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**ALIM QASIMOV'S CREATIVE PHENOMENON AS  
A SYMBOL OF RETURNING TO ROOTS  
IN THE MUGHAM PERFORMANCE TRADITION**

**Abstract.** The article we present discusses the unique role and significant contributions of Alim Qasimov, who has been selected for his creative role in the development of mugham, an art form originating from the East. In the article, we attempted to briefly describe Alim's distinctive qualities and artistic attributes, as well as to highlight the main factors contributing to his success as a performer. Additionally, we discussed Alim Qasimov's approach to blending tradition and modernity in mugham art, as well as innovations in his performance characteristics.

**Key words:** mugham art, tradition, vocalist performance, Alim Qasimov, folk music.

**Introduction.** Mugham is an extensive classical example of an orally transmitted professional musical art form. This cultural heritage extends beyond Azerbaijan to the Near East and Central Asian countries. Rooted in antiquity, mugham holds significant historical, philosophical, and spiritual value, characterized by its unique intonation and performance style. While it features free rhythm and a propensity for improvisation, it is also governed by specific rules. In contemporary times, the study of mugham has been advanced by musicologists, yielding substantial scholarly information.

In musicology, the study of mugham—which includes both its vocal and instrumental manifestations—has long been a prominent area of study that draws students' attention. In the early 1950s and 60s, most people thought of mugham as folklore. Later reassessments, however, acknowledged it as a traditional art form essential to the Eastern cultural legacy in general as well

as Azerbaijani culture specifically. After the country gained its independence and ideological limitations were lifted, interest in mugham was rekindled and examined from a fresh angle.

**The interpretation of the main material.** Azerbaijani Mugham is a distinctive musical tradition that has retained its relevance. It continues to attract scientific interest and is actively studied by musicologists. Azerbaijani culture, having transcended national borders, is widely admired by numerous nations. This is evidenced by the warm reception of Azerbaijani mughams, folk songs, and symphonic works in various countries. The international acclaim of the renowned singer Alim Qasimov, who has captivated audiences in many prestigious venues over the past two decades, underscores this point. His performances are far from ordinary events; they reflect societal developments impacting national music and its performance principles. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century formation of Azerbaijani mugham to the rise of Alim Qasimov, the genre has evolved to acquire new philosophical depths. Qasimov, while preserving tradition, epitomizes contemporary mugham performance. His ability to resonate with diverse audiences, irrespective of language, attests to his profound impact. Understanding his art requires an appreciation of Eastern paradigms, as Qasimov's unique style and interpretation position him among the foremost influencers in the development of mugham.

Music transcends linguistic and racial boundaries, and Alim Qasimov's performances are universally cherished. Mugham, although intricate and profound, does not necessitate a musician's expertise for appreciation. Qasimov not only performs mugham but also conveys its spirit and his personal emotions through expressive movements and gestures. The vitality of his performances is palpable from the outset. Music, akin to light originating from a singular source, adheres to natural laws and developmental rhythms. Qasimov's broad acceptance across linguistic boundaries highlights the necessity of his unique approach. His performances, deeply felt and unconfined by rigid structures, preserve tradition while expressing every nuance and emotion. His creative environment and resilience in the face of challenges have significantly shaped his artistic development.

In mugham, the unity of voice and words is pivotal, shaping the spiritual values of the people. As the saying goes, «Some music makes you nod your head, some music makes you tap your feet,» implying that certain music stimulates thought while other forms evoke emotions. This unity directly impacts the listener's consciousness. Qasimov's reflections confirm this:

“Through mugham, I feel the real world. Each mugham structure is a means of understanding the connection with nature, the transcendental, and the spiritual environment. Mugham is filled with spiritual, infinite, and inexhaustible power. Poetry also plays an important role in mugham. Although ghazals mainly express love, like music, they transcend specific interpretations, reaching the hearts of listeners as philosophical reflections or dedications to love.”

Qasimov’s exceptional memory enables him to retain complex ghazals and dastgahs, reinforcing the unity of words and music. His innovative style, distinct from his predecessors, vividly conveys the meter of ghazals in dastgahs, and he has expanded rhythmic mugham performances by incorporating tasnifs, songs, and instrumental episodes. His prowess on the daf and qaval demonstrates his exceptional rhythmic precision and unique sound, integral to his singing.

Young contemporary mugham singers should emulate Qasimov. Issues such as rhythm problems or inadequate proficiency in playing the qaval often necessitate the inclusion of the naghara, disrupting the traditional sazanda ensemble. Furthermore, young singers frequently shorten dastgahs, err in ghazal selection and pronunciation, and struggle to convey mugham’s essence. Thus, possessing a beautiful voice alone is insufficient for mastery.

The art of singing is intrinsically linked to mugham, a musical embodiment of folk creativity transmitted orally through generations. People’s Artist Bulbul emphasized that the development of mugham is closely tied to its performers, citing singers who created programmatic works and established a unique school of singing respected across the Near East.

For Alim Qasimov, the essence of his art lies in the audience and the sanctity of mugham. His performances transcend the ordinary, immersing listeners in the profound world of words and art. One of his greatest qualities is his humility and willingness to acknowledge what he does not know, akin to Socrates’ philosophy: ‘I know that I know nothing.’ This mindset drives Qasimov’s continuous exploration within the vast realm of mugham, as he articulates: “The world of mugham is an infinite ocean. Though many may dive into it, few reach its depths. I also believe in myself”.

To foster and preserve the mugham tradition, Qasimov has engaged with master artists, orientalist, and philologists, continuously educating himself. His performances, characterized by their originality and innovation, vividly convey the meter of ghazals and expand rhythmic mugham’s characteristics,

as evident in the rhythmic mugham «Mani-Ovshari.» His contributions signify the development of mugham art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Renowned contemporaries such as Haji Mammadov, Bahram Mansurov, and others have accompanied Qasimov. His wide vocal range, clear diction, precise musical sense, and exceptional qaval playing are divinely endowed talents. His ability to perform all mughams freely and his proficiency with the saz and tar enhance his musical precision.

It is undeniable that the state has shown concern, interest, and attention for this art form in modern times. This dedication is demonstrated by the abundance of academic papers, research projects, and scientific inquiries on instrumental and vocal performances. These studies are a priceless tool for teaching the next generation important and fascinating facts about our musical history. The Azerbaijani people's national treasure, Mugham, embodies their history, culture, and future.

**In conclusion**, while many names in mugham may be forgotten, Alim Qasimov's legacy will endure as a national treasure. His art is crafted for the future, and his unique contributions continue to elevate the tradition of mugham.

I will end by quoting the renowned musicologist Zemtsovsky, who said, «Azerbaijani mugham is an art that blazes with a love of life, as powerful as the jewels of the Renaissance, born from spiritual tension, and possessing great aesthetic perfection.»

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#### Ləman Rüstəmli (*Azərbaycan*)

#### ALİM QASIMOVUN YARADICILIQ FENOMENİ – MUĞAM İFAÇILIQ ƏNƏNƏSİNİN KÖKLƏRƏ QAYIDIŞIN SİMVOLU KİMİ

Bu məqalə, Şərqi muğam sənətinin inkişafına əsaslı töhfə olan Alim Qasimovun yaradıcılığına həsr olunmuşdur. Məqalə, Alim Qasimovun musiqi sahəsindəki unikal cəhətlərini və sənət keyfiyyətlərini vurğulamağa çalışır və onun ifaçılıqda uğur qazanmasının əsas amillərini təqdim edir. Əlavə olaraq,

Alim Qasımovun muğam sənətinin ənənələri ilə müasir yanaşmasından və ifa xüsusiyyətlərindəki yeniliklərindən də bəhs edilir.

**Açar sözlər:** muğam sənəti, ənənə, xanəndə ifaçılığı, Alim Qasımov, xalq musiqisi.

**Ляман Рустамлы (Азербайджан)**

**ТВОРЧЕСКИЙ ФЕНОМЕН АЛИМ ГАСЫМОВА КАК  
СИМВОЛ ВОЗВРАЩЕНИЯ К ИСТОКАМ ТРАДИЦИИ  
ИСПОЛНЕНИЯ МУГАМА**

В представленной статье обсуждается уникальная роль и значительные вклады Алима Касымова, который был отмечен за свой творческий вклад в развитие мугама, искусства, зародившегося на Востоке. В статье мы постарались кратко описать отличительные качества и художественные черты Алима, а также выявить основные факторы его успеха как исполнителя. Кроме того, мы обсудили подход Алима Касымова к сочетанию традиции и современности в мугаме, а также новации в его исполнительских характеристиках.

**Ключевые слова:** мугам, традиция, вокальное исполнение, Алим Касымов, народная музыка.

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**“LIVELIER THAN ALIVE”: PERFORMATIVE  
GESTURE AND INTERACTIVE THEATRE.  
PERFORMANCE AS ANTI-THEATRE**

**Abstract.** In the article the author examines the concept of performance, which has become very popular recently, in the context of interactive theatre. The analysis from this point of view, together with the consideration of new theatrical concepts of theatrical theorists, the experience of experiments of theatrical practitioners from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, allows us to give a more precise definition of the concept of “live theatre”.

**Key words:** interactive theatre, orthodox theatre, performative, live theatre, Erica Fischer-Lichte.

**Introduction.** In the context of expanding the boundaries of traditional theatre space, the so-called “art of action”, including performance, happening, actionism, etc., occupies a special place. Combining elements of various arts, it allows artists to express their thoughts and emotions through movement, through space, use of unusual props or even participation of the audience in the process of performance. This article will discuss the problems of defining the concept of “performance” and its similarities and differences from traditional and interactive theatre.

**The interpretation of the main material.** Performance is commonly understood as a “live” presentation of an artistic work related to the performing arts. The first person to use the word performance as a defining term in relation to his work was John Cage, who used this term in the poster of his work “4’33””. Performance is an interdisciplinary form of contemporary art that expresses a concept through an action performed by a