Jazoir," "Jon-jon Urtok," "Jamaligim," "Hay, Hay, Ulan," "Kani-kani," and "Hay Yor-yor." He also experimented with the use of recitative to characterize negative персонажи (as in *Comrades*), introduced two-part choral writing, and skillfully integrated national melodic material with dramatic сценические developments.

The play *Ichkarida*, from 1935 onward, was performed under the title *Gulsara*.

It preserved many outstanding song-and-dance melodies such as "Galdir," "Endi Sendek," "Tanovar," "Savti Mukhayyar," "Mugulchai Segoh," "Kalandar," "Feruz," and "Netay," as well as "Guluzorim," which later formed the basis of *Gulsara*'s central aria "Oh, Otam." Reinhold Glière, impressed by the "beauty and originality of Uzbek folk melodies and dances," created in 1936, in collaboration with T. Sadykov, a new version of the work.

Jalilov's melodic version for Khurshid's play *Farhad and Shirin*, regarded as the finest among the existing adaptations, served as the basis for the musical drama

Farhad and Shirin by V. A. Uspensky and G. A. Mushel. Both Gulsara and Farhad and Shirin, which soon gained nationwide recognition due to their high artistic and ideological merit, came to occupy a special place in the history of musical theatre and opened new perspectives for its further development

In 1940, having already accumulated extensive experience working in professional theatrical groups—including the drama group of Mannon Uygur, the Andijan Theatre, and the Uzbek State Musical Theatre—T. Jalilov was appointed artistic director of the newly established Muqimi Uzbek State Theatre of Musical Drama and Comedy.

The productions Tahir and Zuhra by S. Abdulla and Nurkhon by K. Yashin, staged in the early years of the theatre and soon becoming legendary, marked a new stage in Jalilov's creative activity as a composer. In these works, he not only drew upon traditional musical material—adapting and transforming it for the stage—but also created original compositions in the spirit of these traditions.

The composer's refined sensitivity to the nature and expressive essence of folk music, as well as his deep and organic immersion in the material, are particularly evident in the arias of Tahir ("Ey, Quyosh," "Ayirmush," "Ruboiy," "Sitara"), Zuhra ("Suv Kelar," "Ayirganlar," "Kalamlar"), Mohim ("Izlaring"), the orphan's song ("Yig'larman"), and the arias of Nurkhon ("Ey, Sabo," "Vakhtu Iqbol"). Moreover, Jalilov possessed a remarkable ability to breathe new life into classical national music and song-dance folklore, integrating them into a theatrical context and enriching them with vivid imagery.

In musical dramas such as Kurban Umarov by S. Abdulla and Chusti (on a military-patriotic theme), Orzu, Istibdod by S. Abdulla, Gunchalar by Z. Fatkhullin, Surmakhon by B. Rakhmonov, Fergana Story by Kh. Gulyam, and Queen of the Steppe by Zh. Mashrabiyy, devoted to contemporary life, Jalilov combines original rhythmic-intonational ideas with traditional elements. At the same time, works such as The Secrets of the Paranja by Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, Muqimi by S. Abdulla, and Ravshan and Zulkhumor by K. Yashin, differing in subject matter and stylistic features, are characterized by their close connection to the musical life of their time.

This is evidenced, for example, in Oforin's aria "Oshkor," based on the folk song "Galdir," Sherali's song "Ey, Chehrasi Tobonim" derived from the Fergana katta

ashula tradition (Muqimi), as well as in the arias of Ravshan, Gorogly, and Zulkhumor, drawing on Khorezm folk material (Ravshan and Zulkhumor).

These works testify to Jalilov's constant search for an expressive and emotionally melodic language, a vivid and richly developed rhythmic structure, and a distinctive intonational palette. They sounded fresh and innovative, precise and profound in their expressive power, bringing new vitality, new ideas, and a wide range of emotions to the genre of musical drama, and fully realizing the dramaturgical conception.

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