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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT OF MUSICAL RESEARCH - THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This article will focus on the historical background of the consciousness of the Cabinet of Scientific Music Research, created in 1932 under Azerbaijan State Conservatory. The article emphasizes the role of powerful educational movement in the history of the culture of Azerbaijan at the end of the XIX th-beginning of the XX th century, which served as an impetus for progressive activity of the Azerbaijani intelligentsia and, in particular, interest in the problems of preserving and recording the spiritual heritage of Azerbaijan. Articles from the periodical press, verbatim reports of conferences and public speeches are used as source materials.

Keywords: music, history, press, folklore, heritage.

Introduction

The current period of globalization necessarily has an effect on the cultural heritage of Azerbaijan, whose preservation is a matter of importance, and this applies particularly to the country's folk music. Culture in the 21st century is dominated by the "screen", through which there is a huge flow of information. And, of course, such a massive supply of information may also have a negative influence.

The processes of globalization now underway clearly highlight the value systems of traditional heritage. The study of the history of Azerbaijani musical culture from the archaic to modern musical folklore is certainly relevant to contemporary humanitarian studies, as the culture of mass information carries within it the danger of levelling, absorbing and negatively transforming oral musical creativity.

The problem of preserving intangible heritage has been raised repeatedly within UNESCO. Thus, in 2002, 110 representatives of UNESCO member states participated in a round table discussion on "the intangible cultural heritage, a mirror of cultural diversity" and "expressed their concern about the processes destroying traditional culture and the lack of a unified strategy for the protection and development of world heritage" [1, p.88].

The interpretation of the main material

It is both important and interesting that the tasks set by the organisers of NIKMUZ (*Nauchno-Issledovatel'skiy Kabinet Muzyki* - literally, Cabinet of Scientific Music Research) for the coordination of work to document and collect musical folklore, are actively pursued today. Thus, in 2002, Nigar Akhundova, representative of the department of cultural policy in Azerbaijan's Ministry of Culture, wrote: "The national policy of Azerbaijan on the preservation of intangible heritage covers several areas. First is the collection and preservation of the best examples of intangible, musical and decorative-applied art" [1, p. 89]. So, Azerbaijan's independence has stimulated the collection and preservation of samples of the country's spiritual culture.

NIKMUZ's contributions to scientific enlightenment in developing the history of Azerbaijan's musical culture can be understood more deeply from materials related to the history of oral folk art reviewed in the process of research. Let us begin with the history of Azerbaijani culture from the end of the 19th century to the opening of the 20th century. During this period, the strong current of enlightenment that swept through Azerbaijani society was a trigger for progressive activity by the Azerbaijani intelligentsia, particularly with respect to the preservation and documentation of their spiritual heritage.

Issues concerning the documentation and research into folklore were raised by Azerbaijani enlighteners. For example, articles about oral folk art and, particularly, about its documentation, were published systematically on the pages of *Kaspiy*, a leading newspaper in Azerbaijani society. "*Kaspiy* had a certain role in the collection and research of samples of oral folk art." [3, p. 67].

Kaspiy published articles about ethnography, folklore and folk poetry. Researchers commented that, “popularization of Azerbaijani folklore on the pages of the newspaper was mainly conducted in two directions: first was the collection and publication of poetic legends and tales in Russian translation; and second – efforts to conduct theoretical research into certain genres of oral folk art” [3, p. 67].

Some prominent enlighteners in Azerbaijani culture were involved in collecting their folklore, including Hasan bey Zardabi, Mahmudbey Mahmudbeyov, Timur Bayramalibeyov, Mahammad Agha Shahtakhtinsky and Suleyman Sani Akhundov.

The enlighteners regarded Azerbaijani folklore as a phenomenon that had emerged over many thousands of years of folk history and that it functioned as a living source of national values.

The Russian enlightener Nikolai Chernishevsky, whose ideas were quite popular among his counterparts in Azerbaijan, wrote that “...devoting your life to collecting folk songs is a heroic act” [3, p. 68].

There was a special focus on the educational significance of oral folk art. In fact, Zardabi wrote, “From Experience”, an article in the *Kaspiy* newspaper about the ashig art, specifically its educational function [3, p. 68].

It is important to underline the fact that the first publications about oral folk art issued by Azerbaijani enlighteners helped to introduce Azerbaijani folklore to the world of folk art. Thus, information about the different types of ceremonies, rituals, beliefs and poetic comprehension of the Azerbaijanis’ ethno-culture sparked appropriate responses from members of other enlightenment movements, particularly from those in Russia. The analogies and parallels witnessed between the world views of different nationalities testified, on the one hand, to development, and, on the other hand, to the antiquity of the Azerbaijanis’ ethno-culture.

Hasan bey Zardabi’s work was of particular significance. As an active public figure and enlightener, he initiated the collection and publishing of musical folklore and of oral folk art in general.

It is clear from the biography of the literary specialist and enlightener Firidunbey Kocharlinski that, throughout his whole scientific and teaching career, he collected and researched oral folk art.

On 4 November 1916, the *Sovgat* newspaper published an article by Abbas Sahhat, poet, educator and public figure: “The significance of song and music classes in schools” was devoted to music education in schools. Sahhat wrote, “An education in music is a most acute and necessary requirement... teaching music can bring amazing results [4, p. 375]. The lessons in music and singing that were prevalent in Azerbaijani schools contributed to understanding and memorizing musical folklore, which naturally, was significant for the preservation of the oral musical arts.

“The experience of Tatar folk poetry”, an article by Ahmedbey Aghayev, was published in the *Kaspiy* newspaper [5]. It discussed the particular qualities of Azerbaijani *dastans* and stressed the specificities of the ashig art. The *dastan* called *Asli and Kerem* received special attention.

There were interesting observations in another *Kaspiy* article, “Oriental music, its treatment, future and the oriental orchestra” [2]. It was not only the writer’s thoughts on the specifications and originality of Azerbaijani folk music, but also the treatment of issues concerning the preservation of oral music culture that attracted our interest.

Some interesting observations arise here. The author writes of folk music: “Each separate sound in this (eastern) melody has a certain meaning... so that the listener has a complete and vivid picture of the life of that people, it is important that the songs of these people are performed with total accuracy, as they really are sung by the peasants... The peasant’s word is tied closely to their song; their soul, mind and heart are poured into it; and the word and the song serve as vivid expressions of their originality” [2, p. 97].

This article does raise a problem about recording. Thus, the writer quite rightly notes that, “it is very difficult to record the melody in note form exactly as it is performed. To do this, the person notating the music must be very familiar with these songs” [2, p. 104].

The article in question is remarkable in many respects. In addition to the above, there is discussion of variations in the musical folklore that is being recorded. The writer states that songs are passed orally from one performer to another and each one gives their own nuances to a performance. Further,

the article adds in historical and social factors: “The original melody..., besides natural variations, also submits to the passage of time, the influence of fashion and the needs of modern life, thus when it reaches us... there are no recorded notes or music, and nothing to compare or check with” [2, p. 104-105].

The article also emphasises that the Azerbaijani melodies (referred to as “oriental” in the article) are richly ornamented with multiple embellishments that form the essence of the music. The writer states, “these embellishments should be recorded as accurately as possible” (in order to preserve the subtlety of the melody - L. A.) [2, p. 105].

Samaya Movlayeva, who researched the history of the *Kaspiy* newspaper, wrote that “the significant factual material on oral folk art presented on *Kaspiy*’s pages allows a conclusion that the newspaper played an important role in promoting the oral folk art of Azerbaijan in the press. Collecting materials on the oral arts was a civic duty for Azerbaijani columnists, who, even in the pre-revolutionary period, laid the foundation for the future creation of a science of folklore studies” [3, p. 72].

By the early years of the 20th century, from 1901-1904, public figures with a musical education already believed that recording and collecting Azerbaijani music was a most important task for its development. Thus, it was suggested that they “research in detail, collect other [motifs], process them and identify the rules” [2, p. 104].

As these materials testify, certain goals were set for the collection of oral folk art. Namely: to define originality, to research musical folklore as a whole, compare samples of oral music, define the general rules of the functioning of folk music and as a result, to seek an appropriate harmonisation of folk music.

It is important to mention that of so-called oriental concerts held in Azerbaijani cities like Baku and Shusha were also important to this process. Of course, they were only indirectly related to the collection and recording of musical folklore, nevertheless, reviews of those concerts contain much valuable material. Suffice to say that the writers of those reviews emphasized the beauty of Azerbaijani mughams and the originality of ashigs’ music. Information about the popularization of folk music and the preservation of its best traditions was also prominent.

Scientific interest in the research, collection and recording of oral music art stimulated domestic performance, and even concerts.

Archive materials and the press of those years report that the “Muslim Charitable Society” organised so-called Muslim nights, at which Azerbaijani folk music was performed.

Thus, the first “oriental” concert was organized in the Zeynalabdin Taghiyev Theatre on 11 January 1902. Public and cultural figures wrote of the great impression made on them by Azerbaijani folk music, which had risen from being household music to concert level. Reviewers wrote in the *Kaspiy*: “Accustomed to listening to performances by oriental instruments in relatively small spaces and usually in a small circle of people, even before the concert began, many visitors felt it was difficult to expect a good impression from those instruments in a theatre building. However, the concert’s first piece – *Arazbari* – played by an oriental orchestra, dispelled all such thoughts with its hugely successful performance.” [2, p. 52].

This is interesting because oriental concerts were one step along the way to understanding the importance of preserving and caring for the folk music of Azerbaijan.

The excellence of the performers should also be noted. The first oriental concert featured outstanding musicians like Khanende Jabbar Qaryaghdi, Ashig Abbas Qulu and Najaf Qulu from Shusha.

At a Muslim night organized on 20 January 1907, “Badalbeyov, head of the city’s concert department sang solo the song *Yarin Qashifursat Magamidur* at the popular request.” A children’s choir performed several interesting Tatar [i.e. Azerbaijani - L. A.] choral songs very harmoniously. Famous Caucasian singers: Jabbar, Islam, Mammad, and tar players: Zeynal, Shirin and others, performed several beautiful pieces, followed by repeated calls for encores” [2, p. 136].

The road to establishing the Department of Musical Research was a difficult one. Of course, the historical social upheavals and re-evaluations of cultural values, sometimes reactionary in nature,

influenced the resolution of problems of preserving Azerbaijan's intangible heritage.

The composer Muslim Magomayev did great work to promote and develop musical folklore studies in the 1920s-30s. As head of the arts department of the People's Commissariat for Education, he supervised the department of musical broadcasts and managed both the drama and the opera-ballet theatres. Muslim Magomayev was always active in advancing the development of Azerbaijani music, particularly musical folklore studies. As early as 1921, at a meeting of the Third All-Azerbaijan Congress of the RABIS [Art Workers'- trans.] Union, Magomayev proposed the collection and recording of Azerbaijani folk music. Despite disputes about interpreting oral music art, he declared that the work should be conducted purposefully [6, p. 9].

Working in the People's Commissariat of Education, Magomayev was head of both the musical and art departments. Magomayev's first item in his Charter of the Department of Arts was the collection and recording of the folk melodies of Azerbaijan [6, p. 20].

Throughout the 1920s, Muslim Magomayev often wrote that "Collecting and researching Turkic folk songs should be prioritised. This issue never seems to get off the ground. Meanwhile, identifying the foundations of Turkic harmony depends almost entirely on this work" [6, p. 37].

Conclusion

The Department of Musical Research, established in 1932 within the Azerbaijan State Conservatoire, has played an important role in the development of Azerbaijani musical folklore studies and was the result of the historical development of Azerbaijani musical science at a certain stage in the country's history.

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Mövcud məqalədə, 1932-ci ildə Azərbaycan Dövlət Konservatoriyası nəzdində yaradılmış, Musiqi Elmi-Tədqiqat Kabinəsinin fəaliyyəti ilə əlaqəli bəzi tarixi şərtlər işıqlandırılır. Məqalədə Azərbaycandakı maarifləndirmə hərəkatının davamiyyəti, xüsusən şifahi xalq yaradıcılığının təbliği və tətbiqi təhlil edilir. Əyani vəsait olaraq vaxtaşırı mətbuatda yer alan məqalələr, müşavirələrin stenoqrammaları, çıxışlardan istifadə edilir.

Açar sözlər: *musiqi, tarix, mətbuat, xalq yaradıcılığı, irs.*

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ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ ПРЕДПОСЫЛКИ СОЗДАНИЯ НАУЧНО-
ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКОГО КАБИНЕТА МУЗЫКИ

В данной статье освещены некоторые исторические предпосылки деятельности Научно-исследовательского кабинета музыки, созданного в 1932 году при Азербайджанской Государственной Консерватории.

В статье рассматривается длительность просветительского движения в Азербайджане, в частности, пропаганда и изучение устного народного творчества. В качестве материала фигурируют статьи из периодической прессы, стенограммы совещаний, выступления.

Ключевые слова: *музыка, история, пресса, фольклор, наследие.*

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