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THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN THE STATE-BUILDING OF AZERBAIJAN

Abstract. In 2025, our esteemed President Ilham Aliyev declared the Year of the Constitution and Sovereignty. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the 5th anniversary of our victory in the Second Karabakh War. We are living through a proud and honorable five-year period in our history and in our lives. For musicians, this year is a double celebration, as it is also the 140th anniversary of the great Uzeyir Hajibeyli. The presented article focuses on the important role of Uzeyir bey and, in general, music in the state-building of Azerbaijan.

As is well known, all over the world and in every country, the main symbols of statehood are the flag, the emblem, and the anthem. This is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan. As we see, one of the main symbols is directly connected with music — the national anthem and state marches. When the National Anthem of the Republic of Azerbaijan is performed, people rise to their feet to listen, sing, or applaud; under the influence of the words and music, they feel love for the Motherland, pride, and deep emotions. This once again highlights the significant role of music in promoting the ideas of statehood and Azerbaijani identity. These very feelings are instilled in the heart of every Azerbaijani by the music of the great Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli.

Key words: Constitution and Sovereignty, Uzeyir Hajibeyli, symbols of statehood, Turkish Mehter ensemble.

Introduction. Uzeyir Hajibeyli's "Azerbaijan March" was composed in 1919 during the period of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. Written to the

lyrics of poet Ahmad Javad, this march became the voice of the Azerbaijani people's struggle for freedom and reflected the national ideas and aspirations of that time. After the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, it was officially adopted as the state anthem in 1992.

The musical basis of the march is the “shur” mode, which carries a somewhat minor character. It can be said that the majority of national anthems of the world have an energetic and major character. In this regard, our anthem is different. In fact, there are deep-rooted reasons for this. If we look back at the time when Uzeyir Hajibeyli lived — the years when the anthem was written and when the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was founded — we can understand the reason. As is well known, that era was filled with the struggles of patriots for Azerbaijan, for the Republic, for freedom and independence. At the same time, these events came at the cost of great losses, sacrifices, shocks, and hardships. Naturally, all these struggles and experiences could not leave the progressive and selfless people of that period — including Uzeyir Hajibeyli and Ahmad Javad — unaffected.

In the “Azerbaijan March”, alongside determination, courage, love for the homeland, and the spirit of struggle and freedom, there is also pain and sorrow. In our view, the certain dramatic and mournful notes in the anthem stem from these emotions and reflect the difficult yet honorable path that the Azerbaijani people had gone through. The State Anthem composed by Uzeyir Hajibeyli, as well as his entire creative legacy, once again demonstrates that this great personality played an exceptional role both in the state-building of Azerbaijan and in the cultural construction of the State, and will continue to serve the nation as long as the Azerbaijani people exist.

The interpretation of the main material. It should also be noted that Uzeyir Hajibeyli was not only a composer but also a prominent political and public figure. He went down in history as one of the founders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. He was one of the founders and the first editors of the Republic's first official press organ, the newspaper “Azerbaijan”. This newspaper, bearing the sacred name of the Republic itself, became the voice of the nation and a herald of its socio-political life. Numerous articles by Uzeyir Hajibeyli — political as well as socio-cultural in nature — were published in its pages, playing an important role in the enlightenment of the people and in the formation of national consciousness.

One of the main attributes of every state is its army. Among the factors that determine the existence of a state, the army occupies one of the leading places. The Azerbaijani army is the foundation and pillar of the state, as well as a source of pride. Military music plays a very important role in army building: it has both practical and psychological significance, and this responsible duty is performed by military bands. The importance of music covers different aspects of military life: military music strengthens soldiers' sense of patriotism and fighting spirit, alleviates fear and fatigue during combat. Military marches regulate soldiers' orderly steps during drills and marches, create a sense of rhythm, and ensure teamwork and discipline. Music is performed at state ceremonies, military parades, award ceremonies, receptions of foreign envoys, and farewell ceremonies for soldiers. Thus, we can say that music is one of the most powerful tools for discipline, motivation, and coordination in the activities and operations of the army.

The emergence of military bands also has an interesting history. It should be noted that the first military band in music history was the Turkish Mehter Ensemble. Europeans, when they first heard Mehter music, were astonished by its sound, and even frightened. Ivan Chopin, in his well-known work, gave information about the military band he heard in Yerevan and expressed his impression as follows: "Everything screeches, squeaks, clatters mercilessly; in addition, the powerful beats of the Turkish drum, as if combined with a hellish melody, bring unbearable torment to ears unaccustomed to Asiatic concerts" [1, p. 898]. Nevertheless, inspired by the Turkish Mehter bands, European states also began to create their own military bands.

It should be noted that since the city of İrevan had been repeatedly captured by the Ottoman sultans over many years, the influence of Turkish Mehter music was particularly strong there. In other Azerbaijani cities, however, there is information that as early as the 12th century, "Naghara-khana" ensembles — court drummer groups led by musicians — existed [2, p. 253]. The fact that one of the villages in the Shamakhi region is called "Nagharakhana" is proof of this. The Mehter ensemble was referred to by Europeans as the "Turkish orchestra." The ensemble included strong-sounding wind instruments such as zurna, boru (trumpet), tuluq zurna (bagpipe), sheypur, and sometimes karnay, along with percussion instruments such as daf, gaval, davul, and small and large Turkish drums. The ensemble primarily had a military function: it participated in important state ceremonies, the reception and farewell of ambassadors and guests,

marches, and battles. At the same time, it performed at festivals and ceremonial celebrations, mobilizing and uniting the people.

It should also be noted that over time, Mehter music inspired European composers, giving rise to works known as “Turkish marches.” Great Western composers such as W.Mozart, G.Bizet, G.Rossini, G.Puccini, and others, when writing their “a la turca” pieces, were directly inspired by Turkish Mehter marches.

Several groups of zurna players also carried out the same function. During war and battle, they would march in front of the army, inspiring the fighting soldiers with national melodies, while at the same time terrifying the enemy with the “formidable,” deafening, and powerful sounds of the instrument when necessary [1, p. 898].

Music also lies at the foundation of cultural diplomacy, playing an exceptional role in a country’s recognition, as well as in the establishment and development of international relations. In Azerbaijan, folk music is preserved and promoted at the state level. State support for the art of mugham — such as the organization of symposiums, competitions, and festivals, the celebration of the jubilees of master ashugs, the erection of monuments, and so on — not only serves the promotion and preservation of traditional music and the education of future generations, but also becomes an integral part of state cultural policy, acting as a key to strengthening state ideology. It increases citizens’ loyalty to the state and fulfills a state-building function in the formation of public consciousness, in politics, and in international relations.

The historical roots of Azerbaijani statehood are linked to the common Turkic context. “The magical function of war music is similar to the magical function of the flag. ... According to mythological beliefs, the shaman’s drum was gifted to humans by the Goddess of Thunder; the Turks likened the sound of the drum to thunder. ... Researchers also consider it important to include the human battle cry among war music” [3, p. 42]. All this was intended to instill fear in the enemy, to force them to submit before the greatness and majesty of the Turk, and to ensure victory in battle.

Among the rich cultural and spiritual treasures created by the Azerbaijani people over centuries, the epic “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud” occupies a special place. This unique and magnificent monument of art, which vividly reflects our heroic past, played an important role in defining our national identity [3, p. 16]. One of the most important ideas in the epic is the idea of unified

statehood. “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud” embodies the traditions of statehood that characterized Azerbaijan in the 5th–7th centuries: it had its own army, strict rules and laws, a flag, and assemblies — called “kenqesh” (from the verb *gənəşmək*, meaning “to consult,” a word still used in the dialects of many Azerbaijani regions) — which functioned as councils to resolve political, economic, military, and administrative issues.

In this epic, which is referred to as the “Mother Book” or the “Book of Morality” of the Azerbaijani people, we also find reflections of moral principles such as the selection of wise elders to resolve important issues, the unconditional obedience to their word, respect for elders and parents, loyalty to the family, and others.

In the “Book of Dede Qorqud”, Bayandir Khan appears as a leader who raises the great banner, rising to defend the homeland and statehood — the supremacy of law and the protection of social justice. The statement in the epic, “Bayandir Khan commanded that twenty-four standard-bearers should come”, indicates that the system of “sancak beylik” (standard-bearer governance) was carried over into later periods — to the Oghuz, the Ottoman state, and also to Azerbaijan. In the system of *II/El* governance, the “sancak beylik” was considered the highest position at the state border. The tradition of “sancak beys” was continued in the Ottoman Empire as well. In Azerbaijan, too, the systems of “beylerbeylik” and “beylik” governance existed. In general, we would not be mistaken in saying that the struggle for statehood runs as a central theme throughout the Oghuz epics.

Examples of this nature can also be drawn from the “Koroglu” epic. Koroglu gathered around him masses of people united in a common cause, creating the society of Chanlibel — a socio-political community. Here, the concepts of a free homeland, the national hero, historical identity, and people’s democracy appear as the main thread. The Chanlibel community had its own rules and discipline: “At the time of work, everyone worked; at the time of training, everyone trained; at the time of leisure, everyone enjoyed themselves” [4, p. 5].

Koroglu, who created such a just community, was not only a symbol of patriotism and heroism, but also an *ashiq*, a poet, a performer — in short, an artist. He was the creator of the immortal Koroglu melodies. These melodies called people to patriotism, to the restoration of justice, and to heroism, while also expressing his humanist ideas. Melodies such as “Misri”, “Koroglu Jangisi” (Koroglu Battle March), “Koroglu

Atlandırılması” (Koroglu’s Mounting), “Koroglu Talimi” (Koroglu’s Training), “Doshama Koroglu”, “Koroglu Dubeyti”, “Surutma Koroglu” and others still retain their artistic value today due to their vivid imagery and content, melodic-rhythmic and poetic beauty, powerful emotional impact, grandeur, and strength.

It is no coincidence that Koroglu would ride into battle with a sword in one hand and a saz in the other. Let us recall that the epic also mentions that each of Koroglu’s 7,777 warriors was capable of playing the saz. (A similar theme is also present in the “Book of Dede Qorqud” — where it is said that all the people of the Oghuz could play the gopuz.) President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev has stated the following on this subject:

“The epic of Koroghlu is a very powerful tool in the upbringing of the younger generation. Because the young generation must grow up and be educated in the spirit of patriotism. ...No country, no nation can develop without national and moral values.... Our state has been built on a strong foundation – a centuries-old history and culture.”

As is well known, in Ashiq creativity, the love of the homeland and attachment to the native land are praised with a distinctive mastery and delicacy. Mountains, soil, the sky, and other elements of nature, along with its beauties, are perceived as symbols of the native land and village, and are understood as the primordial essence, the emblem of the motherland. Throughout all periods, master ashiqs have acted as heralds of truth and justice. In their poems, songs, and tales, they have constantly glorified the aspirations and wishes of the people, their protests against injustice, and their struggles. They have never refrained from expressing their firm position on socio-political events of their time. Epics and songs such as *Qachaq Nabi*, *Qachaq Kerem*, and others reflecting outlaw movements were also created under the influence of this position.

National musical culture plays a key role in the future development of every nation, in the formation of the spiritual values and national spirit of the younger generation, in ethnic mobilization, and in achieving new creative accomplishments. It constitutes an integral part of the national development concept and national idea of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Traditional Azerbaijani national music holds a special importance in the creation of the people’s historical memory, cultural identity, spiritual solidarity, and unity. At the same time, it plays a vital role in the formation and strengthening of statehood, serving as the “spiritual foundation of

statehood” (M.Imanov). Folk musical creativity expresses the uniqueness of each nation, embodies national and moral values and traditions, carries the native language, and contributes to the consolidation of national self-awareness.

In the most critical moments of every nation’s history—during wars and socio-political cataclysms—music, especially folk music, becomes a key factor in fostering the sense of unity and solidarity of the people and in preparing them for struggle. In our view, the much-loved song “Karabakh Shikastasi” can serve as a vivid example of this. During the period of Karabakh’s occupation—spanning 30 years—this famous folk musical piece virtually became the musical symbol of Karabakh. Throughout these years, the “national call” function carried by this melody proved to be as powerful as a weapon of war.

In fact, Karabakh Shikastasi, which traces its origins back to ancient Ashiq melodies, is a musical-poetic work that expresses grief, sorrow, and heartbreak in its themes, imagery, and mood. For centuries, it was performed first by ashigs, and later by khanandas and saz players, as well as by various singers and musicians. Each performer added new color, a new breath, and left their creative mark upon it. Yet, during the years of occupation, while preserving its main melodic and rhythmic features, this melody acquired a new content, new imagery, a spirit of heroism, and traits of valor. Presented through diverse interpretations and fresh performances, Karabakh Shikastasi renewed the spirit of the people, tuned their hearts, awakened their memory, and called them to struggle—leading them toward victory. The magnificent victory of the Azerbaijani people has now endowed this melody with an entirely new meaning. Today, Karabakh Shikastasi has transformed into the victory anthem of this ancient homeland. The sound that once arose from decades of longing now proudly resounds as the victorious chords of the Karabakh struggle.

Conclusion. The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan states (Article 40, Section II): “Everyone shall show respect and care for historical, cultural and spiritual heritage, and shall protect historical and cultural monuments.” The inclusion of such a provision in the Constitution, along with the adoption of laws such as “On the Legal Protection of Folklore”, once again highlights the significance of traditional Azerbaijani music. Indeed, national music is among the grand monuments of culture, and folk musical creativity plays an undeniable role in shaping patriotic feelings,

popularizing national values, and strengthening the legitimacy of state authority.

Finally, let us recall one more passage from the Book of Dede Qorqud: “If there is an ozan who sings and plays in our land and in our homes, then in our homeland and in our nation there will always be peace and harmony!” [2, p. 253].

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İradə Koçərli (Azərbaycan)

AZƏRBAYCANDA DÖVLƏT QURUCULUĞUNDA MUSİQİNİN ROLU

Sunulan makale, Azərbaycan'da devlet kuruculuğunda müziğin önemli roluna odaklanmaktadır. Devletin temel sembollerinden biri olan ulusal marşların Azerbaycancılık düşüncelerinin yayılmasındaki önemi, ayrıca ordunun faaliyet ve operasyonlarında disiplin, motivasyon ve koordinasyonu sağlamadaki askeri orkestraların rolü vurgulanmaktadır. Avrupa'daki askeri orkestraların gelişiminde önemli bir örnek olarak “Türk Mehter Takımı” hakkında bilgi verilmektedir. Azerbaycan devletçiliğinin tarihî kökleri, özellikle geniş Türk dünyası bağlamıyla ilişkisi öne çıkarılmaktadır. Ayrıca, “Kitabi Dede Korkut”ta yer alan devletçilik geleneklerinin ve “Koroğlu” destanındaki adil toplum anlayışının bağımsız Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nde de başarıyla devam ettiği belirtilmektedir.

Açar sözlər: marş, hərbi orkestr, Dədə Qorqud, “Koroğlu”, “Qarabağ şikəstəsi”.

Ирада Кочарли (Азербайджан)

РОЛЬ МУЗЫКИ В ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОМ СТРОИТЕЛЬСТВЕ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА

Представленная статья посвящена значительной роли музыки в процессе государственного строительства Азербайджана. Особое внимание уделяется важности национальных гимнов как одного из ключевых символов государственности, способствующих продвижению азербайджанских идей, а также роли военных оркестров в поддержании дисциплины, мотивации и координации действий армии. Приводится информация о «турецком оркестре мехтер», который отмечается как важный пример в развитии военных оркестров в Европе. Подчеркиваются исторические корни азербайджанской государственности, в частности, её связь с более широким тюркским контекстом. Также отмечается, что традиции государственности, описанные в «Китаби Деде Горгуд», и принципы справедливого общества, заложенные в эпосе «Кёроглу», успешно продолжают в независимой Азербайджанской Республике.

Ключевые слова: гимн, военный оркестр, Деде Горгуд, «Кёроглу», «Гарабаг шикястеси»