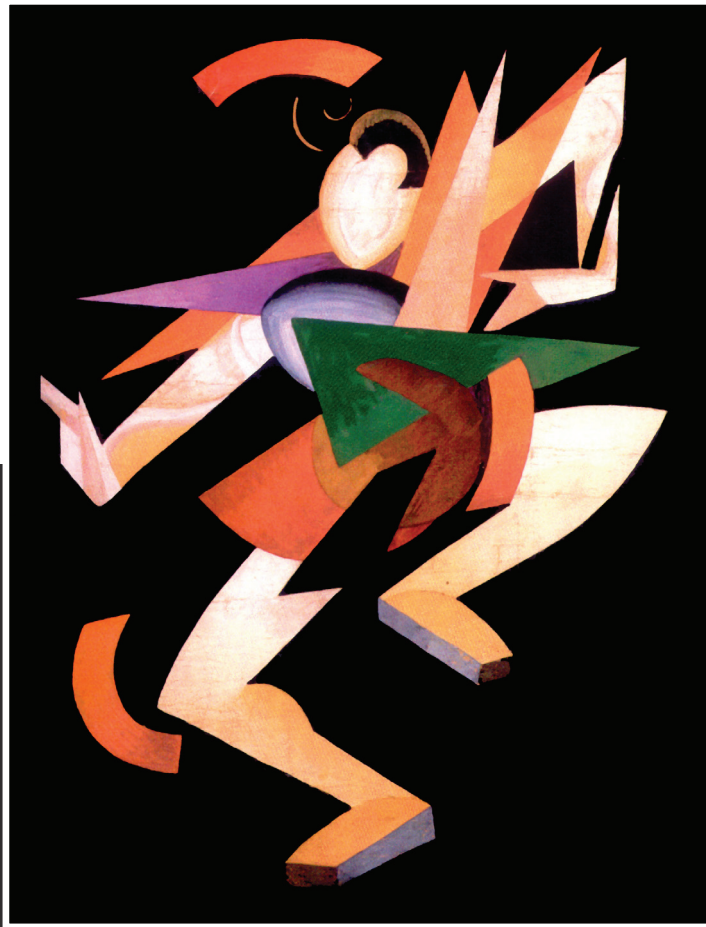




UNIVERSITY  
OF CENTRAL ASIA

# RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT



AGA KHAN HUMANITIES PROJECT





UNIVERSITY  
OF CENTRAL ASIA

# **RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT**

**AGA KHAN HUMANITIES PROJECT**

**Bishkek - Dushanbe - Almaty**

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## CONTRIBUTORS TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

- Rafique Keshavjee**, *Anthropology (USA)*  
**Shiraz Allibhai**, *Architecture (USA)*  
**Kamol Abdullaev**, *History (Tajikistan)*  
**Munira Ahtamova**, *Philosophy (Tajikistan)*  
**Amriyazdon Alimardonov**, *Oriental Studies (Tajikistan)*  
**Abdurahman Alymbaev**, *Literature (Kyrgyzstan)*  
**Brian Averbush**, *Near Eastern Languages and Civilisations (USA)*  
**Nurmagambet Ayupov**, *Philosophy (Kazakhstan)*  
**Norma Jo Baker**, *Social and Political Thought (USA)*  
**William Beeman**, *Anthropology (USA)*  
**Komil Bekzoda**, *Philosophy (Tajikistan)*  
**Gulmira Bilyalova**, *Philosophy, Religion (Kazakhstan)*  
**Muso Dinorshoev**, *Consultant, Philosophy (Tajikistan)*  
**Jyldyz Doolbekova**, *Political Sciences (Kyrgyzstan)*  
**Hamza Elboev**, *Cultural Studies (Tajikistan)*  
**Mohira Faizullaeva**, *Political Sciences (Tajikistan)*  
**Abdurahim Juraev**, *Cultural Studies (Tajikistan)*  
**Sunatullo Jonboboev**, *Philosophy (Tajikistan)*  
**Max Hamon**, *History (Canada)*  
**Michael Hall**, *Islamic Studies (USA)*  
**Khayriddin Idiev**, *Social Sciences (Tajikistan)*  
**Sharofiddin Imomov**, *History and International Relations (Tajikistan)*  
**Victoria Ivanenko**, *English Language Teacher (Tajikistan)*  
**Kurbon Giyoev**, *Social Sciences (Tajikistan)*  
**Sakina Karmaly**, *Ethics (UK)*  
**Nataliya Khafizova**, *Political Sciences (Tajikistan)*  
**Obidkhon Kurbonkhonov**, *Sociology (Tajikistan)*  
**Olga Parinova**, *Phylology (Tajikistan)*  
**Yasmin Lodi**, *Political Philosophy (India)*  
**Annamaria Kiss**, *Social Anthropology (Hungary)*  
**Merdan Khalilov**, *Economics and Busyness (Turkmenistan)*  
**Firuz Mahmadjanova**, *Philosophy (Tajikistan)*  
**Ahmadjan Mahmadvajev**, *Philosophy (Sufism) (Tajikistan)*  
**Mejuev Vadim Mikhailovich**, *Consultant, Cultural Studies (Russia)*
- Akmal Mirshakar**, *Art - Painting (Tajikistan)*  
**Muhammad Ali Muzaffar**, *Anthropology and Psychology (Tajikistan)*  
**Svetlana Mahkamova**, *Literature (Tajikistan)*  
**Sharofat Mamadambarova**, *Literature and Assessment (Tajikistan)*  
**Stepanyantc Marietta**, *Consultant, Eastern Philosophical Traditions (Russia)*  
**Akram Mukhamatkulov**, *Political Sciences (Uzbekistan)*  
**Zayniddin Nabotov**, *Theology (Tajikistan)*  
**Ramazan Nazariyev**, *History of Philosophy (Tajikistan)*  
**Sharon Powel**, *International Education (USA)*  
**Lola Pulatova**, *Art - Music (Tajikistan)*  
**Muhsin Rahimov**, *Philosophy and Psychology (Tajikistan)*  
**Sadullo Rahimov**, *Cinema (Tajikistan)*  
**Muhabbatshoh Ruzadorov**, *Sociology (Tajikistan)*  
**Madiso Sa'dullaev**, *Philosophy (Tajikistan)*  
**Abdulvahid Shamolov**, *Philosophy (Tajikistan)*  
**Shonazar Shoismatulloev**, *Sociology (Tajikistan)*  
**Alexandra Spektor**, *Philology (Tajikistan)*  
**Mekhmansho Sharipov**, *Islamic Studies (Tajikistan)*  
**Pulat Shozimov**, *Social Sciences (Tajikistan)*  
**Eraj Sodatsairov**, *Political Sciences (Tajikistan)*  
**Joomart Sulaimanov**, *Philosophy and Ecology (Kyrgyzstan)*  
**Sanjarbek Tajimatov**, *Ethnology (Kyrgyzstan)*  
**Chad Thompson**, *Social and Political Thought (Canada)*  
**John O'connell**, *Musicology (UK)*  
**Karomatullo Olimov**, *Eastern Philosophical Traditions (Tajikistan)*  
**Firuz Tursun-Zadeh**, *Aesthetics (Tajikistan)*  
**Olimsho Vatanshoev**, *International Educational Development (Tajikistan)*  
**Khurshed Ziyoev**, *Sufism (Tajikistan)*  
**Samira Rakhimova**, *Human Rights (Tajikistan)*  
**Mavjigul Dushanbieva**, *Cultural Anthropology (Tajikistan)*  
**Ibodov Mahmaddullo**, *Philosophy (Tajikistan)*  
**Marifat Alifbekova**, *Education (Tajikistan)*  
**Ajamsho Kalonov**, *Political Sciences (Tajikistan)*

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## PREFACE

Central Asia is undergoing profound cultural changes with new foundations for identity emerging as the recently independent states face broader economic and political challenges. Central Asians are reaching into their past for inspiration and seek assistance in drawing upon the rich traditions of their societies to anchor a new system of values. Responding to a widely felt need by educationalists for initiatives to foster to a deeper understanding of ethical issues and the moral choices facing society, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture established the Aga Khan Humanities Project (AKHP) in 1997. In 2007 AKHP became part of the University of Central Asia (UCA). UCA was founded as an international educational organization in 2000 by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, and His Highness the Aga Khan.

AKHP promotes pluralism in ideas, cultures, and peoples by initiating and supporting the creation and implementation of an interdisciplinary undergraduate humanities curriculum, pedagogical and professional development of faculty in Central Asian universities and community outreach projects. AKHP builds bridges across communities in the region and helps Central Asians explore and share their traditions and establish links with the outside world.

An appreciation and understanding of the breadth of their cultural heritage will enable the people of Central Asia to identify those aspects that can help them adjust to rapid change. Central Asia has interacted with many different cultures, including Buddhist, Chinese, Greek, Indian, Iranian, Islamic, Jewish, Mongol, Russian, Turkic and Zoroastrian. In addition, the impact of the more recent Soviet experience on shaping values and identities should not be underestimated. In all cases students are encouraged to develop the skills of critical thinking to help them understand the diversity within each culture and the similarities between different cultures.

Educators at partner universities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan have been trained to teach AKHP courses, assess curriculum materials, co-ordinate student projects, and conduct further teacher training. Students explore a variety of media and genres through divergent classroom techniques, designed to promote active learning, encouraging students to come to their own critical and insightful understanding of key issues.

The curriculum material has been developed, tested and revised over a period of ten years. Such piloting took place within Central Asian classrooms at AKHP's partner universities, where intensive training in student-centred learning was provided. The material was subsequently reviewed by two external committees of international scholars. Based on this input, final editorial revisions were completed in 2008.

The final version of the eight courses that comprise the AKHP curriculum will move beyond the AKHP partner universities and are flexible enough to be utilised in a variety of settings including secondary schools where the pilot testing has already commenced. Each institution has its own needs and expectations, and instructors are encouraged to adapt the materials contained within these courses to their own particular classrooms and the needs of their own students. Such creative adaptation to specific needs forms the basis of a critical education, and is a key step in encouraging Central Asian teachers and students to respond to the needs of their own region.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Preface.....	1
	Table of contents.....	2
	Introduction.....	5
	<b>CHAPTER ONE:</b>	
	<b>ORIGINS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Case Study:</b>	
	Akhmet Jubanov, Kurmangazi.....	9
	<b>Film:</b>	
	Najib Mirza, Falak, Song Of Soul .....	25
	<b>Texts:</b>	
	Cheryl L. Keyes, The Roots And Stylistic Foundations Of The Rap Music Tradition.....	27
	James Welson Johnson: The Book Of American Negro Spirituals.....	43
	Poem: Rumi: Listen To The Reed Of The Flute (from the “Mathnawi”).....	47
	Amnon Shiloah: Islam And Music: The Ideological Background.....	49
	<b>CHAPTER TWO:</b>	
	<b>THE SPIRIT OF MUSIC.....</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>Case Study:</b>	
	Leo Tolstoy: The Kreutzer Sonata.....	57
	<b>Film:</b>	
	The Generous Manas (the Kyrgyz Epic Poem).....	61
	<b>Texts:</b>	
	Talantali Bakchiev: The Sacred Summons: The Mnemonic Creativity of Jomochu.....	63
	A. Asankhanov, N. Bekmukhamedova: The Phenomenon Of Manaschi .....	67
	Lev Vigotsky: Arts And Psychoanalysis.....	73
	Youssef Rakha: Umm Kulthoum, The Epic Of The Nation.....	81
	Comparative Analysis Questions.....	88
	Additional Reading.....	88

**CHAPTER THREE:****MUSIC AS MENACE..... 91****Film:**

The Rock Star And The Mullahs .....93

**Case Study:**

Josef Skvorecky: Red Music..... 95

**Texts:**

Chingiz Aytmatov: Story On Raymali-aga..... 105

Theodor Adorno: Perennial Fashion: Jazz..... 109

International Freedom of Expression Exchange: Banned Music ..... 113

Robin Deneslow: “I Was Spat at And Called A Traitor” ..... 115

Comparative Analysis Questions..... 119

Additional Reading..... 119

**CHAPTER FOUR:****MUSIC, DANCE & THE HUMAN CONDITION..... 121****Case Study:**

Hazrat Inayatkhani: The Mystery of the Sound .....123

**Film:**

Aryana Farshed: “Mystic Iran”, The Unseen World..... 127

**Texts:**

Peter Chelkowski: Time Out Of Memory: Ta'ziyeh, The Total Drama..... 129

Virginia Danielson: Artists And Entrepreneurs:Female Singers In Cairo In The 1920s ..... 135

Michael T. Bertrand: The Forgotten Roots Of A (Rock) Revolution (Elvis)..... 139

Elvis Lives In Persian: Life and Death Of The “Afghan Elvis” ..... 143

Ikhvan-us-Safa: On Music (from Treatises) ..... 145

Comparative Analysis Questions..... 150

Additional Reading..... 150

**CHAPTER FIVE:**

DANCE & HUMAN DIVERSITY..... 153

Case Study:

Barbara O’Connor: The Russian Years (The Story of Isadora Duncan).....155

Film:

4 Dancing With Long Sleeves (Tibet, China).....161

Texts:

Nizam Nurdjanov: Dancers (Bukharan Sozandas).....163

Judith Lynne Hanna: Men, Women and Homosexuality..... 175

Salome, Interview With Suhaila Salimpur..... 185

Susan Manning: Modern Dance, Negro Dance..... 191

Comparative Analysis Questions..... 197

Additional Reading..... 197

**CHAPTER SIX:**

GLOBAL MUSIC & MODERN TRADITIONS.....199

Film:

Sacred Traditions in the Sacred Places..... 201

Text:

Ted Swedenburg: Islamic Hip-Hop Versus Islamophobia.....203

Theodore Levin: Frozen Music.....209

Muhammad Tahir: Turkmen Music Loses Out To Hip-Hop.....215

Additional Reading.....218

Photo and Image Credits.....220

# INTRODUCTION

In this course our discussion will focus on issues relating to rhythm and movement. It is common knowledge that rhythm and movement are universal forms of human expression. But what role does this phenomenon play in human life and in the study of the humanities? This course will explore the great influence music has had on shaping human society and history. The main purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to dance and music as important disciplines within the humanities and to debate basic ideas related to the arts' aesthetics. Obviously, one must acknowledge the fact that music and dance belong to all humanity, not just to the performing arts. Furthermore, it is obvious that music and dance are natural aspects of our everyday life. Hence, the general impact of the art on world history as well as its personal influence on individuals' social, political, spiritual and private lives will be analyzed. In short, this course aims to broaden our discussion pertaining to the humanities.

5

We will approach music as a cultural "artifact" (i.e. invented by humans) and will examine what such a phrase means. Culture and its "artifacts" have a dynamic character within a social context. We will examine the dynamic character of music and dance throughout history in diverse world cultures as well as through different spheres of human life. The texts collected here will inform us about the origins, nature, and spirit of music and dance. They will also help us discuss the issues of human diversity and conditions that produce different forms of these artistic 'artifacts'. Furthermore, we will be involved in debates concerning the various global and modern traditions of music and dance.

All the materials presented in this course are selected from different cultures and civilizations (Europe, America, Russia, some Muslim countries, and India, among others) that have had direct or indirect links to the history and contemporary life of Central Asia. The experience of three or four civilizations is sufficient to help us understand similarities and differences in tradition and the many divergent worldviews and perspectives pertaining to music. A sampling of these different views will be important in order to develop critical, analytical and independent thinking skills while at the same time learning to respect different opinions and cultures. The focus of our investigations is Central Asian society and culture. Therefore, each chapter includes one or two ethno-musical examples from Central Asia in visual, musical, or written forms.

The uniqueness of this text lies in its approach to the study of the humanities and to music and dance in particular. The discourse developed in this text and course connects different dimensions and perspectives: contemporary, historical, theoretical, and practical. Traditional and modern music are presented in all chapters and students will be expected to draw connections between them. Also, we should be aware of the interdisciplinary approach employed in the study of the humanities: we will not be satisfied by only listening to music, but will also be involved in reading philosophical, psychological, historical, and sociological materials on music and dance.

The Rhythm and Movement text consists of six chapters. Chapter One deals with the origins (roots) of music that have influenced modern Central Asian culture. The chapter starts with a musical voyage from the Kazakh steppe and the music of 'kuiy.' It then moves to Tajik folk music (falak) before exploring the rap music tradition and its roots in African and Caribbean cultural expressions in America that brought on the emergence of 'hip-hop'. The chapter concludes by searching for the place and legitimacy of music in Islamic texts and its foundations.

Chapter Two examines the spirit of music and the role of dreams and revelation in epic musical performances (Manas). It continues with discussions on the modern psychoanalysis of musical influences on individuals and the role of the social environment in this process. Chapter Three analyzes the relationship between diverse music (jazz, rock, blues, traditional song, etc) and society, politics, religious leaders, and traditions. This chapter confronts the notion that music is a menace with the "potential" power to corrupt the existing political, religious, and cultural order.

Chapter Four observes two phenomena – music and dance- as ways of expressing the human condition, starting with a debate on the "cosmic" and magical functions of music in the universe and human soul according to the teachings of a modern thinker. The chapter contains theoretical discussions on the conceptualization of human

bodies by political and cultural theories and the role of music in the mystic zikr dance. The text then analyzes the lives of female singers from Cairo, rock 'n' roll in America and pop music from Afghanistan before concluding with a debate on ta'siyah as total drama within the religious musical heritage.

Chapter Five is devoted to dance as a particular phenomenon. It includes issues relating to how the human body and dance can be instruments of beauty, the role of dance in traditional societies (looking at the success and tragedy of dancers serving the rulers of Bukhara), the diversity of dancing forms in neighboring countries (Tibet, China), and the relationship of dance to the workers' movement. The chapter addresses the important issues of race (black and white), sex, gender, identity, dominance, desire, and the tyranny of the ballet aesthetic.

Chapter Six prepares the basis for deeper contemporary debates on global music and modern traditions, and helps in evaluating and reassessing the role of music and dance in our lives. All chapters and audio-visual materials will approach music and dance not as a part of a professional and elite discourse, but simply as a part of everyday human life. Having an ethical and moral dimension, music has value not only as an art, but as a human action.

This course will allow the reader to freely question existing musical forms, groups, and ensembles and to challenge the ruling cultural, traditional and political attitudes concerning issues of professional or local musical performance, self-expression, and the responsibilities of musicians to society. As you listen to the vibes, you will be asked to reflect on your opinions and on the role of music as a form of social expression. We will pay particular attention to its place within social history and its links to race, creativity, politics, gender and sub-cultures. Students will be encouraged to write their thoughts addressing some primary questions, such as how does culture, especially music and dance, reflect society, traditions, and politics? And how does it have a positive/negative influence on society, culture and history?

### INTRODUCTION

Origins... What do we mean by this word? Do we want to try to conduct an 'archaeological study' of music? To be honest, it is difficult to answer the question when and where music and dance took place for the first time in human history. Moreover, it may seem to us that such a question is meaningless because rhythm and movement have existed since the dawn of human history. So, when we discuss 'origins' we are not conducting historical investigations, but discussing the origins of particular musical genres and styles as well as the types of popular music that are currently entering the modern global music scene. In other words, this chapter will help us discuss and debate the dynamic character of culture as it reveals itself in music. Obviously, music as a common human cultural 'artefact' transcends time and place, and continuously transforms itself, as it journeys from place to place and from time to time, connecting with different people and their cultures. Clearly, music has a very important role in human life. Using symbolic language we can say that it was music that helped the soul enter the body.

This discussion will also cover the role of music in Islamic culture with references to the opinions of religious scholars and modern ethnomusicologists. Some questions we will address include: Has Islam prohibited any kinds of music from the time of its origins? Are there any objections from Muslims concerning the role of music in general? How do other cultures see music? What is the role of imagination and inspiration in the origin of music?

For example, the text examines the roots of Western rap music. One perspective offered is that Rap Music is a confluence of African and Caribbean cultural expression. The text will also trace the path of music through history, looking at the changes, adaptations and progress of music from one culture to another, such as the music from West African Islamic societies, its adaptation in modern global music like hip-hop, and the global influence of hip-hop originating in North America.

How can we talk about the origins of traditional music? Do all musical works in history have origins? An attempt to answer these questions will be made through observing and debating a film, and a drama about Kurmangazi, a famous '**kyuy**' performer from Kazakhstan. Do they reflect the mountain and steppe environment, or the nomadic and settled lifestyles of Central Asia?

This course has larger aims than just the search for the origins of music, however. Our priority is not only to examine music and dance epistemologically, but also to find connections to contemporary life and the debates music provokes in society.

**kyuy** -  
a popular, Kazakh instrumental  
musical style





POMP MUSIC



## AKHMET JUBANOV: KURMANGAZI (LIFE STORY OF A MUSICIAN)

The author of this text, Akhmet Jubanov, is a contemporary Kazakh ethnomusicologist who has written a series of essays on steppe musical performers from ancient Kazakh history until 20th century. This essay describes the life story of a very famous Kazakh “kyuy” performer from the 19th century, Kurmangazi Sagirbay, who was persecuted by the Russian Tsarist regime and local Kazakh feudal governors because of the anti-tsarist and dissident nature of his songs. ‘Kyuy’ is an oral and popular instrumental symphonic melody, which traditionally was created by one person who was a poet, a composer and a singer. Kyuys have special contemporary content and are passed on to other people through memorization. Kurmangazi was a protest singer and an advocator of justice; he devoted his life to fight for social justice both physically and through his poetry, by singing, helping protect ordinary people and making them aware of their rights, etc. Because of his love of freedom and protest, and the content of his kyuy, he was jailed several times but he always managed to escape.

This text describes the origin of music as self-expression of everyday life and the role of inspiration in composing new kyuy. The nature of music in the steppe nomadic culture challenged state authorities and led them to limit the performer’s activities and to isolate singers from society in order to limit their influence. But can music and musicians follow such instructions? What inspires composers to create music? What are the roots of new music?



In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a large popular uprising under the command of Isatai Taimanov against Khan Jangir occurred in the Bukeev horde. A punitive force under the command of Gek and a squadron of Ural Cossacks sent to help Jangir had severely punished the rebels who were poorly armed. Their leader, Isatai Taimanov, was killed.

The Kzyl-Kurt clan from where Kurmangazi came completely supported Taimanov and for a long time after the defeat they did not want to yield to the Khan and Tsar’s protégés. This clan was especially violently persecuted by the authorities. Leaders of clans having direct relations with the Khan were suspicious even about elders of this clan. Kurmangazi-**dzhigit** felt the burden of exploitation early and was not just an indifferent witness to these events. Legend has it that he took an active role in the revolt. That is not likely as Kurmangazi was too young at that time. In any case, he certainly sympathized with the leaders of the revolt and in his works he praised Taimanov and his brothers-in-arms. That’s why for the whole of his life Kurmangazi was under suspicion by the Temporary Council on administration of the Bukeev horde, the Astrakhan province investigating authorities, and the Orenburgh Governor-General.

Stealing a horse of the **bay’s** herd gave reason for Kurmangazi to be put on the blacklist of horse thieves – barymtachi – as individual rebels who protested against a so-called “common law” were called at that time. The “common law” was a very flexible legal tool for rulers of Kazakh **auls**: bays, mullahs, and **kazi**. Tzar protégés who were afraid of even the words “**revolt**” or “rebel” readily included all those breaching public order in the category of horse thieves as that allowed them some freedom while at the same time being considered a “criminal” among the population. In the archives

- dzhigit** - skillful horseman
- bay** - rich person; governor; feudal lord
- aul** - a type of fortified village (Tatar: awil)
- kazi** - religious judges
- revolt** - a refusal to accept authority

there are plenty materials about stealing horses and cattle from bayis, officials or from herds that belonged to mosques, not for the purpose of robbery but as revenge for some injustice: **alienation** of land, insult, etc. Kurmangazi who didn't get along with the authorities and irritated the high and mighty with his musical performances that incited people was put in jail several times. Zataevich and especially Dina Nurpeisova have particularly documented this.

Kurmangazi's first works date from the end of 1830s. One of the kyuy that was written during that period is "Kshjentai" or "A little one". According to Y. Kabigojin who told us about this kyuy, Kurmangazi devoted it to Isatai's feats on behalf of "a little brother to big brother – a people's hero." That was Kurmangazi's first work that he wrote under the influence of "Syrym sazy" kyuy (Syrym's meditation). He heard it performed more than once by Uzak who accompanied it with a story about the revolt of the Kazakh workers and their leader – Syrym Datov. In his kyuy Kurmangazi tells about the tragic fate of the heroes while at the same time asserting the immortality of their feat.

The "Kishkentai" kyuy talks about heroic days of struggle for freedom and is notable for its astonishing harmony and requires a masterly performance. Based on the complexity and polish of that kyuy it can be attributed to a later period of Kurmangazi's creations. A **distich** written later by Kurmangazi which we have recorded comes from his follower, in a way that could serve as an epigraph to "Kishkentai":

*Isatai and Mahambet, Have you really died? – No!*

The introduction of the kyuy is peculiar: using one second string of the **dombra**, without emotion and serious, following the nature of epic tales, a theme of secret grief is heard. On the surface this introduction is similar to wordless vocal introductions that Kazakh zhyrshi (narrators) used for introducing a long narration. Such a prolonged melodious exclamatory opening was, in a way, an emotional preparation of performer and listeners for an upcoming improvisation and sometimes was used for downtime for reflection. In kyuy motifs of deep epic, **meditation** alternates with a dramatic theme of struggle. Gradually, the movement **accelerates** and moves to the highest register of the dombra. The force of the sound increases (the dombra-player lifts his/her elbow – a technique similar to using the right piano pedal) and at the same time the character of the music changes; it becomes bright and joyful like hope. At the end of the kyuy one can hear a theme of grief once again and the kyuy is finished as if a tragic requiem to a perished batyr.

Kurmangazi devoted his first work to the topic of the people's struggle. From his childhood he experienced many hardships. He grew up in an atmosphere of complex social contradictions. Kurmangazi's life, from cradle to tomb, and his way into art was no bed of roses. Discords in his family between Sagyrbai and Al-koi regarding the future of their son, unusual for that time, provoked conflicting **rumours**, first in his native aul and then in the surrounding area. The exchange of his red ox for a bayi's horse and his shepherd's whip for a dombra occurred as the result of Kurmangazi's long, pertinacious struggle for his right to devote himself entirely to his calling. The re-birth of Kurmangazi and his "kyuyshi" reputation happened only because of his creative will and intense struggle. He profoundly understood the difficulties of his people under the double oppression of the Tsarist regime and the local Khan nobles, and he was a witness to the death of local heroes Taimanov and Utemisov which left an indelible mark in the people's memory. Kurmangazi couldn't help but capture those murderous deeds in the sounds of his dombra.

Thus, he took his first step in writing music; that was the creative movement of his young wings that immediately carried him away into the realm of public and political events.

**alienation -**

transferring possession of property from one person to another

**distich -**

a couple of verses or poetic lines making complete sense; an epigram of two verses

**dombra -**

the dombra is a long-necked, two-stringed instrument, possessing a resonating chamber, somewhat similar to a banjo or a lute

**meditation -**

the practice of focusing the mind, often formalized into a specific routine

**accelerate -**

to cause to move faster

**rumour -**

a piece of purportedly true information that circulates without substantiating evidence

Thus, his first musical work was birthed during a period of popular uprising. During that period Kurmangazi wrote many new kyuy as he was inspired by the diversity of people's lives and dreams about a better destiny. "Balbraun" kyuy (Refined) is typical in this regard. "Balbraun" kyuy can be heard in all four corners of Kazakhstan; it is performed not only on the dombra but also on the kobyz and sybyz-gy. Kurmangazi wrote "Balbraun" following the dance rhythm and from beginning to end it depicts a joyful and excited movement reminiscent of festive games and, probably, dances of young people living in auls. We think it is no accident that modern composers use "Balbraun" kyuy as a basis for **scherzo**, symphonies and virtuoso dancing items in operas and instrumental concerts. The music of "Balbraun" is very active, impetuous, and **fervent**. Apparently, Kurmangazi was a participant of joyful festivals like the one depicted in this piece and he was probably the center of attention.



STATUES OF MUSICIANS

"Bas Akjelen" kyuy (Initial Akjelen) is probably attributed to the same period of Kurmangazi's work. It is a small "Akjelen" kyuy of a joyful and cheerful nature that is found among the people. Murat Uskembaev, a famous dombra player, preserved this kyuy. According to him, a big event was held in Khiva at the end of the first half of the last century where Uzbeks, Turkmen, Kazakhs and representatives of other Central Asian nations took part. A competition of the best dombra and dutar players took place. During that competition Leker, a Kazakh kyuishi, performed the "Bas Akjelen" kyuy that, as he said, was Kurmangazi's kyuy. Murat's father, a prominent dombra player, learned that kyuy and spread it all over Mangyshlak. This fresh and melodious kyuy is largely improvised and the circumstances under which it was created are unknown.

People's memories preserve poetic legends about the origins of Kurmangazi's kyuy. They say that once he visited a man from the Adai clan (a branch of the Baiyli clan) and when he entered the tent he saw a dombra hanging from the kereg. He took the instrument, re-tuned it to his liking and put it back. At that time his host's daughter came in and when she took the dombra she noticed that someone touched it. "Who played my dombra?" she asked. "I don't know, probably it was our guest", her father answered pointing with his eyes to Kurmangazi who was sitting without uttering a word. Then the girl sat down and played a kyuy that was unknown to Kurmangazi "Dear," said Kurmangazi, "that's no good for anything!" He took the dombra from her hands and played his "Serper" kyuy (Impulse). The girl, Ak-Madai, who was a famous dombra player in that area, was amazed by the skill of the stranger. His hosts recognized the famous kyuishi and asked him to stay several days. All that time they enjoyed his performances. Legend has it that Kurmangazi was flattered by the girl's attention and dedicated a kyuy to her that was called "Adai" or "Adai-kyz" (Girl from the Adai clan).

"Serper" kyuy was first recorded and published by a famous Russian **ethnographer**, Zataevich. "Undoubtedly, it is the best of Kurmangazi's kyuy, A. Zataevich wrote about "Serper", and one of the best in the collection listed in this work. It is wonderfully harmonious and systematically develops people's "scherzo". It even has **coda** – a

**scherzo -**

a name given to a piece of music or a movement from a larger piece such as a symphony. The word means "joke" in Italian

**fervent -**

warm in feeling; ardent in temperament

**ethnography -**

the genre of writing that presents qualitative descriptions of human social phenomena based on fieldwork

small masterpiece of duet with audacious use of the second-long interval while at the same time remaining typically Kazakh music!”

... Zataevich himself made an unbiased recording of a variant of the “Serper”. But besides this variant there are also others that are recorded by the followers and apprentices of Kurmangazi. These variants are more perfect than the “Serper” recorded by Zataevich according to their form and technique of performance. Among them, the variant reported by Kabigojin stands out. His “Serper” is notable for its scale, variety of metrorhythm and dynamic nuances as well as very original performance techniques. According to Kabigojin “Serper” is dedicated to the freedom-loving impulse and the strength of people that will inevitably stand erect like a bow, which, despite any amount of bending will never be ultimately broken.

The contents of the “Serper” are described in the words of Kurmangazi: “No! Kurmangazi never gives up and will never yield to fate.” Kurmangazi-dzhigit had a right to identify himself with the people in accordance with the proverb saying that their “blood and sweat were mixed”.

There is also another version about how the “Serper” kyuy was written that was told by one of Kurmangazi’s favorite apprentices, Ergaly Eshanov. According to this version, Kurmangazi composed the “Serper” kyuy when he went to Mangyshlak. He dedicated it to his favorite horse, Aksur-at, who never grew tired; to its stature, kind temper, and fast speed. It is clear that it is a symbol depicting the heroic nature of a true dzhigit – persistent and tireless in achieving his goals, just like Aksur-at. This kyuy, undoubtedly, has serious publicly-significant value. Kabigojin’s version is now widespread in Kazakhstan. The melody is played on one dombra string (which is typical of Kurmangazi) and develops rapidly crowned in a vivid culmination which may be called a song of victory. It is so striking, powerful, and impetuous that it immediately conquers the attention and will of a listener. The rhythmic and metric composition of this kyuy reminds one of popular songs about a horseman who meets sunrise and sunset on horseback. This song is repeated several times during the performance of the kyuy like a **refrain** that divides the kyuy into several parts. In contrast with Zataevich’s version, here every part internally completely differs from the others and talks about specific things. One can hear a song of victory, thud of horses’ **hoofs**, chase, and combat. The kyuy has several waves that end in culmination. The use of the second-long interval that was noted by Zataevich is typical and expressive. I think that if Zataevich would hear Kabigojin’s version, he would be able to appreciate the outstanding musical composition.

The clarity of the ideological content of Kurmangazi’s kyuy and their provocative influence on people put Khan protégés and Tsarist official on guard, as was already mentioned. ...

People say that during one of his trips as a professional kyuyishi, Kurmangazi came to an aul that belonged to bayi Ak-shok during his daughter’s wedding. In the thick of joy Kurmangazi was so much carried away that he forgot about precautions. When he heard a call for a race, Kurmangazi didn’t think long and decided to nominate his horse Kalban-kulak.

He put one of the local boys who already participated in the races several times on the back of his horse. No local people knew about it. People were standing at the finish line. They already saw a silhouette of a horse that galloped far ahead of others. That was Kalban-kulak.

A person named Jansha, son of bayi Shiman, came to the wedding with his yurt. He was very upset with the results of the race because his horse Kertobel came in

**coda -**

a passage which brings a movement or a separate piece to a conclusion through prolongation

**refrain -**

is the line or lines that are repeated in music or in verse

**hoof -**

the hard part at the bottom of a horse’s leg

second place only because of the help of Shiman's relatives who, sitting on fresh horses, dragged the exhausted Kertobel by bridles and tail across the finish line.

Jansha decided to take revenge and called Kurmangazi for a *kurse* (wrestling) with his "court" wrestler. Kurmangazi agreed. Proud paluan Jansha stepped forward. He looked like a camel with blood-shot eyes. Kurmangazi approached him with no fear. Ignoring the rules of wrestling, Jansha grappled Kurmangazi, trying to put him down with a quick throw and not giving him an opportunity to fight back. He threw Kurmangazi three times and each time Kurmangazi got back on his feet. After the third throw Kurmangazi asked him for his turn to attack. He lifted the paluan above his head, threw him and jumped over his head as according to the popular belief that doing this helps take strength from an enemy. Thus, Jansha was defeated twice. Moreover, the bayi's daughter, Zipa, sent her servant to fetch Kurmangazi and for a long time she listened to his wonderful *kyuys* in her *otau* (a yurt for newlyweds) surrounded by her girlfriends. Jansha swore to take revenge on Kurmangazi. The fact that during his wrestling with the paluan Kurmangazi several times called on the rebellious spirit of Isatai, embittered Jansha even more. The audacious *kyuyishi* also reminded him that Jansha had helped the authorities to send Jahi, Isatai's 14 year-old son into exile to Siberia. Jansha ordered his *dzhigits* to catch and bind Kurmangazi but after being repulsed by their powerful adversary, they guiltily returned to their master. The resentful Jansha returned to Urda and plotted new schemes against Kurmangazi. The bayi pursued the *kyuyishi* like a shadow.

Once, in the evening, when Kurmangazi was playing *dombra* and was carried away with music, Jansha was able to catch him unawares. Kurmangazi was put in the Urda jail and accused of stealing horses.

Kurmangazi languished in jail for one year. There he played *dombra*, composed new *kyuys* and that's why all the prisoners liked him and tried to help free him.

There is a legend about the power of Kurmangazi's *kyuys*. Once when Kurmangazi played his "**Erten, ketem**" *kyuy*, one of the officials who liked and understood *dombra* music passed by his prison cell. That official later told his co-workers that in that music he clearly heard a horse race, the stomp of horses' hooves and saw a horseman as if with his own eyes. That night Kurmangazi ran away.

Wandering through the steppe, Kurmangazi came to the aul of some Kemel-Ture who severely persecuted all the *kyuyishi*'s relatives who lived at Kzyl-Kurt. Kurmangazi accidentally discovered Aksur-at, his enemy's horse tied to a *beldey*. Kurmangazi saddled it and went away. Knowing that now he could not stay in the Bukeev horde, he thought about crossing the Ural River to the land of Maly Zhuz. He knew that without permission from the Temporary Council and Border Commission he was not allowed to cross the border dividing the zhuzs. He also knew that these authorities would not grant him such permission as he was already included on the list of horse thieves and *barymtachi*. But remembering a proverb that "risk is a boat that will cross a sea" Kurmangazi crossed the Ural in the place called **Tas keshu** and went in the

**erten, ketem** -  
I will run away tomorrow  
**tas keshu** -  
stone passing

direction of Mangyshlak. Leaving his persecutors behind, Kurmangazi went everywhere as a welcome guest. He performed his burning *kyuys* and talked about his experience in prison and at liberty. At that time he also composed new *kyuys*.

... At the beginning of 1850s, Kurmangazi returned to his Motherland. Believing that during his five-year absence the situation might have changed, he crossed the Ural River without any precautions and came to the Bukeev horde. Here Kurmangazi found Abubakir Akbaev and asked him to repay his debt to Sagyrbai who had worked for him as a shepherd for a long time. But Akbaev did not want to hear about repaying the debt to Kurmangazi's father. He ordered his people to tie and beat up the impertinent *kyuyishi*. Kurmangazi fought off Akbaev's *dzhigits* and told him: "One can behead a person but there is no such custom as to cut out a person's tongue". He finished his speech with a poem:

*Lord God, I'm not guilty  
I didn't touch Aybek's herds.  
I'd like to meet you in the steppe,  
Because no words are necessary for punishing a mongrel.*

After insulting his enemy, Kurmangazi left Akbaev's aul and no-one dared seek after him. For a long time Akbaev hunted down Kurmangazi and his *dzhigits* were once able to catch the *kyuyishi*, tie him up and send him to the Ural prison. Here Kurmangazi met a Russian prisoner, the worker Lavochkin, who was imprisoned "for insulting the white Tsar." Despite the fact that Kurmangazi barely knew any Russian, these two spoke with each other, using mime and gestures at first. Little by little Kurmangazi began to understand Russian and even tried to speak it using separate incoherent words. Lavochkin comforted Kurmangazi, encouraged his rebellious spirit, and told him about the suffering of the Russian workers. From his side Kurmangazi told his friend about his mother who always supported her son – a musician and rebel:

"Akbaev's people caught me, put into chains, tied me to a cart and wanted to send me to Uralsk. My mother came to me to say goodbye and suddenly I began to cry. Then my mother, instead of mourning for me, came closer and slapped me in the face saying: "I thought I gave birth to a man, not a big cry baby".

These words became ingrained in Kurmangazi's mind. The *kyuyishi* who couldn't even write could think of nothing but his mother and her love of her playing *dombra*, so he created a musical image of that wonderful woman – the "**Kairan sheshem**" *kyuy*.

In Dina Nurpeisova's version, "Kairan sheshem" begins with a theme of deep meditation like a voice of a person longing for freedom. Then, following his resolute manner, Kurmangazi suddenly changes the nature of the music as if the dark clouds had begun to dissipate and the bright sun becomes visible. The *kyuy*'s tempo increases, its movements are impetuous and restless. Maybe it is a picture of the legendary escape. There is no doubt that in his "Kairan sheshem" *kyuy* Kurmangazi tries to create an image of a courageous, firm woman – Al-koi. The hard thoughts of a prisoner dreaming about and hoping for freedom and his confidence in his strength are central ideas of "Kairan sheshem" *kyuy*.

There is a legend saying that the mother of Kurmangazi's friend, Lavochkin, also was a courageous woman who sent them a steel saw blade for sawing through bars and chains to escape, and escape they did.

Kurmangazi and Lavochkim shared their plan of escape with a jailer who had sympathized with them for a long time. Of course, they were afraid of causing trouble for him, but the jailer truly was an honest man and one dark night helped them run away.



Kurmangazi knew the paths and roads well and led his friend quickly and confidently, and when morning came they were already far away. Besides, the jailer who helped them had sent their pursuers the wrong way. In the steppe the fugitives took off their chains and after one day they met a fisherman who was Lavochkin's acquaintance. They stayed there to rest. After somewhat regaining his strength Kurmangazi, took the dombra in his hands. Lavochkin noticed his friend's emotions and left him alone. Kurmangazi composed a new kyuy dedicated to his Russian friends and his mother. In this kyuy he expressed his deep gratitude to his friend for saving him from life in prison. People called that the "Laushken" kyuy (Lavochkin). The legend says that when the last note died away Lavochkin approached his friend and saw the strong man crying. People say that "Tears pour down when a person is sad and when a person is happy." Kurmangazi told Lavochkin: "Mothers are mothers, and whatever language she speaks everyone understands her. I dedicate this kyuy to a Russian mother as a sign of filial gratitude. My kyuy is understood by all people. My kyuy will express my feelings more clearly than I can do it myself." He played his kyuy and Lavochkin heard the echo of his native Russian song. They spent another day at the fisherman's house and then hugged each other and parted for good.

Kurmangazi returned to his native aul. At first he wandered around playing his dombra and performing his latest works "Kairan sheshem" and "Laushken", explaining them and telling the story of the kyuy. Being a good story-teller and having a rich sense of humor, he ridiculed officials, governors and jailers under the guise of kyuy stories. He became very popular. People liked him. The Ural authorities had assumed that he wouldn't come back to his native land. Kurmangazi changed his last name and took the name of Dyuysambaev, and got a job as a day laborer for bayi Kulmankui. All summer he cut hay and in the evenings played dombra, performing kyuy that he claimed he had learned from Kurmangazi. A man of outstanding strength, he left the other laborers behind during field work. During mowing, when hay-makers move in a row, he was close on the heels of those in front of him. No one wanted to stand in front of Kurmangazi. The bayi appreciated the work of his laborer and gave him a yearling horse, hoping that he would stay with him. He never suspected Kurmangazi's diligence was caused by his desire to temporarily keep peaceful relations with the high and mighty. Following Lavochkin's advice he tried to gain a reputation as a dumb laborer so that his name would not be entered in the list of horse thieves where, as he already knew, the authorities readily entered rebels that disagreed with the existing regime.

During one year Kurmangazi's bad horse turned into a beautiful stallion. It was of Turkmen breed, but bayi Kulman had not known about this before. Horses of Turkmen breed look very plain in their younger years and start to gain their distinctives only after they turn three.

But Kurmangazi couldn't stay in his native land for a long time. The Orenburgh authorities circulated a letter about his detention. Abubakir Akbaev, an agent of the Tsarist regime expressed a desire to catch him and began to track Kurmangazi.

The news that Kurmangazi was now the owner of a wonderful Turkmen racer reached Akbaev and he sent his accomplices to take it away from him. Akbaev thought that Kurmangazi had stolen a horse from someone else and now he could be arrested as a horse thief. Two of Akbaev's accomplices, who were considered strong men in their aul, came to Kulman's aul to punish Kurmangazi. He knocked them both off of their horses and told them: "You can tell Abubakir what you saw. I earned this horse." Kurmangazi understood very well that he needed to go into hiding as soon as possible, but before doing so, he gathered his friends and performed his new kyuy dedicated to Akbaev's injustice. Henceforth, Akbaev's name becomes a symbol of forces hostile to ordinary people. This kyuy is known as "Akbai". In it, Kurmangazi talks about the difficult life of oppressed and suffering people with a melody that rises like waves. But the following melody contrasts strongly with a strong heroic theme, as if proclaiming the nearness of light and the victory of justice.

This time Kurmangazi said goodbye to his mother with a heavy heart. Al-koi was getting older. Weary with constant anxiety for her son, she suffered the forthcoming parting. But remembering his mother's words about "a cry-baby" Kurmangazi bid farewell to her with a cheerful kyuy that he called "Goodbye, mother, goodbye" ("Aman bol, sheshem, aman bol").

Listeners who know Kazakh repeat after the musician: "Aman bol, sheshem, aman bol". It seems that the kyuy clearly pronounces the words that Kurmangazi told his mother: "Aman bol, sheshem, aman bol."

According to another version, Kurmangazi and Lavochkin's escape was unsuccessful. While in jail, Kurmangazi not only continued to compose his kyuy's but knowing that they gain power only when heard by people, he persistently sought freedom.

Once, at nighttime, a warden who was a local and knew the Kazakh way of life and customs and spoke Kazakh, summoned Kurmangazi to the jail's management to listen to his playing and asked: "Do you play Russian songs as well?" In response Kurmangazi played "**Korobeiniki**", "**Barynya**", and "**Svetit mesyatz**". From that time, the warden allowed Kurmangazi some freedom. But at that time a decree of the governor-general was issued calling to account persons who had committed crimes against the 1844 law. According to that law Kurmangazi was to be sent to Siberia for suspected horse thieving. Kurmangazi understood the complexity of his situation and decided to escape from jail at all costs. He told his mother about his intention to escape as soon as possible and she managed to pass her son a steel saw that she had hidden in a loaf of bread. At first Kurmangazi tried to saw through his shackles but the sound of the sawing and the clink of chains was so loud that he decided to escape shackled. Shortly before the day when he was to be deported, Kurmangazi came back from work with the other prisoners. The night was dark and moonless and Kurmangazi pretended that he had rubbed his foot sore with the shackles and lagged behind his friends.

With a strong blow he knocked his escort down, snatched his weapon and started to run, holding his shackles with one hand. Darkness was an effective ally for the fugitive. The pursuers lost track of him and he safely reached a secluded ravine where, with great difficulty, he was able to saw off his shackles. Trying to run away from jail as far as possible, he quickly walked to a familiar place. He spent a night hiding in a birch-tree and by sunrise he reached the yurt of a poor man. Common people are the most reliable defenders of the oppressed and they helped hide him.

Kurmangazi tells of his escape with his dombra in his "**Turmeden kashkan**" kyuy. Frantic movements, running, and galloping are its main features.

**korobeiniki** -  
peddlers

**barynya** -  
madam

**svetit mesyatz** -  
shining moon

**turmeden kashkan** -  
escape from prison



When performing this kyuy Kurmangazi often said: “When I composed it I was dreaming about freedom, dreaming about days when I’ll be back among you.” He then performed another kyuy called “**Kisen ashcan**” explaining, “I wrote it when I was liberating myself from chains to tell people that the will of man for freedom is stronger than any chains in the world.” Finally, Kurmangazi depicts the third stage of his struggle for freedom in his “**Kyzyl kaiyn**” kyuy. “This kyuy is about a birch-tree that gave me shelter in its branches and hid me from my pursuers”, said Kurmangazi. “This kyuy is about my native steppe, glorious dzhigits, my people who extended a helping hand and saved me from a terrible death.”

After escaping from prison, Kurmangazi returned to his motherland, to the Naryn sands. On his way home early one morning he came to a poor fisherman’s shack that was standing lonely on the bank of a river and asked for a drink. The hospitable hosts gave the wanderer the best they had: hot tea with camel’s milk. To thank them, the fugitive took a dombra that was hanging on the kerek and began to play.

To the host’s question: “What was that music that you played?” Kurmangazi answered that he had composed the kyuy in their honor and wanted to call it “Balkaimak” (honey and cream), because, although the dastarkhan was not rich, the tea was served from pure hearts and for him it was like very tasty honey with cream”. After saying that Kurmangazi told them who he was. Then, speaking to the host’s daughter who had prepared the tea, Kurmangazi added: “I dedicate this kyuy to you, little sister. Your tea is sweeter than honey.” Embarrassed by such a generous gift, the girl opened a trunk and took out a beautiful dombra decorated with feathers. She asked Kurmangazi to repeat the kyuy and copied it immediately.

“Balkaimak” kyuy is known in two versions that are very similar. It was a lyrical kyuy that praised the beauty and sentimental nature of a girl who moved the fugitive’s heart with her gentleness and hospitality.

By the middle of the 1850s Kurmangazi was tired of being constantly hunted and went to the Emba River (Zhem in Kazakh). He wanted to see the batyrs Turemurat, Narynbai and Uten, distant relatives of Sagyrbai who lived far from the area where Kurmangazi was well known. He left his mother and wife (by that time he had married Igilik’s daughter, Ayes. Igilik was from the Isengul-Berish clan) with his friend Zhalel and started on a journey. Legends about Kurmangazi staying with his relatives are reminiscent of fairy-tales about epic heroes. They said that after many days Kurmangazi reached their aul and didn’t find them as they had gone to another aul to investigate some petty issue. Kurmangazi decided to follow them and when he came to the aul he saw several white yurts that were apparently put up for the batyrs. Many horses were tied up and spears put behind the beldey. Kurmangazi did not think long about it, took a spear, thrust it into earth, tied his horse Kula-kask to it and entered the nearest tent. No-one paid attention to his greetings as everyone in the yurt was engaged in important negotiations. Only after quite some time did Narynbai notice Kurmangazi who was still standing at the door: “Come up and sit at the place of honor, dzhigit.

**kisen ashcan** -  
liberating from chains  
**kyzyl kaiyn** -  
red birch

Where are you from?” He noticed that the traveler had come from afar and his lips were parched. Narynbai ordered koumiss for him. Kurmangazi drank the koumiss in one go and addressed the people citing a poem:

I came to you from Naryn. My Motherland is so beautiful: There are flocks of noisy birds and lakes overgrown with cane. There are my friends from childhood, I love this land, but I have left everything behind, batyrs, I came here as a fugitive, because this is my fate. My only hope lies in you, Turemurat and Narynbai

Turemurat didn't let him finish: “Your words are like honey, and, probably, you are a good man yourself. If you want to become our brother, we will be more than happy!” Kurmangazi was very grateful to them for such a warm welcome and stayed in the batyrs' aul as their blood brother for a long time. The legend says that no shooting at “altyn kabak”, no “**paluan kurse**”, and no racing was held without Kurmangazi's participation and everywhere he showed his dominancy. Once, the batyrs went to hunt wild goats. Their dzhigits couldn't hit running saigas, but Kurmangazi hit them with his first shot. Then one of the dzhigits said that it happened “by accident”. When Kurmangazi hit the saiga for the second time, another dzhigit said that “probably this saiga's fate was to die.” Kurmangazi was annoyed by the behavior of Turemurat's dzhigits and when he saw the third saiga within gunshot, he asked one of dzhigits:

– Tell me where to aim? Head or leg?

The dzhigit said:

– Aim at its leg!

Kurmangazi fired a shot. The saiga began to limp but tried to follow the herd. Instead of running after it, Kurmangazi stopped deep in thought and said: “Is she the only one wounded by life? Is helplessness and defenselessness the destiny of animals only? Are there not enough wounded and maimed among my people?” And Kurmangazi composed a kyuy right there dedicated to all the wounded, maimed and defenseless, and named it “**Aksak kiik**”.

This showed a distinguished feature of Kurmangazi – an ability to grasp the essence of life. Often events that seemed insignificant on the outside gave rise to deep musical images.

It is remarkable that “Aksak kiik” kyuy contains neither grief nor passive observations of other's suffering. With expressiveness peculiar to Kurmangazi's musical language this kyuy seems to tell us: “love life and love freedom as the saiga loves the steppe. Those who are ready to struggle for life will win.”

There is a legend that batyr Turemurat violated Kazakh common law and got married at his own will rather than according to the will of his parents. He married Kyz-Danai who was famous for her beauty and wit. Regardless of the fact that she had been engaged to another man since birth, Turemurat took her from her parents by force. Together with his dzhigits he attacked the aul where Kyz-Danai lived and took her with him. Several years passed before dzhigits, armed with pikes and pole-axes, attacked Turemurat's aul. Those dzhigits were from the aul of Kyz-Danai's fiancée who had given a large bride-price for her. No one except Kurmangazi had time to mount their horse. While the batyrs armed themselves, Kurmangazi alone fought the enemies off, not allowing them to get close to Kyz-Danai's otau. After a violent battle the enemy ran back to their aul. Kurmangazi took his dombra and composed his kyuy that depicts Turemurat's battle for Kyz-Danai. This kyuy became well known among the people under the names “Turemurat” and “Kyz-Danaidyn kyr-ryny” (Battle for Kyz-Danai). This kyuy is so vivid that a listener can picture the battle without any need for explanation. A dashing race gives place to a song of joy; moments of peace

alternate with images of brutal battle. Performance of the kyuy requires a lot of skill. Not just any dombra player can master this virtuoso piece. When it is performed by Dina Nurpeisova, it is notable for its special expression.

The legend says that Kurmangazi had left Turemurat's aul as he was insulted by the dzhigits who were jealous of his success. Several days after the battle for Kyz-Danai, Turemurat organized a festival and many people came to the celebration. After races and other valiant entertainment an oyin (performance) began. A song competition was first. Some dzhigits who had held a grudge against Kurmangazi for a long time found a foolish girl, Shoken, and persuaded her to perform a song addressed to Kurmangazi and ridicule him as a tramp who, like a dog, hangs around places where he will be well fed. They composed the song and Shoken sang it in the presence of many people.

*Only a pale is left of bayis' yurt,  
Only carrion is left of a fox.  
And you sold yourself for food,  
Running after your nose like a dog.  
Bustling about as fast as your legs carry you when you see a scuffle,  
And whimpering when someone beats you with a stick.  
You are a straying tramp,  
I begrudge even wasting words on you.*

Kurmangazi certainly understood that Shoken had sung what others had told her, but he took his dombra and answered the girl with a poem, not sparing her feelings in the slightest:

*If no fire burns in the dzhigit's heart,  
Such a dzhigit spends all his time at home.  
People everywhere respect brave men –  
And the whole world is open for me,  
My dombra will earn me love and honor.  
And you are manipulated by others, like a puppet.  
You compared me to a dog –  
Don't complain when you hear rude words, sister!*

Narynbai came to the defense of their guest's honor and the ashamed girl ran away. But Kurmangazi was so insulted that he didn't sleep all night. Early in the morning he woke up Turemurat and told him of his decision to return to the Bukeev horde. Kurmangazi struggled with two feelings – on the one side he felt attachment to Turemurat, and on the other – bitterness at the insult. In parting, he took his dombra and played a new kyuy that he dedicated to his parting with the hospitable batyrs. This kyuy was disseminated among the people under two names:

“**Krshtasu**” and “**Bozkangyr**”. From beginning to the end one can hear a theme of tender human love in this kyuy; it seems like the music radiates warmth coming to the very heart. In some places one can detect themes of struggle and ardent contradiction peculiar to Kurmangazi, but the dissonant combination used for expressing them does not last long. One can assume that it is a reflection of the struggle between two contradictory feelings in the kyuyishi’s heart that the legend is talking about.

Kurmangazi loaded his horse with his dombra and gun, and left after saying goodbye to the batyrs. He reached Zhideli without any problems. By that time Kurmangazi had become very famous in the horde and more and more popular. As before, Kurmangazi went to the auls, played kyuy that he had composed during his last trip, told stories about composing “Bozkangyr”, “Turemurat”, “Kyz-Danai” kyuy and concluded by singing in a low voice his song “Ash bory” that he composed after his competition with Shoken and his yearning for Zhidely.

Unending yearning for native places accompanied Kurmangazi in his wanderings and he returned to his Motherland risking capture by the warders again. In this song he compares his return with a flight of an animal being hunted. He introduces the “**Ash bery**” song with the words: “My dears! I’m not a singer and I’m not an akyn. My song is the voice of my heart that was yearning for my Motherland when I was wandering.”

*It is better to be a wolf being hunted down,  
Then live in captivity as a contended, fat dog.  
Although I roamed around the steppe as a saiga, – Now I’m coming back home.  
There would be enough food for everyone in the aul,  
If there were no treason.  
No, Kurmangazi will never surrender and bow his head to fate.  
I had the chance to be in many bloody battles... No enemy can escape my revenge*

But it was his fate to face hostility and treason again as he was was thrown into jail. A detachment of the Ural forces drove all the cattle away from Kurmangazi’s aul under the pretense that damage had been caused to pastures by the Kzyl-Kurt clan. **Perturbed** by such obvious violence, Kurmangazi strove to settle accounts with the offenders and together with his brother Baigazy and several other dzhigits he drove off nine horses from a herd that belonged to Seitkulovs’ Cossacks who at that time were serving at the Glininskaya mosque. A report about this case was filed to the Temporary Council and in 857 the case was transferred from one institution to another: from the Temporary Council to the Orenburgh Border Commission, from there to the Orenburgh governor general. Finally, it was dismissed upon an order of the Orenburgh governor general, Perovsky.

After he was liberated from prison, Kurmangazi safely came to Zhidely where he stayed with his friend, Zhalel, who welcomed kyuyishi as usual. But Kurmangazi noticed that his friend was worried about something and he immediately understood that something bad happened with his family. He asked him straight: “If something happened with my family you will tell me honestly if you’re my friend. I will face all hardships like a man.” Zhalel told him that three days earlier a detachment from the Ural forces took his wife, Ayes, and their young son, Kazy, as **hostages**. Without wasting a minute Kurmangazi went to the herd that belonged to a neighboring bayi, took two horses and went after his wife... Three days later, after asking shepherds and horse-herders, Kurmangazi got on the track of the detachment. Late one night he saw a detachment resting in front of him. A full moon prevented Kurmangazi

**krshhtasu** -

farewell

**bozkangyr** -

vagabond

**ash bery** -

hungry wolf

**perturbed** -

greatly disturbed; uneasy or  
anxious

**hostage** -

a person or entity (group, even  
pet) which is held by a captor

from approaching it secretly and he had to crawl so the soldiers would not notice him. Kyuyishi saw that soldiers were fast asleep, their horses were grazing and their guns were collected in pyramids, and Ayes sat with their baby on her lap drowsily. He whistled softly. Ayes woke up immediately and when she heard another whistle she covered herself with a dark robe and gave her breast to Kazy so he wouldn't cry, and crawled to her husband. Kurmangazi took her to the horses and then crawled back to the guns and took one of them "just in case". When the soldiers woke up in the morning they saw that Ayes and the baby were gone. They looked for her in the neighbourhood, asking shepherds who didn't tell them anything. When they came back to Uralsk, the chief of the detachment reported that Kurmangazi's wife ran away with the baby when they were staying at that place and it looked as if they had been killed by animals, because in such a deserted place she wouldn't be able to go far on foot. That incident became a topic for a new Kurmangazi's kyuy called "**Byktim-Byktim**".

In the early 1860s Dauletkerei Shigaev (aka Bapas) was appointed ruler of the Nogai and Kzyl-Kurt clans. That event somewhat changed Kurmangazi's status. Their first meeting didn't bring anything good for Kurmangazi. Dauletkerei was brought up in delicate conditions and at first sight Kurmangazi seemed to him a very rude man who didn't know the usual norms of the steppe way of life. Also Dauletkerei, a relative of Khan Jangir, couldn't have liked the fact that Kurmangazi always remembered Isatai and Mahambet. But restless Kurmangazi often quoted Mahambet and especially those extracts from his songs that ridiculed Khan Jangir. Nevertheless, a certain respect to Kurmangazi prompted Dauletkerei to take the first step towards conciliation.

One day, several **aksakals** and dzhigits from the Kzyl-Kurt clan, including Kurmangazi, came to Dauletkerei's aul to solve some land issues. During breaks in negotiations, Kurmangazi and his student, Kokbala, played a kyuy, and Dauletkerei couldn't help but give Kurmanagazi his due. Impressed by their game Dauletkerei who was a very good dombra player and composer himself, satisfied the request of Kzyl-Kurt clan, and asked Kurmangazi and Kokbala to stay so they could enjoy their music. He saw Kurmangazi as an outstanding performer and composer. Until late at night Dauletkerei and Kurmangazi sat facing each other performing their kyuy. Dauletkerei's confidants were not happy. They thought that Dauletkerei was of blue blood and shouldn't play with Kurmangazi as if he was an equal. For his part, Kurmangazi highly appreciated the mastery of Dauletkerei-Bapas. Once, after Dauletkerei performed a kyuy, Kurmangazi asked him: "What is this kyuy? It is so melodious!" Dauletkerei explained that he played his composition called "**Bulbul**". Kurmangazi there and then composed a new kyuy on the subject of "Bulbul" and told Bapas that it was a new "Bulbul" born from his "Nightingale". And then Dauletkerei exclaimed: "This is not "Bulbul", but "Bulbuldyn kurgyry"!"

Even earlier Dauletkerei had not always followed his rank as a governor and devoted a lot of time to his dombra. But now, after meeting Kurmangazi, they went to auls together. Once, both of them came to an aul where a famous woman – a dombra

**byktim-byktim** -

bending and bending

**aksakal** -

literally "white bearded men"  
that refers to the old and wise  
of the community

**bulbul** -

nightingale

player, Aidjan-kyz – lived. She was at home. Despite the feudal serfdom of women at that time, she behaved with ease and went to places where men gathered: games, festivals, and competitions. People respected her and only some representatives of the nobility and deeply religious people thought that her behavior seemed frivolous.

Aidjan-kyz gave her guests a cordial welcome, moreover they were her “comrades-in-arts”. Bapas asked her to perform several ancient kyuyys but only after long persuasion from older kyuuyshi did she agree to perform her own kyuy that bore her name. Admiring her skillfulness Kurmangazi took his dombra and composed a new kyuy in her honor and as a token of his kind attitude to her. Kurmangazi wanted to leave a memory about a Kazakh girl who, despite her deprived status, developed folk art. Kurmangazi wanted to give his kyuy a name worthy of that wonderful girl. And Bapas, who was keeping silent the whole time, said that Kurmangazi’s kyuy was like Aidjan-kyz’s fate and decided to name it “**Aida, bulbul Aidjan-kyz**”.

Thus, the three kyuuyshi composed the new kyuy that people praise in memory of their meeting. Such meetings played a tremendous role in the development of folk music as they substituted modern sharing of creative experience: literature about music, public concerts and, musical schools.

Kurmangazi liked “**Zhiger**”, the kyuy composed by Dauletkerei-Bapas very much. As with “Bulbul”, Kurmangazi composed his own kyuy on the subject of “Zhiger”. Bapas very much enjoyed the new composition of the kyuuyshi. Certainly, these kyuyys of the same name have not only something in common but also have distinctive differences because of the performing techniques of Dauletkerei and Kurmangazi. Recorded versions of Kurmangazi’s “Zhiger” are performed by Dina Nurpeisova and Gilman Hairushev.

Around that time Kurmangazi had composed “Nazym” kyuy (Nazym is a girl’s name). A dombra player who performed this kyuy for us didn’t know anything about the story of its composition, but during one of our meetings, Dina told us that once Kurmangazi and Kokbala were passing by the cemetery and he noticed a group of people. Kurmangazi wanted to know what had happened and headed their horse toward them. He learned that these people were burying a girl who had died the previous afternoon from a blow delivered by a camel when she was milking it. Remembering stories of prisoners about true and suspected death and that in the case of suspected death it is better to wait a little before burial, Kurmangazi asked the girl’s parents to wait at least until evening. Many people didn’t like such impudence from the direction of a stranger, especially the mullah who was ready to say the last prayer. He told Kurmangazi: “I have never seen dead people resurrected before. Stranger, you repeat the words of infidels. God will punish you in the next world.” Kurmangazi answered him: “Mullah, you have probably already profited from this funeral. We will not take from you what you’ve already received. And it is too early to say what will happen to either you or me in the other world.” Then, the parent’s of the deceased girl spoke up: “Let’s comply with the request of the stranger, as he came from afar. Let’s wait.” The agonizing suspense hung heavy. Young people forgot about the old people’s grief and laughed at the mullah looking at the stranger with curiosity. Kurmangazi dismounted, came to the girl and took her pulse. Suddenly he flinched and cried at the top of her voice: “Suyunshi!” After some time the girl stirred. People began to think the Kurmangazi was a sorcerer. The mullah ran away murmuring a prayer. Kokbala gave the girl a drink of koumiss from his torsyk. They quickly brought the girl’s clothes from the aul and took her home. There she finally came to her senses. Kurmangazi stayed with her parents for several days. Nazym gave him her favorite horse, Sary-at, and said: “You, Kureke,

**aida, bulbul Aidjan-kyz** -  
take a risk, you are a nightin-  
gale, Aidjan

**zhiger** -  
energy

have become my second father. I will be grateful to you forever.” Dina told us that she saw Nazym and in her old age she still spoke about Kurmangazi with awe. Old people said that the girl’s name really was Nazym. Quite probably Kurmangazi composed his kyuy based on that incident.

At the end of 1860s Kurmangazi stayed in Zhidely for longer than usual. That became possible owing to the protection of Dauletkerei-Bapas. Dauletkerei enjoyed authority and tried to protect Kurmangazi as much as he could. Despite their hatred of Kurmangazi, Akbaev and his followers didn’t dare attack him openly. But still, one dark night Akbaev sent his accomplices to steal Sary-at. Kurmangazi came to Akbaev and asked him to return the horse. But Akbaev had not only taken the horse but also insulted Kurmangazi with rude words. “Why do you need such a nice horse when you’re a worn out tent that is black as resin and substitutes for the starry sky. You should be called ‘Kurymbai’ because your tent is covered by “**kurym-kshz**”. Incensed with anger, Akbaev even beat Kurmangazi, but Kurmangazi kept silent and suffered in order not to complicate his life even more. Then Akbaev’s dzhigits attacked him and beat him up until he lost consciousness. Kurmangazi regained consciousness only late at night and ran away, but not before he swore to take revenge. Kurmangazi spent several days in bed but as soon as he recovered he went to Akbaev’s herd and stole 50 horses in broad daylight. No one dared pursue him and Kurmangazi composed a song where he ridicules Abubakir Akbaev and calls himself Kurymbai.

*Ask me, what is my name and I'll answer that my name is Kurymbai,  
I will not burn in fire or drown in water.  
He stole your herd, you proud bayi.  
But he will never do harm to a poor man.*

According to the legend, Akbaev sent 26 elders to look for Kurmangazi. Later he sent 7 governors and 80 elders. All elders say that Kurmangazi didn’t come to their land because they gave him shelter. Kurmangazi told Akbaev that he was safe and sound, and waited for when Akbaev would return Sary-at to him. When he would, then Kurmangazi would return his horses to him. Akbaev had to concede and they exchanged horses. But Akbaev was very obtrusive and didn’t leave Kurmangazi alone. He bribed one of the elders, Sarykul Aailulov, and caught Kurmangazi with his help. Together they drew up a “peace agreement” where Kurmangazi, allegedly on behalf of all the people, was sentenced to deportation to Irkutsk as a socially-dangerous person. Kurmangazi was brought to Saratov on a cart to which a grey, tailless horse was harnessed. On the way Kurmangazi composed his “**Boz-sholak**” kyuy where he depicts his deprived status in the form of a horse being beaten mercilessly with a whip.

**kurym-kshz** -  
mat black with soot  
**boz-sholak** -  
grey and tailless

**SOURCE:** AKHP transtation: Ahmet Jubanov. Strings of centuries. Almaty, «Daik-Press» 2001, pp.29-70



**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What historic events influenced Kurmangazi to become an akyn, a kyuyshi, a folk singer and a performer?
2. What conditions contributed to the birth of the kyuyshi genre?
3. Why did Kurmangazi become an advocate of justice? Was he influenced by the conditions of his life or was it just a profession he chose for himself? Was his decision influenced by the spirit of music and the musician?
4. To what did Kurmangazi dedicate his first compositions? Why did various versions exist? How does Zataevich's interpretation differ from others? What peculiarities of the kyuy genre made its performer socially active and politically dangerous for local Kazakh feudal lords and the Tsarist regime?
5. How can music and musicians protect themselves? What human qualities are characteristic of musicians? Does the word "musician" always infer the superiority of moral strength and exclude physical power?
6. Can music be put in jail? Please comment on Kurmangazi's words: "One can behead a person, but there is no such custom as cutting out a person's tongue" How did imprisonment (jail) and freedom influence the kyuyshi's work?
7. How was the kyuy "Lame saiga" composed? How is it commented on by the author? How accurately can a musicologist correctly interpret music written by another person?
8. How can friendships and creative unions (of two men – Kurmangazi and Dauletkeri – and a famous woman – the dombra player, Aijan-kyz) influence the future life and work of the musicians?
9. What are the origins of 'kyuy' music? What are the origins and role of inspiration in composing music?

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

1. Compare the musical story of the 'kyuy' and Kurmangazi with the folk musical genres in your native countries.
2. Identify the differences between Kazakh steppe music and the traditional music of Central Asia.
3. What does all Central Asian music have in common? What are the origins and spirit of folk music?



## NAJIB MIRZA, FALAK, SONG OF THE SOUL

Najib Mirza, Falak: Song of the Soul, OXUS Aperture film, 2005. [www.oxusap.com](http://www.oxusap.com); [infor@oxusap.com](mailto:infor@oxusap.com); Run time: 15min.

Najib Mirza is an ethnomusical filmmaker from Canada, the director of the film “Herders’ Calling”, and the creator of a film about Falak, which is a traditional form of folk music common in Tajik mountain villages. Usually, Falak performances use folk and popular songs touching themes like separation of dear and beloved people. Currently, Falak is being transformed from folk music into songs of ensemble, (as a result of post-Soviet gigantism), which we will also discuss in the final chapter concerning the destiny Shash-maqam.

The theme of spiritual separation of the human soul from the source (God) is also central to Sufi tradition (Rumi, Mesnevi). In the preamble to this film, the author comments that Falak is performed in this film “in the tradition of Sufi poets such as Rumi and Omar Khayyam, three musicians in Tajikistan offer their interpretations of the meaning of the musical style called Falak, in words and in songs”.

We would like you to listen to the sounds and voices of the performers and try to understand the meanings of their songs and music, the way of implementing them, and the style compared with other musical traditions of mountain and valley music in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyz folk music: Shepherd’s song, Kambarkhan, Toktogul Satyrganov’s songs originating in komuz).

Comparative and ethnomusical studies of musical heritage in Central Asia helps us to understand many cultural, historical and anthropological issues which are common to all of Central Asia:

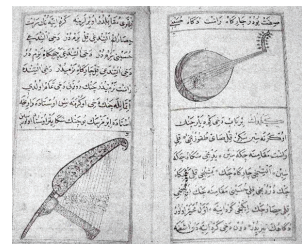
What are the similarities and differences between mountain music in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan?

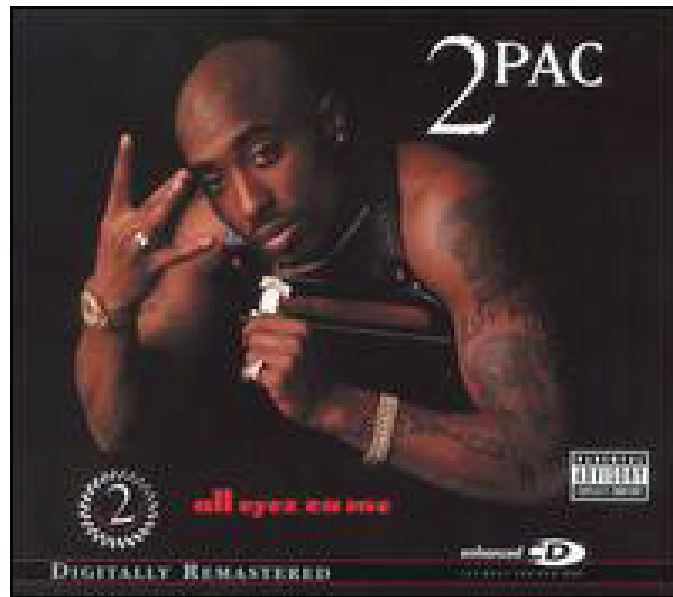
How can we differentiate between Tajik and Kyrgyz mountain folk music and the steppe music of the ‘kyuy’ in Kazakhstan?

What are the origins of Central Asian Folk music and what do you think about its propagation in the future?



**DAVLATMAND KHOLOV, GREATEST FALAK PERFORMER FROM TAJIKISTAN**





TUPAC SHAKUR ALL EYEZON ME.

## CHERYL L. KEYES : THE ROOTS AND STYLISTIC FOUNDATION OF THE RAP MUSIC TRADITION

Cheryl L. Keyes, Ph.D., of Indiana university, “is the author of *Rap music and Street Consciousness*, who received a CHOICE award for outstanding academic books in 2004. Her areas of specialty include African American music, gender, and popular music studies. Keyes has conducted extensive fieldwork on rap and hip-hop culture in Mali, West Africa, New York City, Detroit, Los Angeles, and London. Her research has been published in major journals such as *Ethnomusicology*, *folklore Forum*, *Journal of American Folklore*, and *The World of Music*. Her recent research includes a study on a piano performance tradition indigenous to East Texas and Southern Louisiana. She currently serves on the board of directors of the Society for Ethnomusicology as a member-at-large. In addition, Keyes is a composer-orchestrator and a pianist-flutist-vocalist who has performed and recorded with jazz clarinetist. Most recently, she has performed at such noted venues as the Hollywood Bowl and the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre where she made her debut as Musical-Artistic Director for the “Blues in the Summertime” concert, presented by Instrumental Women, summer 2006. She is near to completing her solo-debut CD, entitled “Let Me Take You There”, which ranges in musical styles from classical/jazz/pop/rhythm ‘n’ blues to African diasporic global pop”. [from: <http://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/people/keyes.htm>].

While reading this material, we would like you to think about the issues of the African roots of rap/hip-hop culture and discuss the dynamic character of the modern musical culture, the issues of the interrelationship between traditional and modern music and regional and international (global) music, and the issue of the ‘origin’ of particular music. To what extent can someone, or any nation or country demand ownership of the ‘originality’ and ‘purity’ of cultural artefacts, ideas, and inventions which now belong to the global community?



### THE AFRICAN NEXUS

“Most critics and scholars concur that rap music is a confluence of African American and Caribbean cultural expressions, such as sermons, blues, game songs, and toasts and toasting – all of which are recited in a chanted rhyme or poetic fashion. As Paul Gilroy observes, hip-hop culture grew out of the cross-fertilization of African American vernacular cultures with their Caribbean equivalents rather than springing fully formed from the entrails of the blues (1993:103). While rap artists forthrightly confirm an African American and Caribbean **nexus** by regarding rap as having a close resemblance to the Jamaican toast or “Jamaican rhymes”, they also view their music through a historical lens by which (West) Africa is primarily perceived as the place of origin for the rap music tradition.

When I asked about the origins of rap, several veteran rap artists pointed to Africa as a reference for its performance practices. Hip-hop’s proclaimed godfather Afrika Bambaataa indicated, “although it [rap] has been in the Bronx, it goes back to Africa because you had the chanting style of rappin” (Bambaataa interview). Elaborating further, Lumumba “Professor X” Carson refers to an African context

out of which he believes a style of rap was born: “Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, every Friday of the month, it was the duty of the grandfather in a tribe to sit down and bring all of the immediate children around him to rap. One of the instruments that was played while grandfather rapped his father’s existence was a guy playing the drum. I guess that’s why we are so into rap today” (Carson interview). When I occasionally mentioned to academics how rappers would locate Africa as the foundation of the rappin’ style, some of them immediately marveled at this while simultaneously wondering, “Who told them that?” Despite some queries by academicians about artists’ knowledge of the rap music-African nexus, Bambaataa and Carson’s statements suggest, nonetheless, that rappin’ is similar to the West African bardic tradition.

Beyond whatever traditions and history may have been passed down to African Americans through the oral traditions of their families and communities, the impact of a particular book published in the 1970s gave those who did have access to oral history a new means by which to understand their contemporary culture and practices through examining their heritage. The considerable contributions of this book may underlie the strong assertions that rhymin’ MCs make about the bard-rap continuum. The comparative literature scholar Thomas A. Hale notes that the West African bard’s rise in popularity in the United States can be attributed to the 1976 publication of Alex Haley’s *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. The televised version of *Roots*, which was produced as a miniseries in 1977, “drew the largest audience in the history of U.S. television” (Hale 1998:2). The series retold the story of Haley’s African ancestor, Kunte Kinte, who is said to have come from Gambia. *Roots* also stimulated African Americans’ interest in genealogy. *Roots* was followed by its miniseries sequel, *Roots: The Next Generations* (1979). An autobiographical sketch of Haley’s life as a journalist and novelist, the sequel revealed how he embarked upon his research for Kunte Kinte. In the last episode, Haley, played by the actor James Earl Jones, travels to Gambia where he is directed by the Ministry of Culture officials to a keeper of oral history, a griot, who would probably know the story of Kunte Kinte. Undoubtedly *Roots* informed viewers about the role African bards played as purveyors of the past, recorders and guardians of history, and scholars of African culture. Thomas A. Hale best summarizes the impact of *Roots*: “thanks to the continuing impact of *Roots*, West African griots have dramatically expanded their performance contexts. They have appeared on the stages of university auditoriums, in churches, and in television and recording studios in Paris, London, New York, and Tokyo” (1998:2). It would not be farfetched to presume that among the audiences of these performances were rappers, who recognized rap’s strong link to an old African practice, a practice whose influence they may have unconsciously adopted from their families, churches, and cultures. To understand why rappers identify with the role of the African bard, we must examine its historical context.

In traditional African societies, the bard is a storyteller-singer and above all a historian who chronicles the nation’s history and transmits cultural traditions and mores through performance. Early accounts of the bard can be found in the writings of the Syrian scholar al-’Umari and the memoirs of the Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta during the fourteenth century. Both al-’Umari’s work *Masalik al-Absar Fimamalik al-Amsar* (1337) and Ibn Battuta’s chronicle (1355) describe and praise a singer poet who serves as an intermediary and interpreter among a host of court poets. Al-’Umari cites the following about a sultan in Mali named Sulayman, the brother of the sultan Mansa Musa: “In front of him there stands a man to attend him, who is

the executioner ... and another, called sha'ir, 'poet', who is his intermediary (safr) between him and the people. Around all these are people with drums in their hands, which they beat" (al-'Umari in Levtzion and Hopkins 2000:265).

Several years following al-'Umari's visit, Ibn Battuta witnessed the following: "I arrived at the town of Mall, the seat of the king of the Sudan... I met the interpreter Dugha ... one of the most respected and important Sudanese. ... I spoke with Dugha the interpreter, who said: 'Speak with him, and I will express what you want to say in the proper fashion'" (Battuta in Levtzion and Hopkins 2000:288-89). Ibn Battuta noticed the importance of music affiliated with the interpreter and poets during council meetings and festivities associated with the sultan's court.

Inside the council-palace beneath the arches a man is standing. Anyone who wishes to address the sultan addresses Dugha and Dugha addresses that man standing and that man addresses the sultan. ... The sultan comes out of a door in the corner of the palace with his bow in his hand and his quiver between his shoulders. ... The singers come out in front of him with gold and silver stringed instruments (qunburi) in their hands. ... As he sits, the drums are beaten and the trumpets are sounded at the two festivals of the Sacrifice and the Breaking of the Fast... [a] seat is set up for Dugha and he sits on it and plays the instrument which is made of reed with little gourds under it, and sings poetry in which he praises the sultan and commemorates his expeditions and exploits and the women and the slave girls sing with him and perform with bows. On the feast day, when Dugha has finished his performance, the poets come. They are called jula, of which the singular is jail.

In traditional West African society, the bard is a member of a caste of artisans (i.e. blacksmiths, leather workers, etc.) known among the Mande as nyamakala. It is believed that whenever a bard utters a word or any member of the nyamakala performs a task within their respective profession, a powerful force called nyama is released. Westerners have often translated nyama as "malevolent force," which is partially correct. But as the linguist and Mande scholar Charles Bird puts it, Nyama is essentially associated with action, acts and the individual's capacity to act. For this reason, I prefer to translate it as the energy of action.

Whatever the act, the individual requires a certain amount of energy to perform it and the performance of the act itself releases a certain amount of energy. From the point of view of equilibrium, the energy of action is dangerous, since, if it is not appropriately controlled, it will lead to disequilibrium and upheaval

Speech itself is considered to contain this energy as denotes the expression Nyama be kuma la [or] "the energy of action is in speech." (1976:98)

When nyama is operative, a bard's utterance can transform chaos into peace or "transmute things and man himself" (Anyanwu 1976:576).

The words of bards abound in several quasi-song forms from epics – long narrative poems centered around a legendary hero, for example, Sunjata, a celebrated epic about the founder of the Mali Empire – to praise songs or poetry exalting a patron's namesake.

While performing, a bard makes use of formulaic expressions, poetic abstractions, and rhythmic speech – all recited in a chant like fashion that prefigures rap.

The effectiveness of a bard's performance is achieved through the use of the imagery that is created through the bard's words. As described by Leopold Senghor: " 'African-Negro imagery is therefore not imagery-equation but imagery-analogy, surrealist imagery. ... The elephant is force, the spider, prudence; horns are the moon and the moon is fecundity. Any representation is imagery, and imagery, I repeat, is not equation but symbol, ideogram.'" (quoted in Taylor 1977:25). Senghor's picturesque statement sheds light on the African aesthetic of verbal performance, that is, to paint pictures with words through the use of metaphors and symbols. Because of the masterful use of words, a bard is revered and highly respected in a community, a role claimed later in the Diaspora by the most adept MCs.

A bard's performance is further advanced through the use of musical accompaniment. Most storyteller-singers are accompanied by a harp-lute (e.g. kora) or percussion instrument, whose repetitive beat interlocks with the bard's voice. A bard may also be accompanied by an apprentice, the *naamu-sayer*, who responds by singing "naamu" in affirmation of the bard's words, adding an active interchange between the bard and *naamu-sayer*, who represents the voice of the listener

Although the bard seemingly gives credence to the historical roots of rap's poetic performance, this aspect is not confined to the African continent alone but is rather idiosyncratic to oral traditions throughout the African World, Diaspora, or what Paul Gilroy refers to as "The Black Atlantic" (1993). During the trans-Atlantic slave trade, many Africans, including bards, were transplanted to the Western world. In the New World, Africans were enslaved and forced to learn a culture and language different from their own. In the face of this alien context, blacks transformed the new culture and language of the Western world through an African prism. The way in which they modified, reshaped, and transformed African systems of thought resonates in contemporary culture. For example, many rap music performance practices represent what I call cultural reversioning: the foregrounding (consciously and unconsciously) of African-centered concepts. While rap music is considered an art form



**ALHAJI PAPA SUSSO  
AND MAMADOU SUSSO,  
GRIOTS FROM THE  
GAMBIA.**  
(photo by the author)



indigenous to the United States, it is important to discuss its roots in this context, which I trace to early African American expressive culture. I contend, however, that the convergence of African American and Caribbean form an expressive culture and the influence of the latter on the former in the making of rap music occurred in a more discernible manner during the 1970s. The following section discusses African American antecedents of rap music and the basis for some of rap's verbal performance practices. The Caribbean impact on rap and hip-hop will be addressed more fully in chapter 2 and subsequent chapters.

### THE CULTURAL REVERSION OF AFRICAN CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

Poetic speech remained paramount to African peoples in the New World, circumscribing their everyday experience. Essentially, “the communication system that evolved among the Africans [in America] stemmed from their creativity and their will to survive. Language quickly became not only a means of communication but also a device for personal presentation, verbal artistry, and commentary on life's circumstances. In effect the slave was... a poet and his language was poetic” (Baber 1987:78). Enslaved Africans devised ways by which to encode messages about their condition.

Black poetic speech is fluid and predicated on what communication scholars call *nommo*, “the power of the word,” a concept derived from the Dogon of Mali.<sup>4</sup> *Nommo* permeates speech and oral performance throughout the African Diaspora. In discussing the efficacy of *nommo*, Ceola Baber opines that it “generates the energy needed to deal with life's twists and turns; sustains our spirits in the face of insurmountable odds [and] transforms psychological suffering into external denouncements. .. and [into] verbal recognition of self-worth and personal attributes” (1987:83). These concepts will become important as we look to place rap music in a historical context.

Poetic language of African peoples eventually flourished in the New World as testimony of enslavement. Under the strictures of institutionalized slavery, blacks were forced into human bondage. Out of such conditions came black vernacular expressions that documented one's existence, hopes, and desires.

Slavery existed in varying degrees throughout the United States. The population of black enslaved persons in the North was relatively small compared to that in the South. Owing to the shorter summer months and growing antislavery sentiments, “there was no desire for slaves” (Franklin and Moss 1994:65). In the North, slavery has been described as “relatively mild, with slaves receiving fairly humane treatment and many considerations as to their personal rights” (63). A **smattering** of slave insurrections during the 1740s in areas like New York, however, resulted in statutes sometimes sanctioning severe punishments. Africanisms did thrive in the North, as

**smattering** -  
a small number or amount

documented with the reinterpretation of European-derived (Dutch) holiday celebrations such as Pinkster Day and the slave community's, "Lection Day." But by the 1790s slavery in the North was rapidly dwindling. "The decline of slavery in the region is revealed by the fact that by 1790 there were approximately 14,000 free blacks, comprising about 28 percent of the total black population" (85). Such demographics fueled the antislavery debates in the North. The South rose to become an economic empire on the backs of enslaved blacks. The historians John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr. note that when the indentured status of blacks expired between the 1640s and 1660s, southern colonists began to notice how they "fell behind in satisfying the labor need of the colony with Indians." After carefully scrutinizing the success of black slavery in the Caribbean, "it was then that the colonists began to give serious thought to the 'perpetual servitude' of blacks" (1994:56). By the 1660s slavery was institutionalized throughout the South, establishing the region as a growing reservoir of Africanisms as compared to the North. In many areas of the south, blacks outnumbered whites. As Franklin and Moss note,

*In 1790 Virginia had already taken the lead in black population, which it was to hold during the entire slave period. Virginia's 304,000 blacks were almost three times the number in South Carolina, Virginia's nearest rival. Most of the states in that region, however, presented a picture of an abundant black population. ... By the last census before the Civil War, the slave population had grown to 3,953,760! The states of the cotton kingdom had taken the lead, with 1,998,000 slaves within their borders. Virginia was still ahead in the number of slaves in a single state, but Alabama and Mississippi were rapidly gaining ground. (1994:84,123)*

Enslaved blacks lived primarily on plantations in separate quarters from whites, with occasional interaction. Within this context evolved what the historian John W. Blassingame terms "slave culture." The plantation or slave quarter, densely populated by blacks, comprised the "primary environment" of this culture, while blacks living in contact or close confines with whites made up the "secondary environment" (see Blassingame 1979:105-6). The former environment fostered the maintenance, reinforcement, and continuation of African-derived practices in music making, oral narratives, material culture, philosophy, and belief systems. When unsupervised by whites, blacks retreated to their traditions in such contexts as the "invisible church," secluded places in the woods aptly termed "brush harbors" or makeshift religious structures called "praise houses, and secular celebrations." While it is obvious that the art of preaching or sermonizing took precedent in black religious contexts, expressions that emerged out of secular or recreational pastimes included storytelling and song forms such as field hollers and work songs, precursors to the **blues**. Although the institution of slavery ended officially with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, African-derived locution, phraseology, and musical forms forged in the crucible of bondage continued to survive and evolve into newer modes of expression. The southern-based expressions that provided a foundation for rap are storytelling, ritualized games (i.e. "the dozens" and signifyin'), blues songs, and preaching.

Stories told in **rhyme** have been collected throughout the rural South for many years. One storytelling tradition that provides a structural model for rap music is the toast. The toast is a long narrative poem composed in rhymed couplets and recited in a humorous manner. Its text centers around the feats and foes of a trickster, for example, the Signifying Monkey and the character Shine, or a badman hero type, such as Mr. Lion or Stackolee. These stories are performed in secular contexts merely for amusement. Salient features of the toast include the use of exaggerated language, metaphor, expletives, boasting, repetition, formulaic expressions, and mimicry. Several verbal forms are also

**blues -**

vocal and instrumental form of music based on a pentatonic scale and a characteristic twelve-bar chord progression

**rhyme -**

a repetition of identical or similar sounds in two or more different words, most often used in poetry



structurally interwoven in the body of toast tales, such as the dozens and signifyin'. The dozens (also known in contemporary culture as "snaps") is described as "the oldest term for the game of exchanging insults" (Labov 1972:274). This game involves an interplay or a verbal duel between two opponents in which one makes a direct statement about the other's family member, especially the mama, in rhymed couplets such as, "I saw yo' mama yesterday on the welfare line / Lookin' like she done drank some turpentine," or "Talk about one thing, talk about another / But ef you talk about me, I'm gwain talk about your mother" (Keyes 1982; Oliver 1968:236).

Signifyin' occurs when one makes an indirect statement about a situation or another person; the meaning is often allusive and, in some cases, indeterminate. I recall from my southern background an incident involving a married man's attempt to flirt with an unmarried woman. Aware of his marital status, the unmarried woman reminds the man, through indirection, that he is married. Her response places the man in an indeterminate position as to continue or cease from flirting.

*Married Man: Hey mama, you sho' look good to me today.*

*Unmarried Woman: Oh, by the way, how's yo' wife?*

One popular version of the traditional "Signifying Monkey" clearly illustrates features and verbal forms – the dozens and signifyin' – common to the toast tradition:

*Way down in the jungle deep,  
The baddass lion stepped on the signifying monkey's feet.  
The monkey said, "Muthafucka can't you see,  
Why you're standin' on my goddamn feet."  
The lion said, "I ain't heard a word you said...  
If you say three more, I'll be steppin' on yo' muthafuckin' head."  
And the monkey hid in the jungle in an old oak tree.  
Bullshittin' the lion everyday in the week.  
Everyday befo' the sun go down,  
The lion would kick his ass all through the jungle town.  
But the monkey got wise and start using his wit.  
Said "I'm gon' put a stop to this old ass kickin' shit."  
So he ran upon the lion the very next day.  
Said, "Oh Mr. Lion, there's a big bad muthafucka comin' yo' way...  
He's somebody that you don't know,  
'Cuz he just broke a loose from Ringling Brothers show.  
Said, Baby he talked about yo' people in a helluva way.  
He talked about yo' people 'til my hair turned gray.  
He said, 'Yo' daddy's a freak, and yo' moma's a whore,'  
Said he spotted you runnin through the jungle sellin'... from door to door..."*

As a rule, the effectiveness of the toast lies in its style of delivery rather than in content. Nonverbal gestures, such as facial expressions or hand movements, further enhance effective delivery of a toast. While the dozens, signifyin', metaphor, expletives, boasting, and mimicry are stylistic features of the toast, the structural unit remains the rhyming couplet. The rhyming couplet structure and the aforementioned verbal forms of the toast remain present in rap music.

Rhyme is integral to several African American expressive traditions. In the blues tradition, for example, verses are structured in an AAB rhyme scheme: "(A) I don't know where my baby done gone (B) All I can do is sing a sad sad tone." The blues singer Furry Lewis says, "If you don't rhyme it up, you don't understand nothing and you ain't gettin' nowhere" (Titon 1994:47).

Rhyme is a stylistic and structural device in other African American contexts as well. For example, in the black traditional church, preachers occasionally interject rhyming verses in their sermons: "Giving honor to God, Christ Jesus, pulpit associates, members and friends. I'm glad to be here today, just to say that God is the way..." (Smitherman 1986:146). Rhyme also serves as a structural device in the African-derived dance-song, called "the hambone." Derived from an antebellum dance called the "juba," the ham-bone is executed by the patting and clapping of one's thighs, chests, and hands to rhyming verses. The hambone is commonly performed by males as a courtship game, for instance, "Hambone, hambone, ham in the shoulder / Gimme a pretty woman and I'll show you how to hold her" (Milton Lowe, personal communication, Baton Rouge, La., December 22, 1988).

Though rhyme is not germane to every African American oral expression, tonal inflections are important to the proper interpretation of an expression. Black **vernacular** speech utterances depend heavily on tonal contouring to convey meaning. Tonal aspects employed in the English language by African American speakers are clear evidence of African tonal language retention. The anthropologist Melville Herskovits, in his monumental study, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1958), discusses the tonal element or "musical" quality... prominent in Negro-English" (1958:291). Such vocal inflections are particularly employed in performance. For example, the preacher's most proven stylistic feature is the use of musical tone or chant in preaching (Jackson 1981:213). Blues singers talk-sing their melodies as well. Thus, it is not surprising that hip-hop **MCs** describe their verbal performances as "a melody in itself [or] ... like talking" (Melle Mel interview). This concept is further discussed in chapter 5.

While tonal inflections help the performer to convey the meaning of an utterance, call and response creates a sense of cohesion between performer and auditor. Call and response is ubiquitous to the African American aesthetic in that it synchronizes speakers and listeners within a performance event, but more importantly, it is the life force of black communication. Without this interchange, black communication is lifeless. African American preachers, for example, commonly admonish their congregation that they cannot "preach to no dead church," a church in which the presence of the spirit is not made manifest by active vocal response to "the Word" as conveyed in the preached sermon (Davis 1985:27). In addition, African American artists thrive on audience response to the extent that the success of a performance is measured by the active interplay between the performer and the audience. The concept of call and response is also crucial to the status of rap artists to the extent that rappers are considered worthless by others if they do not have an entourage. For this reason, some rap artists re-create in their records a sense of liveliness by incorporating audience cheers and responses.

**vernacular -**

the everyday language of a country or locality (as opposed to literary language)

**MC -**

a Master of Ceremonies; the host of a staged event or other performance. The MC usually presents performers, speaks to the audience, and generally keeps the show moving

Rap music predominantly utilizes the artifice and art characteristic of other black oral performances. The philosopher Cornel West asserts that “the rap artist combines the potent tradition in black culture: the preacher and singer, [who] appeals to the rhetorical practices eloquently honed in African American religious practices” (quoted in Dyson 1993:12). While it is perhaps more apparent how rap resembles Christian preaching, its nexus in African religions is less pronounced and more subtle. Among the corpus of texts analyzed for this study there were occasional references to the West/Central African concept known as “crossroads.” Crossroads represent “the juncture of the spiritual realm and the phenomenal world” (Drewal 1992:205). The art historian Robert Farris Thompson elaborates: “the points of literal intersection [are] where one might go to offer sacrifice or prayer to ancestors. ... The crossroads, also, function as a powerful symbol in African American folklore ... as legends of black musicians going to crossroads and trading their guitars with spirits to confirm or enhance their talents” (1990:153,154).

The crossroads concept is not alien to black folksong traditions like the blues. For example, Robert Johnson’s “Cross Road Blues” remains the most well-known of crossroads songs. Legend has it that Johnson sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his musical success. But after realizing his mistake, Johnson supposedly wrote “Cross Road Blues” as a repentant plea to God for forgiveness. The following is an excerpt from that song: “I went to the crossroad fell down on my knees / I went to the crossroad fell down on my knees / Asked the Lord above ‘Have mercy, now save poor Bob, if you please”” (Thompson 1990:154). The crossroads concept is more abstract in rap than in the blues. In “To the Crossroads” (1990) Isis and Professor X of X-Clan rap about the creation of the world and humankind as evident through their deification of the ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) deities – Isis “Divine Woman/Mother” (of Horus, Son of Osiris) and Ra (Professor X), the Sun deity. Isis raps: “The I in my own song. Isis deeper and beneath those who ain’t strong. / The radiant rising sun, the bright light in the world of none /... we’ll take a walk with the black and the bold. / I’ll take you there and let us meet at the crossroad.” Professor X intones, “I am Ra from whom time begins. / Rising away, severing the wind, turning. / I am the hub of a wheel, a daystar hovering over in the sea. / I am not the harvest. I am the seed. Off to the crossroad we go!” The concept of crossroads is used here in a traditional African cosmic sense, meaning the place where all spiritual forces or creations are activated. In a sense, Ra, positioned at the “hub of the wheel,” parallels the deity Esu-Elegba, who in the Yoruba tradition is the guardian of the crossroads.

In another X-Clan song, “Funkin Lesson” (1990), Professor X alludes to the crossroads as a place where one goes to get in touch with spiritual forces – the ancestors – in order to empower oneself for the future. Professor X orates: “Out of the darkness, in panther’s skin comes doctors, driving pink caddys, bearing the remedy of your existence. Yes, it gets blacker. With a Nat Turner-ic, Martin, Adam, Malcolm, Huey; there’s a party at the crossroads.” “ ‘Driving pink caddys,’” explains Professor X, is a metaphor for a “

‘traveling time machine.’” He adds, “the year of that particular pink caddy is significant. It’s a ‘59 [Cadillac]. That was another turning point of black men’s existence in America. ... The pink caddy is significant in what Detroit Red went through to become Malcolm X” (quoted in Romain 1992:35). Professor X’s teaching as a modern-day **bard** illuminates the continuous history of the crossroads from its place in ancient African lore to the Diaspora. Today the crossroads includes not only deities and ancient ancestors but African American leaders such as Nat Turner, Martin Luther King Jr., Adam Clayton Powell, Malcolm X, and Huey Newton, who have made indelible marks on America. In referring to what “Detroit Red went through to become Malcolm X” and later El-Hadji Malik El-Shabazz, Professor X also clearly invokes the crossroads as the place black mortals continue to visit in contemporary times to seek guidance in preparation for change – physically, mentally, and spiritually – from the old self to the new self. References to the crossroads as an ancestral or spiritual gathering place are also made in “The Crossroads” (1998) by Bone Thugs-N-Harmony.

The African bardic tradition and its retention in southern-based oral expressions are antecedents of the rap music tradition. However, it was in the context of the urban North that rap was first introduced as a street style of speaking. It was also in this environment that rap, as a speech style, developed into a distinct musical genre. The evolution of rap from a speech style to a musical form occurred during and after the migrations of southern blacks to northern urban centers.

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF BLACK VERNACULAR EXPRESSIONS

Southern traditions were transported by African Americans during their massive migration from the rural South to the urban North between the 1920s and 1950s. Southern cultural traditions were transformed and modified in the new milieu and generated expressions reflecting urban life. The rural context in which African Americans gathered in the South to hear performances of their neighborhood artists were replaced in urban centers by storefront churches, public parks, and street-corner taverns. These new gathering places comprised what urban African Americans call “the streets.”

The streets are an institution as important as the church, school, and family in African American culture (Perkins 1975:26). Yet unlike the other three institutions, the survival center represented by the streets operates as a primary reference for many African Americans living in the inner city. Here one learns about the ghetto, how to survive in it, and how to combat unwarranted economic and social oppression from mainstream society. A major requisite for survival in the streets is learning how to communicate effectively.

The street context fostered a new way of speaking called “jive” talk. The word “jive” is a variation of the English word “jibe.” Dan Burley, a noted scholar of jive talk, traces the appearance of the word “jive” to the streets of Chicago: “In the sense in which it came into use among Negroes in Chicago about the year 1921, it meant to taunt, to scoff, to sneer – an expression of sarcastic comment” (1981:207). Jive talk is also described as a highly effective way of talking about someone’s ancestors and hereditary traits through colorful and metaphoric terms, later referred to simply as jiving someone (207). Jiving is employed in several social contexts, including intimate contexts, in which a man talks to a woman in order to win favor; however, it is more commonly used as a competitive tool, a way of establishing one’s “rep” (reputation) in the streets. Speakers assess the effectiveness of jive talk in context, that is, knowing

what to say and how and when to say it. What differentiates jive from its southern verbal counterparts is the use of a vocabulary derived exclusively from the urban experience. Hence, the urban term for street becomes “stroll,” boy becomes “cat,” girl becomes “chick,” and house becomes “crib.” The art of jive talk, therefore, lies in its originality. When the newness of a word wears out or the word is no longer in vogue, another word replaces it. Jive language is undoubtedly dynamic.

*Jive circulated in arenas beyond the streets. In the 1920s and 1930s, prominent literary figures of the Harlem Renaissance, such as Langston Hughes and Sterling Brown, flirted with black vernacular (street) themes, speech, and music in their works. Most notable of Hughes’s works are the blues poems “The Weary Blues” (1925) and “Homesick Blues” (1926) and his short stories based on a fictitious urban street character named Jesse B. Simple. The first of the Simple stories is Simple Speaks His Mind, in which Hughes portrays the main character as a humorous jive talker. In a similar vein, Sterling Brown wrote various poems that paid tribute to black vernacular forms like the blues. “Ma Rainey” (1930) and “Long Track Blues” (1932) rank among his premier poems. Brown’s performance of “Long Track Blues,” which adheres to a three-line blues structure, was spoken over live piano blues in an early Smithsonian/Folkways Recording.*

During the post-World War II years, jive talk had proliferated in all arenas in the urban milieu – from the church to the street corner. The English scholar Clyde Taylor notes that the tributaries of street speech are found by tracing its course in jazz (1977:30). Jive was nowhere more operative than in jazz culture. Jazz musicians employed jive in creating idiomatic expressions used exclusively to communicate to other jazz colleagues. Such words as “jam” (having a good time); “blow” (to play well); “cat” (jazz colleague); “bad” (good); and “shed” (to practice) are only a few of the many words that are commonplace in the jazz vernacular. Even prominent jazz bandleaders like Cab Galloway, Duke Ellington, Count Basic, and Louis Jordan occasionally interspersed quasi-sung narrative sections of jive into their performances to create rapport with their audiences. Louis Jordan was especially extolled for his humorous, jive-like short narratives in songs like “Caldonia” (1945) and “Saturday Nite Fish Fry” (1949). Even jazz-pop groups such as the Ink Spots utilized jive talk in their narratives when recounting aspects of romance.

The art of jiving to music over radio airwaves was introduced in the 1940s by African American radio disc jockeys. Most noted was Reverend Arthur Bernard Leaner of Mississippi, who began his career as a gospel music announcer for WGES of Chicago in 1945. When WGES refused to sell Leaner advertising in his brokered time slot because of the religious nature of the program, Leaner changed his name to Al Benson (Barlow 1999:98). In addition to his business acumen at time-brokering, Benson was known for using jive on his secular program, which helped him to connect with Chicago’s black southern migrants (like himself) and its growing urban black community. Undoubtedly, he “had an enormous impact upon the cultural world of the Chicago black community.

He gave public visibility and legitimacy in the community to the culture of ‘the street’ and to the styles and perspectives of southern blacks.... The intermixture of Benson’s southern style with the northern middle-class style resulted in a hybrid black style that evolved into a black urban language” (Spaulding 1981:123-24). In so doing, Benson was a forerunner of what critics dubbed the era of the personality jock.

Credited as pioneers of jive talk in rhyme were the Chicago disc jockey Holmes Bailey, known popularly as Daddy-O Daylie of WAIT radio, and Lavada Durst, known to his audience as “Doc Hep Cat” of KVET in Austin, Texas. As the jazz great Dizzy Gillespie recalls, “We [jazz musicians] added some colorful and creative concepts to the English language, but... Daddy-O-Daylie, a disc jockey in Chicago, originated much more of the hip language during our era than I did” (1979:281). Doc Hep Cat exploited rhyme, as in the following excerpt:

*“I’m hip to the tip, and bop to the top. I’m long time coming and I just won’t stop. It’s a real gone deal that I’m gonna reel, so stay tuned while I pad your skulls.” (quoted in Barlow 1999:106)*

In addition to their artful use of jive and rhyme, early black personality jocks also employed radio sound techniques such as “talking through” and “riding gain.” In the former, the disk jockey lowers the volume of the music and continues to talk as it plays, whereas riding gain occurs when the disc jockey boosts or lowers the volume on the audio board in order to accent various parts of a record (Williams 1986:81). These techniques as well as jive and rhyme were emulated by early hip-hop DJs and MCs. Numerous jockeys followed in the footsteps of Benson, Bailey, and Durst, becoming heroes in their communities. Among these are Vernon Winslow (WWEZ of New Orleans), Douglas “Jocko” Henderson (WOV of New York), Rufus Thomas (WDIA of Memphis), Tommy “Dr. Jive” Smalls (WWRL of New York), and many others.

Jive was even incorporated in the boasting poetry of certain African American sports heroes. For example, the former heavyweight champion boxer Muhammad Ali (formerly Cassius Clay) was known for his poetic prowess. Before each boxing match, Ali would taunt his opponent by boasting in rhymed couplets. Of one of his challengers, Ernie Terrell, Ali said:

*“Clay swings with a left, Clay swings with a right. Just look at young Cassius carry the fight. Terrell keeps backing but there’s not enough room. It’s a matter of time until Clay lowers the broom. Then Clay lands with a right – what a beautiful swing.*

*And the punch raised Terrell clear out the ring*

*Who on earth thought when they came to the fight that they would witness the launching of a human satellite?” (quoted in Olsen 1967:10)*

African American comedians, too, laced their monologues with street jive. Prior to Muhammad Ali’s use of the boasting poetic style, black comedians, who used jive, flourished in 1940s Harlem, where they often hosted talent shows at theaters like the famous Apollo. Early popularizers of jive humor included Jackie “Moms” Mabley, Redd Foxx, Godfrey Cambridge, Pigmeat Markham, and Rudy Ray Moore, the man known for popularizing toasts like “Dolemite” and “The Signifying Monkey” via audio recordings as well as in film.

By the 1960s jive talk was redefined according to changing conditions of African American life in America (Taylor 1977:32) and reincorporated by urban speakers as “rap.” Many African Americans attribute this shift from jive to rap to the Black Nationalist, Hubert or H. “Rap” Brown, whose **moniker** depicts his mastery of black street speech. A street-educated rapper extraordinaire, Brown (also known as Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin) explains how he acquired the title “Rap”: “what [I] try to do is totally destroy somebody else with words. It’s that whole competition thing again, fighting each other.



There'd be sometimes forty or fifty dudes standing around and the winner was determined by the way they [the crowd/audience] responded to what was said. If you fell all over each other laughing, then you knew you'd scored. It was a bad scene for the dude that was getting humiliated. I seldom was. That's why they called me Rap, 'cause I could rap" (Brown 1981:354). Brown's stylized way of speaking had gained popular acceptance among young urban speakers, who solidified the name of that style as rappin.

The 1960s also fostered a framework through which rappin was set to musical accompaniment. The Black Arts Movement (BAM) was pivotal to this occurrence. This movement began during the wake of Malcolm X's death and spanned the years 1965 to circa 1976.<sup>12</sup> Essential to the BAM was Leroi Jones, a poet and playwright who changed his name to Imamu Amiri Baraka, meaning "Blessed Priest and Warrior."<sup>13</sup> After the death of Malcolm X, Jones sent a letter to black artists summoning them to work for the black community and themselves, to use their art to "pick up and continue where Malcolm ended" (I'll Make Me a World [video] 1999). Baraka describes the mission of the BAM: "when we went Uptown to Harlem in the Black Arts Repertory School, we said we wanted to do three things. We wanted to create an art or a poetry that was African American, let's say, as African American as Bessie Smith or Duke Ellington. We wanted to create an art that was mass-oriented, that would come out of the universities that would get into the street that would reach our people. ... And the third thing we wanted to do was create an art that was revolutionary" (quoted in Alim 2000:16). Following Baraka's lead, young African American artists began rejecting European literary canons and replacing them with African-derived ones or something uniquely black in expression. They espoused that art should be functional, community-based, and it should resonate with real-life black experience, establishing a mandate for what would soon be termed "the new black aesthetic." Afrocentric and Black Nationalist themes and Islamic ideology were all fundamental to the expression of the new black aesthetic formulated by the BAM. In keeping with Afrocentric themes, adherents of the BAM donned Afros or natural hairdos and African dress. They used certain gestures that signified Black Nationalism (e.g. the clenched fist for black power), replaced their anglicized birth names with African and Islamic ones, established the Afrocentric national holiday Kwanza (founded by Maulana Karenga in 1966), sought to define the meaning of black, and continued to popularize rappin through the recitations of BAM's poets. Poetic skills were not judged on rhyme per se but rather on one's ability to articulate themes relevant to African American life. Poetic lines were executed in a rhythmic fashion using breath cadences, alliteration, repetition, and expletives for emphasis. Performances included shifts from casual talk to heightened speech and sometimes to musical chant. It is for these reasons that I define BAM poetry as song poems. Among those who championed the artistic explosion that Baraka initiated are the literary artists Larry Neal, Nikki Giovanni, Don Lee (known as Haki Mabhuti), Sonia Sanchez, Toni Cade Bambara, Ish-mael



Reed, June Jordan, and Audre Lorde; the composer Oscar Brown Jr.; the visual artists Benny Andrews and Faith Ringgold; the filmmakers Melvin Van Peebles and Gordon Parks Sr. and Jr.; and ensembles such as the Dance Theater of Harlem and the Art Ensemble of Chicago.

Various cultural organizations also sprang up during the heyday of the BAM, including the Umbra Writers Workshop in Greenwich Village, the Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC) in Chicago, and the Art Ensemble of Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM). Black filmmakers explored black urban America from an insider's viewpoint. Following the BAM mandate that African Americans should create art without apology, black independent publishing companies such as Broadside Press in Detroit and Third World Press of the OBAC rose to this charge.

A number of writer's workshops espousing the new black aesthetic produced a legion of poets who recited their poetry to musical accompaniment, thus advancing the popularity and influence of song poems. The Watts Prophets of the Watts Writers Workshop stand out in this regard. Although The Watts Prophets were regionally known, The Last Poets of Harlem succeeded in becoming nationally recognized via their recordings and spoken word tours. For this reason, they are recognized by rap artists as "the first or original style rappers" (Bambaataa interview).

The Poets' first album, *The Last Poets* (1970), which sold more than eight hundred thousand copies, featured poems of political commentary like "New York, New York," "Niggers Are Scared of Revolution," and "When the Revolution Comes" rendered over African-derived percussion (i.e. congas).

In 1973, Jalal "Lightnin' Rod" Uridin, a member of The Last Poets, recorded a solo album called *Hustler's Convention*. Unlike the political poetry on the first album, *Hustler's Convention* featured a series of toasts about two fictitious urban badman characters, Sport "The Gambler" and his buddy Spoon. The album chronicled the street adventures of Sport and Spoon, from their wins at craps, pool, and poker to Sport's bout with the cops that almost leads to his demise (Toop 2000:119). Because of its close association with street language and lore, *Hustler's Convention* was recognized by early rap artists as a prototype of rap music. As the rap music veteran Grandmaster Caz recalled: "I knew the entire *Hustler's Convention* by heart. That was rap, but we didn't know it at the time" (quoted in Hager 1984:49). Another New York poet-musician known for his political songs and lauded as a major influence on rap music was Gil Scott-Heron. He considered himself "neither poet, composer or musician" (liner notes, Scott-Heron 1970). But to many, his lyrics captured the essence of rappin through their language, rhythm, and technique of indirection. One popularly known song poem by Scott-Heron is "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," from his 1970 album *A New Black Poet: Small Talk at 125th and Lenox*. In this poem, Scott-Heron informs his listening audience that there will be no commercials, soap operas, reruns with white actors, nor processed hair worn by those African Americans ascribing to white beauty standards; rather, the revolution will be a group action by which black people take to the streets in search of a brighter day. In the album's liner notes, the critic Nat Hentoff includes excerpts from Scott-Heron's song poem "Plastic Pattern People," which employs the BAM's poetry writing – a negation of European grammar rules. Note the use of an uncapitalized "i" for the first-person pronoun, the use of capitalization for certain letters in a word, and the use of varied indentations – all capturing the asymmetric motion of black art sensibilities espoused by the Black Arts Movement.

*STP and LSD. SpEed kiLs and sometimes music's call to the Black is confused i beg you to escape and live.*

Often overlooked as a forerunner of rappin style over music is Nikki Giovanni. On her widely acclaimed spoken word album *Truth Is On Its Way* (1971), Giovanni experiments with music and poetry by reciting her poems in various black musical styles. For example, “Ego-Tripping” is recited to African percussion, while the remaining songs, “Woman Poem,” “All I Gotta Do” (or “sitting and waiting ‘cuz I’m a woman”), “Poem for Aretha,” and “Great Pax Whitey” are performed to the gospel sounds of the New York Community Choir. More importantly, unlike the song poems of The Watts Prophets, The Last Poets, and Gil Scott-Heron, Giovanni’s poetry gave voice to an African American woman’s perspective and to black feminist thinking.

In growing numbers, balladeers and **funk** performers incorporated rap into their songs, a style initially popularized by Larry Darnell and Arthur Prysock in the 1940s and 1950s and by certain soul music artists – Ray Charles, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, and Lou Rawls – who integrated short rappin’ sections in their music to establish a rapport with their listeners. By the late 1960s, rappin’ emerged as a distinct song style all its own. It took the form of a monologue that celebrated the feats and woes of love and party-oriented themes. The songwriter-singer-musician Isaac Hayes led the way in this via Hayes’s unique way of setting the tone of songs by speaking loosely in a stylized manner over a repetitive accompaniment, as with his rendition of *By the Time I Get to Phoenix*” (1969), was emulated by his contemporaries Mil he Jackson and Barry White. In contrast, the monologue raps of funk Performers during the 1970s centered on topics such as “partying,” or are grounded in the concept of “being cool”: behaving in an emotionally-restrained manner, being laid-back, and moving at a moderate tempo. Clinton emphasized this concept in “P-Funk” (1975) when he declared: “the law around here is to wear your sunglasses so you can feel cool.” Unlike the rappin’ style of the early entertainers, the love ballad and funk-styled raps were not in rhyme but were loosely chanted over a repetitive instrumental accompaniment. By the early 1990s Clinton’s music would become the centerpiece for a West Coast subgenre of rap music known as gangsta rap.

Though the roots of rap music reside in the African bardic traditions, they continued to penetrate African American oral traditions from the rural South to the urban North. During the 1930s through the 1950s, southern expressions were transplanted in the urban context, fostering a new way of speaking: jive talk. Jive was incorporated in the verbal performances of sacred and secular African American performers. By the late 1960s African American political nationalists renamed jive talk as rap. The Black Arts Movement, I assert, set the tone for hip-hop, a youth arts movement. Drastic social, political, economic, and musical changes external to and internal to black urban communities, particularly in New York City, gave rise to rappin’ as a musical genre during the early 1970s. Rap music emerged, then, as an expressive tool through which its creators responded creatively to changes in their environment. The following chapter addresses these issues in more depth.

**Funk -**

a style of music ith a strong rhythm based on jazz and African music

**SOURCE:** Cheryl L. Keyes. “The Roots and Stylistic Foundation of the Rap Music Tradition.” *Rap Music and Street Consciousness*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. pp. 17-38. Cheryl L. [<http://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/people/keyes.htm> ]

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. To what extent can a person, country or nation, demand the 'originality' and 'purity' of cultural artefacts, ideas, or inventions, which belong now to the global community?
2. How can you describe the dynamic character of rap music and cultural artefacts in general?
3. What can you say about the African roots of rap music in America?
4. How did African bardic traditions penetrate African American oral traditions from the rural South to the urban North of America?
5. What is the role of African American political nationalists and The Black Arts Movement and how did they give rise to rappin' as a musical genre?
6. How did the poetic speech that circumscribed everyday experience remain paramount to African peoples in the New World? What does the "slave was... a poet and his language was poetic" mean?
7. According to the author, how do "tonal inflections help the performer to convey the meaning of an utterance"? How does the "call and response create(s) a sense of cohesion between performer and audience"?
8. What can you say about the point that "rap music predominantly utilizes the artifice and art characteristic of other black oral performances"?
9. What are the differences between 'jive' talk and rap? What were the reasons for southern traditions being transported by African Americans during their massive migration from the rural South to the urban North?
10. How do the streets as an institution compare to the church, school, and family in African American culture? What were the reasons that many African Americans shifted from jive to rap?
11. What is the role of urban culture and how does it affect the performer and the audience?

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the similarities and differences between two texts: Ahmet Jubanov on Kurmangazi and Cheryl Keyes on rap music?

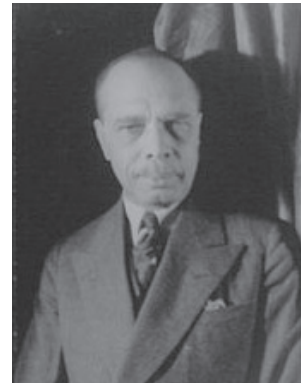
## JAMES WELDON JOHNSON: “THE BOOKS OF AMERICAN NEGRO SPIRITUALS”

In 1871 James Weldon Johnson was born in Jacksonville, Florida. He was encouraged to study English literature and the European musical tradition. He attended Atlanta University with the intention that the education he received there would be used to further the interests of black people. After graduation, he took a job as a high school principal in Jacksonville. In 1900, he wrote the song “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing” on the occasion of Lincoln’s birthday; the song which became immensely popular in the black community came to be known as the “Negro National Anthem.” In 1912, Johnson published *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* under a pseudonym. It is the story of a musician who rejects his black roots for a life of material comfort in the white world. The novel explores the issue of racial identity in the twentieth century.

He had a talent for persuading people of differing ideological agendas to work together for a common goal, and in 1920 he became the national organizer for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. His book of poetry, *God’s Trombones* (1927), was influenced by his impressions of the rural South, drawn from a trip he took to Georgia while a freshman in college. James Weldon Johnson died in 1938.” [From: <http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/72>]

We will discuss the issue of the origins of Spirituals: a debate exists on the roots of spirituals – do they belong to Negro folk music or were they original in themselves?

Please describe Johnson’s arguments and try to explain way racist tendencies survive amongst the scholars of musicology in the twentieth century? Explain the reasons for the battle for the originality and roots of music which is spreading in the world?



### AMERICAN NEGRO SPIRITUALS

“Perhaps there will be no better point than this at which to say that all the true Spirituals possess dignity. It is, of course, pardonable to smile at the naiveté often exhibited in the words, but it should be remembered that in scarcely no instance was anything humorous intended. When it came to the use of words, the maker of the song was struggling as best he could under his limitations in language and, perhaps, also under a misconception or misapprehension of the facts in his source of material, generally the Bible. And often, like his more literary poetic brothers, he had to do a good many things to get his rhyme in. But almost always he was in dead earnest. There are doubtless many persons who have heard these songs sung only on the vaudeville or theatrical stage and have laughed uproariously at them because they were presented in humorous vein. Such people have no conception of the Spirituals. They probably thought of them as a new sort of ragtime or minstrel song. These Spirituals cannot be properly appreciated or understood unless they are clothed in their primitive dignity.

No space will here be given to a rehearsal of the familiar or easily accessible facts regarding the origin and development of folk music in general. Nor will any attempt be made at a discussion of the purely technical questions of music involved. A thorough exposition of this latter phase of the subject will be found in H. E.

Krehbiel's Afro-American Folksongs. There Mr. Krehbiel makes an analysis of the modes, scales and intervals of these songs and a comparative study between them and the same features of other folksongs. Here it is planned, rather, to relate regarding these songs as many facts as possible that will be of interest to the general lover of music and serve to present adequately this collection. Instead of dissecting this music we hope to recreate around it, as completely as we can its true atmosphere and place it in a proper setting for those who already love the Spirituals and those who may come to know them.

Although the Spirituals have been overwhelmingly accredited to the Negro as his own, original creation, nevertheless, there have been one or two critics who have denied that they were original either with the Negro or in themselves, and a considerable number of people have eagerly accepted this view. The opinion of these critics is not sound. It is not based upon scientific or historical inquiry. Indeed, it can be traced ultimately to a prejudiced attitude of mind, to an unwillingness to concede the creation of so much pure beauty to a people they wish to feel is absolutely inferior. Once that power is conceded, the idea of absolute inferiority cannot hold. These critics point to certain similarities in structure between the Spirituals and the folk music of other peoples, ignoring' the fact that there are such similarities between all folksongs. The Negro Spirituals are as distinct from the folksongs of other peoples as those songs are from each other; and, perhaps, more so. One needs to be only ordinarily familiar with the folk music of the world to see that this is so.

The statement that the Spirituals are imitations made by the Negro of other music that he heard is an absurdity. What music did American Negroes hear to imitate? They certainly had no opportunity to go to Scotland or Russia or Scandinavia and bring back echoes of songs from those lands. Some of them may have heard a few Scotch songs in this country, but it is inconceivable that this great mass of five or six hundred Negro songs could have sprung from such a source. What music then was left for them to imitate? Some have gone so far as to say that they caught snatches of airs from the French Opera at New Orleans; but the songs of the Negroes who fell most directly under that influence are of a type distinct from the Spirituals. It was in localities far removed from New Orleans that the great body of Spirituals were created and sung. There remains then the music which the American Negroes heard their masters sing; chiefly religious music. Now if ignorant Negroes evolved such music as Deep River, Steal Away to Jesus, Somebody's Knockin at Yo' Do', I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray and Father Abraham by listening to their masters sing gospel hymns, it does not detract from the achievement but magnifies it.

Regarding the origin of this music, I myself have referred to the "miracle" of its production. And it is easier to believe the miracle than some of the explanations of it that are offered. Most difficult of all is it to believe that the Negro slaves were indebted to their white masters for the sources of these songs. The white people among whom the slaves lived did not originate anything comparable even to the mere titles of the Spirituals. In truth, the power to frame the poetic phrases that make the titles of so many of the Spirituals betokens the power to create the songs. Consider the sheer magic of:

*Swing Low Sweet Chariot*  
*I've Got to Walk My Lonesome Valley*  
*Steal Away to Jesus*  
*Singing With a Sword in My Hand*  
*Rule Death in His Arms*

*Ride on King Jesus*

*We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace*

*The Blood Came Twinklin' Down*

*Deep River*

*Death's Goin' to Lay His Cold, Icy Hand on Me*

and confess that none but an artistically-endowed people could have evoked it.

No one has even expressed a doubt that the poetry of the titles and text of the Spirituals is Negro in character and origin, no one else has dared to lay claim to it; why then doubt the music? There is a slight analogy here to the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy. The Baconians, in their amazement before the transcendent greatness of the plays, declare that Shakespeare could not possibly have written them; he was not scholar enough; he did not know enough Greek; no mere play actor could be gentleman enough to be so familiar with the ways of the court and royalty; no mere play actor could be philosopher enough to know all the hidden springs of human motives and conduct. Then they pick a man who fills these requirements and accounts for the phenomenon of the crowning glory of the English tongue. Lord Francis Bacon, they say, wrote the plays but did not claim them because it was not creditable for a gentleman to be a playwright. However, though it was creditable for a gentleman of the age to be a poet, they do not explain why Lord Bacon did not claim the poems. And it is easy to see that the hand that wrote the poems could write the plays.

Nobody thought of questioning the Negro's title as creator of this music until its beauty and value were demonstrated. The same thing, in a greater degree, has transpired with regard to the Negro as the originator of America's popular medium of musical expression; in fact, to such a degree that it is now completely divorced from all ideas associated with the Negro. Still, for several very good reasons, it will not be easy to do that with the Spirituals.

When the Fisk Jubilee Singers toured Europe they sang in England, Scotland and Germany, spending eight months in the latter country. Their concerts were attended by the most cultured and sophisticated people as well as the general public. In England they sang before Queen Victoria, and in Germany the Emperor was among those who listened to them. Music critics paid special attention to the singers and their songs. The appearance of the Jubilee Singers in Europe constituted both an artistic sensation and a financial success, neither of which results could have been attained had their songs been mere imitations of European folk music or adaptations of European airs.

**SOURCE:** James Weldon Johnson (1925). "The Books of American Negro Spirituals." From Gena Dagal Caponi (ed.). *signifyin(g), sanctifyin', & slam dunking: a reader in African American expressive culture*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999. [pp. 48-50.];

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Please describe Johnson's arguments and explain why racist tendencies survive amongst twentieth century scholars of musicology? Explain the reasons for the battle for originality and roots?
2. The author says musicologists take a racist approach. But why, according to him do "the white people among whom the slaves lived did not originate anything comparable even to the mere titles of the Spirituals"? Do you think these arguments are sufficient for making this statement?
3. Why does he believe that the poetry of the Spirituals as well as their music is Negro in character?
4. What is the magic of the songs? What kind of analogy exists here to the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy?
5. Do you agree with the approaches of scholars into the evaluation of the role of philosopher, scholars and actors play in history? Why, according to them, is writing a poem more prestigious and difficult than to play the role?
6. What are the similarities and differences between this text and the previous texts?
7. Do you know similar spiritual songs and debates on the origins of sacred or religious songs in your country or region? What is the 'power' of spiritual songs? Write a short essay on this topic.



## RUMI: LISTEN TO THE REED OF THE FLUTE (FROM THE “MATHNAWI”)

How did people approach music in the past? How important was the music for scientists, scholars and mystic thinkers or even ordinary people? How did they appreciate music? Was the music only a metaphor or a means for philosophical and religious debates? What did they think about the origins and spirit of music, the correlation of music and human conditions? Reading the ‘Poem of the Flute’ of Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi (1207-1273), the famous Sufi thinker, find the role of music in his teaching. Please think about the metaphors of reed, flute and sound:

Listen to the **reed** of the flute, how it a long complaint makes:  
 it, explanation of the tale of separation, loud and faint makes...  
 “Ever since the time that I was torn away from the reed’s bed  
 my cries have caused men and women... many a sigh to shed.  
 I want a chest that has been ripped wide apart by separation  
 so that of the deepest of longings... I can give an explanation.  
 Anyone who is staying far from where he came, his real Self:  
 is always yearning to be returning to the same... his real Self.  
 That one that utters wailing notes in every crowd, I became:  
 the teller to the joyful and those weeping out loud, I became.  
 Each one of them had their own reasons for befriending me...  
 but none asking my heart my secret tried comprehending me.  
 My secret... distant from these complaints that I cry, is not,  
 but still the illumination of the ear and also of the eye is not.  
 The body **veiled** from soul... neither soul from the body isn’t,  
 and yet a single person, the soul to be allowed to see, isn’t.”  
 That sound, it is of fire that the reed is making... is not wind:  
 anybody who lacks such fire... is as if nothing... is not wind.  
 That sound... that is the fire of Love that into the reed fell...  
 and it’s only Love... the ferment that the wine freed... fell.  
 The reed is the confidant of all who are cut off from a friend...  
 its wail of longing has torn away our veil... from end to end.  
 Who has ever seen an antidote and a poisoner... like the reed?  
 Who has seen a sympathetic, a longing lover... like the reed?  
 The reed, tell of the Path that’s full of the bloody stain does;  
 it, recount the story of Majnun’s passion and his pain, does...  
 Hail! O Hail that Love that brings such a great gain to us!  
 For all of our sickness... You, are the great Physician to us!



**mathnawi -**

rhyming couplets

**reed -**

a thin strip of wood in the mouthpiece of a musical instrument that vibrates to produce a tone when you blow over it

**veil -**

a piece of thin material worn by women to cover the face or head

O yes... the remedy for pride and cure for conceit... You are!  
O our real Plato You are and also our Galen to meet You are.  
The earthly body has soared up to heaven because of Love...  
joyful and dancing became the mountain... because of Love...  
If the lip of mine touched the lip of the One who loves me...  
I too would tell what is possible to tell... like reed's melody...

48

SOURCE: <http://www.khamush.com/mw/listen.htm>



SUFISM, RUMI

## AMNON SHILOAH: “ISLAM & MUSIC: THE IDEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.”

Amnon Shiloah is Professor of musicology and Head of the Department of Musicology at the Hebrew University, in Jerusalem. In her book she examines the question of how important a role music had in Arab and Muslim life that predates Islamic time and also during the great Musical Tradition that emerged at the time of the first Dynastic Caliphates in urban centers under Islam, especially appearing in distinct styles by the end of third century involving the Persians, Turks and then Indians. In this piece, which has been selected in order to discuss the relationship between music and the religious doctrine of Islam, the potential basis for conflict between real life and religious doctrine etc., the author raises the main issue for our discussion: according to her, the “question on which we should focus our interest is, above all: do the tension, friction and conflict emanate from the concept of music itself, or are they determined by other factors?”



“When we undertake to discuss the relations between music and a religious doctrine we should consider the fact that the concept of music is integrated into the relevant system of thought. In our case this means that music does not act independently according to its own fundamentals, nor is the musician free to pursue the dictates of his imagination. Religious music is therefore subordinated to or interacts with ideas that are generated by what Max Weber called the theological meaning of man’s conceptions of himself and his place in the universe, conceptions which legitimize man’s orientation in and to the world and give meaning to his various goals (Parson 212). According to Max Weber, from whom we borrow some basic theoretical ideas, a system is a result of rationalization, and this rationalization comprises normative control or sanction and a conception of motivational commitment which includes both ‘belief and practical commitment – in the sense of readiness to put one’s own interests at stake in the service of ideas. In the context of rationalization, Max Weber emphasizes the importance of a sacred written tradition, of sacred books which are subject to continual editing and complex processes of interpretation, and which tend to become the focus of specialized intellectual competence and prestige in the religious field and, on the cultural level, of rationalized systems of religious doctrine.



In light of the above, a look at the meaning and place assigned to music in the normative system of Islam would confront us with conflicting attitudes on the doctrinal level; we would also become aware of obvious conflict and friction between the ideology expounded by prominent religious thinkers and the actual reality that gave birth to the Great Tradition and encouraged it to flourish. Hence, the question on which we should focus our interest is, above all: do the tension, friction and conflict emanate from the concept of music itself, or are they determined by other factors?



As a point of departure let us take the listener's views or feelings regarding music. In all the sources one finds repeated belief in the overwhelming power of music that exerts an irresistibly strong influence on the listener's soul. Acting as a kind of charm, music produces either sensual pleasure or extreme excitement, and its maximal effect can send the listener into an emotional, even violent **paroxysm**. As a result of this untamed power, or spontaneous effect, the listener loses control over his reason and behavior and is consequently governed by his passions. This quasi-somnambulistic state is considered to be in contradiction to the exigencies of rational religious precepts (Shiloah 82: XXI).

One of the earliest treatises prohibiting music is *Dhamm al-Malahi* (The Book of the Censure of Instruments of Diversion) by the theologian and jurist Ibn Abi'l-Dunya (823-894). It contains a violent condemnation of music, which the author considers a diversion from devotional life; he extends the prohibition against music to all games and pleasures. Multiple variations of this fundamental approach are to be found in the corresponding literature, such as: listening to music is forbidden because it takes one's mind off the devotional life and removes one's thoughts from God; or, a person who deviates from those laws that bring one nearer to God, will find himself ever more remote from Him (Robson 50). The jurist Ibn al-Hadjdj (d. 1336) who considered 'knowledge' and 'action' to be inseparable, based his *Madkhal al-shar' al-sharif* (Introduction to the Venerable Law) on the principle that an act of worship devoid of true intent cannot accord with the law.

Ibn Djama'a (d. 1388), who considered music and dance earthly pleasures, claimed that they led the religious man to error and perdition. The theologian and legal consultant Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) went so far as to state that anyone who practiced **sama'** was an infidel and polytheist. The fiercest of these attacks were directed against the Sufis for whom *sama'* was an essential element in the performance of spiritual exercises, as we shall see later. The *sama'* of the Sufis, claimed Ibn Taymiyya, had an intoxicating effect that excluded all possibility of rational thinking; were it important to religion, the Qur'an would have recommended it. Condemning the practice of shouting during the celebration of dhikr (see below), the jurist ibn Bistam (d. 1685) concludes that it is better to worship with quiet humility because, he says: 'you are not calling on deaf ears and not invoking a remote God'. The inspirational power the mystics attributed to music presupposes the use of man's inner resources for his spiritual experience rather than dependence on the words of the scriptures which, according to the supporters of the 'nomos' doctrine, should be the only way leading to the true knowledge of God and all He has created. Describing the *sama'* as a source of corruption, many authors ascribe its origin and effect to Satan's evil forces. One of the harshest but most cogent expositions of this theory can be found in *Talbis Iblis* (The Devil's Delusion) by the jurisconsult and preacher ibn al-Djawzi (d. 1200). Ibn al-Djawzi claims that music is basically a temptation of the devil that dominates the soul and makes it a slave to passion. Music intoxicates, provoking worldly passions and sensual pleasures usually associated with other indulgences such as drinking to excess and fornication. In his exposition, ibn al-Djawzi also discusses the origin of music as elaborated by various authors who preceded him.

Before proceeding to a discussion about the origin of music, it should be noted that not all theologians were so intransigent. In actual fact not a few adopted a rather more subtly-shaded approach in their writings, an approach in some cases reminiscent of that followed by certain mystics. An example is the kind of sum-

**paroxysm -**

a sudden outburst of emotion or action

**sama' -**

the Sufi practice of gathering to listen to religious poetry that is sung, often accompanied by ecstatic dance or other ritual

mary proposed by the traditionalist and jurisconsult Ibn Radjab (d. 1392) in his book *Nuzhat al-asma' fi mas'alat al-sama'* (Pleasure of the Ears Concerning the Practice of Listening to Music). The author speaks of two categories of music: one discusses it as an amusing pastime, the other as a means for consolidating faith in God and purifying the heart. The singing of any poem that has frivolous content and is intended to stir sensual feelings must be forbidden, even if it is not called *ghinad'* (art or secular song); songs with serious and ascetic contents are harmless. Turning to musical instruments, Ibn Radjab rejects the views of learned people who distinguish between those instruments that cause pleasure and those that do not: he considers all instruments forbidden (Farmer 204; Roychudhury 208).

**SOURCE:** Amnon Shiloah. "Islam & Music: The Ideological Background." *Music in the World of Islam: a Socio-Cultural Study*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995 (note: no "h" in "scolar.") [pp.33-35.]

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Do you agree with the point from the text that "music does not act independently according to its own fundamentals, nor is the musician free to pursue the dictates of his imagination"? If yes, explain why?
2. What is the importance of a sacred written tradition in the "context of rationalization" according to Max Weber?
3. Using your personal experiences of listening to and interpreting music, how should we answer the question posed by author: "do the tension, friction and conflict emanate from the concept of music itself, or are they determined by other factors?"
4. Why do many Muslim religious scholars "claim that music is basically a temptation of the devil that dominates the soul and makes it a slave to passion"?
5. What are the arguments of other scholars opposing the leading view? What are the two categories of music the Muslim scholar Ibn Radjab is talking about?
6. How can we explain that musical instruments are prohibited, but not human voices (compare with hadiths)? How can the author's view of music help us understand the origins and role of music in Muslim society? Do you agree with the author's view? If not, what are the weaknesses of this point of view?
7. How can we identify the differences between the sacred written tradition and the approaches of Muslim scholars to music? What are the connections between music and imagination?

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS (CHAPTER I):

1. What can you say about the Muslim African and Caribbean origins of Rap Music in America? Do you agree with this point?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the texts presented in this chapter? Listening to a variety of samples of Central Asian music, what are the differences between steppe 'Kyuy' music of the Kazakh, Kyrgyz Pastoral Mountain music and Tajik 'Falak' folk music?
3. How can the diversity of Muslim cultures and the intellectual traditions of Islam change the minds of people who think music is a menace and should be prohibited?
4. If you read the Holy Qur'an can you find anything prohibiting music there? Can you argue for the importance of music in human life? If not, why?
5. Do you know other debates on the origins of music in other cultures in Central Asia?
6. What are the connections between the origins of music and human nature?
7. What is the role of inspiration and imagination in the creation of music? How can traditional music express individuality? Can tradition create problems for individual musical expressions?
8. Express your thoughts on the role of music in your personal life, or in living Islam, in the society and communities surrounding you? Interpret any piece of music which is familiar to you using the texts and concepts of music presented in this chapter?

## ADDITIONAL READINGS: (FOR WRITING ESSAYS AND RESEARCH PAPERS)

### Central Asian Folk Music and Islamic sources:

1. Akhmet Jubanov. *Strings of Centuries*. Daik Press, Almaty, 2001. Also: <http://www.unesco.kz/heritagenet/kz/content/history/portret/jubanov.htm>; See: Bimboes, A.E., 25 Kyrgyz songs. The musical ethnography. Russian Geographical Society, Alma-ata, 1926; Valikhanov, Ch., *Jungarian stories*, St. Pittsburg, 1904; Vambery, A. *Essays on life and customs of Oriental*, St. Pittsburg, 1877, Kharuzin V.N. *Kyrgyz's of Bukueev Urd (tribe), 1889*]; Also see: Slobin, M., *Music of Central Asia and of the Volga-Uralic People*, Bloomington: Indiana University, 1977; Zeranska-Kominek, S. 'The Turkmen Bakhshy: Shaman and/or Artist', in VII European Seminar in Ethnomusicology, Pre-publication of the Conference Papers, Berlin: International Institute for Comparative Music, 1990, 497-508; Hoerburger, F. 'Correspondence between Eastern and Western Folk Epics', *JIFMC*, 4, 1954, 23-26; Rashed, B.S., *Egyptian Folk Songs*, New York and Cairo, 1958; Chadwick, N. and V. Zhirmunsky, *Oral Epics of Central Asia*, Cambridge, 1969; Havas, M.A., *The Contemporary Arab Folk Song*, Moscow, 1970; Slobin, M., 'Buz-Baz: A Musical Marionette of North Afghanistan', *Asian Music*, 4, 1975, 217-224;
2. The Musical Nomad, Central Asian Music, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nomad/Pages/asiamuse.htm>;
3. Art of Central Asia: "arts, Central Asian." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 2006. *Encyclopedia Britannica Premium Service*. 24 Aug. 2006 <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-13926>>;
4. Tajik Folk Music: [http://experts.about.com/e/m/mu/Music\\_of\\_Tajikistan.htm](http://experts.about.com/e/m/mu/Music_of_Tajikistan.htm);
5. Music of Tajik Badakhshan: [http://www.iis.ac.uk/SiteAssets/pdf/van\\_belle\\_](http://www.iis.ac.uk/SiteAssets/pdf/van_belle_)

badakhshan.pdf#search='Tajik%20Folk%20Music';

6. On Hadiths: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith>; On Sahih al-Bukhari, see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahih\\_Bukhari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahih_Bukhari); Introduction to translation of Sahih al-Bukhari, Translator M. Muhsin Khan. [http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/bukhari/Islamic\\_Server\\_of\\_MSA-USC](http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/bukhari/Islamic_Server_of_MSA-USC); <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/bukhari/sbtintro.html>;
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54

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"Wild Style" and "Beat Street" are two films which portray Hip Hop culture.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE SPIRIT OF MUSIC

55

### INTRODUCTION

Is music only a form of entertainment? Is there a particular spirit to music? Or does it exemplify the human spirit? This chapter is about the creation of music by the composer, the development of music, and short glimpses into the lives of musicians and their impact on ordinary people. Eventually, we are forced to raise the question: what is music about? Is it something tangible from the physical world? Is music part of the cosmos and the universe? Or is it something internal, existing inside the human soul as a response to spiritual, social and cultural challenges and needs? Imagination is one source or mechanism inspiring the origin of music and creation of the spirit of music. But is the imagination the only source? What other sources of inspiration are there?

We will participate in an ancient and modern discourse on the spirit of music, including discussions on psychoanalytical approaches to musical interpretation. In order to understand the process of creation and production of music, one should empathize with the performer. To understand the role and impact of music in human life and history, we will watch a film, read life stories, and analyze excerpts on music and dance. The first topic for discussion is the process of creating music. This part includes a film about Manas, the Kyrgyz Epic poem, which will start our discussions, involving an analysis of the Manas performer, Jomokchi. The role of dreams and revelation in the spirit and life of performers will open the discussion on the spirit of this traditional epic performance of Central Asian people, not only of the nomadic peoples, but also of the settled communities.

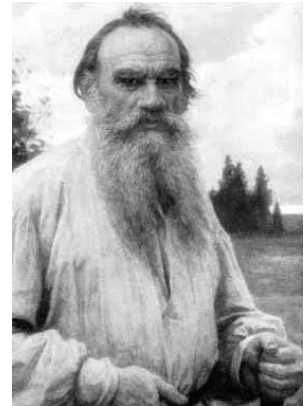
Should there be just one explanation of the influence of music on humanity? Why do the views of writers and scholars differ regarding the impact of music? This part of the chapter includes two texts from Russian culture. One is an excerpt from the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy (19th c.) on the connection between music and the human spirit, and the second excerpt contains comments from the Russian scholar Lev Vygotsky offering psychoanalysis of art. Lev Vygotsky will continue the discussion started by Tolstoy, but contests Tolstoy's ideas and explains the phenomenon of music in another way, offering social context as the subconscious condition for the influence of music. Next, we will read and discuss an article on Umm Kulthoum, a famous and influential 1960s and 70s singer from Egypt who at that time was called the 'Epic of the Nation'. It will end this chapter and open the way for discussion on what the role of music in society is, as well as how to reach a deeper understanding of music.



**FLUTE PLAYER**

## LEO TOLSTOY: THE KREUTZER SONATA

This part of our discussion will concern Tolstoy’s view of Music. Leo Tolstoy is a very famous 19th century Russian writer and the author of “War and Peace” and “Anna Karenina” among other novels and stories. Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy was born on August 28, 1828 (old style) at his family’s estate at Yasnaya Polyana. His approach to life was very philosophical. He tried to find the internal meaning of things. This search affected his later writings. We know little of his childhood other than: “His mother shortly passed away and having no surviving photographs Tolstoy had no recollection of what his mother looked like. While still a young boy Tolstoy’s older brother, Nikolai, told him he had written the secret of how to make all men happy on a green stick and hid it by a road in the Zakaz forest. Tolstoy later asked to be buried where the mystical green stick was thought to have been hidden” [See: <http://www.ltolstoy.com/biography/index.html>].



Leo Tolstoy had a multi-faceted personality and was interested in philosophy, music, and psychology. His thoughts on the role and spirit of music, especially Beethoven’s Kreutzer Sonata, are pertinent to our discussion.

Reading the text, we should consider the pros and cons of the opinion suggested about this piece on music. According to the main character of this novel: “a terrible thing is music in general”? Do you agree with this point of view? If not, why?

### CHAPTER XXIII.

“I think that it is superfluous to say that I was very vain. If one has no vanity in this life of ours, there is no sufficient reason for living. So for that Sunday I had busied myself in tastefully arranging things for the dinner and the musical **soiree**. I had purchased myself numerous things for the dinner, and had chosen the guests. Toward six o’clock they arrived, and after them Troukhatchevsky, in his dress-coat, with diamond shirt-studs, in bad taste. He bore himself with ease. To all questions he responded promptly, with a smile of contentment and understanding, and that peculiar expression which was intended to mean: ‘All that you may do and say will be exactly what I expected.’ Everything about him that was not correct I now noticed with especial pleasure, for it all tended to **tranquillize** me, and prove to me that to my wife he stood in such a degree of **inferiority** that, as she had told me, she could not stoop to his level. Less because of my wife’s assurances than because of the atrocious sufferings which I felt in jealousy, I no longer allowed myself to be jealous.

“In spite of that, I was not at ease with the musician or with her during dinner-time and the time that **elapsed** before the beginning of the music. Involuntarily I followed each of their gestures and looks. The dinner, like all dinners, was tiresome and conventional. Not long afterward the music began. He went to get his violin; my wife advanced to the piano, and rummaged among the scores. Oh, how well I remember all the details of that evening! I remember how he brought the violin, how he opened the box, took off the serge embroidered by a lady’s hand, and began to tune

- soiree** -  
an evening party or reception
- tranquillize** -  
make calm or still
- inferior** -  
one of lesser rank or station or quality
- elapse** -  
pass by

the instrument. I can still see my wife sit down, with a false air of indifference, under which it was plain that she hid a great timidity, a timidity that was especially due to her comparative lack of musical knowledge. She sat down with that false air in front of the piano, and then began the usual **preliminaries**, – the **pizzicati** of the violin and the arrangement of the scores. I remember then how they looked at each other, and cast a glance at their auditors who were taking their seats.

They said a few words to each other, and the music began. They played Beethoven's 'Kreutzer Sonata.' Do you know the first **presto**? Do you know it? Ah!" . . .

Posdnicheff heaved a sigh, and was silent for a long time.

"A terrible thing is that sonata, especially the presto! And a terrible thing is music in general. What is it? Why does it do what it does? They say that music stirs the soul. Stupidity! A lie! It acts, it acts frightfully (I speak for myself), but not in an ennobling way. It acts neither in an ennobling nor a debasing way, but in an irritating way. How shall I say it? Music makes me forget my real situation. It transports me into a state which is not my own. Under the influence of music I really seem to feel what I do not feel, to understand what I do not understand, to have powers which I cannot have. Music seems to me to act like yawning or laughter; I have no desire to sleep, but I yawn when I see others yawn; with no reason to laugh, I laugh when I hear others laugh. And music transports me immediately into the condition of soul in which he who wrote the music found himself at that time. I become confounded with his soul, and with him I pass from one condition to another. But why that? I know nothing about it? But he who wrote Beethoven's 'Kreutzer Sonata' knew well why he found himself in a certain condition. That condition led him to certain actions, and for that reason to him had a meaning, but to me none, none whatever. And that is why music provokes an excitement which it does not bring to a conclusion. For instance, a military march is played; the soldier passes to the sound of this march, and the music is finished. A dance is played; I have finished dancing, and the music is finished. A mass is sung; I receive the sacrament, and again the music is finished. But any other music provokes an excitement, and this excitement is not accompanied by the thing that needs properly to be done, and that is why music is so dangerous, and sometimes acts so frightfully.

"In China music is under the control of the State, and that is the way it ought to be. Is it admissible that the first comer should hypnotize one or more persons, and then do with them as he likes? And especially that the hypnotizer should be the first immoral individual who happens to come along? It is a frightful power in the hands of anyone, no matter whom. For instance, should they be allowed to play this 'Kreutzer Sonata,' the first presto – and there are many like it – in parlors, among ladies wearing low-necked dresses, or in concerts, then finish the piece, receive the applause, and then begin another piece? These things should be played under certain circumstances, only in cases where it is necessary to incite certain actions corresponding to the music. But to incite an energy of feeling which corresponds to neither the time nor the place, and is expended in nothing, cannot fail to act dangerously. On me in particular this piece acted in a frightful manner. One would have said that new sentiments, new realities, of which I was formerly ignorant, had developed in me. 'Ah, yes, that's it! Not at all as I lived and thought before! This is the right way to live!'

"Thus I spoke to my soul as I listened to that music. What was this new thing that I thus learned? That I did not realize, but the consciousness of this indefinite state filled me with joy. In that state there was no room for jealousy. The same faces, and among them HE and my wife, I saw in a different light. This music transported me into an unknown world, where there was no room for jealousy. Jealousy and the feelings



**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN** (1770-1827) began a new realm of musical expression that profoundly influenced composers throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. London p.188  
MUSIC: AN APPRECIATION. FOURTH BRIEF EDITION Aut. ROGER KAMIEN

**preliminary -**

prior to or preparing for the main matter, action, or business

**pizzicato -**

a method of playing a bowed string instrument by plucking the strings with the fingers

**presto -**

a musical term indicating a fast tempo



that provoke it seemed to me trivialities, nor worth thinking of.

“After the presto followed the **andante**, not very new, with commonplace variations, and the feeble finale. Then they played more, at the request of the guests – first an elegy by Ernst, and then various other pieces. They were all very well, but did not produce upon me a tenth part of the impression that the opening piece did. I felt light and gay throughout the evening. As for my wife, never had I seen her as she was that night. Those brilliant eyes, that severity and majestic expression while she was playing, and then that utter languor, that weak, pitiable, and happy smile after she had finished; I saw them all and attached no importance to them, believing that she felt as I did, that to her, as to me, new sentiments had been revealed, as through a fog. During almost the whole evening I was not jealous.

“Two days later I was to start for the assembly of the Zemstvo, and for that reason, on taking leave of me and carrying all his scores with him, Troukhatchevsky asked me when I should return. I inferred from that that he believed it impossible to come to my house during my absence, and that was agreeable to me. Now I was not to return before his departure from the city. So we bade each other a definite farewell. For the first time I shook his hand with pleasure, and thanked him for the satisfaction that he had given me. He likewise took leave of my wife, and their parting seemed to me very natural and proper. All went marvellously. My wife and I retired, well satisfied with the evening. We talked of our impressions in a general way, and we were nearer together and more friendly than we had been for a long time.

**andante** -

moving moderately slow, but distinct and flowing

**SOURCE:** Leo Tolstoy. The Kreutzer Sonata. From Project Gutenberg.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main idea of this text? What are the connections between music and imagination?
2. Do you agree with the point that ‘music is a terrible thing’? Do you think that this is actually the opinion of Leo Tolstoy? Can you imagine how this novel continued and what might have happened at the end of the story between the narrator and his wife?
3. If we compare this text with Jubanov’s text on the origins of his music (chapter 1), how does this influence your opinion about the effects of music? What about your opinion of Tolstoy?
4. Listen to Beethoven ‘Kreutzer Sonata’ and get a feel for the music. Do you think that this music in itself really contains any sign of terrible horrors?
5. What is the connection between the spirit of music and the human condition? What are the differences between the prohibition of music by some Islamic scholars and the concerns of the main character in this story?



**KYRGYZ MANASCHI**



## THE GENEROUS MANAS

Film: The Generous Manas (Kyrgyz Epic Poem), UNESCO-funded project Keen Communications, P.O. Box 62855, Colorado Springs, CO 80962, www.keenmedia.com.

Run time: 25 min.

In order to understand the performance we need to watch the film. Nevertheless, a written introduction is also necessary. According to the film poster ‘the epos, **Manas**, contains the foundations of the cultural, historical, social and religious traditions of the semi-nomadic Kyrgyz people of Central Asia’.

In 1995 the 1000th anniversary of the unprecedented folk **epic** “Manas” was celebrated. With 500,000 poetical lines it is the greatest epic work in the world. For centuries “Manas” has been passed down from generation to generation by skilled “manaschi”. This film tells about the history of the Kyrgyz people through their ancient hero, Manas. It was filmed in the mountainous land of Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia by the well-known Kyrgyz company, Epos. It exhibits their ancient culture and customs and the beautiful country in which they live.

This film is not the only material on Manas. There is a large collection of reading and video materials available from a variety of sources. Thus, watching the film we should pay attention to the Manas performance and musical process to interpret the spirit of music of in general, comparing Manas with other living musical examples from Central Asia. What do you think makes the Manas musical performance unique?

**Manas** -  
the name of epic's hero

**epic** -  
a film, poem or book which is long and contains a lot of action, usually dealing with a historical subject



**MANAS` 1000<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

## TALANTALI BAKCHIEV: SACRED SUMMONS

Talantali Bakchiev is an ethno-musicologist from Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan). Kyrgyzstan is situated on the high mountains of the Tian-Shan in the heart of Central Asia. The Kyrgyz are the successors of a nomadic culture, and this nation is rich with oral tradition, especially, the epos. The author of the article talks about the “jomokchy” phenomenon – the activity of a narrator of the “Manas” Kyrgyz epos, the nature of his creative work, the ‘birth’ of this music, his apprenticeship, his journeys, crises he faced in his work, the role of memory (mnemonic activity), dream and the subconscious in his life, etc. When reading this text we will find the answers to the questions concerning the role of music in nomadic culture and the spirit of Kyrgyz folk and epic poems, such as: “Damnation, retribution, or wrath of the spirits of the Manas are transferred to him personally or descendants of those who provoked their wrath.” To some extent this statement seems mystical. Is it mystical or not? Musical performance is the main component of the activities of a Manaschi, who has a spiritual role in Kyrgyz society. It is important to know and to interpret the role of music in ancient nomadic Kyrgyz society. What are the core activities of the carriers of that ancient spiritual culture? How seriously can one accept the author’s suggested interpretation of jomokchy? Reading this material, we would like to think about the issues of the spirit and roots of Manas culture and discuss the dynamic character of the Manas performance. We will pay particular attention to the interrelationship of traditional, regional and international (global) music. Is the spirit of Kyrgyz folk music limited to the Kyrgyz national identity, or does it belong to the global community?



### SELECTION (JOMOKCHY)

“The selection process usually begins in childhood, adolescence or early adulthood. That is connected with completion of a full astrological cycle (muchel) at 12-13 (first muchel) and 24-25 (second muchel). The final age for being selected as a jomokchy is 36-37 (third muchel) years. A. Mukhambetova, a Kazakh cultural anthropologist, thinks that these astrological cycles are peculiar to the nomadic Tengrian civilization calendar: “Higher cosmic forms of existence whose common principles pierce the whole world expose themselves in the lowest, mundane forms. The macrocosm cycles are connected with the human lifecycle. The rhythm of a bio-social life consisting of a chain of 12-year mushels is synchronized with cosmic time cycles. The first mushel is from 1 to 12 years – childhood (balalyk); the second – 13-24 years – youth (jastyk); 25-36 and 37-48 years are two mushels of maturity (karasakaldyk); 49-60 and on – old age (aksakaldyk). Every person undergoes a mushel every 12 years. Mushel age is a dangerous transition period accompanied by instability and sometimes by temporary **deterioration** of health that according to the law of similarity, causes also psychological and social hardships. These are the 13th, 25th, 37th, 49th, 61st, etc. year of life requiring special attention, caution, and **prudence**. On this path he assimilates sensory and emotional (childhood), emotional and psychological (adolescent), intellectual and social (adult) experiences. Only after fully completing all the mushels, a person in his senior years comes to the peak of his spiritual experience... Great Cosmic laws are coded in the mushel – the Law of Evolution, the Law of Cosmic Justice or Karma, the Law of Free Will and the Law of Sacrifice.” (Mukhambetova, A., pp. 119, 123).

**deterioration** -  
the process of growing worse

**prudence** -  
wisdom in the way of caution  
and provision

Coming back to jomokchy, we'd like to note that the process of selection of jomokchy takes place during the first two stages of human life, when the person is not fully developed.

Dreams and inspiration are signs of selection. The Kyrgyz have a very serious attitude towards dreams and think that dreams are part of life. In fact, people sleep for 1/3 of their life. That is why dreams are perceived as signs given by spirits. He sees Manas and his confidants in his dreams or under inspiration: Bakai (cousin and councilor of Manas), Kanykei (Manas' wife), Semetei (Manas' son), Gulchoro (Almambet's son), Aichurek (Semetei's wife) or one of forty soldiers of his retinue (kyrk choro), etc. Often, spirits of former narrators related to the chosen one, come to him. In this case, an interpretation and confirmation by famous narrators of the meaning of these dreams is necessary.

Jomokchy's dream is the main sign of selection and it is simply impossible to suppress it. According to the epos, the above characters (Bakai, Kanykei, Semetei, Gulchoro, Aichurek) do not die but only leave the world of people and vanish into the world of spirits – kayip. According to Shaabai Azizov, a famous narrator, "Bakai is not only the oldest and highest ranking, but also the most powerful. Those to whom Bakai comes and blesses will narrate all 14 tribes of Manas (7 ancestors and 7 descendants of Manas) or 14 verses of the Manas epos.

"The echo of this belief is found in Yakut and Dolgan folklore. Narrators are regarded as being chosen by spirits and deities. The origin of olonkho and its first performance is credited to Seerkeen Sesepy who became one of the characters of the epos, a wise advisor of the main heroes". (see: Putilov, B.N. p.45).

**Damnation, retribution, or wrath** of the spirits of Manas are cast on him personally, or descendants of those who provoked their wrath. A person who has suffered the wrath of Manas spirits will have no male descendants. Here is the story of one of the famous jomokchy of the 18th century, Keldubek Barybos yyly, who was punished by Bakai: "The first apparition of Manas and his warriors occurred when Keldibek lived in Chui and tended a herd of sheep in the afternoon.

Manas' warriors told him:

"Keldibek, we spent the night at yours on the way, after you we'll go to Sagymbai and have lunch, then we'll have a short meeting with Tynybek. Treat us kindly; we'll also have lunch with Kojomkeldy cherik (name of a clan) but his life will be short". The second apparition of Manas and his warriors: a person with a stern and beetle-browed face and black round beard, riding on horseback on Akkula, said: "I am Manas." Near him, riding on Saral was a resplendent, wide-eyed person with a red, wedge-shaped beard. When Keldibek asked him: "Who are you?" he answered: "I am Almambet." Then Keldibek addressed a white-bearded swarthy person riding on Akboz: "And who are you?" He answered: "I am a relative (of Manas), Bakai." They warned Keldibek: "If you make a sacrifice (of cattle) to us every year when you remember the spirits of the ancestors, you will have male descendants. But if you forget this vow even once, nothing can help you and you will have no descendants." During their third, and last, visit they said: "You worshipped us and poetized our deeds but you did not fulfill our condition completely, so you won't have male descendants, you will have only one daughter." (Kydyrbaeva, R.Z., p. 1-11)

Prominent representatives of Kyrgyz culture and science, T. Sydykbekov (Sydykbekov, T., pp. 565-566), Z. Bektenov (Bektenov, Z., p. 267), and M. Ubukeev (Ubukeev, M., p. 3), who worked closely with the Manas epos, devoted a large part of their lives to it, and traced lives of their colleagues, openly state the following facts: "ardent opponents of the Manas epos such as P. Baltin, G. Nurov, J. Samaganov, and G. Samarin, who in their time jeopardized the Manas epos, its devoted researchers and

**damnation -**

to be put in hell and punished forever

**retribution -**

deserved and severe punishment

**wrath -**

extreme anger

narrators not once, finally were severely punished by the spirits of the Manas world.” A prominent Soviet scientist, V. Jirmundsky, who underestimated the mystic power of Manas, had personally experienced the wrath of Manas. That’s why those who understand or tried to understand that world and the power that it has, take Manas himself and his world very seriously.

Spirits coming to jomokchy offer, request and sometimes even insist on performing a part of the epos indicated by them for people. They treat a chosen one to a white-colored drink (like mare’s milk), koumiss, airan, water, millet, and sand. That is their blessing and initiation and, at the same time, the content of the epos that they will narrate in the future. It seems as if this type of treatment has a very important symbolic meaning.

The interpretations of the appearance of the spirits are very contradictory and those who experience it are considered **doomed**. There are many incidences when chosen ones tried to avoid it. But spirits can be so persistent that ultimately they gain the upper hand. Disobedience and repudiation entails illness or insanity. Realistically, that person does not have “a real illness”, most likely this is the illness of his soul. The spirits severely torture the chosen one, making him leave his house and go wandering. Otherwise, he would die.

The illness becomes apparent only when the chosen one refuses to obey. That crisis will continue until he **concedes** to narrate the epos. Hope that they will leave him in the near future is not possible. Lingering illness may lead to death. Manifestations of the illness vary and are based on regular neuropsychic disorders (mental derangements), such as a person loses consciousness, has an unusual appearance and behaves strangely; sometimes he has attacks of “epilepsy” or “hysteria”; he often disappears at nighttime, seeking **seclusion**; he is not talkative, sleeps for a long time, looks absent-minded, and loses self-control. These are the first signs of his new life, the mystical calling. Sometimes they are so dramatic that one can perceive that person as mentally ill. He loses interest in everyday life, is abashed, scared and doubts his vigor. Illness meant that the chosen one is in the power of spirits of the Manas world. That can go on for months or years. The illness manifests itself either in a person’s sleep or in reality. At that time in the chosen one’s mind a “blast” of devastating force occurs. That “blast” is required for birth of something new. The chosen one limits his food intake as if cleansing his body. During this time of crisis he must be watched closely but at the same time one shouldn’t hinder or impede his actions.

The main ascetic practice is **solitude**. R. Walsh writes about it: “... solitude is the main ascetic practice. It is common for all religious traditions. One can see the periods of solitude in the lives of many great saints and founders of religions. Remember the 40-day fasting of Jesus in the desert; the secluded meditation of Buddha; the loneliness of Muhammad in the cave. Such practices were a part of preparation of Eskimo shamans, Christian hermits, Hindu yogis, and Tibetan monks who lived in embedded caves for 13 years. The main purpose of seclusion is to abstract from the outer world and pay attention to spiritual basis. Such a spiritual realm hides in every one of us – “The Kingdom of God is inside you.”

**doom -**

death, destruction or any very bad situation that cannot be avoided

**concede -**

to admit, often unwillingly, that something is true

**seclusion -**

when someone is alone, away from other people

**solitude -**

the situation of being alone

“Look inside yourself. You are Buddha.” But intensive contemplation and introspection are required to reveal it. One needs to train one’s concentration, deepen sensitivity to one’s internal world, calm one’s mind, and pacify the storms of desire.” (Walsh, R., pp. 55-57). That’s why jomokchy seek solitude. Through solitude they improve themselves, contact spirits, and reach spiritual perfection. When they vanish for several days, they are in another world, another space, and another dimension – the world of Manas. Modern interpretation of such phenomena is so varied that a jomokchy could be viewed as a hysterical person, neurotic, psychotic, epileptic, schizophrenic, charlatan, unlucky person, or an idiot. One can re-read research done by Soviet scholars to see what derogatory labels were given to them. This shows that those specialists in folklore lacked both anthropological, psychological education and personal experience.

But people didn’t stop believing and honoring jomokchy, and praising them as saints. That’s why it is important to understand that interpretation of a different culture based on beliefs and standards of one’s own culture is risky and can lead to gross distortions. I’d like to add here the opinion of a famous Russian specialist in folklore familiar with Kyrgyz narration only by reading scientific materials: “What can an author who has never worked with manaschi and who may rely only on international comparative material on the issue of selection and inspiration add? Only one thing: a gift of epic narration connected with such monuments as Manas is an inexplicable mystery. No one can explain where this gift comes from, how it comes into a person, why it tortures and makes that person happy, how it is disclosed and commands realization ... And although there are many quite rational facts that together could be used as material for giving a partial answer to this and other questions, the mystery remains and something else is required to explain the mysterious phenomenon of the narrating gift. That “something” begins from time immemorial, feeds on myth, kept up by stable conceptions of “supernatural”, “superordinary”, and “non-natural” that is perceived in very real changes.” (Putilov, B.N., p. 51).

After being in the spirits’ hands, the person appears reborn. He changes completely: his personality, fate and views. Essentially, jomokchy’s illness is the initiation of the candidate to jomokchy.

A spirit from the Manas world becomes his first tutor or helpmate in his later life. It so happens that the selection is made from his grandfather, father, uncle or big brother’s side when they are still alive. But in this case the selection is made at the spirit’s insistence, too. Spirits let them know that it is time for him to pass on the baton to his younger relative and name him. His clansmen and the Kyrgyz nation in general greatly respect and honor the chosen one and the whole process of selection. For Kyrgyz people it was a great honor to be chosen as a Manas but at the same time a great responsibility.

**SOURCE:** AKHP translation: Talantali Bakhchiev. *The Sacred Summons*. Bishkek, 2005, pp.71-87

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. How are jomokchy born and how are they selected?
2. What role do dreams and visions play in the life of jomokchy? What is the illness that jomokchy suffer from?
3. What role does solitude play in the professional formation of jomokchy?
4. What are the similarities and difference between the events of the lives of jomokchy and prophecy?



## A. ASANKANOV N. BEKMUKHAMEDOVA

This is an excerpt from the work of A. Asankhanov and N. Bekmukhamedova (modern Kyrgyz scholars) containing historical and cultural analysis of creative work by folk singers and narrators of 'Manas' epos from the point of view of present humanistic ideals. In this work the authors analyze the connection of manaschi (a person narrating 'Manas') with social and political conditions; his quest for inspiration, "prophetic mission" among nomads; issues of transferring the skill from instructor to apprentice; gender problems; dreams and visions, etc. Our task is to understand the spirit of music (using 'Manas' as an example) and how the narrator's creative work influences his/her personal and public life and vice versa.

### MANASCHI PHENOMENON

...In the past a manaschi's fate was difficult due to the close interdependence of social and political conditions of the life of people. Old people tell that during Jungari rule manaschi were severely persecuted by the conquerors. Narrators were tied to horses and torn apart... The enemy didn't like Manas's freedom-loving songs that were heard everywhere in Kyrgyz villages; they wanted people to be obedient and dependent.

The majority of manaschi came from the common people and their family income didn't differ from that of poor men even when they became famous.

How can the whole-hearted devotion of manaschi to their course of life be explained? Most likely the Manas itself is the reason. They heard it once and felt a strong emotional sympathy with its heroes. In comparison to the dramatic situations of the epic's heroes, their own personal, spiritually traumatizing events lose their significance. By empathizing with the heroes' sufferings, they feel passion, horror, and grief which psychologists call **catharsis**. Personal emotional conflicts are overcome through catharsis and their psychological state is stabilized. The unity and solidarity of the Kyrgyz nation in the struggle for freedom is the central idea of 'Manas' which is shown through the tragic fate of the heroes. Thus, the epos became of utmost importance for them and they became subconsciously prepared to overcome the hardships and misery of their own lives. Every time a manaschi performs the epos for listeners, he experienced this catharsis over and over again, thus, clearing internal conflicts from his life, raising himself above his prejudices, forcing out base and unkind feelings, and gaining kinder and higher ones that are necessary for the benefit of other people.

The popularity and love people have for their manaschi can be explained not only by the wonderful performance of the epos, its deep sense and poetic beauty but also by the personality of the manaschi, his fascination, kindness, warmth, fairness, and attractive simplicity in communicating with ordinary people. They are satisfied with small things, not craving riches and not seeking the rank of the high and mighty distinguished "spiritual **adherents**" – clergy, prophets, and preachers who popularized their

#### **catharsis** -

a release of emotional tension, as after an overwhelming experience, that restores or refreshes the spirit

#### **adherent** -

a supporter, as of a cause or individual

teachings in many centers of civilization. The majority of us know the famous poem “Prorok” (Prophet) by Pushkin from school days. This poem is about the destiny of a poet and his creative work in society. Pushkin uses the image and motives of the biblical story about the prophet Isaiah. Like the prophet, the poet is destined “to burn people’s hearts with words”, seeing and having a greater prescience than ordinary people, to lead their thoughts in a direction that is good for society.

In our nomadic culture this prophetic mission has been placed on akyns and manaschi since ancient times. They didn’t allow the public conscience to stagnate.

Not just anyone can become a manaschi but only those who since birth possess the right delicate emotional disposition and sense of words, i.e. a poetic gift peculiar to singers and poets. Today, guided by works of scholars studying ‘Manas’ we can describe the characteristics of the professional art of manaschi that developed through centuries of narrating of the epos.

Based on the strength of the spiritual gift in the narrator’s conscience and soul and influence it had on the performance, there are two categories of manaschi – “chon manaschi” (literally, big manaschi) and “chala manaschi”, i.e. ordinary manaschi (literally, imperfect manaschi). Following V. Radlov, Kazakh scholar, M. Auezov, compared them with beliefs adopted in Europe – **aeds** and rhapsodies, meaning that “chon manaschi” were like aeds, i.e. they knew and performed the whole epos from beginning to end, while “chala manaschi” (uncompleted master) were like Greek rhapsodies performing some extracts, episodes that were of significant size, or popularized the epos among the people... pp. 168-169.

... Men were the main narrators of the epic ‘Manas’ trilogy. But women have also been well-known manaschi – Alyiman Musa kyzy (1912-?), Aiargul Taji-baikpy (1900-?), Kalbubu Suyinbai kyzy (1923-?), Seide Deidy kyzy (1881-1946), Sidepe Moldoke kyzy. There were probably many women-manaschi in the ancient times as well but they didn’t reach the level of “chon manaschi” and so there is no memory of them.

The manaschi’s profession, requiring wandering and frequent solitude due to threats, didn’t attract many women who traditionally were more dependent on families and had to bring up children. Besides, the Islamic faith doesn’t approve of the active participation of women in public life resulting in prohibitions against them engaging in the profession. The heroic nature of Seidene (a woman-narrator) is therefore significant and deserves respect. She was born in another (Soviet) age. At the beginning she narrated the epos only among her native villagers. “Her husband’s parents prohibited her narrating, but her irrepressible inclination to do it never left her alone and once, without the knowledge of her family, she went to a big festival where a lot of honored aksakals (elders) and **connoisseurs** of folk art gathered. She made them listen to her narration of the ‘Manas’. The honored aksakals were amazed at her talent and her level of skill and gave her their blessing and permission to openly narrate the epos in public and share her art with people while she was able. Thus, the smart and courageous Seidene was able to stand up for her right to be a manaschi. Her acknowledgement as a ‘Manas’ narrator influenced the development of her talent. Seidene became more famous as a se-meitechi. In the 60s she came to the capital of the republic where connoisseurs and researchers highly praised her style. Seidene’s professionalism reached the highest level that was achieved only by chon manaschi – a true creator of the epos. Just like them, Seidene was able to introduce her vision in interpretation of some themes without violating the framework of the general plot. Her interpretation illustrated her inspired flair and peculiar, female mentality and experience.

**aed -**

troubadour; wandering  
minstrel

**connoisseur -**

a person with expert knowl-  
edge or training, especially in  
the fine arts

Manaschi frequently formed family dynasties. Many of them said that their parents or close relatives who were narrators of the epos (manaschi, semeteichi, seitekchi) played a very important role in their development. For instance, Zhanybai Kozhek uulu's (who was from Tien Shan) father, grandfather and great-grandfather were manaschi and here we can see an evident dynastic succession. The son of an outstanding Chui singer and prominent manaschi, Balyk Naimanbai, also became famous as a true manaschi. The brother of a famous Issyk-Kul narrator, Chotoke-Lziz Omur uulu, also narrated the epos and passed on his knowledge to his son, Shaabai. A very famous Issyk-Kul manaschi, Mambet Chokmor uulu, began to narrate the epos under the influence of his uncle, Donuzbai Eshimbek uulu. A narrator from the south born in Uzgsnsky district, Lanpaz Kokkoz uulu, was also a successor of his family tradition as for nine generations his ancestors were 'Manas' narrators. Two brothers, Daikanbai and Almabek, continued their father, Toichubek's, trade, who was a professional manaschi. Aktan Tynybek uulu is the son of Tynybek, a famous manaschi in his time. Succession didn't always mean the transfer of the art of narration to relatives. Novices often came to famous masters and were somewhat trained by them... pp. 170-171

... Manaschi of the past didn't like to talk about their apprenticeship as it required much effort and a strain on their nervous system. Answering questions about how they learned to narrate the 'Manas', they often said that they had a dream where they saw various heroes of the epos naming themselves. Before that they allegedly knew neither its content nor concept. Manaschi explained their gift of narration as an inspiration from on high (divine predestination of the spirits of epic heroes in which they piously believed) that was made known to them in a dream...

Scholars studying 'Manas' say that the explanation of narrators that their gift was revealed to them in a dream has been studied very attentively and for a long time. The rationalistic nature of the explanation of the dream is connected to the fact that a dream is a phenomenon of the human subconscious reflecting psychological experiences as a result of a creative process. Almost all great artists, writers, musicians, and creative people experience similar dreams or sensations. L. Saliev writes that for artists who recreate life in the world of images such dreams are an ordinary phenomenon and play an activating role; they occur due to belief in the reality of the images being created, and the inevitable empathising in the author's suffering and ecstasy. That was the case with Dante, Raphael, Derjavin, Byron, Goethe, Guano, Dickens, Thackeray, Shuman, Maupassant, Aleksandr Ivanov, Dostoevsky, Verlen, Kramskoy, Wagner, and many others. This is the same as for the art of the manaschi, who from the cradle felt an atmosphere of reverence for the 'Manas'.

The narrators certainly didn't explain the reasons for their dreams in such a way but the obligatory nature of their occurrence for every "contender" to narrating the 'Manas' produced a sense of peculiarity of the trade among manaschi. Narrating had the effect of a religious rite, and the epos was perceived as a kind of divine revelation.



**KYRGYZ MUSICIANS  
IN KARAKOL**

Dreams, as an explanation of the calling of an epic singer, exist in almost all nations. In this regard K. Zhirmundsky mentions the Anglo-Saxon poet, Cadmon; Turk narrators from Central Asia; and natives from Southern Siberia who gained a wonderful gift of singing and narrating after seeing a dream. For the Kazakhs a dream was a mandatory step in the practice of becoming an *akyn* poet. It is noteworthy that in the Kyrgyz oral singing and narrating tradition a dream is connected only with manaschi and doesn't occur for narrators of other epics or for akyns.

Apparently, the uniqueness of the "dream ritual" for the 'Manas' has contributed to the consolidation of the manaschi profession among other creators and keepers of the rich poetic and epic heritage of Kyrgyz. Such a uniqueness, peculiar only to the 'Manas', helped develop its narration history for centuries, serving as a guarantee of the continuation of the genre and stage evolution of the epos, and the historical and colossal "enlargement" of its plot that can be noted in Sagychbai and Sayakbai's versions.

Sources on the narration and the indispensable ritual of dreaming are closely connected with archaic mythological and ritual complexes – the magic of shaman's rites. The similarity between the activities of a shaman-prophet and a narrator are very well documented in recent research. For instance, in the work of K. Sadykov, a dream is considered a natural, conventional stage in the narrator's "birthing" that is necessary for him to gain a new status: from the "nonexistence" to the "birth" of a manaschi after a dream was similar with the incest of the shaman's "birthing", when the latter, after an "illness", i.e. being tortured by spirits, recovers as a shaman. That's why the experience of the manaschi not knowing the epos before having the dream were so widely spread, i.e. this is the experience of "nonexistence" as a manaschi. The notion of being a selected one is an experience of their being forced to become a manaschi by the "spirits from above" that was associated with the pantheon of the epos heroes. And here, once again, we'd like to return to the image of Pushkin's poet and prophet, the Biblical seer, Isaiah, and his relation to the interpretation of gaining of the gift of prophecy and fate in the manaschi's dream. According to Pushkin's symbolism the "six-wing Seraphim" gives it with a "bloody hand", i.e. causing much difficulty and intolerable sufferings for the chosen one, putting the "tongue of a wise snake" into the future poet's mouth. In the dreams of the majority of manaschi the theme is connected with Manas, Kanykei or another hero of the epos giving something to eat to the chosen one: small stones, a bowl of mare's milk, or shares the manaschi food, or just touching him with his pike. If the selected one objects to the manaschi's destiny, the hero threatens him. Such commonality of experience in the selection of poetic artists across different cultures proves their ancient nature that descends from ancient religious cults.

**SOURCE:** AKHP translation. Akyns and manaschis – creators and keepers of spiritual culture of the Kyrgyz nation. Bishkek, 1999, pp. 167-174)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think about the main idea of this text and the connections with previous text?
2. What is the relationship between the manaschi's creative work and the social and political life of the people?
3. How can the whole-hearted devotion of the manaschi to his destiny be explained? How can you explain the creative sufferings of the manaschi and his catharsis while performing the epos?

4. What can you say about the author's idea that "in our (Kyrgyz) nomadic culture prophetic mission was placed on akyns and manaschis"?
5. Analyze the gender difficulties and relationship between men and women regarding the narrating of 'Manas'
6. Why was the narrating of 'Manas' dynastic in nature? Was this rule always observed? What was the process of apprenticeship? What is the role of dreams, visions, the subconscious and the memory in narrating the 'Manas'?
7. Do you agree with what the narrators said about themselves: that it was in a dream that they saw certain heroes of the epos naming themselves, and that allegedly they didn't know the contents or anything about the epos prior to this? How do the authors interpret the role of dreams and visions? Do you agree with them?
8. How can we compare the ideas about the 'Manas' with the case and theory presented by Leo Tolstoy?
9. Can you find similarities and differences between the two interpretations of music?



KYRGYZ YURT





**ANA MARIA DALI, SALVADOR DALI, FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA.  
ASHES (1927-1928) p.225. MOSCOW 2003.**



## LEV S. VYGOTSKY: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ART

We will next look at extracts from a text by the Russian scholar, L.S. Vygotsky, about the spirit of music and art in general. Lev Semenovich Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a psychologist. His ideas had a great affect on aesthetics, literature and art studies. Vygotsky's research in the area of the psychology of art is well-known all over the world. Later on they became the basis for the development of the psychology of art. His main works on the problem of aesthetics are "Tragedy of Hamlet" (1916) and "Psychology of Art" (1925). In his early works on critique and aesthetics one can notice the influence of the impressionist school that was in opposition to traditional "academic" critiques also known as "readers' critique". The task of the latter was perceived as catching the aesthetic emotion stimulated by a work of art because a work of art may be understood only after experiencing it with one's soul. According to Vygotsky, psychological explanations of aesthetic reaction must be psycho-physiological, i.e. involving processes not only in the conscious and subconscious, but in the whole organism as a system that works through neuromechanisms. The activity of these neuromechanisms, in turn, is subject to socio-cultural factors. The opposite feelings result in catharsis. In his interpretation of catharsis he adheres to the opinion that art is an "organization of our behavior for the future", a mobilization of the inner strength of a person for the sake of higher social goals. Reading this text, please compare the ideas of Vygotsky with other texts presented in this chapter in order to consider the spirit of music and art in general.



### EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER IV ART AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

"...the subconscious is not separated from the conscious by some impenetrable wall; processes that start there usually continue in the consciousness and vice versa; we force a lot of the conscious into the unconscious. There is a constant, incessant, living and dynamic connection between both spheres of our consciousness. The subconscious influences our activities and is found in our behaviour, and we learn to recognize the subconscious and the laws that govern it by these traces and manifestations.

Taking this point of view, the previous methods of interpretation of a writer and reader's psyche must be abandoned, and one should take only objective and reliable facts as a basis for analysis to obtain knowledge about subconscious processes. It is only natural that works of art themselves are such objective facts where the subconscious is displayed most vividly and thus, they become a starting point for analysis of the subconscious.

Any conscious rational interpretation that an artist or a reader gives to this or that work of art must be viewed as a posterior rationalization, i.e. some self-deception, excuse to one's own mind, or explanation that was invented post factum.

Thus, the whole history of interpretations and critique as a story of that explicit sense that the reader successively introduced to some work of art is nothing but a chain of rationalizations that changed from age to age. Those systems of art that

**psychoanalysis -**  
a therapeutic technique for  
exploring underlying motives

were able to explain why understanding of the work of art changed from age to age in fact introduced a little into the psychology of art because they were able to explain why the rationalization of artistic experience was changing but could not answer the questions as to how it was changing ...

Up to this point, psychoanalysis was dealing with two major factors of manifestation of the subconscious – dreams and neurosis. It understood these two forms and interpreted them as a compromise between the unconscious and conscious. It was only natural to try and look at art from the point of view of these two main forms of manifestation of the unconscious. Psychoanalyticians alleged that art takes a middle position between a dream and a neurosis and that there underlies a conflict that already “was past its prime for a dream but was not pathogenic yet” (157, S. 53). There, as well as in these two forms, the unconscious is displayed but in some other way although it is of the same nature. “Thus, the artist is between a dreamer and a neurotic concerning his psychology; there psychological processes are similar in general and can be distinguished only partially...” (157, S.53). It is easier to imagine a psychoanalytical explanation of art if one logically traces explanation of a poet’s art and reader’s perception in applying this theory...”

If art is distinguished from dreams or neurosis by anything, it is, first of all, distinguished by its products that are social unlike dreams or symptoms of the illness...”

That is why Vygotsky sharply criticizes Freud and his followers for ignoring the social nature of a human and asserts that: “One can decide to maintain that a writer follows only the unconscious conflicts in his creative work and does not fulfill any social tasks only if one completely turns away from social psychology and closes one’s eyes to reality. In this case psychological theory will suffer from a surprising gap when it tries to apply this method to the whole area of art other than fine arts. How can it interpret music, ornamental painting, architecture, or things when it is impossible to make direct and simple erotic interpretation of the language of form and the language of sexuality?”

## **EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER XI ART AND LIFE**

What is the relationship between aesthetic response and all other forms of human behavior? How do we explain the role and importance of art in the general behavioral system of man? There are as many answers to these questions as there are ways of evaluating the importance of art. Some believe art is the supreme human activity while others consider it nothing but leisure and fun. The evaluation of art depends directly on the psychological viewpoint from which we approach it. If we want to find out what the relationship between art and life is, if we want to solve the problem of art in terms of applied psychology, we must adopt a valid, general theory for solving these problems. The first and most widespread view holds that art infects us with emotions and is therefore based upon contamination. Tolstoy says, “The activity of art is based on the capacity of people to infect others with their own emotions and to be infected by the emotions of others. ... Strong emotions, weak emotions, important emotions, or irrelevant emotions, good emotions or bad emotions – if they contaminate the reader, the spectator, or the listener – become the subject of art.”

This statement means that since art is but common emotion, there is no substantial difference between an ordinary feeling and a feeling stirred by art. Consequently, art functions simply as a resonator, an amplifier, or a transmitter for the infection

of feeling. Art has no specific distinction; hence the evaluation of art must proceed from the same criterion which we use to evaluate any feeling. Art may be good or bad if it infects us with good or bad feelings. Art in itself is neither good nor bad; it is a language of feeling which we must evaluate in accordance with what it expresses. Thus, Tolstoy came to the natural conclusion that art must be evaluated from a moral viewpoint; he therefore approved of art that generated good feelings, and objected to art that, from his point of view, represented reprehensible events or actions. Many other critics reached the same conclusions as Tolstoy and evaluated a work of art on the basis of its obvious content, while praising or condemning the artist accordingly. Like ethics, like aesthetics – this is the slogan of this theory.

But Tolstoy soon discovered that his theory failed when he tried to be consistent with his own conclusions. He compared two artistic impressions: one produced by a large chorus of peasant women who were celebrating the marriage of his daughter; and the other, by an accomplished musician who played Beethoven's Sonata. The singing of the peasant women expressed such a feeling of joy, cheerfulness, and liveliness that it infected Tolstoy and he went home in high spirits. According to him, such singing is true art, because it communicates a specific and powerful emotion. Since the second impression involved no such specific emotions, he concluded that Beethoven's sonata is an unsuccessful artistic attempt which contains no definite emotions and is therefore neither remarkable nor outstanding. This example shows us the absurd conclusions that can be reached if the critical understanding of art is based upon the criterion of its infectiousness. Beethoven's music incorporates no definite feeling, while the singing of the peasant women has an elementary and **contagious gaiety**. If this is true, then Yevlakhov is right when he states that " 'real, true' art is military or dance music, since it is more catchy." Tolstoy is consistent in his ideas; beside folk songs, he recognizes only "marches and dances written by various composers" as works "that approach the requirements of universal art." A reviewer of Tolstoy's article, V. G. Valter, points out that "if Tolstoy had said that the gaiety of the peasant women put him in a good mood, one could not object to that. It would mean that the language of emotions that expressed itself in their singing (it could well have expressed itself simply in yelling, and most likely did) infected Tolstoy with their gaiety. But what has this to do with art? Tolstoy does not say whether the women sang well; had they not sung but simply yelled, beating their scythes, their fun and gaiety would have been no less catchy, especially on his daughter's wedding day."

We feel that if we compare an ordinary yell of fear to a powerful novel in terms of their respective infectiousness, the latter will fail the test. Obviously, to understand art we must add something else to simple infectiousness...

Art would have a dull and ungrateful task if its only purpose were to infect one or many persons with feelings. If this were so, its significance would be very small, because there would be only a quantitative expansion and no qualitative expansion beyond an individual's feeling.

**contagious** -  
transmissible by direct or indirect contact; communicable

**gaiety** -  
a state of joyful exuberance or merriment; vivacity

If the only purpose of a tragic poem were to infect us with the author's sorrow, this would be a very sad situation indeed for art.

One of the great thinkers said once that art relates to life as wine relates to the grape. With this he meant to say that art takes its material from life, but gives in return something which its material did not contain.

Initially, an emotion is individual, and only by means of a work of art does it become social or generalized.

We resort to art only at critical moments in our life, and therefore can understand why the formula we propose views art as a creative act. If we consider art to be catharsis, it is perfectly clear that it cannot arise where there is nothing but live and vivid feeling. A sincere feeling taken per se cannot create art. It lacks more than technique or mastery, because a feeling expressed by a technique will never generate a lyric poem or a musical composition. To do this we require the creative act of overcoming the feeling, resolving it, conquering it. Only when this act has been performed – then and only then is art born. This is why the perception of art requires creativity: it is not enough to experience sincerely the feeling, or feelings, of the author; it is not enough to understand the structure of the work of art; one must also creatively overcome one's own feelings, and find one's own catharsis; only then will the effect of art be complete...

Art is the social within us, and even if its action is performed by a single individual, it does not mean that its essence is individual. It is quite naive and inappropriate to take the social to be collective, as with a large crowd of persons. The social also exists where there is only one person with his individual experiences and tribulations. This is why the action of art, when it performs catharsis and pushes into this purifying flame the most intimate and important experiences, emotions, and feelings of the soul, is a social action. But this experience does not happen as described in the theory of contamination (where a feeling born in one person infects and contaminates everybody and becomes social), but exactly the other way around. The melting of feelings outside us is performed by the strength of social feeling, which is objectified, materialized, and projected outside of us, then fixed in external objects of art which have become the tools of society...

Guyau correctly attributes tremendous importance to the role played by art in society. It introduces the effects of passion, violates inner equilibrium, changes will in a new sense, and stirs feelings, emotions, passions, and vices without which society would remain in an inert and motionless state. It "pronounces the word we were seeking and vibrates the string which was strained but soundless. A work of art is the center of attraction, as is the active will of a genius: if Napoleon attracts will, Corneille and Victor Hugo do so too, but in a different way. ... Who knows the number of crimes instigated by novels describing murders? Who knows the number of divorces resulting from representations of debauchery?" "Guyau formulates the question in much too primitive a way, because he imagines that art directly causes this or the other emotion. Yet, this never happens. A representation of murder does not cause murder. A scene of debauchery does not inspire divorce; the relationship between art and life is very complex, and in a very approximate way it can be described as will be shown..."

Hennequin introduces two very important corrections, but his solution of the problem remains quite primitive. He is correct in saying that aesthetic emotion does not immediately generate action, that it manifests itself in the change of purpose. He is also correct when he states that aesthetic emotion not only does not generate the actions of which it speaks, but is completely alien to them...

As a matter of fact, art performs an extremely complex action with our passions and goes far beyond the limits of these two simplistic alternatives. Andrei Bely says that when we listen to music we feel what giants must have felt. Tostoy masterfully describes this high tension of art in his Kreutzer Sonata.

This excerpt from The Kreutzer Sonata tells us quite convincingly of the incomprehensibly frightening effect of music for the average listener. It reveals a new aspect of the aesthetic response and shows that it is not a blank shot, but a response to a work of art, and a new and powerful stimulus for further action. Art requires a reply, it incites certain actions, and Tolstoy quite correctly compares the effect of Beethoven's music with that of a dance tune or a march. In the latter case, the excitement created by the music resolves itself in a response, and a feeling of satisfied repose sets in. In the case of Beethoven's music we are thrown into a state of confusion and anxiety, because the music reveals those urges and desires that can find a resolution only in exceptionally important and heroic actions. When this music is followed by ice cream and gossip amidst ladies in **de collete**, we are left in a state of exceptional anxiety, tension, and disarray. But Tolstoy's character makes a mistake when he compares the irritating and stimulating effect of this music to the effect produced by a military march. He does not realize that the effect of music reveals itself much more subtly, by means of hidden shocks, stresses, and deformations of our constitution. It may reveal itself unexpectedly, and in an extraordinary way. But in this description, two points are made with exceptional clarity: First, music incites, excites, and irritates in an indeterminate fashion not connected with any concrete reaction, motion, or action. This is proof that its effect is cathartic, that is, it clears our psyche, reveals and calls to life tremendous energies which were previously inhibited and restrained. This, however, is a consequence of art, not its action. Secondly, music has coercive power. Tolstoy suggests that music should be an affair of state. He believes that music is a public affair. One critic pointed out that when we perceive a work of art we think that our reaction is strictly personal and associated only with ourselves. We believe that it has nothing to do social psychology...

This is why Freud is wrong when he says that man stands face to face with the reality of nature, and that art be derived from the purely biological difference between the principle of enjoyment toward which all our **inclinations** gravitate, and that of reality which forces us to renounce satisfaction and pleasure. Between man and the outside world there stands the social environment, which in its own way refracts and directs the stimuli acting upon the individual and guides all the reactions that emanate from the individual. In applied psychology it is therefore of **immense** significance to know as Tolstoy puts it, music is something awesome and frightening to the average listener. If a military march incites soldiers to march proudly in a parade, what exceptional deeds must Beethoven's music inspire! Let me repeat: music by itself is isolated from our everyday behavior; it does not drive us to do anything, it only creates a vague and enormous desire for some deeds or actions; it opens the way for the emergence of

**de collette** -

low-necked dress

**inclination** -

a disposition or bent, esp. of the mind or will

**immense** -

vast; huge; very great, boundless

powerful, hidden forces within us; it acts like an earthquake as it throws open unknown and hidden strata. The view that art returns us to **atavism** rather than projecting us into the future is erroneous. Although music does not generate any direct actions, its fundamental effect, the direction it imparts to psychic catharsis, is essential for the kind of forces it will release, what it will release, and what it will push into the background. Art is the organization of our future behavior. It is a requirement that may never be fulfilled, but that forces us to strive beyond our life toward all that lies beyond it...

Future studies and investigations are likely to show that creating a work of art is not a mystical or divine act of our soul, as real an act as all the other movements of our body, only much more complex. We have discovered in the course of our study that a creative act cannot be recreated by means of purely conscious operations. But, by establishing that the most important elements in art are subconscious or creative, do we automatically eliminate any and all conscious moments and forces? The act of artistic creation cannot be taught. This does not mean, however, that the educator cannot cooperate in forming it or bringing it about. We penetrate the subconscious through the conscious. We can organize the conscious processes in such a way that they generate subconscious processes, and everyone knows that an act of art includes, as a necessary condition, all preceding acts of rational cognizance, understanding, recognition, association, and so forth.

It is hard to guess what forms this unknown life of the future will take, and it is even harder to guess what place art will take in that future life. One thing is clear, however: arising from reality and reaching toward it, art will be determined by the basic order of the future flow of life.

Psychological investigation reveals that art is the supreme center of biological and social individual processes in society, that it is a method for finding an equilibrium between man and his world, in the most critical and important stages of his life. This view of course completely refutes the approach according to which art is an ornament...

It is hard to imagine the role that art will play in this remolding of man. We do not know which existing but dormant forces in our organisms it will draw upon to form the new man. There is no question, however, that art will have a decisive voice in this process. Without new art there can be no new man. The possibilities of the future, for art as well as for life, are inscrutable and unpredictable. As Spinoza said, "That of which the body is capable has not yet been determined."

**atavism -**

behaviour of a very old natural and basic habit from the distant past, not because of a conscious decision or present need or usefulness

**SOURCE:** AKHP translation. Lev Vygotsky. *Psychology of Art*: izdatelstvo "Iskusstvo". M., 1968, pp.304-330

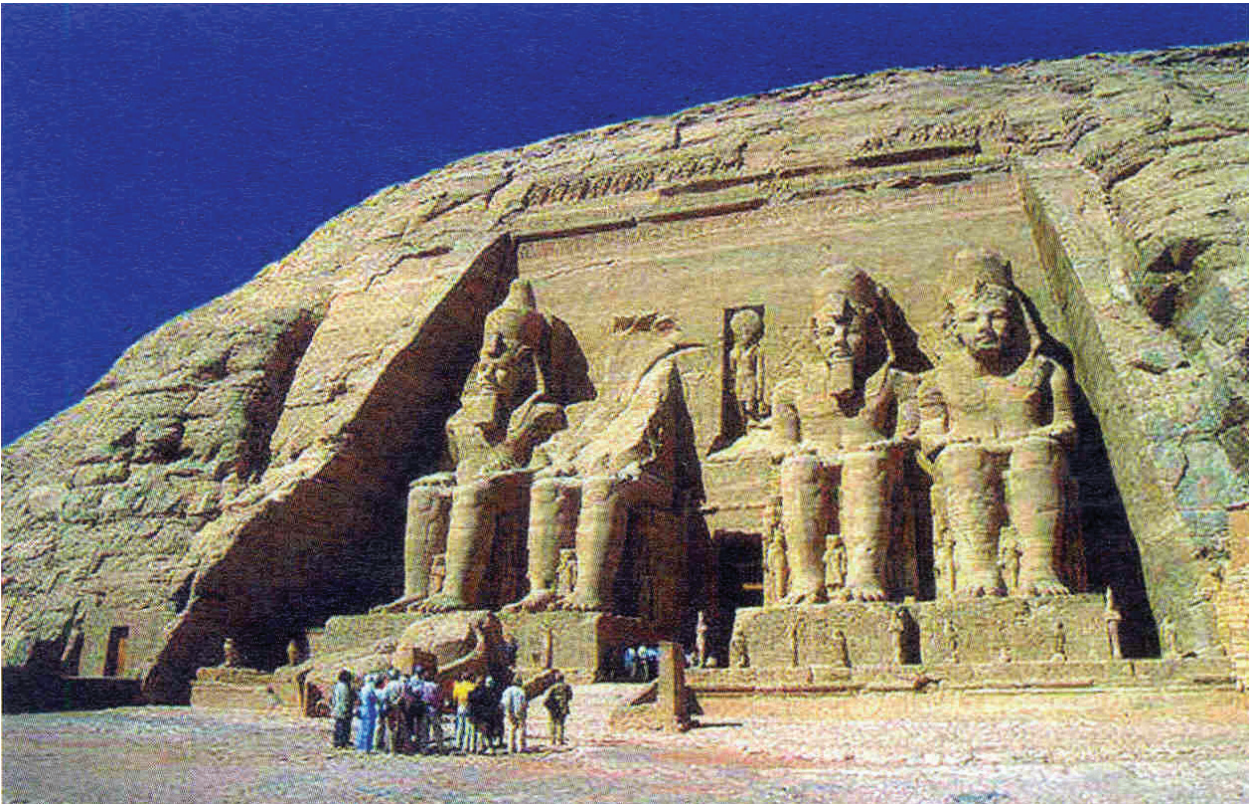


**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the role of music in the psychology of art and in studying the nature of art and spirit of music? For what did Lev Vygotsky criticize Leo Tolstoy and Freud in interpreting music?
2. Why is Freud not right in explaining the arts as originating from the biological differences between the principles of reality and principles of satisfaction? What is the role of the social environment in the arts?
3. How does Lev Vygotsky explain the influence of music on human beings? Comment on the author's point that "art relates to life, as wine to the vineyard"
4. To what extent do you agree with the author's point that "art does not attract us to something directly, but art organizes our behavior for future actions only"? What are the psychological aspects of the plurality of the arts?

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the main idea of this text? What are the negative and positive aspects of this concept of art?
2. How can we use the Vygotsky's theory to explain the 'kuiy' music of Kurmangazi and the music of Falak and Manas (Asanchanov, Bakiev)?
3. How can the theory of art developed by Vygotsky be useful in justifying music in front of local radical and fundamentalist religious leaders? What are the similarities and differences between this theory of art and that developed by Kyrgyz scholars?
4. Do you agree with Vygotsky's opinion that art and music serve as organizers of human behavior and for the mobilization of power? If not, why? Using Vygotsky's theory, describe any style or piece of music you are currently listening to.



EGYPT

## YOUSSEF RAKHA: “EPIC OF A NATION”

This part of our discussion concerns the text about Umm Kulthum. Read this short piece of information about the author: “Umm Kulthum during the 1950s and 1960s expanded her role in Egyptian public life. She granted more interviews during which she spoke about her life, repeatedly identifying herself as a villager, a fallahah or peasant, who shared a cultural background and essential values with the majority of the Egyptian populace. Her interviews were full of stories of her family, her neighbors, and the familial qualities of village life.

Umm Kulthum cultivated the position of spokeswoman for various causes. She advocated governmental support of Arabic music and musicians, she endowed a charitable foundation and, most importantly, after the Egyptian defeat in the 1967 war, she began a series of domestic and international concerts for Egypt. Umm Kulthum traveled throughout Egypt and the Arab world, collecting contributions and donating the proceeds of her performances to the government of Egypt. These concerts were much publicized and took on the character of state visits. Umm Kulthum was entertained by heads of state, she toured cultural monuments, and, in interviews, repeated her views concerning the importance of support for indigenous Arab culture. More than a musician, she became ‘the voice and face of Egypt.’” (Excerpt from Virginia Louise Danielson’s *Shaping tradition in Arabic song: The career and repertory of Umm Kulthum.*); [<http://almashriq.hiof.no/egypt/700/780/umKoulthoum/>]. Discussing the text we will concentrate our attention on the spirit of music, the role of music in society, challenging state politics, and the possibility of music becoming the voice and face of cities and countries.

“Through the radio her force-field drew in millions of Arabs, who not only cherished the protracted love songs and beautifully-rendered qasa’id (long, often very difficult poems in literary Arabic), but hailed them, along with Gamal Abdel-Nasser’s speeches, as the very expression of their collective identity. The impact of her performances was such that people were said to be inebriated for hours just watching her perform, and her paraphernalia, most of which was lost following the **demolition** of her famous villa in Zamalek, was subject to the most insuperable **scrutiny**.

As the millennium draws to a close, Kawkab Al-Sharq (the Star of the East) has never been more popular. She is featured on the World Wide Web, and boasts a secure position in the CD stores of the West. Films depicting her life have appeared everywhere, and academic studies continue to assess her achievement. At home, her cassettes are selling as successfully as the latest pop mega-hits, her presence is strongly felt in the media and a whole range of institutions bear her name, including a radio station that **broadcasts** four hours of her music daily.

To coincide with her alleged centenary (her actual date of birth is more probably in the range of 1904-5), the Ministry of Culture is now embarking on a LE10 million project aiming to build an Umm Kulthoum Museum near the beautiful Manasterli Palace, overlooking the Nile. The museum will include objects and documents as well as audio-visual installations intended to “bring Kawkab Al-Sharq back to life”.

**demolition -**

the act or process of wrecking or destroying, especially destruction by explosives

**scrutiny -**

a close, careful examination or study

**broadcast -**

transmission of a radio or television program or signal for public use

Minister Farouk Hosni has declared that founding a museum dedicated to Umm Kulthoum has been “a personal ambition” of his since he was appointed minister,” Samir Gharib, head of the Cultural Development Fund, said the project was already under way.

Ne’mat Ahmed Fouad (a writer and academic whose career has been partly devoted to Umm Kulthoum), talks about the new project, the great singer’s place in the nation’s collective memory, and the resilience of her inimitable songs.

“How could you refer to her simply as ‘a woman’?” Ne’mat Ahmed Fouad is scandalised by my lack of decorum. Umm Kulthoum was a woman, I had said, who managed to command everyone’s respect through performing at a time when public performances by females were regarded as strictly taboo.

“I don’t care what society was like,” she continues. “She is the lady of ladies, the very symbol of Egypt, not just ‘a woman’. Of course,” she says, in a different tone now, “Umm Kulthoum is also a simple Egyptian who grew up in the countryside but managed to rise above the most prestigious palaces and castles. For me, no one – not even a princess or a queen – will ever be like Umm Kulthoum. I mean, there are plenty of princesses. But the symbol, the embodiment of Egypt, is Umm Kulthoum alone.”

Fouad flicks through her notebook, where she has jotted down nearly three pages of notes in the interval between hearing my questions on the phone and receiving me in her house in Zamalek – not far, in fact, from where Umm Kulthoum used to live. “Because she had an immense respect for her homeland and her people,” Fouad says with emotion, “Umm Kulthoum was universally revered. Suffice it to say that those who fought her are dead [in people’s memory] even though they’ve actually outlived her.”

But in view of the fact that Umm Kulthoum’s villa was destroyed to make space for a high-rise building, history seems to have passed a different kind of verdict. “A new museum is no consolation for the loss of the house,” says Fouad. “I remember queuing up with countless others to see Victor Hugo’s home in Paris. On the other side of the road stood Louis XVI’s palace, and there was no one there to see it. Everyone wanted to see the poet’s house. Everything in it was very basic... and yet, at every step, there were security guards watching over the house’s contents, as if these simple things were priceless treasures.” By then Fouad seems genuinely upset and she **heaves** a bitter **sigh**. “Can you imagine what Umm Kulthoum’s house would have been like,” she says, “full of genuine treasures as it was, all the gifts she was given, from all over the world, the jewelry and the medals and everything? They’re all gone now, scattered all over the place. How much of what’s been lost could this museum possibly gather?”

For Fouad, who has led a press campaign calling for improved care of ancient and Islamic monuments, Umm Kulthoum and the monuments are inextricably linked, even though she regards the museum project with outspoken suspicion. “What museum? Propaganda is all there is to it,” she shrugs. “Whenever the authorities are confronted by a crisis in the area of monument preservation (the monuments are still subject to abuse and under threat of disappearing, you know), every time a crisis confounds them, they pay a little more attention to Umm Kulthoum.”

Unlike the ancient monuments, Umm Kulthoum’s continuity is under no threat, but one sometimes has the feeling that her older songs are less popular than they used to be. The older repertory is still regarded by many as Umm Kulthoum’s higher achievement, and it is a disconcerting thought that it might be in danger of oblivion or neglect. Fouad, however, insists that no single part of Umm Kulthoum’s output is more privileged than another. “There is absolutely no danger of her heritage (or

**heaves** -  
to raise or lift, especially with  
great effort or force

**sigh** -  
to exhale audibly in a long  
deep breath, as in weariness  
or relief

even part of it) disappearing,” she says. “Because great works always endure. Even if a time comes when they are (deliberately or otherwise) abandoned, these times are of no consequence. It’s like having a solid diamond: the stone may be neglected, and dust may settle on it, but this will never in the long run affect the shine, the glitter, or the genuine value of the jewel...”

Fouad has flicked through her notebook a second time, and rises suddenly. She moves to the crammed bookshelf in the corner, where several Pharaonic statuettes testify to her interest in all things Egyptian. “I am not in the least worried about Umm Kulthoum’s heritage,” she says on her way back, having found what she was looking for almost immediately. “In the 25 years since she died all sorts of new singers have come our way, both male and female, Egyptians and Arabs, all sorts of crazes and fads. But now would you tell me, if you please, has anyone managed to take over Umm Kulthoum’s position in Arab music or **usurp** her place in our hearts? Has anyone managed anything vaguely like Umm Kulthoum’s Thursday night concerts?”

“It’s not a question of talent,” Fouad finally remarks, sitting down again with a hefty volume in her hands – her own book on Umm Kulthoum. “Many people have talent and a beautiful voice. What made a difference was her intelligence, the enormous knowledge she cultivated, her taste. She taught herself so many things, from foreign languages to pre-Islamic poetry, everything! From 1948 until 1951, you know, everyone spoke of getting rid of the British. She sang, demands are not met by wishes; the world can only be taken by struggle, and it was like thunder! That line from Shawqi’s famous poem affected us more than anything else in the papers or on the radio.

“I will read you a passage here which sums it all up for me: She made history just as history made her. Among the historical figures who are female, we sometimes find intelligence behind the fact of their entering history, sometimes beauty or elegance, and sometimes political or military heroism. Umm Kulthoum is a historical figure who combines all of these: the intelligence she possesses, her sense of humour and refined sensibility, her supreme ability to sing and the power of her performances... She is also a historical figure by virtue of her contribution to the patriotic community in the ordeal of 1967, when she toured the world raising not only hard currency but also people’s morale, an even harder currency. Where she stirs emotions and unites the Arab peoples, she embodies love; and where she brings wealth into her country, both during her life and **posthumously**, she embodies fortune and good will. She is as much a symbol of the values she upheld as a landmark in the history of music... Umm Kulthoum is thus much more than a mere singer. She is the epic of a nation.”

A CENTURY’S VOICE: In the 1910s, word spread of a little girl from the village of Tamay Al-Zahayra (near Simbillawyn in the eastern Delta) who could sing the repertory of the mashayekh (religious leaders) just as adeptly as a grown man. She was not yet eight when she performed for the first time at the house of the omda (village mayor), but people already spoke of her impeccable command of literary Arabic, and her astonishingly powerful voice.

**usurp -**

to seize and hold by force and without legal authority

**posthumously -**

after a person’s death



Her name was Umm Kulthoum, and her scrupulous renditions of the customary *tawashih* (religious songs recounting the biography of the Prophet Mohamed) quickly attracted the attention of patrons from the neighboring towns and beyond. Wealthy families sought out the little country girl who, dressed in the outfit of a Bedouin boy, managed to hold sway over an audience of grown-ups.

Eventually, with the help of musicians Abul-Ela Mohamed and Zakariya Ahmed, and under the **patronage** of the prestigious house of Abdel-Razeq, Umm Kulthoum made her debut in Cairo, and from then on embarked on a rigorous daily routine designed to extend and deepen her knowledge of music and poetry, and to give her better control of her capacities as both a popular singer and a lady of style.

No sooner had she established herself in the city than she mobilised a whole battalion of supporters and instructors. She began to interfere directly in the writing and composition of her songs, subduing everyone and everything to her own distinctive style. Upon her first appearances in the capital, the great writer Abbas El-Aqqad recalled being told of a “Bedouin girl” who was becoming more and more in vogue among the connoisseurs of traditional music. “Is she really Bedouin?” he asked, and the writer Mahmoud Taymour replied that he would find out when he saw for himself.

It was the stigma attached to public performances by females that prompted the family to insist on such incongruous accouterments, and initially to restrict the range of Umm Kulthoum’s repertoire to religious songs. The “image of Islamic modesty”, as historian Hussein Fawzi later called it, helped Umm Kulthoum advance her brilliantly lucrative career without incurring a loss on her reputation as a young woman from the country. Even at this stage she embodied the unusual and relatively novel notion of a female singer whose moral integrity was airtight, a woman performer whose spectacular success depended on her artistic excellence alone, not on any feminine charms she might possess. Umm Kulthoum had learned the Qur’an in the local *kuttab* (a small school where children memorized and learned to read, write, count and recite the Qur’an correctly) and, besides giving her widely acclaimed life-long skill in the articulation and delivery of the *qasa’id*, the experience had made the child a sheikha in her own right. When she moved to Cairo for good in the early 1920s, she had already set the pattern for an achievement that defies description: at once indigenous and legendary, self-evident and paradoxical, earthy and (very literally) phenomenal.

Before long the little Bedouin girl had incorporated *taqatiq* (light songs in colloquial Arabic, usually on the theme of love) into her repertory and (from the mid-1930s on) was playing the lead in a number of musical films. She worked on developing the image of restrained stylishness and classic elegance that would characterize her public demeanor for the rest of her life. Significantly, she also procured her emblematic handkerchief (a constant companion on stage and, along with the color of her dress and the shape of the brooch that would adorn it, a source of speculation for millions).

By the mid-1920s she had her own *takht* (small orchestra), and was earning more than any other singer in record contracts; by the early 1930s, she was firmly on her way to becoming the unchallenged mistress of Arab song. One story has it that, when a lesser spirit called herself Umm Kulthoum in an attempt to appropriate the real singer’s fast growing popularity, handouts were circulated in the theatres and music halls of the city bearing Umm Kulthoum’s picture with the following message: “I alone am the original Umm Kulthoum and I am Umm Kulthoum Ibrahim El-Beltagi. As for the others, they are false *ummahat* [mothers, singular *umm*] of Kulthoum, whom Kulthoum himself disowns, denying their relationship to singing...”



Umm Kulthoum was unquestionably one of the most discerning artists of her time, but she was also an **astute** businesswoman eager to exploit opportunities as they became available to her and ready to pounce on potential rivals and detractors. In her life as much as in her music, she would always strike a winning chord between **pragmatic** sense and aesthetic sensibility, daring to challenge the rules without breaking them, soaring high while remaining close to the ground.

A young woman who sang men's songs, a child prodigy who brought fame and fortune to her humble family, a country girl who, largely on her own initiative, managed to make it to the big city – Umm Kulthoum would always tread a fine line between tradition and modernity, convention and innovation, established order and the need for change. “There is no doubt that Arabic singing has developed,” she said in a 1960s interview. “How much better today's songs are! It's a leap, not just an improvement. But the music developed faster than the words. It became more expressive of meanings, more **congruent** with syllables. Its aspect of tarab [enchantment] is no longer pursued for its own sake.” At a time when complaining about the deterioration of Arabic music has become the norm, this may sound odd indeed, but one must not forget that it is Umm Kulthoum and her contemporaries who form the peak from which we are said to have fallen.

From the moment she set foot in Cairo, her story is not only that of an ambitious provincial who aimed for and achieved an astounding degree of urban prosperity and renown, it is also the story of the golden age of Arabic music, and of a whole nation's attempt at formulating a distinct and revitalized sense of cultural identity. She arrived in the capital just after the 1919 Revolution (when the exile of the great statesman Saad Zaghloul by the British sent millions to the streets calling for national independence), and when she first started having songs composed and written specifically for her – by poet Ahmed Rami (said to have harbored an unrequited love for Umm Kulthoum throughout his life) and musician Mohamed El-Qasabgi (one of her earliest tutors and the life-long oud player in her exclusive orchestra) – the stage was set for fundamental changes in the socio-political fabric of Egyptian life. These were changes that affected Umm Kulthoum and to which she would eventually contribute, but, more importantly, they were changes that made it possible for the village girl with the Bedouin headgear to turn into the abiding symbol of an era.

In the late 1940s when, following a series of health troubles and the deaths of her mother and brother, Umm Kulthoum contemplated retiring, she had already commanded a rich and eventful career in the course of which she established herself not only as a singer who worked with (and to some extent controlled) some of the most remarkable lyricists and composers of her time (Beiram El-Tunsi and Riyad El-Sonbati among them), but also as a public persona who came to represent all that was authentically Egyptian.

While the struggle for independence continued, Umm Kulthoum was also setting a precedent as a poor man's daughter who could move, by dint of her natural ability and

**astute -**

having or showing shrewdness and discernment, especially with respect to one's own concerns

**pragmatic -**

dealing or concerned with facts or actual occurrences; practical

**congruent -**

corresponding

good sense, in the upper echelons of society. Both the sense of ultimately belonging to the people and the **hankering** after what was authentically Egyptian made her a likely candidate for the role of first lady in the newly-independent Egypt of the 1950s, especially since Gamal Abdel-Nasser did not believe that the wife of the president should play a public role. In 1948, Umm Kulthoum had insisted on celebrating the return of the Free Officers defeated at Al-Falouga in her own house, against the Minister of Defence's wishes, and met Nasser for the first time. When news of the 1952 Revolution reached her while she was on vacation in Ras Al-Barr, she was quick to commission a patriotic song to mark the occasion and announce her adherence to the new order.

Although she never engaged in the kind of excessive glorification of Nasser's person at which her most popular rival, Abdel-Halim Hafez, excelled, the figures of Gamal Abdel-Nasser and Umm Kulthoum became associated in the public imagination as the very tokens of what this new Egypt constituted, and patriotic songs (speaking of the Revolution and its vision of an "Egypt for the Egyptians" where the fellah was liberated from the chains of feudalism), would occupy a major part of Umm Kulthoum's **repertoire** for the next decade. On one occasion Riyad El-Sonbati spoke of his work with Umm Kulthoum as being like the construction of the High Dam, Nasser's greatest project of the time.

Indeed, it was Nasser's reign that witnessed Umm Kulthoum's fullest flowering as the supreme exemplar of Egyptianness. From her late marriage to a notable doctor (Hassan El-Hifnawi) to her long-awaited collaboration with the great composer Mohamed Abdel-Wahab, together with a host of younger lyricists and musicians (including Baligh Hamdi who, despite belonging to a much later generation, composed some of Umm Kulthoum's most enduring and well-liked songs); from any number of official honours (both musical and cultural), to a series of fund-raising concerts conducted worldwide in the wake of the 1967 War – Umm Kulthoum's image and voice were omnipresent throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and (despite a growing resentment on the part of left-wing intellectuals and, later, a less conciliatory relation with the Sadat regime), her popularity continued to gather momentum.

She remained active well into the mid-1970s, when an exacerbated kidney condition forced her to withdraw from the public arena. In 1975, her death caused such havoc that the funeral went out of control as the coffin was virtually stolen and moved from shoulder to shoulder on a three-hour trek through the city. A few days earlier, the media had made the mistake of announcing her death before it actually occurred, and millions of people had gathered around her house in what amounted to a **rehearsal** of the final event.

"People die and never know what their funerals are like," she told journalist Mustafa Amin on the phone as she lay on her deathbed. "As for myself... I am confident of people's love."

**SOURCE:** Youssef Rakha. "Epic of a Nation." Al-Ahram. 24-30 December 1998. Published in Cairo by AL-AHRAM established in 1875

**hanker -**

to have a strong, often restless desire

**repertoire -**

all the music or plays, etc. that you can do or perform or that you know

**rehearsal -**

prepare for a performance

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the main idea of this text? What do you think about the spirit of Umm Kulthoum's music?
2. How did Umm Kulthoum become a symbol of Egypt?
3. What is your opinion of Umm Kulthoum's house and museum as an element of Egypt's cultural heritage?
4. How did Umm Kulthoum differ from other singers? According to the author there are many talented people with beautiful voices, but Umm Kulthoum's place is uncontested. Why?
5. What is the role of intelligence in artists and singers in society, and the people who are cultivating new knowledge and skills in becoming musical symbols? What made Umm Kulthoum, "a villager, a fallahah or a peasant" a symbol of Egypt?
6. What are the differences between politicians and singers and their role in society?
7. Comment on the opinion that: "She made history just as history made her. Among female historical figures, we sometimes find intelligence behind the fact of their entering history, sometimes beauty or elegance, and sometimes political or military heroism".
8. What was Umm Kulthoum's role in Egypt's revolution for independence, the Nasser reign and Islamic modernism and what contributions did she make towards them?
9. What do you think of the singer's funeral as a cultural event? What does it tell us about the personality and mission of artistic performance? What conclusion can you draw about the spirit of music in general?

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

10. Hypothetically, what would be Umm Kulthoum's answer to the radical and fundamentalist approaches of religious scholars who prohibit music? What is the connection between music and politics? Can music stars become a political "stars" or leaders?
11. How can folk music become professional, and how does a folk singer become a music star?
12. What are the results and effects of globalization on folk music and vice versa?
13. Describe the power and spirit of music connecting this text with the previous ones (Leo Tolstoy, Lev Vygotsky). What are the similarities and differences?

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS (CHAPTER TWO):

1. Please, answer the questions analyzing the suggested texts: What is the connection between music and human life? What are the similarities and differences between the scholars' approaches presented in this chapter?
2. How can you apply any of these theories concerning the interpretation of music? Which music do you like best?
3. What is the connection between the Manas epos and the music of Beethoven (sonata)? What differences exist between them? What is the role of imagination in creating music?
4. On what points would the scholars researching Manas (Bakiev, Asanaliev) agree or disagree with Lev Vygotsky's theories? What can Rumi (poem on the flute) add to these debates? What is the role of the subconscious in the creation or composition of music?

## ADDITIONAL READING:

### Lev Vygotsky:

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**Umm Kulthoum:**

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## CHAPTER THREE: MUSIC AS MENACE

91

### INTRODUCTION

Seeing the positive, negative, enthusiastic, melancholy, condemnatory or celebratory aspects of music is curious and interesting. Music reflects the way we see the world: we are different and, therefore, our responses to music makes some people happy and others sad. Why does this happen? Why have people approached music differently throughout human history? What is the relationship music and dance have with society and individual life? Why does music disturb religious clerics and political leaders and challenge them? Why do new musical compositions, genres, and the mixing of different musical traditions create problems for performers? What are the reasons for making music a political issue?

Addressing the questions raised above, we will read one case study, see one film “Rock Star and the Mullahs” and examine several texts. All materials reflect the relationships between music (jazz, rock, blues, traditional song, etc.) and society, politics, religious leaders, and traditions. They look at music as a **menace**, a “potential” power to challenge the existing political, religious, and cultural system. The first text is a case study from Josef Skvorecky (Prague) talking about the times in Eastern Europe when the lives of individuals and communities were strictly controlled by the state (Nazism, communists, nationalists). Since the states themselves remained uncontrolled, the creative energy of musicians was expressed in diverse forms of socio-political protest.

What is the approach of modern Muslim communities to contemporary music in various areas of Asia? The class will have the opportunity to compare religious attitudes with “traditional” attitudes, where they differ and where they are the same. The topic of the potential of music in contesting “traditional” ideas and values will be continued by the prominent modern Central Asian writer Chingiz Aitmatov in the story of Raymali-aga, a poet, composer and popular singer, whose sufferings were profound because of prejudice based in “tradition.” His story analyses how people in traditional nomadic villages in some parts of Central Asia used to treated musicians and musical professions.

Nevertheless, music does not just create trouble for a musician; for many their whole existence is taken up with a professional musical career which can result in a long and happy life for them. Meanwhile, a prominent feature of music and musicians is being in permanent conflict with themselves and with society, because that is the way of life of creative people. Theodore W. Adorno in “Perennial Fashion-Jazz” psychoanalyzes jazz as a conflict between ego and society, and finds jazz to be the mechanical reproduction of a regressive movement, the compromise between aesthetic **sublimation** and social adjustment. That is another musical response to the world we live in.

#### **menace -**

something that is likely to cause harm

#### **sublimation -**

changing the natural expression of an impulse or instinct to one that is socially acceptable

**spat -**

To forcefully expel saliva

**traitor -**

a person who is not loyal or stops being loyal to their own country, social class, beliefs

In this course, we will also try to understand the response evoked by music among people, states, and religions. The remaining four pieces of the text talk about music that has been banned in various parts of the world: a text on Khaled, a famous pop star from northern Africa and his mix of African dance music and western pop that, according to the author, 'made him a star but won him enemies back home in Algeria'; Robin Deneslow's article "I Was **Spat** at and Called a **Traitor**". Is compromise the only way for composers to have musical success even in such authoritarian societies?

By the end of this chapter, we should be able to freely discuss and address the reasons why some people, traditions, and religious and political authorities approach music as some kind of menace and obstruct its free development. We should also be able to discuss to what extent we can agree with Lev Vigotsky's view from Chapter Two that music does not lead us anywhere, but can only help us to organize our future actions? If we agree with this point of view, does music still remain a menace for us?

## THE ROCK STARS AND THE MULLAHS

**FILM: The Rock Stars and the Mullahs**, film editor: **Ollie Auddleston**, Production manager **Rupinder Bhogal**, directed and produced by **Argus McQueen, Ruhi Hamid**; **October film Production**; in association with **Becker Entertainment @BBC** and **Educational broadcasting Corporation**; Run time: **60min**.

This film describes the contemporary phenomenon of music and the approaches of local mullahs and religious authorities in challenging the existence of modern music within Muslim communities (North Pakistan). Actually it is research into music, musical performance, and the attitudes of some religious leaders to music, which can help local Central Asian students think and create similar interdisciplinary projects connecting musicology and ethnography.

Discussion about the film will create a bridge between the chapters of this course. It challenges the stereotype of Islam as a religion with many 'prohibitions' on music, referring to religious sources and the authority of the Prophet. Junoon, the main character of the film, describes the life of a musician who has suffered because of the radical approaches of mullahs. The author tries to find a possible way to justify the existence of musical performance in Pakistan. At the same time he came across many ordinary people who supported music and dance as part of their everyday lives, organizing and performing musical festivals, visiting shrines, and celebrating to receive spiritual power. According to the rock star, music accompanies every step of human life, even the reciting of the Holy Qur'an is a kind of music in itself.



**STILL FROM THE FILM “THE ROCK STARS AND THE MULLAHS”**

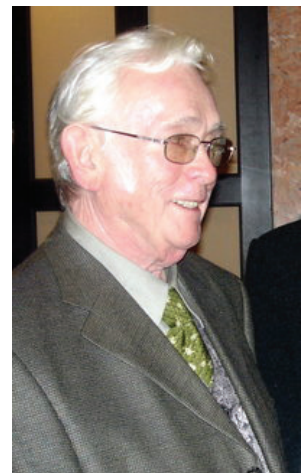
### WHILE WATCHING THE FILM WE SHOULD DEBATE THE QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main idea of this film? What is the origin of music according to the interpretation of Mullahs and local musicians? Is music really a menace? If yes, what are the reasons?
2. What kind of arguments did the Mullahs give? Why, according to them, is there no place for music in Islam? If music is not a menace, why do religious leaders get upset and worry about it? Why does the young generation support Junooni's music?
3. Do you know of any event or can you cite any evidence that can justify a ban on music? What do you think about the role of music in Muslim cultures, in modern-day Islam?
4. Is there a connection between the ideas of the film and your everyday life?



## JOSEF SKVORECKY: “RED MUSIC” THE BASS SAXOPHONE

This case study is about music as a menace and the role and condition of music in totalitarian regimes: Nazi, nationalist, communist, imperialist and new oppressive political systems. We will start our reading with a short piece of information on the author, Josef Skvorecky, the musicologist and philosopher from Canada, who was born in 1924 in Náchod, Bohemia, Czechoslovakia. “Skvorecky graduated in 1943 from the Reálné gymnasium in his native town. As part of Josef Goebbels’ ‘totaleinsatz’ scheme, he spent the next two years as a slave laborer in a German aircraft factory. After world war two he studied at Charles University in Prague, and received his PhD. in philosophy in 1952. In 1952 - 1954 he served in the Czechoslovak army then held editorial jobs in the Odeon publishing house. His first novel, *The Cowards*, written in 1948-49, was not published until 1958, and was immediately condemned by the Communist Party, banned, and seized by the police. According to many critics, this novel marks the beginning of the end of socialist realism in Czech literature. After the Soviet takeover in 1968, Skvorecky and his wife left for Canada where he continued writing novels, and taught in the Department of English at the University of Toronto until his retirement in 1990. Most of his books are available in English: the novels *The Cowards*, *Miss Silver’s Past*, *The Republic of Whores*, *The Miracle Game*, *The Swell Season*, *The Engineer of Human Souls*, *The Bride of Texas*, *Dvorak in Love*, *The Tenor Saxophonist’s Story*, etc. ...his non-fiction works include *Talkin’ Moscow Blues*, a book of essays on jazz, literature and politics, an autobiography - *Headed for the Blues*, two books on the Czech cinema, and *All the Bright Young Men and Women*. Josef and his wife Zdena Salivarová live in Toronto, Canada”. [from: [http://www.skvorecky.com/josef\\_biography.htm](http://www.skvorecky.com/josef_biography.htm)]. While reading this text we should pay attention to the relationship between political regimes and music. How do politicians control the musical environment and use music for their own benefit? They tend to implement their false principles and ideologies when it starts disturb them. We will discuss the issue of music in totalitarian regimes and how music can protest against a socio political system.



“In the days when everything in life was fresh – because we were sixteen, seventeen – I used to blow tenor sax. Very poorly. Our band was called Red Music, which in fact was a **misnomer**, since the name had no political **connotations**: there was a band in Prague that called itself Blue Music and we, living in the Nazi protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, had no idea that in jazz blue is not a color, so we called ours red. But if the name itself had no political connotations, our sweet, wild music did; for jazz was a sharp thorn in the sides of the power-hungry men, from Hitler to Brezhnev, who successively ruled in my native land.

What sort of political connotations did they have? Leftist? Rightist? Racist? Classist, Nationalist? The vocabulary of ideologists and **mountebanks** doesn’t have a word for it. At the **outset**, shortly before the Second World War when my generation experienced its musical revelation, jazz didn’t convey even a note of protest. (Whatever shortcomings the liberal republic of T. G. Masaryk may have had, it was a **veritable** paradise of cultural tolerance.) And no matter what Leroy Jones says to the contrary, the essence of this music, this “way of making music,” is not simply protest. Its essence is something far more

- misnomer** -  
an error in naming a person or place
- connotation** -  
an idea that is implied or suggested
- mountebanks** -  
one who attracts customers with tricks or jokes
- outset** -  
the beginning
- veritable** -  
being truly so called; real or genuine

elemental: an elan vital, a forceful vitality, an explosive creative energy as breathtaking as that of any true art that may be felt even in the saddest of blues. Its effect is cathartic.

But of course, when the lives of individuals and communities are controlled by powers that themselves remain uncontrolled – slavers, czars, fuhrers, first secretaries, marshals, generals and generalissimos, ideologists of dictatorships at either end of the spectrum – then creative energy becomes a protest. The consumptive clerk of a workingman’s insurance company (whose heart had reportedly been moved by the plight of his employer’s beleaguered clients) undergoes a sudden metamorphosis to become a threat to closely guarded socialism. Why? Because the visions in his castle, his trial, his America are made up of too little paper and too much real life, albeit in the guise of nonrealistic literature. That is the way it is. How else to explain the fact that so many titles on senator Joe McCarthy’s index of books to be removed from the shelves of the U.S. Information Service libraries abroad are identical to many on the index issued in Prague by the Communist Party early in the seventies? Totalitarian ideologists don’t like real life (other people’s) because it cannot be totally controlled; they **loathe** art, the product of a yearning for life, because that, too, **evades** control – if controlled and legislated, it **perishes**. But before it perishes – or when it finds refuge in some kind of **samizdat** underground – art, **willy-nilly**, becomes protest. Popular mass art, like jazz, becomes mass protest. That’s why the ideological guns and sometimes even the police guns of all dictatorships are aimed at the men with the horns.

Red Music used to play (badly, but with the enthusiasm of sixteen-year-olds) during the reign of the most Aryan Aryans of them all and his cultural handyman, Dr. Goebbels. It was Goebbels who declared, “now, I shall speak quite openly on the question of whether German radio should broadcast so-called jazz music. If by jazz we mean music that is based on rhythm and entirely ignores or even shows contempt for melody, music in which rhythm is indicated primarily by the ugly sounds of whining instruments so insulting to the soul, why then we can only reply to the question entirely in the negative.” Which was one reason we whined and wailed, rasped and roared, using all kinds of **wa-wa and hat mutes**, some of them manufactured by ourselves. But even then, protest was one of the lesser reasons. Primarily, we loved that music that we called jazz, and that in fact was swing, the half-white **progeny** of Chicago and new Orleans, what our non-blowing contemporaries danced to in mountain villages, out of reach of the Schutzpolizei, the uniformed security service. For even dancing was forbidden then in the Third Reich, which was in mourning for the dead at the battle of Stalingrad.

The revelation we experienced was one of those that can only come in one’s youth, before the soul has acquired a shell from being touched by too many sensations. In my mind I can still hear, very clearly, the sound of the saxes on that old, terribly scratchy Brunswick **seventy-eight** spinning on a wind-up phonograph, with the almost illegible label: “I’ve got a guy” Chick Webb and his orchestra with vocal chorus. Wildly sweet, soaring, swinging saxophones, the lazy and unknown voice of the unknown vocalist who left us spellbound even though we had no way of knowing that this was the great, then seventeen-year-old Ella Fitzgerald. But the message of her voice, the call of the saxes, the short wailing and weeping saxophone solo between the two vocal choruses, they all came across. Nothing could ever silence them in our hearts.

And despite Hitler and Goebbels, the sweet poison of the judeonegroid music (that was the Nazi **epithet** for jazz) not only endured, it prevailed – even, for a short time, in the very heart of hell, the ghetto at Terezin. The ghetto swingers . . . There is a photograph of them, an amateur snapshot, taken behind the walls of the Nazi-established ghetto during the brief week that they were permitted to perform – for the benefit of

**loathe -**

to dislike (someone or something) greatly; abhor

**evade -**

to escape from by trickery or cleverness

**perish -**

to die or be destroyed through violence, privation

**samizdat -**

an underground press

**willy-nilly -**

whether desired or not

**wa-wa and hat mutes -**

electronic devices for altering the sound of music

**progeny -**

offspring or a descendant

**seventy-eight**

an old-fashioned record that plays at 78 rpm

**epithet**

abusive description



the Swedish Red Cross officials who were visiting that Potemkin village of Nazism. They are all there, all but one of them already condemned to die, in white shirts and black ties, the slide of the trombone pointing diagonally up to the sky, pretending or maybe really experiencing the joy of rhythm, of music, perhaps a fragment of hopeless escapism.

There was even a swing band in the notorious Buchenwald, made up for the most part of Czech and French prisoners. And since those were not only cruel but also absurd times, people were put behind barbed wire because of the very music that was played inside. In a concentration camp near Wiener neustadt sat Vicherek, a guitar player who had sung Louis Armstrong's scat chorus in "tiger rag" and thus, according to the Nazi judge, "defiled musical culture"! Elsewhere in Germany several swingmen met a similar fate and one local gauleiter issued an extraordinary (really extraordinary? In this world of ours?) set of regulations which were binding for all dance orchestras. I read them, gnashing my teeth, in Czech translation in the film weekly *Filmovy Kuryr*, and fifteen years later I paraphrased them – faithfully, I am sure, since they had engraved themselves deeply on my mind – in a short story entitled "I Won't Take Back One Word":

1. Pieces in foxtrot rhythm (so-called swing) are not to exceed 20 percent of the repertoires of light orchestras and dance bands;
2. In this so-called jazz type repertoire, preference is to be given to compositions in a major key and to lyrics expressing joy in life rather than Jewishly-gloomy lyrics; as to tempo, preference is also to be given to brisk compositions over slow ones (so-called blues); however, the pace must not exceed a certain degree of allegro, **commensurate** with the Aryan sense of discipline and moderation. On no account will Negroid excesses in tempo (so-called hot jazz) or in solo performances (so-called breaks) be tolerated; so-called jazz compositions may contain at most 10 percent **syncopation**; the remainder must consist of a natural legato movement devoid of the hysterical rhythmic reverses characteristic of the music of the barbarian races and conducive to dark instincts alien to the German people (so-called riffs);
5. Strictly prohibited is the use of instruments alien to the German spirit (so-called cowbells, flexatone, brushes, etc.) As well as all mutes which turn the noble sound of wind and brass instruments into a Jewish-freemasonic yowl (so-called wa-wa, hat, etc.);
6. Also prohibited are so-called drum breaks longer than half a bar in four-quarter beat (except in stylized military marches);
7. The double bass must be played solely with the bow in so-called jazz compositions;
8. Plucking of the strings is prohibited, since it is damaging to the instrument and detrimental to Aryan musicality; if a so-called pizzicato effect is absolutely desirable for the character of the composition, strict care must be taken lest the string be allowed to patter on the sordine, which is henceforth forbidden;
9. Musicians are likewise forbidden to make vocal improvisations (so-called scat);
10. All light orchestras and dance bands are advised to restrict the use of saxophones of all keys and to substitute for them the violincello, the viola or possibly a suitable folk instrument;

**commensurate** -  
of the same size, extent, or duration as another

**syncopation** -  
a shift of accent in a passage or composition that occurs when a normally weak beat is stressed

When this unseemly decalogue appeared in that story of mine in Czechoslovakia's first jazz almanac (it was in 1958), the censors of an entirely different dictatorship confiscated the entire edition. The workers in the print shop salvaged only a few copies, one of which got into the hands of Milos Forman, then a young graduate of the film academy in search of material for his first film. After several years of writing and arguing with the censors, we finally got official approval for our script, whereupon it was personally banned by the man who was at that time the power in the country, president Antonin Novotny. That was the end of our film. Why? Because the decrees of the old gauleiter were once again in force, this time in the land of the victorious proletariat.

But back in the days of the swastika it was not just that one isolated German in the swing band at Buchenwald, not just the few imprisoned pure-Aryan swingmen – many far more reliable members of the master race were tainted with the sweet poison. How vividly I recall them, in their blue-gray Nazi uniforms, recently arrived from Holland with Jack Bulterman's arrangement of "Liza Likes Nobody," in exchange for copies of which we gave them the sheet music for "Deep Purple" and the next day they were off to Athens, where there were other saxophones swinging, underlined with Kansas riffs. I can see those German soldiers now, sitting in a dim corner of the Port Arthur tavern, listening hungrily to the glowing sounds of Miloslav Zachoval's big band, which was the other, far better swing band in my native town of Nachod. Vainly did I dream of becoming one of Zachoval's swingers. Alas, I was found lacking in skill, and doomed to play with the abominable Red Music. How naive we were, how full of love and reverence. Because Dr. Goebbels had decided that the whining judeonegroid music invented by American capitalists was not to be played in the territory of the Third Reich, we had a ball inventing aliases for legendary tunes so that they might be heard in the territory of the Third Reich after all. We played a fast piece – one of those forbidden "brisk compositions" – called "the wild bull," indistinguishable to the naked ear from "tiger rag"; we played a slow tune, "abendlied" or "evening song," and fortunately the Nazi censors had never heard the black voice singing "when the deep purple falls over sleepy garden walls . . ." And the height of our effrontery, "the song of Rzeshetova Lhota," in fact "St. Louis blues," rang out one misty day in 1943 in eastern Bohemia, sung in Czech by a country girl, the lyrics composed so that they might elaborate on our new title for W. C. Handy's theme song: "Ftesetova Lhota ... Is where I go ... I'm on my way ... To see my Aryan folk. . . ." In fact, we were fortunate that the local Nazis had never seen Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, never heard the bullies sing about the "Ary-ary-ary-ary-aryans." Neither had we, of course – "the song of Rzeshetova Lhota" was simply an indigenous response to Nazism.

It was, like most of our songs, ostensibly the composition of a certain Mr. Jifi Patoka. You would search for his name in vain in the lists of popular composers of the time since he too was a figment of our imagination. That mythical gentleman's large repertoire also included a tune indistinguishable from "The Casa Loma Stomp." In our ignorance we hadn't the faintest idea that there was a castle of that name in distant Toronto. We believed that Casa Loma was an American band leader, one of the splendid group that included Jimmy Lunceford, Chick Webb, Andy Kirk, the Duke of Ellington (Ellington had been placed among the nobility by a Czech translator who encountered his name in an American novel and decided that this must be a member of the impoverished British aristocracy, eking out a living as a bandleader at the cotton club), Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller – you name them, we knew them all. And yet we knew nothing. The hours we spent racking our brains over song titles we couldn't understand . . . "struttin' with some barbecue" – the definition of the word "barbecue" in our pocket Webster didn't help at all. What on earth could it mean: "walking pompously with a piece

of animal carcass roasted whole”? We knew nothing – but we knew the music. It came to us on the waves of Radio Stockholm mostly, since that was the only station that played jazz and that the Nazis didn’t jam. Swedish style: four saxes, a trumpet plus rhythm – perhaps the first distinct jazz style we knew, except for big band swing. Curiously there was one film, also of Swedish provenance, that amongst all the Nazi war-propaganda films, the Pandur Trencks and Ohm Krueger’s, escaped the eyes of the watchmen over the purity of Aryan culture. In translation it was entitled the whole school is dancing. The original title appealed to us more, even though we understood no Swedish: *Swing It, Magistern!* In the territory of the Third Reich, that was the movie of the war. We all fell in love with the swinging, singing Swedish girl called Alice Babs Nielsen, another reassuring indication that though we lacked knowledge we at least had an ear for jazz: much, much later she recorded with Ellington. But that film – I must have seen it at least ten times. I spent one entire Sunday in the movie theater, through the matinee, through the late afternoon show and the evening show, inconsolably sad that there was no midnight mass of *Swing It, Magistern!*

“*Swing It, Magistern, Swing It!*” became one of the standard pieces played at public concerts in obscure little towns in eastern Bohemia, much to the joy of fans of swing. But of course, enemies of jazz and swing were also to be found amongst our Czech contemporaries. The milder ones were the jazz conservatives to whom swing was an outlandish modern distortion. They would just boo loudly at our concerts. The radicals, the polka buffs, did more than that. They threw apple cores at us, rotten eggs, all kinds of filth, and the legendary concerts in the legendary hick towns often ended in a brawl between the polka buffs and the fans of swing. Then the band would have to flee by the back door to save their precious instruments, irreplaceable in wartime, from the wrath of the protectors of the one and only true Czech music: the polka – played, horror of horrors, on an accordion.

The polka buffs never dared throw eggs at our Ella, though. Yes, we even had our own goddess, our queen of swing, girl born of rhythm, slender girl with rhythm at her heels, our own Ella. She was white, of course, and her name was Inka Zemankova. She distinguished herself by singing Czech lyrics with an American accent, complete with the nasal twang so alien to the Czech language. My god, how we adored this bugging-up of our lovely language for we felt that all languages were lifeless if not bugged up a little. Inka’s theme song was something entitled “*I Like to Sing Hot,*” not one of Jifi Patoka’s ostensible compositions but a genuine Czech effort. The lyrics describe a swinging girl strolling down Broadway with “*Harlem syncopating in the distance.*” It contained several bars of scat, and concluded with the singer’s assertion, “*I Like to Sing Hot!*” This final word, sung in English, alerted the Nazi censors, and on their instructions Inka had to replace it with the equally monosyllabic expression “*z not,*” – a charmingly absurd revision, for although it rhymes with “*hot,*” the expression means exactly the opposite of singing hot music: it means singing from sheet music, from the notes.

Far from Harlem, from Chicago, from New Orleans, uninformed and naive, we served the sacrament that verily knows no frontiers. A nucleus existed in Prague that published an

underground magazine entitled O.K. (not an abbreviation of “OI korekt” but of Okruzni Korespondence, i.e., circulating correspondence). Pounded out on a typewriter with about twenty almost illegible carbon copies, this underground publication (really underground, its very possession punishable by a **stint** in a concentration camp) was our sole source of reliable information. It was distributed through the protectorate by lovely Krystynky on bicycles, the bobby-soxers of those perished times. I can see them in their longish skirts, dancing and “dipping” in the taverns of remote villages, with one fan always standing guard at the door, on the lookout for the German police. When a Schupo appeared over the horizon, a signal was given, and all the Krystynky and their boyfriends, the “dippers,” would scurry to sit down to glasses of green soda-pop, listening piously to the Viennese waltz that the band had smoothly swung into. When the danger had passed, everyone jumped up, the Kansas riffs exploded, and it was swing time once again.

Then the Great War ended. In the same movie theater where I had once sat through three consecutive showings of *Swing It, Magistern!* I sat through three screenings of a lousy print of *Sun Valley Serenade*, with Russian subtitles. I was impervious to the Hollywood plot, but hypnotized by Glenn Miller. The print had found its way to our town with the Red Army, the film badly mangled by frequent screenings at the battlefield, the damaged soundtrack adding Goebbelsian horrors to “In the Mood” and “Chattanooga Choo-Choo.” Nonetheless, I had the splendid feeling that, finally, the beautiful age of jazz had arrived.

My mistake. It took only a lean three years before it was back underground again. New little Goebbelses started working diligently in fields that had been cleared by the old demon. They had their own little Soviet bibles, primarily the fascistoid music of spiritual poverty by A. V. Gorodinsky and I. Nestyev’s *Dollar Cacophony*. Their vocabulary was not very different from that of the little doctor, except that they were, if possible, even prouder of their ignorance. They characterized jazz and jazz-inspired serious music by a rich assortment of derogatory adjectives: “perverted,” “decadent,” “base,” “lying,” “degenerate,” etc. They compared the music to “the moaning in the throat of a camel” and “the hiccupping of a drunk,” and although it was “the music of cannibals,” it was at the same time invented by the capitalists “to deafen the ears of the marshalized world by means of epileptic, loudmouthed compositions.” Unfortunately, these Orwellian masters soon found their disciples among Czechs, who in turn – after the fashion of disciples – went even further than their preceptors, declaring wildly that jazz was aimed at “annihilating the people’s own music in their souls.” Finally the aggressive theoreticians even organized a concert of “model” jazz pieces composed to order for the party’s cultural division. It was an incredible nightmare. Bandleader Karel Vlach, the greatest among Czech pioneers of swing, sat in the front row, going from **crimson** to ashen and from ashen to crimson again, probably saying a prayer in his soul to Stan Kenton. Beside him sat an unholy trinity of Soviet advisors on jazz (led by, of all men, Aram Khachaturian, colleague of Prokofiev and Shostakovich), gloomy, silent, and next to them a senile choirmaster using a hearing aid. And yet not even the emasculated musical monster presented to them satisfied the Soviet advisors. They criticized its “instrumental makeup” and described it as “the music of a vanishing class.” Finally, the old choirmaster rose, and we heard him add the final chord: “now, take the trumpet. Such an optimistic-sounding instrument! And what do those jazz people do? They stuff something down its throat and right away it sounds despicable, whining, like a jungle cry!”

After that Vlach was unable to **refrain** from a few heretical remarks: if they didn’t give him something better than Stan Kenton, said he, he would keep on playing Stan Kenton. Which is perhaps what he did, in the traveling circus to which he was shortly thereafter relegated along with his entire band. The party also proclaimed the creation of an “official”

**stint** -  
short period of time

**crimson** -  
a deep red color

**refrain** -  
to restrain or hold back

model jazz band, and in the youth musical ensembles the most avid ideologists even tried to replace the hybrid-sounding (therefore supposedly bourgeois) saxophones with the monohybrids (therefore more proletarian) violoncello – but it takes at least five years to learn to play the cello passably, while a talented youth can master the saxophone in a month, and what he wants to do is play, play, play. But ideological thinking follows paths free from the taint of reality. In place of Kenton, they pushed Paul Robeson at us, and how we hated that black apostle who sang, of his own free will, at open-air concerts in Prague at a time when they were raising the socialist leader Milada Horakova to the **gallows**, the only woman ever to be executed for political reasons in Czechoslovakia by Czechs, and at a time when great Czech poets (some ten years later to be “rehabilitated” without exception) were pining away in jails. Well, maybe it was wrong to hold it against Paul Robeson. No doubt he was acting in good faith, convinced that he was fighting for a good cause. But they kept holding him up to us as an exemplary “progressive jazzman,” and we hated him. May god rest his – one hopes – innocent soul.

But in the early fifties, although the bishops of Stalinist obscurantism damned the “music of the cannibals,” they had one problem. Its name was Dixieland. A type of the cannibal-music with roots so patently folkloristic and often (the blues) so downright proletarian that even the most Orwellian falsifier of facts would be hard put to deny them. Initiates had already encountered isolated recordings of Dixieland during the war, and after it ended a group of youths heard the Graeme Bell Dixieland Band performing at a youth festival in Prague. They created the first Czechoslovak Dixieland band, and soon there was a proliferation of Louisiana sounding names: Czechoslovak Washboard Beaters, Prague City Stompers, Memphis Dixie, and dozens of others. Uncle Tom music was really the only form of jazz suffered at the depressing congregations called youth entertainments, where urban girls in pseudo-national costumes got up and sang bombastic odes to Stalin in the style of rural yodeling.

An apostle of Dixieland, Emanuel Ugge, took the Czechoslovak Dixieland on the road. Once again, obscure little towns in the northeast of Bohemia resounded with loud syncopations, wound around with the boring, hyperscholarly commentaries of this devoted doctor angelicas of Dixieland who, for the ears of the informers attending the concert, succeeded in interpreting the most obscene tune from the lowest **speakeasy** in Chicago as an expression of the suffering soul of the black people, waiting only for Stalin and his camps, where re-education was carried out directly for the other world. But it turned out that going on the road with Dixieland was a double-edged move. On the one hand, it kept the knowledge of jazz alive, but on the other hand what the more enlightened and therefore, less, brazenly orthodox supervisors in Prague had passed off as a “form of Negro folklore,” the true-believing provincial small-fry recognized for what it was: an effort to “smuggle western decadence into the minds of our workers. . . . Such orchestras conceal their vile intentions in music that has no educational merit,” says a letter from the town council of Hranice to the management of the Hranice cement workers. “Eighty percent of what the ensemble played was western, cosmopolite music

**gallows -**

a device usually consisting of two upright posts supporting a crossbeam from which a noose is suspended and used for execution by hanging

**speakeasy -**

place where alcohol is sold illegally

which had an eccentric effect, going so far as to cause one of the soldiers to come up on the stage and do a tap dance.” Horrors! A soldier in the Czech Red Army, tap-dancing to some Nick la Rocca tune! Years later I recalled this harlemized soldier when I read in an article by Vasily Aksionov (author of the epochal *A Ticket to the Stars* – but who in the west has heard of him? Who knows that the liberating effect of this novel, written in Moscow slang, had perhaps a more profound influence on contemporary Russian prose than “*Doctor Zhivago*”?) About a big band that existed somewhere in Siberia during Stalin’s last days, and played “St. Louis blues,” “When the Saints,” “Riverside Blues.” . . . Another chapter in the legends of apostles who were often **martyrs**.

Even Inka, our idolized queen of swing, became one. After the war she had put aside her career in order to study singing professionally. Five years later, she decided it was time to make her comeback. The concert agency booked her for a Sunday matinee at the Lucerne Hall in Prague. She sang one song just before the intermission and was to sing another one after. It was an old swing tune, and while Inka’s sense of rhythm had remained, her vocal range had doubled. She was rewarded by thunderous applause, gave them an encore, and this time sang one whole chorus in scat. The applause was endless. “when I stumbled off-stage,” she told me years later, “I thought to myself – there, I’ve made it again! But there was a guy there, in one of those blue shirts, you know, I think they called them the young guard, all scowling and furious, and he yelled at me, ‘That’s it! Out! I can assure you you’ll never sing another note in public.’ And in fact, that’s what happened, they didn’t even let me sing my second number after the intermission.” At that moment I couldn’t help thinking about Vicherek and his scat chorus in “tiger rag” during the Nazi occupation.

However, with the passage of years political events threatened the unlimited rule of the provincial small-fry (and the blue-shirted communist youth storm trooper) and also the validity of their musicological opinions. We began to consider how we might get permission for The Czechoslovak Dixieland Band (now metamorphosed into The Prague Dixieland Band) to perform in public again – and found unexpected and unintended help from the U.S. An American bass player named Herbert Ward had asked for political asylum in Czechoslovakia, “delivering another serious blow to American imperialism” the party press announced. It also said that Ward used to play with Armstrong. We immediately looked him up in his hotel in Prague and talked him into playing a role of which he was totally unaware and which is referred to in Stalinist slang as “shielding off.” In fact, we used him ruthlessly. We quickly put together a jazz revue entitled *Really the Blues* (title stolen from Mezz Mezzrow), printed Herb’s super-anti-American statement in the program, provided The Prague Dixieland to accompany Herb’s home-made blues about how it feels to be followed by American secret police agents (a particularly piquant blues in a police state where everybody knew the feeling only too well), dressed his sexy dancer-wife Jacqueline in original sack dresses borrowed from a Prague matron who had lived it up in Paris in the twenties, then settled down to enjoy her dancing of the eccentric, decadent Charleston. Since Herb’s terribly-shouted blues had anti-American lyrics and because Jackie’s skin was not entirely white the authorities didn’t dare protest, and left us alone with our towering success. The show finally folded as a result of difficulties of a more American nature. Herb and Jacqueline wanted more money. The producer, bound by state norms, was unable to give them more, and *really the blues* died a premature death. Later on, Herb and Jacqueline went the way of many American exiles: back home to the states, the land where the words “you can’t go home again” generally seem not to apply. Apply they do, though, for other countries, the ones that send their own writers into exile, to prison, or to their death.

*Really the Blues* was the end of a beginning. Jazz had grown to resemble the Mississippi, with countless rivulets fanning out from its delta. The party found other targets: Elvis Pres-

**martyr -**

one who is put to death for his religion or beliefs



ley, little rock'n'roll groups with guitars electrified and amplified on home workbenches, with a new crop of names recalling faraway places – Hell's Devils, Backside Slappers, and Rocking Horses – new outcries from the underground. By the end of the fifties, a group of young people had been arrested, and some of them sentenced to prison for playing tapes of “decadent American music” and devoting themselves to the “eccentric dancing” of rock'n'roll. (Again the spirit of Vicherek was present at their trial.) And because the mass of young people had turned to follow other stars, jazz proper, whether mainstream or experimental, was no longer considered dangerous, and so the sixties were a time of government-sponsored international jazz festivals. The stage at Lucerne Hall in Prague echoed with the sounds of Don Cherry, the modern jazz quartet, Ted Curson. . . . We applauded them, although, for the most part, this was no longer the music we had known and loved. We were the old faithfuls. The broad appeal of the saxes was gone, either this was esoteric music or we had simply grown old. . . . Jazz is not just music. It is the love of youth which stays firmly anchored in one's soul, forever unalterable, while real live music changes, forever the calling of Lunceford's saxophones. . . .

That was when I wrote “The Bass Saxophone,” and I was writing about fidelity, about the sole real art there is, about what one must be true to, come hell or high water; what must be done to the point of collapse, even if it be a very minor art, the object of condescending sneers. To me literature is forever blowing a horn, singing about youth when youth is irretrievably gone, singing about your homeland when in the schizophrenia of the times you find yourself in a land that lies over the ocean, a land – no matter how hospitable or friendly – where your heart is not, because you landed on these shores too late.

For the steel chariots of the Soviets swung low, and I left. Jazz still leads a precarious existence in the heart of European political insanity, although the battlefield has shifted elsewhere. But it is the same old familiar story: a spectre is again haunting eastern Europe, the spectre of rock, and all the reactionary powers have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise it – Brezhnev and Husak, Suslov and Honecker, East German obscurantists and Czech police-spies. Lovely new words have emerged from the underground, like the *krystynky* and the “dippers” of the Nazi era: now there are *manichky*, “little marys” for longhaired boys, *undrooshy*, from the Czechified pronunciation of the word “underground,” for rock fans of both sexes. Anonymous people hold underground Woodstock's in the same old obscure **hick** towns, gatherings often ruthlessly broken up by police, followed by the arrest of participants, their interrogation, their harassment, all the joys of living in a police state.

And so the legend continues . . . And the chain of names. The ghetto swingers, the nameless bands of Buchenwald, the big band in Stalin's Siberia, the anonymous jazz messengers in Nazi uniforms crisscrossing Europe with their sheet music, the Leningrad seven – nameless **aficionados** who in the Moscow of the sixties translated, from the Czech translation of original American material, into Russian *samizdat* the theoretical **anthology** the face of jazz – and other buffs and bands, even more obscure, blowing

**hick -**

a person regarded as gullible or provincial

**aficionados -**

an enthusiastic admirer or follower; a fan

**anthology -**

a collection of literary pieces, such as poems, short stories, or plays

away for all I know even in Mao's China. To their names new ones must be added, the plastic people of the universe, and dg307, two underground groups of rock musicians and avant-garde poets whose members have just been condemned (at the time I am writing this) to prison in Prague for "arousing disturbance and nuisance in an organized manner." That loathsome vocabulary of hell, the vocabulary of Goebbels, the vocabulary of murderers. . . .

My story is drawing to a close. "Das spiel ist ganz und gar verloren. Und dennoch wird es weiter-gehen. . . ." The game is totally lost. And yet it will go on. The old music is dying, although it has so many offspring, vigorous and vital, that will, naturally, be hated. Still, for me, Duke is gone. Satchmo is gone, Count Basie has just barely survived a heart attack, Little Jimmy Rushing has gone the way of all flesh. . . .

. . . Anybody asks you who it was that sang this song, tell them it was . . . He's been here, and's gone.

Such is the **epitaph** of the little five-by-five. Such is the epitaph I would wish for my books.

*V. J. S. Toronto, 1977*

**SOURCE:** Josef Skvorecky. "Red Music." *The Bass Saxophone*. Toronto: I&od, 1980. Pp. 3-28.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the main idea of this text? Please note the author's arguments supporting this idea.
2. Why did they call the band "Red Music"? And why did it have no political connotations?
3. Comment on the author's point about the time: "when the lives of individuals and communities are controlled by powers that themselves remain uncontrolled." In your opinion, why does creative energy become a power to protest?
4. According to the author, what are the reasons for the 'totalitarian ideologists to dislike real life (other people's)?' What do you think? What are the preconditions for the rise of popular mass music, especially jazz in former socialistic countries?
5. What are the differences between the Nazi regime's approach to music and that of socialist rulers during the time of Brezhnev. What was the destiny of Czechoslovakia's first jazz almanac in 1958 and the role of 'samizdats'? What was the reason for the appearance of "samizdats" in the Soviet Union?
6. How would you describe the particularity of jazz music in Czechoslovakia during the different political systems? What can you say about the vocabulary of tyranny and its effect on music?
7. What kind of conclusion regarding the nature of music can you draw after reading this essay on jazz music?
8. Using the materials from this text and your personal experience as a user or listener of music, how can you answer the question: Is the music a menace? If yes, is it a menace for individuals or for belief systems (political, religious, ideology, etc.)?
9. What do you think about the condition of music in totalitarian regimes? Do you agree with author's opinion? What kind of connection exists between music and individual's freedom?

#### **epitaph -**

a brief literary piece commemorating a deceased person

## CHINGIZ AYTMATOV: “A STORY ABOUT RAIMALY-AGA”

Our discussion will be continued by Changiz Aytmatov, a prominent Central Asian writer. Chingiz Aytmatov was born December 12, 1928, in Sheker, Kyrgyz A.S.S.R. [now in Kyrgyzstan], Aytmatov, author, translator, and journalist, began his literary career in 1952 and in 1959 became a “Pravda” correspondent in Kyrgyzstan. He achieved major literary recognition with his collection of short stories, “Povesti Gor I Stepey” (1963; *Tales of Mountains and Steppes*), for which he was awarded the Lenin Prize in 1963. (see: <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9011518/chingiz-aytmatov>); This story is from ‘The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years’. The short legend is about an old and famous singer who met his love in the twilight of his life. The old man’s high feelings evoked violent condemnation from his tribe. People perceived his feelings as something insulting, humiliating for the community, as a violation of obligations to relatives. As a result we witness an immediate violent reaction to this wonderful feeling. While reading the text, we should ask ourselves the following questions: What is the role of music in traditional society? Why was musical talent and love, a wonderful feeling praised by all societies, so violently condemned by the tribe?



“... Raimaly-aga was a famous singer for his time. He became famous when he was still young. By divine mercy he was born a “zhyrau” who combined three great principles: he was a poet, a composer of his own songs, and a remarkable singer.

And that is how it was. All his life Raimaly-aga spent on horseback with a dombra in his hands. He didn’t make a fortune although his fame was **immense**. He lived like a nightingale; spent his time feasting and enjoying himself; and everywhere he was welcomed with honor and kindness. But there were also other well-off people who disliked him. They say that he lived his life dissolutely, like wind in a field.

Raimaly-aga began to age like a poplar that withers all alone... And then he realized that he didn’t have a family, herds, or other riches. His younger brother gave him shelter, but not before he had expressed his discontent and reproached his relatives. Nevertheless, he arranged to give Raimaly-aga a separate yurt, and to give him food and wash his clothes ...

Once Raimaly-aga couldn’t restrain himself and saddled his old horse, Saraly, and went to a big festival to dispel his boredom. Someone had lifted high a canopy over the door of a yurt and a girl appeared at the **threshold**. She held a dombra close to her chest. The girl was open-faced, with a mischievous but proud look in her eyes; her brows were like a bow-string showing her extremely resolute character. She was so well-knit as if made by skillful hands – her height, her looks, her girlish dress... before anyone had time to say a word, the girl confidently hit the strings of her dombra and began to sing a song of welcome addressing it to Raimaly-aga:

“Listen to my story, the great zhyrau, since I dared to make this step. I loved you from my early years, Raimaly-aga. Your gift of singing is from God. I followed you everywhere, Raimaly-aga, wherever you sang or wherever you went. Don’t

**immense** -  
extremely large; huge

**threshold** -  
a piece of wood or stone  
placed beneath a door; a  
doorsill

condemn me. My dream is to become an akyn, just as you were and are, Raimaly-aga. You are a great master of songs. I followed you like an unseen shadow never missing a word. I repeated your tunes like prayers and learned your poems like **incantations**... And I reveled in your songs but at the same time I was burning with shame as I was dreaming about you and I wanted to become a woman as soon as possible so I could come to you and tell about it. I vowed that I would master the art of composition, understand the nature of music, and learn how to sing just like you do, my teacher, so I could come to you without shame, not afraid of a keen look, to say hello, to confess that I love and challenge you without hiding myself. And here I am. You can see me and judge me.”

- But who are you? Where are you from? – exclaimed Raimaly-aga and stood up.- What is your name?

- My name is Begimay.

- Begimay? Where have you been before? Where did you come from, Begimay? – Raimaly-aga unintentionally cried out and bent his head gloomily.

- You shouldn't lament so bitterly, Raimaly-aga, - said Begimay. If I am a messenger of fate, don't doubt me, Baimaly-aga. Nothing will be more precious to me than knowing that I can bring you joy with my caress, song, and unselfish love. Don't be in doubt about me, Raimaly-aga.

- What are you talking about! What is this battle of words, Begimay! What competition is skillfulness worth when there is a more dreadful ordeal – love that is not consistent with the customs with which we live. No, Begimay, I will not compete with you in eloquence. Not because I don't have enough vigor, or because words have died in me, or because my voice had become dull. I can only admire you, Begimay. I can only love you to my grief, Begimay, and admire you in love only, Begimay. Saying this, Raimaly-aga took his dombra, tuned it to a new fret and began to sing a new song just as before – like a wind that is barely heard in grass, or like a storm with rolls rumbling in a blue and white sky. Since then that song lives on earth. The “Begimay” song.

People couldn't recognize the old singer. Raimaly-aga's voice was ringing as it used to; he became lithe and deft as he used to be; his eyes were shining as two lamps in a white yurt on a green meadow. Even his horse, Sarala, arched his head and was proud. But not everyone liked it. There were those in the crowd who were spitting looking at Raimaly-aga. His relatives and fellow clansmen were outraged. The clan was called “Barakbai”. The Barakbais were furious at Raimaly-aga's wedding. That's no good, they said, he has gone insane! They began to slander Raimaly-aga before his brother, Abdilkhan. How will we elect you our district head. Others will ridicule us at election if this old dog, Raimaly, exposes us to shame? Do you hear what he sings? He is laughing like a young stud! And do you hear how this whore answers him? A sin and a shame! She twists him round her little finger and people are looking at it! It is bad luck! Why does he need this whore? We must crack down on him so a bad reputation does not reach all the other auls...

Abdilkhan had been angry at his dissolute brother for some time already as he spent all his life in dissipation. Abdilkhan thought that as he grew old he would settle down and now, look at him – he is a disgrace to the whole Barakbai's clan. And here, in the presence of all the steppe people, they agreed to meet one day at a big fair where they would sing for all people coming from everywhere.

- First I want to tell you this, poor Raimaly. You spent all your life in poverty and had only one horse; you sang at feasts and strummed your dombra; you were

**incantation -**

a formula used in ritual recitation; a verbal charm or spell

a clown – Maskarapos. You spent your life entertaining others. We forgave your dissipation when you were young. Now you are old and ridiculous. We despise you. You should think about death and humility. But you became entangled with that whore to make yourself a laughing-stock. As a flibbertigibbet you defied our laws and customs and don't want to submit to our advice. All right then, let God punish you. You have only yourself to blame.

– Not one of you is a prophet or my judge – said Raimaly-aga ahead of Abdilkhan.

– I pity you people sitting here. You are roaming in dark delusion. You judge things that can not be solved at a gathering. You don't know where truth and happiness are in the world. Is it a shame to sing when your soul sings? Is it a shame when love comes to someone as if sent by god? The biggest happiness on earth is to rejoice at people who are in love, isn't it? But if you think me insane only because I sing, and don't avoid love that came to me untimely, I'll leave you. I'll go for the world is large enough.

Raimaly-aga darted from those restraining him. Stop now! Don't kill the horse!

- You can't take a step from here! – he said quietly, and suddenly screamed:

- Catch him! He is insane! Tie him up before he kills us!

Screams ensued. Everyone was confused, colliding into one another: Give me the rope! Twist his arms! Tighter! He's gone mad! Here is your god! Look at his eyes! Truly, he's lost his mind! Drag him here, to the birch tree! Let's drag! Drag faster!

The moon was already high above the ground. All was quiet in the sky and on earth. Some shamans came, built a fire and began to dance violently trying to **conjure** away spirits that darkened the great singer's mind. Then the mullah came. He read some verses from the Koran. He tried to put him on the right track.

And he was standing tied to the birch tree with his hands tightly tied up behind his back...

**conjure -**

to affect or influence by or as if by invocation or spell

**SOURCE:** AKHP translation. Chingiz Aytmatov: *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*, the story of Raymali-aga (И дольше века длится день). Frunze, Kyrgyzstan, 1988, pp. 232-244

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Are music and songs dangerous for society? What is your personal opinion?  
The story of Raimaly-aga is a typical story of creative persons in traditional Central Asia. Imagine the situation where one is forced to be in the same situation as the main characters. What would you do?
2. Why doesn't the traditional community allow individuals to develop and perform freely? What is the reason for such opposition from society to music and musicians? What are the different opinions of community and society concerning an individual's success? Why do communities try to control individuals' behavior?
3. What is the relationship between musical performance and madness for which Raymali-aga was blamed? Why do people in contemporary society so seldom discuss the issues of human love and friendship?
4. According to Raymali-aga what is the spirit of music? Why does he not accept it as a menace?
5. Would you pay the same price for your creativity concerning an intimate feeling like love?
6. Are there any connections between creativity, love and music?
7. What are the similarities and differences between this text and the Skvorecky text? Write a similar story using someone's life story?



## THEODOR W. ADORNO: “PERENNIAL FASHION – JAZZ.” PRISMS

This is a very short piece of text explaining jazz music presented by a very famous philosopher and social critic, Theodore W. Adorno. Adorno had great influence on German intellectuals after the Second World War. According to available sources “he was the most prominent challenger to both Sir Karl Popper’s philosophy of science and Martin Heidegger’s philosophy of existence...the scope of Adorno’s influence stems from the interdisciplinary character of his research and from the Frankfurt School to which he belonged. Especially from Kant onward, his philosophy embodied the radical nature of his critique of contemporary western society. He was a seminal social theorist and a leading member of the first generation of critical theory...[ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/adorno/#1>”]. Now let us look at some information about his life: “...born on September 11, 1903 as Theodora Hudwig Wiesengrund, Adorno lived in Frankfurt am Main for the first three decades of his life and the last two. He was the only son of a wealthy wine merchant of assimilated Jewish background and an accomplished musician of Italian Catholic descent. Adorno studied philosophy with the neo-Kantian Hans Cornelius and music composition with Alban Berg...” everyone knows about the conditions of life during the Nazi regime, particularly for citizens of Jewish origin. Adorno was no exception. “Adorno left Germany in the spring of 1934. During the Nazi era he resided in Oxford, New York City, and southern California. There he wrote several books for which he later became famous, including *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, *The Authoritarian Personality* and *Minima Moralia*. From these years come his provocative critiques of popular culture and the culture industry. Returning to Frankfurt in 1949 to take up a position in the philosophy department, Adorno quickly established himself as a leading German intellectual and a central figure in the Institute of Social Research; conflict and consolidation marked the last decade of Adorno’s life. A leading figure in the “positivism dispute” in German sociology, Adorno was a key player in debates about restructuring German universities; he died unexpectedly of a heart attack on August 6, 1969, one month shy of his sixty-sixth birthday”. [from: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/adorno/#1>];

Regarding this text, we will look at the roles of music and society, music and individuality, the socio-economic base of the musical business, especially in mass culture, and the problem of conflicts between the ego and society.

“The jazz monopoly rests on the exclusiveness of the supply and the economic power behind it. But it would have been broken long ago if the ubiquitous specialty did not contain something universal to which people respond. Jazz must possess a ‘mass basis’, the technique must link up with a moment in the subjects – one which, of course, in turn points back to the social structure and to typical conflicts between the ego and society. What first comes to mind, in quest for that moment, is the eccentric clown or parallels with the early film comics. Individual weakness is proclaimed and revoked in the same breath, stumbling is confirmed as a kind of higher skill. In the process of integrating the asocial, jazz converges with the equally standardized schemas of the detective novel and its **offshoots**, which regularly distort or unmask the world so that anti-social behavior and crime become the everyday norm, but which at the same time charm away the **seductive** and **omi-**



**offshoot -**

a branch, descendant, or member of a family or social group

**seductive -**

tending to seduce; alluring

**ominous -**

menacing; threatening



## JAZZ

**nous** challenge through the inevitable triumph of order. Psychoanalytic theory alone can provide an adequate explanation of this phenomenon. The aim of jazz is the mechanical reproduction of a regressive moment, a castration symbolism. 'Give up your masculinity, let yourself be castrated,' the eunuch-like sound of the jazz band both **mocks** and proclaims, 'and you will be rewarded, accepted into a fraternity which shares the mystery of impotence with you, a mystery revealed at the moment of the initiation rite'. If this interpretation of jazz – whose sexual implications are better understood by its shocked opponents than by its apologists – appears arbitrary and far-fetched, the fact remains that it can be substantiated in countless details of the music as well as of the song lyrics. In the book, *American jazz music*, Wilder Hobson describes an early jazz bandleader, Mike Riley, a musical eccentric who must have truly mutilated the instruments. 'The band squirted water and tore clothes, and Riley offered perhaps the greatest of trombone comedy acts, an insane rendition of "Dinah" during which he repeatedly dismembered the horn and reassembled it erratically until the tubing hung down like brass burnishing in a junk shop, with a vaguely harmonic honk still sounding from one or more of the loose ends.' Long before, Virgil Thomson had compared the performances of the famed jazz trumpeter, Louis Armstrong, to those of the great cast rat of the eighteenth century. The entire sphere is saturated with terminology which distinguishes between 'long' and 'short haired' musicians. The latter are jazz people who earn money and can afford to appear presentable; the others, the caricature of the Slavic pianist, for instance, whose long mane is exemplary, are grouped under the little esteemed stereotype of the artist who is starving and who flaunts the demands of convention. This is the manifest content of the terminology. What the shorn hair represents hardly requires elaboration. In jazz, the philistines standing over Samson are permanently transfigured.

In truth, the philistines. The castration symbolism, deeply buried in the practices of jazz and cut off from consciousness through the institutionalization of **perennial** sameness, is for that very reason probably all the more potent. And sociologically, jazz has the effect of strengthening and extending, down to the very physiology of the subject, the acceptance of a dreamless-realistic world in which all memories of things not wholly integrated have been purged. To comprehend the mass basis of jazz one must take full account of the taboo of artistic expression in America, a taboo which continues unabated despite the official art industry, and which even affects the expressive impulses of children; progressive education, which seeks to stimulate their faculties of expression as an end in itself, is simply a reaction to this. Although the artist is partially tolerated, partially integrated into the sphere of consumption as an 'entertainer', a functionary – like the better-paid waiter subject to the demands of 'service' – the stereotype of the artist remains the introvert, the egocentric idiot, frequently the homosexual. While such traits may be tolerated in professional artists – a scandalous private life may even be expected as part of the entertainment – everyone else makes himself immediately suspicious by any spontaneous artistic impulse not ordered in advance by society. A child who prefers to listen to serious music or practice the piano rather than watch a baseball game or television will have to suffer as a 'sissy' in his class or in the other groups to which he belongs and which embody far more authority than parents or teacher. The expressive impulse is exposed to the same threat of castration that is symbolized and mechanically and ritually subdued in jazz. Nevertheless, the need for expression, which stands in no necessary relation to the objective quality of art,

### mock -

to treat with ridicule or contempt; deride

### perennial -

lasting or active through the year or through many years

cannot be entirely eliminated, especially during the years of maturation. Teenagers are not entirely stifled by economic life and its psychological correlative, the reality principle. Their aesthetic impulses are not simply extinguished by suppression but are rather diverted. Jazz is the preferred medium of such diversion. To the masses of young people who, year after year, chase the perennial fashion, presumably to forget it after a few years, it offers a compromise between aesthetic sublimation and social adjustment. The 'unrealistic', practically useless, imaginative element is permitted to survive at the price of changing its character; it must tirelessly strive to remake itself in the image of reality, to repeat the latter's commands to itself, to submit to them. Thus it reintegrates itself into the sphere from which it sought to escape. Art is deprived of its aesthetic dimension, and emerges as part of the very adjustment which it in principle contradicts. Viewed from this standpoint, several unusual features of jazz can be more easily understood. The role played by arrangement, for instance, which cannot be adequately explained in terms of a technical division of labor or of the musical illiteracy of the so-called composers. Nothing is permitted to remain what it intrinsically is. Everything must be fixed up, must bear the traces of a preparation which brings it closer to the sphere of the well known, thus rendering it more easily comprehensible. At the same time, this process of preparation indicates to the listener that the music is made for him, yet without idealizing him. And finally, arrangement stamps the music with the official seal of approval, which in turn testifies to the absence of all artistic ambitions to achieve distance from reality, to the readiness of the music to swim with the stream; this is music which does not fancy itself any better than it is.

**SOURCE:** Theodor W. Adorno. "Perennial Fashion – Jazz." *Prisms*. Boston: mit press. 1981. Pp. 129-131;

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who was Theodor Adorno and what kind of philosophy of music did he support? What is the role of social structure, economic power and conflicts between the ego and society in the jazz monopoly?
2. What are the connections between socio-economic conditions and the development of jazz music?
3. Can you identify the interdisciplinary character of Adorno's research on music? How is Theodor Adorno's social theorist approach different from the existentialists?



**JAZZ CONCERT**

5. How would you interpret the author's point on jazz music: "The aim of jazz is the mechanical reproduction of a regressive moment, a castration symbolism: give up your masculinity, let yourself be castrated." Do you agree with this explanation of jazz music?
6. What are the arguments for the critiques of popular culture and the culture industry by Theodor Adorno?
7. How do you interpret the role and image of the artist in jazz as a mass art industry according to Adorno's statement that, "although the artist is partially tolerated, partially integrated into the sphere of consumption as an 'entertainer', a functionary – like the better-paid waiter subject to the demands of 'service' – the stereotype of the artist remains the introvert, the egocentric idiot, frequently the homosexual"?
8. What is the effect of jazz as a form of mass art industry on the education of children?
9. What is the destiny of serious music in the future? How will the popular culture industry change the behavior of youths? How does the authority of parents and teachers suffer from music?
10. Do you agree with the conclusion of author that "art is deprived of its aesthetic dimension, and emerges as part of the very adjustment which it in principle contradicts"?
11. How can we base our arguments for and against Adorno's on the role of the popular culture industry, jazz, and their negative influence as a instrument of mass industry on the new generation?
12. According to Adorno's theory, would you identify the elements of jazz music as a menace?

#### **COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the differences between Skvorecky's view of the domination of politics on music and Adorno's view of the domination of the economy and cultural industry on music?
2. What do you think about the story from the novel of Aytmatov? Raimaly-aga suffered from the domination of tradition on musical performance. Can music function without any kind of domination?
3. How do you understand the film 'The Rock Stars and the Mullahs' after reading these texts? Is art really a menace? Can music be free, without being an instrument of any social, religious, or political system?

## INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION EXCHANGE: BANNED MUSIC

What is IFEX and what is the character of banned music in the world? You can find information on this organization from the internet: “International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) is a network of non-governmental organizations that monitors media freedom violations around the world; IFEX distributes accurate, independent bulletins whenever a journalist, writer or human rights activist is attacked or threatened for doing their work. The information is supported by 64 non-governmental organizations around the world. IFEX’s website contains the largest online archive of information on press freedom violations dating back to 1995”. [see: <http://www.freemuse.org/sw9443.asp>]

Reading this text, let us discuss the issues of banned music in different countries: Russia, UK, USA, Argentina, Germany, and Muslim countries. What are the reasons and what are the preconditions for music to be banned?

“Banning music is a common form of political censorship, reports “Index On Censorship” in a special issue entitled “Smashed Hits: The Book of Banned Music”, which comes with a compact disc of banned music. Musicians have been banned, arrested and even murdered for writing and singing political songs. But “Index” notes that market forces also come into play, forcing musicians to follow “cultural and political norms.”

In the overview, Julian Petley says that in this century music suffered the most in the Soviet Union from 1932 to 1953 and in Germany under the **Third Reich**. Under Stalin, classical music and composers in the Soviet Union bore the brunt of the attack, which banned modern or “formal” music. The campaign against “formalism” was carried out in all the arts under Stalin. Likewise, says Petley, “in the Third Reich, the enemy was again modernism, now coupled with ‘musical Bolshevism’ and Jewish influences, both real and imagined.” In 1930, the “ordinance against negro culture” was also passed in the German state of Thuringia in an attempt to ban jazz.

In the United States under the anti-communist campaign of senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s, actor and musician Paul Robeson was censored more than any other US musician, reports “Index”. During the same era, some US songs were banned in the United Kingdom over fears that rock and roll would inspire teenagers to rebel, as they had in the US. In the UK more recently, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has refused to play music containing references to drugs or sexually **explicit** content, guidelines which also continue to prevent records from being sold in certain stores. Political content relating to the conflict in Ireland, the Falklands war, or the Gulf War have also been banned on the BBC.

Petley relates the story of Chilean folksinger Victor Jara, who was among those in South America who sang popular music with political meaning (known as “Nuevo canción”) that first emerged in Argentina in 1962. Jara’s music “played a key role in the campaign that led to the election of the popular unity government of Salvador Al-



**Third Reich -**  
the German state from 1933 to 1945 under Adolf Hitler

**explicit -**  
fully and clearly expressed;  
leaving nothing implied

lende.” After Allende was overthrown, the dictatorship of Augusta Pinochet banned “nueva canción” as “subversive” and made it an offence to mention the name of Jara, who was subsequently murdered by the regime.

In Muslim countries such as the Sudan, Afghanistan and Algeria, Petley says music which does not suit fundamentalists is banned. In Algeria, writes Judith Vidal-Hall in a separate article, popular Berber singer Jounès Matoub, who came from Kabylia, was murdered in June 1998 in a deliberate assassination outside of Algiers. Vidal-Hall writes, “Matoub had been one of the great voices of the Kabylie, radical, outspoken and often controversial. His last song – and one that many thought had led directly to his death – was a double challenge to the regime. Not only did it denounce the government’s alliance with the Islamists, it openly mocked one of its sacred cows by setting the inflammatory words to the tune of Algeria’s national anthem.” The murder led to huge rallies in the streets and “outpourings of grief, anger and frustration” on radio phone-in programmes. In the 1980s, anti-government protesters had sung Matoub’s songs as a rallying cry, naturally making him unpopular with Algeria’s rulers. In addition, says Vidal-Hall, “Singers had been particular targets of the fanatical and puritanical Islamic extremists for whom music, song and dance were among the prime evils.”

**SOURCE:** International Freedom of Expression Exchange: banned music IFEX vol. 7, no. 46 01 December 1998 [[www.ifex.org/en](http://www.ifex.org/en)]

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. How many forms of political censorship do you know? If the banning of music is a common form of political censorship, what in particular in music is dangerous?
2. Based on information from the text and your own personal knowledge: What was the nature of banned music in the Soviet Union during Stalin, in Germany’s Third Reich, and the USA under the anti-communist campaign of senator Joseph McCarthy?
3. What were the reasons to ban jazz music in Germany and ‘rock and roll’ in the USA? What makes music dangerous for politics? Is music naturally subversive or does it depend the nature of politics to control dissent?
4. Why did music become subversive for fundamentalists beginning last century, but not before, in the history and tradition of Muslims?

#### **COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

1. How many parallels and similarities do you see in the texts of Josef Scvorecky, Chingiz Aytmatov, and Theodor Adorno? What makes each of these texts different from the others?
2. What are the different attitudes to banned music by political and religious movements?
3. Can music peacefully survive alongside religions and religious leadership? Can you cite any examples of this symbiosis?



## ROBIN DENSELOW (THE GUARDIAN): 'I WAS SPAT AT AND CALLED A TRAITOR'

Robin Denselow is a famous journalist and writer from the UK, who from time to time has described the life of musicians and singers and the connections between music and censorship. "Robin Denselow is a graduate in English from New College, Oxford and joined the BBC as a producer and reporter on the African service...since 1992, he has reported for Newsnight on major stories from all around the world, from Somalia, South Africa and Rwanda to India, Indonesia and Kosovo. Recently he has been to Congo and Pakistan and did a 3 month stint in Iraq. He has also covered domestic issues such as the Lawrence inquiry. He writes on popular and world music for the Guardian and is the author of a history of political pop. [see more from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/programmes/newsnight/3094345.stm>]



In this text the author speaks about one of the prominent musicians and singers from Algeria, Khaled – Alidu Hajji Brahim who was born on February 29, 1960. "The leading musician and developer of the musical form rai; Khaled started early with music, and learned to play guitar, bass, accordion, and the harmonica as a child; his music was put under the censorship of the government of Algeria until 1983 and in 1990 he managed to move to France, from where he was able to launch his international career. His music continued to develop, adding new elements like jazz and hip hop [from: <http://i-cias.com/cgi-bin/eo-direct.pl?khaled.htm>]

Reading the text we should think about and discuss the nature of blended dance music in human life. Why do people use different types of music for dancing, but sometimes parts of society have concerns about this blending culture? Is music from other countries a menace for local culture, or can it be an additional source in the development of national music?

*Khaled's mix of African dance music and western pop made him a star – and won him enemies back home in Algeria. He talks to Robin Denselow.*

"In his black jeans and striped shirt, Khaled resembles the stocky boss of some Algerian trucking company. You'd never guess that he is "the king of rai", and one of the greatest celebrities of the Arab world. Khaled is the man who brought north-African music to a new audience in Europe, shaking up the pop scene in France and becoming as influential as Bob Marley in the process. No wonder he says: "I think that God loves me a lot."

Khaled's global breakthrough came in 1992 when his song "Didi" sold more than 1 million copies across Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Produced by Don Was (of Was Not Was and Rolling Stones fame), it was a rousing **blend** of western R&B and rai – Algerian dance music. "Rai is like the **blues**," says Khaled, "that was sung by the slaves. But in Algeria it was sung by the shepherds in the days when we were colonized by the French. It used to be hidden and forbidden. And, like the blues, it sticks to anything – jazz, rock, **reggae** or flamenco."

Khaled's stirring, sensual vocals on "Didi" proved that a song in Arabic could be a French bestseller. He followed it up with the French-language pop ballad "Aïcha", another massive hit. Since then his albums have mixed rai with anything

**blues** -  
a type of popular music that has a strong beat

**blend** -  
to combine or mix so that the constituent parts are indistinguishable from one another

**reggae** -  
popular music of Jamaican origin having elements of calypso and rhythm and blues

from hip-hop to funk and reggae, although his new album – again produced by Was – sees Khaled going back to his roots, with a fresh, more acoustic set influenced by his early days in Algeria. It includes an Egyptian string section and two of his childhood heroes, the pianist Maurice el Medioni and guitarist and singer Blaoui Houari, who “hadn’t met up for 40 years until I got them together”, says Khaled. “This is the first time I’ve really got into an album,” he says. “I’ve been to every minute of every session and I’ve played on it more than before. I play percussion, mandolin and accordion. That was always my lucky instrument – I grew up with the accordion back in Oran.”



**KHALED**

Oran is the Algerian sea-port, close to the Moroccan frontier, where Khaled Hadj Brahim was born in 1960. The son of “a flic – a policeman”, he started singing and playing at weddings while still a schoolboy, with his band Cinq Etoiles. “We were five stars – like the Jackson Five – and we were influenced by Moroccan styles. I’d start off on banjo playing rock or whatever was popular at the time, and then switch to accordion and play rai.” Rai means “opinion” and Cheb (or young) Khaled, as he was first known, was opinionated from the start. He recorded his first cassette at 14, without even telling his father. It was a song about disliking school – “though what I actually said was that I got tired walking down the road to school. You had to play with words like that.” The song was a hit. “When my father found out he said: ‘where’s the money?’ He’d sold the family jewelry to bring up his children, but when we went to the music shop that made the cassettes we were told: ‘there’s no payment for a first record.’”

Khaled sang about sex and alcohol and the authorities loathed him. “It was like rock’n’roll in America – my songs weren’t allowed on TV. But one day they showed a James Brown concert on TV and everyone started singing “Sex Machine”, without knowing what it meant, and journalists started a campaign to let my songs be played. The station had a room full of letters but they never played my songs until 1985, when I organized a rai festival in Oran.” He attracted more notoriety when he moved to the capital, Algiers: “When I sang “Chebba” back in Oran it meant ‘girl’, and in the city it meant ‘marijuana’. I was surprised when people told me how brave I was.”

With his rasping, soulful vocals and bold lyrics, Khaled soon established a reputation across the Algerian **Diaspora**. He wanted to visit France, “but the government were frightened I’d talk about power and politics – though that’s not my subject matter – and I needed a military pass, showing I’d done my national service, if I wanted to leave”. For a while he was able to come and go as he pleased, “thanks to some colonels and big shots who liked my music”, but then he was warned he’d be stopped at the airport. Accompanied by a French diplomat “who had done favors for some of the people there”, he did manage to get out, but now decided it was impossible to go home without being called up. “There were lots of liars and back-stabbers in Algeria,” he says. “I couldn’t trust them.”

His aim in France was to “work in the French clubs and be famous back home – nothing more than that. And I wanted a car – I recorded one cassette in return for a car.” But in France he became a major star – after a difficult start. One project in particular ended in chaos. Khaled was approached by “a big shot back in the Algerian army”, who had the idea of “making a record to promote Algeria, using the best voice in Algeria”. The result was the much-praised 1989 album Kutche. Unfortunately, the funding for the album “came from Kuwait – but the Kuwaitis didn’t like it”. On top of that, Khaled’s passport disappeared, so there could be no promotion. “I think it

**diaspora -**

a dispersion of a people from their original homeland

was stolen by a rival producer in Marseilles who wanted to stop the project,” says Khaled. “Everyone says it’s my best album, but I never got paid for it.”

After that, Khaled signed with the French Barclay label that teamed him with producers Michael Brook and Don Was for the 1992 album *Khaled*, which included the hit “Didi”. Now a celebrity, he wanted to return to Algeria once again, but found that the country had been transformed in his absence. Fundamentalist rebels of the Islamic Salvation Front had declared war on the government after the cancellation of the 1992 elections, which it seemed they would win. A singer like Khaled was no longer safe. Even so, he did go back. “I remember I was dressed in black, in the uniform of the US Raiders football team that I got working with Don Was. I was spat at, threatened, and accused of being French and a traitor.”

Khaled was unable to return to Algeria for eight years, as Islamic militants targeted those musicians who had remained. In 1994 the singer Cheb Hasni was shot and killed, as was record producer Rashid Ahmed the following year. “Oran was always such a safe, neutral town that it was called ‘the Geneva of Algeria,’” says Khaled. “But I had many letters telling me to stay where I was for my own good.” He continued his international career in France, finally visiting Oran again four years ago, when crowds lined the streets to welcome him back.

Khaled’s experiences in exile have resulted in some hard-line political views. He argues, predictably enough, that “rai achieves only positive things, putting people together – unlike Bush and Sharon, who pull people apart”. But he also argues about the dangers of introducing democracy to those who aren’t used to it and “can’t change overnight”. Of Iraq, he says: “I’m not promoting Saddam Hussein, but it’s only someone like Saddam who can sort it out.” He yells with excitement as he warms to his theme.

Once notorious for his drinking bouts and unreliability, especially when it came to interviews, Khaled seems a man transformed. He asks for orange juice and coffee and talks non-stop for two hours – for so long, in fact, that he is late for his concert. Khaled is the kind of performer who inspires screams worthy of Beatlemania, even from audiences at London’s Royal Festival Hall. At an outdoor show at Venice casino after our interview finishes, he tries out the new songs and gives the old-style songs a slick, contemporary finish. He doesn’t play accordion, but his singing is as sensual as ever. He finishes, of course, with the hits, “Aicha” and “Didi”. Watching him, it’s clear: the king of rai still has no competition.

**SOURCE:** The Guardian, ‘I was spat at and called a traitor’. Khaled’s mix of African dance music and western pop made him a star – and won him enemies back home in Algeria. He talks to Robin Denselow, Wednesday August 25, 2004, Khaled’s photos are available on: <http://i-cias.com/cgi-bin/eo-direct.pl?khaled.htm>

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Can you identify the main idea of this text? Why was the Algerian dance music 'rai' hidden during the colonization period?
2. What role did Khaled's family play in his becoming a musical star? What were the themes of Khaled's music? Why did Khaled sing "about sex and alcohol and the authorities loathed him", but not about school, the environment or something else? Was it the impact of outsiders or an individual decision?
3. Why did Khaled and other North African musician's enjoy blending music? Is blending music a natural process of composing music or is it necessary only for the inspiration? What is the role of various musical instruments in creating new music?
4. What effect did of the transformation of Algerian society into fundamentalism have on musical life?
5. Can a great musician be a traitor? Is singing songs in a different style solid evidence of being a traitor?
6. How does political phraseology create images that can have an impact on people and change their destiny?
7. What are the differences between political and cultural idols and cult figures? Why, instead of being a target of Islamic militants, was Khaled greeted by crowds that lined the streets to welcome him back.
8. Is the role of music to bring people together? What do you think is the function of politics? Do you agree with Khalid's opinion about democracy?
9. Please compare this text with previous texts concerning the role of music in society and personal life.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS (CHAPTER THREE):

1. What are the similarities and differences between the texts presented in Chapter Three on music as a menace?
2. What are the differences between the political approaches to music in the texts (Josef Skvorecky, Banned Music, Robin Denselow) and the philosophical analysis (Theodor Adorno)?
3. What are the connections between the theories of music presented by Lev Vygotsky and Theodor Adorno? Find the similarities and differences between the two concepts of music and the role of musicians in society.
4. Can music be separated from the life of the musician?
5. Think about one text regarding music from this chapter in a deeper manner. Write a short essay inspired by reading one of them. For example were you inspired by Adorno or story on Raymali-aga?

119

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## CHAPTER FOUR: MUSIC, DANCE AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

121

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter will address the issue of music and dance as phenomena or ways of expressing the human condition. Do these two phenomena exist separately from our day-to-day life, visible only during special cultural events, or are they essential aspects of ordinary social and individual lives? The conditions of the lives of human beings and many other questions will be discussed in this chapter, which contains rich materials from the diverse world we inhabit. A film on music and dance, and texts, including life stories and theoretical materials on music and dance throughout Central Asia, will be the focus of our attention in this chapter. The chapter starts with a case study from the text of famous thinker Inayat Khan, according to whom music is not something which belongs only to forms of amusement, but is a harmony present everywhere in the world and in the human soul. Inayat Khan adds that music is higher than all other phenomena, even above religion, because it connects people to their origins. The unique traditions of arts show the diversity of music and dance forms in expressing the complexities of the human condition: birth, death, happiness, and sorrow. This topic will be continued by the film, 'Mystic Iran,' describing different (male and female) forms of the Sufi expression of mysticism, 'zikr,' in the mountainous Kurdish parts of modern Iran. We will compare different forms of dance and identify the similarities and differences of approach to the human condition: aesthetic, secular, spiritual, and mystical.

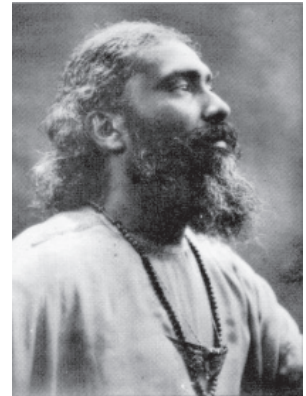
The discussion on music and dance as a form of expression of the human condition is continued on the connections between dance and religious mystical practice, socio-political and cultural theories, and how society and culture create the possibilities and limitations for dance. Also explored are the ways in which the body has been conceptualized in social and cultural theories. This chapter contains Virginia Danielson's sociological media research on the role of female singers in Cairo in the 1920s who were challenging the conventional belief that female singers working in Cairo entertainment between 1850 and 1930 were foreign or non-Muslim. This article includes issues of gender, class/strata, marriages, women's careers and finances, their competition with men, their battles for equality, as well as their attempts at attain respect in the public eye. The last three texts are on popular music: one on Elvis Presley, who helped to transform rock 'n' roll as a minor musical novelty into an international phenomenon; the second on Ahmad Zahir, an Afghan pop legend who died 1979 nicknamed the Afghan Elvis; and the chapter ends with a discussion on the role of music in the lives of the people, human beings in general and in particular, the younger generation.

The discussion in this chapter will also raise many questions (including your own personal questions). An obvious question should be, do music and dance have national, racial, gender or other limitations or do they represent human aspirations and humanity at large?



## HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN: MUSIC

In this section we'll talk about the spirit of music comparing it with various human phenomenon. Philosophy and religion are two of them and they play a significant part in the everyday and spiritual lives of people, and spiritual life can not exist without ideas and faith. Many traditions and customs are accompanied by religious rituals: funerals, weddings, child births, etc. Religious rituals have great power, in many respects due to their sincerity that is achieved through the melodiousness and sonority of prayers. That's why, if you've noticed, in some religions prayers have a musical format or are accompanied with music. Hazrat Inayat Khan was a thinker and Sufi teacher from India who started "The Sufi Order in the West" in the early part of the 20th century. "Though his family background was Muslim, he was also steeped in the Sufi notion that all religions have their value and place in human evolution. Inayat was born into a family of musicians in 1882. His grandfather was a well-known musician respected as a composer, performer, and developer of a musical notation which combined a group of diverse musical languages into one simplified integrated notation. Later, in September of 1910, Inayat sailed for America. Inayat began to travel and lecture first in the United States and later in Europe.



Inayat had been a tireless teacher, writer, and lecturer, traveling and lecturing almost continuously for seventeen years. He had established his school in France and had a dedicated group of disciples. But, his difficult schedule had weakened him over the years. He left for India to see his homeland for the first time in seventeen years. He hoped to rest and meditate but was asked to lecture and graciously consented as was common. He died in New Delhi in 1927 of influenza. Inayat's son Vilayat Khan, who died in 2004, continued to spread the message of Sufism in the west. [from: <http://www.om-guru.com/html/saints/khan.html>]

Here, we'd like to focus our attention on a work of Inayat Khan, who considers the role of music in the religious process, in human life, and in the world. In Sufism, the mystic school of Islam, music is one of the main methods of uplifting the religious state. While reading, pay attention to the following issues: How does music influence the religious state? Why do religions use music? What is "spiritual music"? What professional composers do you know of who use it in their works?

### HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN. MUSIC. CHAPTER I

Music, the word we use in our everyday language, is nothing less than the picture of our Beloved. It is because music is the picture of our Beloved that we love music. But the question is what is our Beloved and where is our Beloved? Our Beloved is that which is our source and our goal; and what we see of our Beloved before our physical eyes is the beauty which is before us; and that part of our Beloved not manifest to our eyes is that inner form of beauty of which our Beloved speaks to us. If only we would listen to the voice of all the beauty that attracts us in any form, we would find that in every aspect it tells us that behind all manifestation is the perfect Spirit, the spirit of wisdom.

What do we see as the principal expression of life in the beauty visible before us? It is movement. In line, in color; in the changes of the seasons, in the rising and falling of the

waves, in the wind, in the storm, in all the beauty of nature there is constant movement. It is movement which has caused day and night, and the changing of the seasons; and this movement has given us the comprehension of what we call time. Otherwise there would be no time, for actually there is only eternity; and this teaches us that all we love and admire, observe and comprehend, is the life hidden behind it and this life is our being.

It is owing to our limitation that we cannot see the whole being of God; but all that we love in colour, line, form or personality belongs to the real beauty, the Beloved of all. And when we trace what attracts us in this beauty which we see in all forms, we shall find that it is the movement of beauty; in other words the music. All forms of nature, for instance the flowers, are perfectly formed and colored; the planets and stars, the earth, all give the idea of harmony, of music. The whole of nature is breathing; not only the living creatures but all of nature; and it is only our tendency to compare that which seems living with what to us is not so living which makes us forget that all things and beings are living one perfect life. And the sign of life given by this living beauty is music.

What makes the soul of the poet dance? Music. What makes the painter paint beautiful pictures, the musician sing beautiful songs? It is the inspiration that beauty gives. Therefore the Sufi has called this beauty Saqi, the divine Giver who gives the wine of life to all. What is the wine of the Sufi? Beauty in form, in line, in color, in imagination, in sentiment, in manner; in all this he sees the one beauty. All these different forms are part of the spirit of beauty which is the life behind them, a continual blessing.

As to what we call music in everyday language, to me architecture is music, gardening is music, farming is music, painting is music, poetry is music. In all the occupations of life where beauty has been the inspiration, where the divine wine has been poured out, there is music. But among all the different arts, the art of music has been specially considered divine, because it is the exact miniature of the law working through the whole universe. For instance, if we study ourselves we shall find that the beats of the pulse and the heart, the inhaling and exhaling of the breath are all the work of rhythm. Life depends upon the rhythmic working of the whole mechanism of the body. Breath manifests as voice, as word, as sound; and the sound is continually audible, the sound without and the sound within ourselves. That is music; it shows that there is music both outside and within ourselves.

Music inspires not only the soul of the great musician, but every infant which, the instant it comes into the world, begins to move its little arms and legs with the rhythm of music. Therefore it is no **exaggeration** to say that music is the language of beauty; of The One every living soul has loved. And when one realizes this and recognizes the perfection of all beauty as God, our Beloved, one understands why the music we experience in art and in the whole universe should be called the Divine Art.

Many in the world take music as a source of amusement, a pastime, and to many music is an art and a musician an entertainer. Yet no one has lived in this world and has thought and felt, who has not considered music as the most sacred of all arts, for the fact is that what the art of painting cannot clearly suggest, poetry explains in words; but that which even a poet finds difficult to express in poetry is expressed in music. By this I do not only say that music is superior to art and poetry, but in point of fact music excels religion; for music raises the soul of man even higher than the so-called external forms of religion.

By this it must not be understood that music can take the place of religion; for every soul is not necessarily tuned to that pitch where it can really benefit by music, nor is every music necessarily so high that it will exalt a person who hears it more than religion

**exaggerate -**  
to make something seem  
larger than it actually is

will do. However, for those who follow the path of the inner cult, music is essential for their spiritual development. The reason is that the soul who is seeking for that is in search of the formless God. Art no doubt is most elevating, but at the same time it contains form; poetry has words, names suggestive of form; it is only music which has beauty, power, charm and at the same time can raise the soul beyond form.

That is why in ancient times the greatest of the prophets were great musicians. For instance, among the Hindu prophets one finds Narada, the prophet who was a musician at the same time, and Shiva, a God-like prophet, who was the inventor of the sacred Vina. Krishna is always pictured with a flute.

There is also a well-known legend of the life of Moses, which says that Moses heard a divine command on Mount Sinai in the words: *Muse Ke, Moses hark*; and the revelation that thus came to him was of tone and rhythm, and he called it by the same name, *Musik*; and the words such as *Music* and *Musike* have come from that word. David's song and verse have been known for ages; his message was given in the form of music. Orpheus of the Greek legends, the knower of the mystery of tone and rhythm, had by this knowledge power over the hidden forces of nature. The Hindu goddess of beauty, of knowledge, whose name is *Sarasvati*, is always pictured with the Vina. And what does it suggest? It suggests that all harmony has its essence in music. And besides the natural charm music possesses, it has also a magic charm that can be experienced even now. It seems that the human race has lost a great deal of the ancient science of magic, but if there remains any magic it is music.

Music, besides power, is intoxication. When it intoxicates those who hear, how much more must it intoxicate those who play or sing themselves! And how much more must it intoxicate those who have touched the perfection of music and have meditated upon it for years and years! It gives them an even greater joy and exaltation than a king feels sitting on his throne.

According to the thinkers of the East there are five different intoxications: the intoxication of beauty, youth and strength; then the intoxication of wealth; the third is of power, command, and the power of ruling; and there is the fourth intoxication, which is the intoxication of learning, of knowledge. But all these four intoxications fade away just like stars before the sun in the presence of the intoxication of music. The reason is that it touches the deepest part of man's being. Music reaches farther than any other impression from the external world can reach. And the beauty of music is that it is both the source of creation and the means of absorbing it. In other words, by music the world was created, and by music it is withdrawn again into the source which has created it.

In this scientific and material world we see a similar example. Before a machine or mechanism will run, it must first make a noise. It first becomes audible and then shows its life. We can see this in a ship, in an airplane, in an automobile. This idea belongs to the mysticism of sound. Before an infant is capable of admiring a color or form, it enjoys sound. If there is any art that can most please the aged it is music. If there is any art that can charge youth with life and enthusiasm, emotion

and passion, it is music. If there is any art in which a person can fully express his feeling, his emotion, it is music. At the same time it is something that gives man that force and that power of activity which make the soldiers march with the beat of the drum and the sound of the trumpet. In the traditions of the past it was said that on the Last Day there will be the sound of trumpets before the end of the world comes. This shows that music is connected with the beginning of the creation, with its continuity, and with its end.

The mystics of all ages have loved music most. In almost all the circles of the inner cult, in whatever part of the world, music seems to be the center of the cult or the ceremony. And those who attain to that perfect peace which is called Nirvana, or in the language of the Hindus, Samadhi, do this more easily through music. Therefore Sufis, especially those of the Chishtiyya School of ancient times, have taken music as a source of their **meditation**; and by meditating thus they derive much more benefit from it than those who meditate without the help of music. The effect that they experience is the unfolding of the soul, the opening of the intuitive faculties; and their heart, so to speak, opens to all the beauty which is within and without, uplifting them, and at the same time bringing them that perfection for which every soul yearns.

**meditation -**

the practice of focusing the mind, often formalized into a specific routine

**SOURCE:** Hazrat Inayat Khan. Music, The Mystery of Sound. <http://sufimessage.com/music/index.html>

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the essence of the spirit of music according to Hazrat Inayat Khan, a modern Sufi thinker?
2. How can the interpretation of the spirit of music given by a mystic differ from its interpretation given by a scholar or scientist?
3. Is there something inherent in music that poses a threat to community or politics?
4. Why is music considered the best form of art for the comprehension of God? Why does Inayat Khan place music above art, poetry, and religion?
5. What forms of ‘intoxication’ exist in the East? Why is intoxication with music the highest form?
6. Why, according to Inayat Khan, does meditation with the help of music differ from meditation without music? Compared to other arts how does music better reflect human emotions?
7. In your opinion, are there links between prophecy and the creation of music? Do you agree with the statement: “It seems that the human race has lost a great deal of the ancient science of magic, but if there remains any magic it is music”?
8. Please comment on the statement by a mystic philosopher that “by music the world was created, and by music it is withdrawn again into the source which has created it.”
9. Do you, as a listener, agree with the author’s interpretation of the ‘mystery of sound’?
10. What is the role of music in human self-perception, perception of society, and perception of other people and nations?
11. Can the spirit of Sufi music be different in different parts of the world? Is music used as a religious component in Central Asia? What are the secular functions of music? Write a similar short story about music based on your own personal experiences?



## MYSTIC IRAN, THE UNSEEN WORLD

**A film by Aryana Farshad, an Aryana Farshad production. In association with: Cinema Development Center Distributor: Planet Pictures, Ltd.; DVD. Run time: 60 min.**

This film was created from original field materials, traditions of worship ceremonies which have survived throughout Iran's history and traditions. "The spectators will join filmmaker Aryana Farshod on a mesmerizing journey deep into the heart of her native Iran. From the women's chamber of the Great Mosque, to the temple-caves in the land of Zarathustra and to the sacred dance of the dervishes in Kurdistan, discover religious ceremonies and locations never seen before". We will compare two forms of Sufi dances (male and female) and identify similarities and differences in approach to the human condition: secular, spiritual, mystical, etc.. The events and episodes of the film show different forms of music describing different forms of the human condition that link to modern life in Central Asia.

- What are the reasons for the survival of these unique traditions in Iran (Zarathustrian and qadiri's Sufi zikr worship)?
- How can one explain the power of the internal life and individual belief?
- What are the connections between human nature and musical performance?



STILL FROM THE FILM "MYSTIC IRAN"



**A TA'ZIYEH SCENE OF QAJAR ERA**

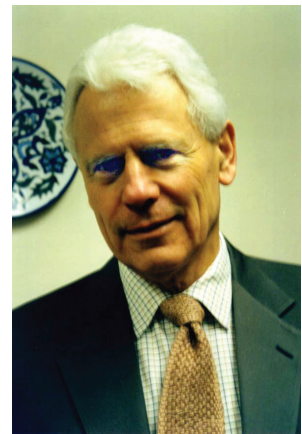
## TIME OUT OF MEMORY: TA'ZIYEH, THE TOTAL DRAMA

Peter Chelkowski is professor of Middle Eastern Studies at New York University. He has a wealth of experience and knowledge working and studying in Iran. He discusses the origins, spirit and the uniqueness of Iranian traditional theatre, *ta'ziyeh*, historically and in present day of Iran. For our current debate on the role of music and dance in human life it is important to ask: Why did the theatrical musical genre and tradition become so important to Muslims during one particular period of history as a way of expressing their spiritual needs? What are the reasons for the diversity of musical performance?

“The dramatic form known as the ‘passion play’ is often associated exclusively with western, and specifically, Christian theatrical tradition. One of the most highly developed and powerful examples of this genre is, in fact, the *ta'ziyeh* - the passion play of the Shiite Muslims performed in Iran - which recounts the tragedy of Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad. It is the only serious drama ever developed in the Islamic world, except for contemporary theater, which was introduced into Islamic countries along with other western influences in the mid-19th century. In an extraordinary development, this summer’s Lincoln Center festival 2002 will include a *ta'ziyeh*, performed in July by Iran’s foremost actors. The production will be staged for only the third time in the west, after receiving critical acclaim and playing to packed houses in Paris, France and Parma, Italy.

The tragedy reenacts the death of Hussein and his male children and companions in a **brutal** massacre on the plain of Karbala, (about 60 miles south of modern day Baghdad), in the year 680 AD. Hussein’s murder was the outcome of a protracted power struggle for control of the nascent Muslim community following the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Two factions arose with competing views on the leadership selection process for the head of the community, or caliph. The Sunnis believed that the caliph should be elected according to ancient Arabian tradition, while the Shiites advocated that the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad possessed a divine right to authority in both spiritual and temporal matters. Hussein became the head of the Shiites after religio-political opponents assassinated his father and elder brother. His refusal to swear **allegiance** to Yazid, the Sunni caliph in Damascus, made it necessary for Hussein to seek refuge in Mecca. Eventually, with his family and a group of supporters, he set out for Kufa, a city where he had numerous partisans.

On the journey to Kufa, Hussein and his party were ambushed by Yazid’s troops and forced to swear an **oath** of allegiance to the Sunni leader as the price of their freedom. Tradition has it that this took place on the first day of the month of Muharram. For ten days, Hussein’s company was cut off from water in the scorching desert of Karbala. Despite the knowledge that his supporters in Kufa had abandoned him after being terrorized by Yazid’s army, Hussein refused to take the oath. On the tenth day, after an



**brutal** -  
extremely ruthless or cruel

**allegiance** -  
loyalty or the obligation of  
loyalty

**oath** -  
formal declaration or promise  
to fulfill a pledge

intense battle, all the male members but one of Hussein's party were savagely killed. Their heads were cut off and taken as trophies to Yazid in Damascus, while the female members of the party were taken hostage. The battle at Karbala and its aftermath precipitated the definitive **schism** of the Sunni and Shiite Islamic branches.

The slaughter at Karbala came to be considered by the Shiites as the ultimate example of sacrifice, the pinnacle of human suffering. The month of **Muharram** became the month of mourning, when Shiites all over the world commemorate Hussein's sacrifice in stationary and ambulatory rituals of unequalled intensity. It was from these ritual observances that ta'ziyeh, which literally means to mourn or to console, arose as a dramatic form. Once Shiite Islam was officially recognized as Iran's state religion in the sixteenth century, royal patronage ensured that the Muharram festival observances would assume a central position in the cultural and religious identity of the country, and the festival became a unifying force for the nation. When the stationary and ambulatory aspects of the ritual merged in the mid-18th century, ta'ziyeh was born as a distinct type of music drama.

Like western passion plays, ta'ziyeh dramas were originally performed outdoors at crossroads and other public places where large audiences could gather. Performances later took place in the courtyards of inns and private homes, but eventually unique structures called takiyeh or husseinyeh were constructed by individual towns for the staging of the plays. Community cooperation was encouraged in the building and decoration of the takiyeh whether the funds for the enterprise were provided by a wealthy, public-minded **benefactor** or by contributions from the citizens of a particular district. The takiyeh varied in seating capacity from intimate structures able to accommodate a few dozen people to large buildings capable of holding 1000 spectators or more. Often the takiyeh were temporary, erected especially for the observance of the Muharram festival. During the festival period, the takiyeh were **lavishly** decorated with the prized personal possessions of the local community. Refreshments were prepared by women and served to the spectators by the children of well-to-do families. Takiyeh dawlat, the royal theater in Tehran, was the most famous of all the ta'ziyeh performance spaces. Built in the 1870s by Nasir al-din Shah, the royal theater's sumptuous magnificence surpassed that of Europe's greatest opera houses in the opinion of many western visitors.

In contrast to the richness of the theater decoration, ta'ziyeh stage décor and props are quite **stark**. All takiyeh, regardless of their size, are constructed as theaters-in-the-round to intensify the dynamic between actors and audience: the spectators are literally surrounded by the action and often become physical participants in the play, (in unwallled takiyeh, it is not unusual for combat scenes to occur behind the audience).

The main drama occurs on a raised, curtainless platform in the center of a building or courtyard. Subplots and battles take place in a sand-covered, circular band of space around the stage. Actors frequently jump off the stage into this space to mark the passage of time or a journey, and scene changes are indicated when a performer circles the platform. If there are auxiliary stages that extend into the audience, they serve as settings for scenes of special significance. Corridors running from the stage through the seating area serve as passageways for troops, messengers, and animals. The starkness of the stage represents the barrenness of the desert plain at **Karbala**. **Props** are few and largely symbolic: the Euphrates River is denoted by a basin of water; a tree branch indicates a grove of palms. More utilitarian props such as chairs or bedding and cooking **utensils** are carried onstage by the actors or even by members of the audience.

**schism -**

disunion; discord

**slaughter -**

killing of a large number of people

**muharram -**

the first month of the Islamic calendar

**unequaled -**

not matched or paralleled by others of its kind

**benefactor -**

one that gives aid, especially financial

**lavishly -**

characterized by or produced with extravagance and profusion

**stark -**

bare

**Karbala -**

a city of central Iraq south-southwest of Baghdad. It is a pilgrimage site for Shiite Muslims

**prop -**

a movable object used on the set of a film or play

**utensils -**

tool used domestically, especially in kitchen

Costumes are also meant to be representational. Although fabulously elegant stage attire was common at the royal ta'ziyeh theater during the reign of Nasir al-din Shah, there was no attempt to make the actors' garments historically accurate. The main goal of costume design was to help the spectators identify a character and his nature by his clothing. This practice has continued over time with certain characters adopting the prevailing fashions of the day for their particular roles. Thus, an actor in Nasir al-din Shah's era playing a western ambassador wore a **frock** coat – the standard diplomatic outfit of the 19th century; since World War II, the same ambassador may be depicted wearing a British military uniform. Performers in women's parts wear baggy black garments which cover them from head to toe. Since female roles are played by men, the voluminous robes and veils also provide concealment. Additional clues to a character's identity can be discerned through various accessories: sometimes a learned man wears reading glasses, while a villain appears in sunglasses, (reflecting perhaps the worldwide influence of American gangster films). Color symbolism further helps the audience to recognize different dramatic personalities and situations. When a white cloth is put on a protagonist's shoulders or he dons a white shirt, it is understood that the white symbolizes a shroud and he will soon sacrifice his life and be killed.

An even more obvious indication of a character's disposition is found in the way that he delivers his dialogue. In the ta'ziyeh, **protagonists** sing their parts and **antagonists** recite theirs. Dressed in red to symbolize blood and oppression, the villains often purposely overact by shrieking their lines in harsh unpleasant voices. By contrast, the heroes sing their parts in the classical Persian modes and clothe themselves in the green color of the garden paradise. Traditionally, actors were chosen for their physical attributes. Protagonists playing Hussein for example, were expected to be tall with broad shoulders and fine beards. This could and did cause casting problems, however, since a fine singing voice was necessary to complement the pleasing physique of a hero. Young boys with good vocal skills who began by playing girl's roles in the ta'ziyeh, often assumed the parts of young men after their voices changed. If a young actor did not attain the stature deemed compatible with a heroic part or if his voice retained a feminine quality, he would continue to play female characters.

Singers are accompanied by a variety of drums, trumpets, flutes, and **cymbals**. An orchestra can be quite substantial or consist of just a few musicians depending on the financial resources or theatrical experience of the troupe. Drum music announces that the drama is about to begin. It may be repeated several times, particularly if the audience needs more time to assemble. Once the spectators have gathered, a fanfare is played while the actors file into the performance area in procession. This is followed by a short overture which sets the mood for the play about to be performed. The drama opens with the pish-khani, or prologue, which presents a summary of the plot sung by the chorus. During the pish-khani, everybody sings, including the antagonists. Usually the chorus gathers in the main performance space, but it occasionally divides into two groups on either side of

**frock -**

a long loose outer garment, as that worn by artists and craftspeople

**protagonist -**

the main character in a drama or other literary work

**antagonist -**

The principal character in opposition to the protagonist or hero of a narrative or drama

**shriek -**

to cry out sharply in a high voice

**cymbals -**

a percussion instrument consisting of a concave brass plate that makes a loud clashing tone when hit with a drumstick or when used in pairs



this area and sings alternate lines in antiphony (“call and response”). Throughout the play, programmatic instrumental music alternates with singing. These musical intervals set a mood or advance the action by indicating the passage of time. They also serve to cue a singer by establishing the particular *dastgah*, or mode, in which he is about to perform. He will then sing the scene a capella.

According to many scholars of music, it is thanks to the *ta'ziyeh* that much of the classical Persian repertoire has survived. But just as western influences are evident in *ta'ziyeh* costumes, they are also prominent in the musical elements of the drama. During the zenith of the *ta'ziyeh* in the latter part of the 19th century, the first polytechnic college, *Darul-Funun*, was founded in Iran and staffed by foreign instructors. The curriculum consisted largely of military subjects, including band music. Eventually, quite a number of these marches found their way into the repertoire of the *takiyeh* theaters.

It is the responsibility of the *ta'ziyeh* director to supervise the music and assemble an orchestra. In addition, he acts as the producer, stage manager, prompter, P.R. man, and financial director. He is truly a “renaissance man” of the theater, supervising not only the drama itself, but also making the necessary arrangements with the local authorities and accounting for the financial returns. Always onstage during a performance, the director makes sure that the production runs smoothly and oversees the interaction of actors, musicians, and audience. His ubiquitous presence is not distracting to the spectators as he is seen as an integral part of the *ta'ziyeh* drama. In his role as prompter, he cues actors and helps children and inexperienced players with their lines. In the past, actors used to read their lines from crib sheets held in their palms, indicating that they were merely role-carriers with no personal connections to the characters they portrayed. Today most performers learn their roles by heart (if they don't, they refrain from conspicuously referring to their notes). While traditionally, the director was responsible for eliciting strong emotions of grief and sadness from the audience by the manner in which the production was staged, it is today more incumbent on the actors to provide a cathartic experience for the spectators. Influenced heavily by the realistic acting of modern film and television, *ta'ziyeh* actors no longer distance themselves from the characters that they are playing, but throw themselves wholeheartedly into their roles. Often the performers identify so strongly with their parts that they are swept away by their situations. In turn, the audience is caught up in an atmosphere of potent and sincere emotions.

The plays devoted to the tragedy at Karbala and its surrounding events form the core of the *ta'ziyeh* repertoire. Although the massacre of Hussein and his followers historically took place in one day on the tenth of Muharram, the battle is divided into many different episodes performed on separate days. The only fixed day and play in the Muharram repertoire is the martyrdom of Hussein on the tenth, or *Ashura*; others can be performed in varying sequence. Usually, the cycle begins on the first day of Muharram with a play commemorating the death of Hussein's emissary to Kufa, Muslim B. Akil. This is followed by a daily progression of plays, each devoted to the martyrdom of various members of Hussein's family or his companions. In these dramas, a hero takes on the entire enemy force unassisted while the remaining protagonists gather on the central stage to reflect on their fate and deliver comments of philosophical and religious nature. Each play contributes to the gradually increasing emotional build-up anticipating the supreme sacrifice of Hussein, the “prince of martyrs.” Hussein's death does not always conclude the essential *ta'ziyeh* repertoire. Performances may continue after *Ashura* to depict the sorrowful destiny of the female members of Hussein's family who were taken as captives to Damascus.



New plays that depicted the sacrifices of Shiite martyrs before and after **Karbala** were added to the *ta'ziyeh* fold over time. Based on the Koran, hadith, legends, and current events, these productions provided an excuse to extend *ta'ziyeh* dramas throughout the year. Even these non-Muharram plays, however, retain a connection to the tragedy at Karbala through a dramatic device known as *guriz*, or digression. Within a particular play, the *guriz* may be a direct verbal reference to Hussein's martyrdom or a brief scene depicting an aspect of his tragedy, or both. Through the *guriz*, all *ta'ziyeh* drama expands beyond spatial and time constraints to merge the past and present into one unifying moment of intensity which allows the spectators to be simultaneously in the performance space and at Karbala.

The number of *ta'ziyeh* works is vast with new productions and local variations of established dramas constantly being added to the canon. The Cerulli collection at the Vatican library contains over 1055 *ta'ziyeh* manuscripts. It is important to note that *ta'ziyeh* scripts are rarely intended for reading, but solely for performing. Each part is written out on loose narrow sheets of paper which the actor can hold in the palm of his hand. The theatrical context of the script, in **conjunction** with setting, costumes, action, and musical and verbal elements, provides a standard for judging its value.

There is an amateur Muharram *ta'ziyeh* tradition which exists alongside that of the professional *ta'ziyeh* dramatic companies. Typically, a production of this kind is organized by a former professional *ta'ziyeh* actor who brings together the residents of a district to perform for purely religious reasons. The dramatization of the death of Hussein gives the participants an opportunity to exhibit their own sorrows and desires as an expression of their faith within an archetypal setting. Professional *ta'ziyeh* productions today are usually commercial enterprises – fundamental social and political changes in Iran during the 20th century abolished the practice of artistic patronage on the individual and communal level that had flourished in the past. In the 1930s, restrictions imposed by the government forced *ta'ziyeh* performances to move from towns to rural areas. At present, professional troupes are often family-run businesses that move from place to place every two weeks performing a different play every day and occasionally giving performances both in the afternoon and evening.

In the last 50 years or so, Europeans and Americans have traveled to Asia to experience the bond between actor and audience that is one of the hallmarks of the eastern dramatic tradition. The most common destinations were India and the Far East, but in the late 1960s, Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, and Tadeuz Kantor discovered *ta'ziyeh*. Brook, in particular was profoundly impacted by the dramatic possibilities of the Persian form. He explained:

I saw in a remote Iranian village one of the strongest things I have ever seen in theatre: a group of 400 villagers, the entire population of the place, sitting under the tree and passing from roars of laughter to outright sobbing – although they knew perfectly well the end of the story – as they saw Hussein in danger of being killed, and then fooling his enemies, and then being martyred. And when he was martyred, the theatre form became truth. (Parabola, 1979)

**conjunction** -  
the act of joining

Brook proved that Iranian dramatic conventions and cultural themes could be effectively transposed to the western stage with his successful adaptation of a 12th-century mystical tract, *The Conference of the Birds*, into a theatrical play.

Jerzy Grotowski also borrowed from the *ta'ziyeh* tradition to fuse dramatic action with ritual as a means of uniting actor and audience. However, his productions for the laboratory theater carefully controlled the dynamic between the players and the spectators by imposing limits on space, audience size, and seating placement. *Ta'ziyeh*, in contrast, actively retains a fundamental principle of intimacy without placing any constraints on the size of the performance space or the number of spectators. This is *le theatre total*. In the words of Benjamin, the first American envoy to Iran, “*ta'ziyeh* is an interesting exhibition of the dramatic genius of the Persian race.”

**SOURCE:** Time out of memory: *Ta'ziyeh*, the Total Drama, Peter Chelkowski

URL: <http://www.asiasociety.org/arts/tazyieh/chelkowski.html>

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What was the role of community cooperation in the building and decoration of the *takiyeh*? Do costume design and colour have any importance in this theatre?
2. What is the role of musical instruments in the *ta'ziyeh* performance? What is the uniqueness of the role of *ta'ziyeh*'s director in supervising the music and ensemble?
3. Why do *ta'ziyeh* actors distance themselves from the characters that they are playing? What can you say about the time, place and the duration of *ta'ziyeh* performance?
4. What is the usefulness of *ta'ziyeh* manuscripts for world culture? What is the role of drama in human life and how does it demonstrate the human condition? How does the dramatization of the death of Hussein give the participants an opportunity to exhibit their own sorrows and desires?
5. What is the relationship between actor and audience in the *ta'ziyeh* performance? What are the connections between traditional Iranian theatre *ta'ziyeh* and the popular arts? How does the *ta'ziyeh* manage the issues of space and spectators?
6. What does “*le theatre total*” mean? What can we say about the origins and spirit of the *ta'ziyeh* drama? Do you have similar tradition or theatrical elements in your own communities? If so, describe them.

### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:

1. What is the importance of drama in your everyday life, in the lives of Muslims and others?
2. Do you know any other forms of ‘*total drama*’ elsewhere in the world? What were your experiences, feelings and feedback after observing any dramatic performance you had the chance to attend?

## VIRGINIA DANIELSON: “ARTISTS AND ENTREPRENEURS: FEMALE SINGERS IN CAIRO IN THE 1920S.”

Now we go to Egypt (19-20c.) to find evidence of the connection between dance, music and the human condition. This short text is based on the research of Virginia Danielson, musicologist from Chicago (USA). Virginia Danielson usually writes about the lives of major musical figures and the confluence of art, society, and creativity that is characterized by the artists' remarkable career. She bases her study on documental research. Her research is rich with facts, but readable as a simple story. This is Danielson's text concerning female Muslim singers in Cairo at the end of the 19th and beginning the 20th centuries and their influence on entertainment as a result their socio-economic mobility. The author shows how Umm Kulthoum's and other artists' "music and public personality helped to form popular culture and contributed to the broader artistic, societal, and political forces that surrounded" them. [see: <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/hfs.cgi/00/13255.ctl> ]

The main issue of our discussion is music and gender and the complexities of the female singing profession. We are also interested in the role of Muslim female singers in Cairo's cultural life at the beginning of 20th century. As the author argues, there are no national, ethnic or religious limitations which can separate or segregate individuals in the expression of their feelings through song and dance.

### COMMON GROUND

“Contrary to the popular wisdom that female singers were foreign or non-Muslim, most of the female singers working in Cairo between 1850 and 1930 were native Egyptians and most were Muslim. Occasionally they came from families in which other members were also musicians or singers, but such was not the norm. Almost all for whom data are available were born to lower-class families, and success in entertainment offered them a means of upward mobility economically and, to some extent, socially.

Most of the singers eventually married. The 'awalim, about whom information is available, married tradesmen from their native quarters. The later generation of singers usually married into a higher economic stratum than their own, consisting titled landowners or upper-middle-class professionals such as doctors and lawyers. Divorces or multiple marriages figured in the lives of some: Munira al-Mahdiyya married and divorced at least five different men; Ratiba Ahmad, according to one journalist, set records for marriages and divorces with 29. Many, however, remained married to the same man all their lives.

Blatantly immoral conduct clearly was not tolerated from star female singers. Badi'a Masabni's series of lovers was public knowledge and drew occasional negative comment. Ratiba Ahmad was **castigated** for her habitual rowdiness and public drunkenness. Whereas a strong, outgoing, fun-loving personality was rewarded, some **semblance** of decent public behavior was also expected. Prostitution as such was associated with a lower echelon of entertainer and in most instances, not surprisingly, was a last resort.



GIZA, CAIRO, EGYPT.  
THE PYRAMIDS

**castigate** -  
to inflict severe punishment on;  
to criticize severely

**semblance** -  
representation; appearance

The commercial environment presented more problems for the entertainers than did private homes and community gatherings: audiences were larger and often unknown to the singer, alcoholic **beverages** were sold, and patrons were occasionally rowdy. In some cases, singers employed by the music halls and cafes were required to socialize or drink alcohol with patrons. Tauhida, for instance, after much negotiation reportedly signed a contract stipulating that she could not be compelled to sit with customers or to drink more than five glasses of cognac in one evening. Journalists ruefully reported occasions on which audience members tried to embarrass performers or compel them to sing only requests. A reviewer in 1922 deplored an incident at a concert by the then new singer, Umm Kulthoum. Having accepted an audience request, the “sweet young singer” was interrupted by a “harsh voice” from the balcony commanding her to stop the song and sing another instead. In spite of protestations from the partisans of the initial request and Umm Kulthoum’s promise to sing the second request after she finished the first, the group in the balcony began “screaming, whistling and clapping until the place was in disorder and the audience upset, and the cry ‘long live the people – down with Umm Kulthoum!’ became ‘long live “this is the night of a lifetime” [the first song] – down with “it is impossible for me not to love” [the second]’, and so on until the curtain fell. Then the yelling and screaming only increased.” Later that month, Umm Kulthoum reluctantly sang “You Hurt Me, My Cousin,” which was requested, in the opinion of the reviewer, only to embarrass her; her cousin, to whom she was believed to be betrothed, was one of her accompanists at the time. When Fathiyya Ahmad performed in the provincial city of Al-minya in 1927, her performance was disrupted by two local prostitutes who made “suggestive gestures” to men in the balcony. In the 1930s, when she was managing a music hall herself, Fathiyya complained that, whereas drunken patrons were bad enough, even some of the dancers in the show were drunk. Asmahan frequently recalled the bad days of her early career in music halls by complaining about the behavior of drunken audiences. Although such incidents were occasional, difficult audiences afflicted almost every female singer, compelling each to find a way to deal with them. A common strategy was to “pack” the audience with a large **coterie** of one’s own supporters, who would loudly voice approval of the singer and handle problematic patrons themselves. These **cliques** of supporters (or “courts” as they came to be known) brought their own problems, as the singers insisted they be admitted free of charge, a practice objectionable to owners and other patrons alike. The behavior of these enthusiasts was occasionally theatrical and distracting in itself. One of Fathiyya Ahmad’s “court,” for instance, moved by her performance, was reported to have blown “resounding kisses to each of his table companions, and then to everyone else he recognized in the room.”

All of the women mentioned here commanded a great deal of money. A conservative estimate of Umm Kulthoum’s income in 1926-27 would be well over £e5,000 (or \$25,000), and Fathiyya Ahmad’s about £e2,200 (\$11,000). Female concert singers generally made more than actresses or singers in plays and bore fewer expenses, because makeup and sometimes costumes were paid for by the individual performer. Women’s fees were roughly equal to men’s for concerts and recordings and sometimes higher.

Women pursued careers in this difficult arena for the rewards they believed could be obtained: recognition of their artistic talent, personal fame, and fortune. A number of them succeeded in attaining their goals by dint of artistic creativity, good business sense, and careful negotiation of the difficult and demanding career path. In addition to their artistic contributions, these women had a lasting impact on the role of women in the public eye in Egypt.

**beverage** -  
any one of various liquids for drinking

**coterie** -  
a group of persons who associate with one another frequently

**clique** -  
a narrow circle of persons associated by common interests

Although their individual approaches to their careers were different, these women were generally ambitious and hard working, and they invested a great deal of energy and effort into ensuring artistic and commercial success. Although their financial rewards were great, their schedules were not easy. During the season most of them worked at least three and often five nights per week, performing on stage for periods of three to five hours. Days were spent planning upcoming events, courting journalists, and for such women as Badi'a Masabni and Munira al-Mahdiyya, managing the business of a music hall and theatrical troupe, respectively. During the summers most of the women toured and planned the following year's commitments. Efforts were made in the off season as well to remain in the public eye.

Most of the female stars eventually assumed the management of their own careers and money, seeking the counsel of others but retaining the ultimate decision making. Stars such as Umm Kulthoum, Munira al-Mahdiyya, and Badi'a Masabni became competent business people and developed reputations as tenacious negotiators. Most of the female stars deliberately built up savings accounts, and many invested in residences and other real estate.

Male and female singers, as well as actors, actresses, and dancers, occupied relatively low social positions. Marriage into the elite classes was almost impossible. Egyptian feminist Huda Sha'rawi initially declined even to permit her photograph to appear in the then-theatrical magazine *Ruz al-Yusuf*, for fear that she might be associated with actresses. The prevailing attitude had two aspects: one was the belief that musical performance was an unworthy use of time. When Zakariyya Ahmad, for instance, announced his intention to compose music for the theater, his father's response was "What! You're the son of an educated religious man and you're going to become one of those whose lives [consist of] 'Oh My Night, Oh My Eyes'?" Another was the association of entertainment, particularly commercial entertainment, with such vices as prostitution, drunkenness, gambling, consumption of drugs, and un-dignified public display. The area of Azbakiyya had long included taverns and brothels, and the resulting problems for performers have already been noted. The presence of foreign soldiers in Egypt exacerbated the situation, as these men, alone on holiday in the city, had plenty of money and few constraints. It was generally believed that their behavior encouraged vice and, in turn, corrupted Egyptian youth.

At the turn of the century, female singers were commonly associated with "light" entertainment. Their repertoires were depicted as musically and textually simple, lacking both serious poetic content and sophisticated musical composition. Whereas Lane found a number of female singers to be "learned," they were generally viewed as unskilled compared with their male counterparts and overlooked altogether in serious discussions of music. In his turn-of-the-century book on music, Kamil al-Khula'i ignored female singers entirely, except to comment on their "complete ignorance" of the principles of their art. Women were associated with a genre of song called the taqtuqa, a strophic piece in colloquial Arabic dealing with coquetry or other common

**amorous** themes. By contrast, the classical qasida was considered to be a male genre, optimally a musically-sophisticated rendition of a literary text containing allusions to Arabic literature or to historical and religious events. In fact, a number of female singers were credited, however grudgingly, with having mastered the repertory of sophisticated song ordinarily associated with their male counterparts. Almaz was the most famous of them, and others included Waduda al-Manyalawiyya, Sakina Hasan, al-Sitt Nuzha, al-Hajja al-Suwaisiyya, Asma' al-Kumsariyya, and Munira al-Mahdiyya.

By virtue of their achievements, the women who engaged in commercial entertainment demanded and were accorded a measure of public respect. Led by Umm Kulthoum and Fathiyya Ahmad, and built on the memories of notable 'awalim such as Almaz and religious singers such as Sakina Hasan, these women raised the visibility of female singers and firmly established them in the public eye as respectable individuals and accomplished artists. Throughout her long career, umm Kulthoum exhibited a dignified demeanor, and she is widely credited today with having raised the level of respect for female singers generally”.

**SOURCE:** Virginia Danielson. “Artists and Entrepreneurs: Female Singers in Cairo in the 1920s.” From Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (eds.) *Women In Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991. Pp. 301-304.

#### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

1. What is the author’s main idea? How did the author organize her arguments? What can you say about the social origin of Cairo’s singers at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries?
2. Why did singers from lower-class families have such success in Cairo? What were the complexities of the personal and social lives of female singers in Cairo?
3. What was the audience’s effect on concert performances? What impact did the female singers have on the role of women in Egypt’s public eye?
4. What kind of socio-economic issues (incomes, class-strata and so on) do we see in the text on Egypt female singers? What was the role and image of Umm Kulthoum in establishing respect for female singers in Cairo?

#### **QUESTIONS FOR COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS:**

1. Find the points for comparison in the texts talking about music as part of the human condition.
2. Describe the state of music and dance in the country and regions you are living in. Describe the feelings you experience when you listen to music or dance.
3. Do gender, national, cultural, religious, or socio-economic differences affect the spirit of music and dance? What is the impact of music and dance on the human condition and vice versa?
4. What is the role of women in the public eye in your country? Is it improving?



## MICHAEL T. BERTRAND “THE FORGOTTEN ROOTS OF A (ROCK) REVOLUTION: RACE, ROCK, AND ELVIS”

This text for discussion on music and the human condition is from Michael T. Bertrand, who is an assistant professor of history at Tennessee State University, studying the life and music of famous modern musical star - Elvis Presley. In his book “Race, Rock, and Elvis” Bertrand examines the emergence of rock ‘n’ roll in a social and regional context. It is important to note that “Bertrand connects the music to larger transformations that were unsettling the post-world War II southern landscape. He shows how alienated and anonymous working-class teenage migrants such as Elvis Presley embraced black music and style to create identities within unfamiliar postwar urban settings. Bertrand contends that unprecedented access to African-American culture challenged Presley’s generation to reassess age-old segregationist stereotypes” see: <http://www.press.uillinois.edu/s05/bertrand.html>. See biography: <http://music.yahoo.com/ar-261721-bio-Elvis-Presley>;

Reading the text we will discuss how rock ‘n’ roll’s emergence challenged “poverty, isolation, and ignorance”. We will also examine how music can become an inherent part of human life, and how one individual life story became the history of modern American music.



“Elvis. The first name alone evokes images and sounds that spark instant recognition. A surname is unnecessary. Although it is true that Elvis Presley may not have invented rock ‘n’ roll, few can deny that he helped transform what many assessed as a minor musical novelty into an international phenomenon. In the process, he became one of the most successful entertainers of the twentieth century and one of history’s more controversial cultural figures. His southern dialect, working-class origins and persona, and black-derived and overtly sexual performing style galvanized both partisans and critics alike. His entrance on the national stage in the mid-1950s enthralled, enraged, and bewildered a wide array of observers. His exit some twenty years later fueled a relentlessly impassioned and contentious debate that has persisted, unabated and unresolved. What, exactly, did the emergence and enduring popularity of Elvis Presley say about American society? What did it all mean? A contemporary English music critic perhaps provided the best approach (although not necessarily the tone) needed to seek the answers: “I don’t regard his rise as a strange or shameful accident. Those who sneer at Elvis Presley should, therefore, redirect their antagonism. Presley just had to happen. He is a symptom of the times. What we should examine and try to understand are the plague circumstances that produced him.”

Focusing on Presley (and the “plague circumstances that produced him”) does not automatically terminate the significance of other artists, black or white, who contributed to the rock ‘n’ roll explosion. Preferably, emphasizing him will at least partly highlight the similarities, not the differences, among major rock ‘n’ roll performers of the 1950s. Even a cursory glance will substantiate that many of these entertainers had a great deal in common, including generational ties, social and economic class backgrounds, and performing styles that owed much to African American sources.

Their regional origins provided the key collective experience. A large number of artists and acts associated with rock 'n' roll **hailed from** below the Mason-Dixon Line. Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Carl Perkins, Little Willie John, Bo Diddley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Clyde McPhatter, Fats Domino, Ray Charles, Roy Orbison, The Clovers, Joe Turner, Ruth Brown, Buddy Holly, Chuck Willis, Gene Vincent, Sam Cooke, the Everly Brothers, Loyd Price, and Presley, southerners all, helped create and popularize the new music. A supplemental **roster** would uncover another eighty luminaries who made an impact on popular music charts. As native southerners, they shared a history and culture that simultaneously sustained failure and **fortitude**, tragedy and resilience. Their connection to the south represented a centuries-old bond that would invariably separate them from northern, western, and British counterparts.

Augmenting their regional affiliations, the performers were, with a few exceptions, approximately the same age. Seventy-six were born in or after 1930 - by 1955, a pivotal year in the history of rock 'n' roll, the average age of the artists was twenty-two. The implication is clear. The vast majority entered adolescence during and following world war II, an extremely disruptive period in the history of the south. Unlike previous generations of southerners in the twentieth century, they encountered substantial change at a relatively early age. The experience was surely a profound one. They represented a group that had a foot planted in two worlds, a situation that furnished them with an outlook unusual for natives of the region. Having reached maturity in a constantly-shifting present, they could therefore confront the future with a perspective not entirely mired in the past.

In addition to being southern natives who had come of age in the **tumultuous** postwar period, virtually all the artists were from working-class backgrounds. Their music would necessarily represent an essential form of regional, generational, and class articulation. Rock 'n' roll's social register, after all, included former truck drivers, mechanics, construction and shipyard laborers, tenant farmers, dishwashers, and factory workers. How they chose to verbalize their desires and emotions, or make music of them, was distinctive. The substance and style of their articulations differed greatly from those of the mainstream, where Tin Pan Alley and Hollywood collaborated to present a widely-accepted (although often illusive and elusive) version of adult middle-class, middle-American values and concerns. The large majority of the southern rock 'n' roll artists of the period had roots in either country or rhythm and blues, genres traditionally linked to the working class.

Finally, most of the rock 'n' roll artists also performed in a manner at least partially derived from black folk and popular music. The majority typically had an **overtly** sexual performing style (some more than others), and they, like rock 'n' roll in general, threatened middle-class standards of morality, tastes, and conduct. Furthermore, all of the rock 'n' rollers went against the conformist tendencies of southern society, particularly in violating racial strictures, yet still became enormously popular in their native region. In addition, as young members of a southern working class seeking to realize the postwar American dream of upward mobility, they represented one of the region's first generations to succeed in terms that the nation had defined. Their emergence would challenge the obstacles of poverty, isolation, and ignorance that had habitually blocked the south's course to progress and tolerance.

Although Elvis Presley was undoubtedly a singular figure in the rock 'n' roll onslaught, he might best be understood within this larger historical framework. His apparent merging of black music and culture with white symbolized similar trends materializing simultaneously throughout the south. Without doubt, the musical and cultural elements

**hail from-**

to originate from

**roster -**

a list, especially of names

**fortitude -**

strength of mind that allows one to endure pain or adversity with courage

**tumultuous -**

very loud, or full of confusion, change or uncertainty

**overtly -**

open and observable

that would eventually coalesce into what became rock 'n' roll had begun to shift into place before Presley emerged. Still, due to his atypical talent, extensive exposure, and enormous success, he became the individual most associated with rock 'n' roll. Writers, entertainment industry insiders, teenagers, clerics, and parents were well aware that the hip-swiveling shouter stood at the center of the storm.

Simultaneously acclaimed and vilified, Elvis Presley personified the excitement and fears identified with rock 'n' roll. Moreover, as a figure who thoroughly encompassed within his celebrity the **volatile** issues of class, race, and age that shook the postwar south, he embodied the conflict and tension of a southern world in transition. Although it is not likely that the vast controversy concerning him will soon subside, neither is it conceivable that any amount of revision will alter the pervasive influence he had on his era. Set in this context, the words of two academics from 1958 seem remarkably appropriate: "as a subject for polemic Elvis Presley has few peers, and too many people have experienced sudden shifts in blood pressure – either up or down – for him to be regarded as anything but an authentic barometer of the times."

Such a scenario would have been difficult to predict. Elvis Presley was born into anonymity in Tupelo, Mississippi, in the midst of the great depression. After years of enduring dwindling economic opportunities and downward progression in their already-low social status, he and his working-class family eventually migrated to Memphis. There, young Elvis sought to defy the invisibility that accompanied poverty and displacement. Inspired by entertainers and movie stars, he developed a penchant for flashy clothes, slicked-back hair, and long **sideburns**. Furthering his quest for identity, he also tuned into the radio. Listening to virtually everything that was being transmitted, he absorbed an eclectic assortment of musical styles: rhythm and blues, country, pop, and gospel. Eventually, he would integrate these various influences into a synthesis that helped launch rock 'n' roll.

Yet as the cold war heated up and the 1940s melted into the 1950s (and audiences by the millions tuned in to hear Johnnie Ray and Patti page), Presley's future as it pertained to rock 'n' roll materialized slowly. In the summer of 1954, a year after graduating from high school, the nineteen-year-old was driving a delivery truck during the day and studying to become an electrician at night. Only after several failed attempts to gain the attention of people in professional music did he finally make his first commercial recordings for Sam Phillips's Sun Records company. He also joined the Louisiana Hayride in Shreveport and toured extensively on one-night stands throughout the south and southwest.

By the end of 1955, when he signed with RCA, Elvis Presley had become one of the hottest commodities in country music. Yet his new manager, the flamboyant Col. Tom Parker, sought a larger and more diversified audience for his client. In 1956 Parker booked Presley onto several network television programs, including three financially-lucrative appearances on Ed Sullivan's variety series. Beamed into the living rooms of millions, Presley's popularity skyrocketed. The sales of his records exploded; each new

**volatile -**

tending or threatening to  
break out into open violence

**sideburns -**

growths of hair down the sides  
of a man's face in front of the  
ears

release was seemingly guaranteed to sell more than the last. Hollywood beckoned, and the singer quickly became a movie idol. Yet not all were happy with the Presley juggernaut. Furor mounted over his sexually aggressive-stage routine. The criticisms that resulted, however, only heightened Presleymania, and by 1958 the media had crowned him the undisputed “king of rock ‘n’ roll.”

Between 1956 and 1963, Presley dominated popular music.

**SOURCE:** Michael T. Bertrand. “The Forgotten Roots of a (Rock) Revolution: Race, Rock, and Elvis”. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000. Pp. 21-24.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the main idea of this text? How does the author support his main thesis? Who was Elvis Presley? What was his contribution to the rock ‘n’ roll explosion in America?
2. What does Presley’s story say about the modern history of America: working-class teenage migrants, and post-war conditions? How do you explain the point that “Presley just had to happen. He is a symptom of the times”?
3. How did rock ‘n’ roll music necessarily represent an essential form of regional, generational, and class articulation? What is the role of black folk and popular music in the origin of rock ‘n’ roll?
4. How did rock ‘n’ roll’s emergence challenge the “poverty, isolation, and ignorance that had habitually blocked the south’s course to progress and tolerance”?
5. Why was Elvis regarded as anything but an ‘authentic barometer of the times’? How and why did this individual life story become the history of modern American music?
6. What were the reasons for Presley’s domination in music for such a long time? Do you agree with the author’s opinion?

### **COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

1. If we compare the texts on music and the human condition, what similar points can we see in all of them?
2. Can we find the theory of domination in music and dance in all cultures presented in this chapter?

## THE ECONOMIST ELVIS LIVES, IN PERSIAN THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE “AFGHAN ELVIS” - AHMAD ZAHIR.

The Economist reports on Ahmad Zahir, undoubtedly the greatest Afghan singer ever. Ahmad Zahir became famous also in Central Asia after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s. According to experts on his music “the feelings can not be explained in words but can be felt through his inspiring music”. Nowadays his music lives in every Afghan citizen regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender..[site: <http://www.ahmadzahir.com/> ; his biography at: <http://www.ahmadzahir.com/biography.php>]. The life story of Ahmad Zahir is similar to the life of his country, Afghanistan. His tomb now is in ruins as the whole country is going through reconstruction. The Taliban revolution to a large extent changed the approach to music in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Afghans remember the history of music in their country: “in a 1989 article entitled “Afghan music,” Dr. Javid tells us that the history of Afghan music goes back 5,000 years starting with the Gathas of the Zoroastrian civilization. He says, “It is mentioned by Rig-Veda poets that the sound of music has been heard from the palace of Yama, the first king of Arians.” <Http://www.ahmadzahir.com/biography.php>; Reading this article we will discuss the reasons for the popularity of Ahmad Zahir’s music in Afghanistan, the role of music in Afghan lives, the impact of politics on music, and the dynamic of music and the human condition.



“After the death in 1979 of Afghanistan’s pop legend, Ahmad Zahir, Kabul police found hundreds of pairs of women’s knickers in his house; or so claimed a gang of **braggarts** in Kabul’s swollen main bazaar last week. Afghan women marked the three-day Muslim festival of Eid with a quieter tribute to a man known as the “Afghan Elvis”. Young and old, in couples and alone, hundreds of them trudged out of the capital and up a dusty slope of the Kabul valley to pray at his newly-rebuilt tomb.

Afghans revere the dead singer. The son of a prime minister who played for the poor, singing Persian love poetry to an electric guitar, Zahir represents for many Afghans the glory days of the 1960s and 1970s, when their country was at its most prosperous and whole. The music-loathing Taliban obliterated Zahir’s tomb with rockets shortly after seizing Kabul in 1996. But even that did not deter Zahir’s diehard fans. Setting course for an ancient mosque farther up the slope, they would veer quickly off past the singer’s grave, though few dared to pause long by its **rubble**.

Five months ago, a group of fans rebuilt the tomb, a small concrete dome on six spidery legs. Thousands have since visited it to reflect, pray, or hum a favorite Zahir number. “I love you! I love you! I love you!” Crooned one elderly man to your (male) correspondent.

A **Pushtun**, Zahir nonetheless sang mostly in Persian and appealed across Afghanistan’s tribal divide. Legend has it that Zahir’s father initially objected to the young Ahmad’s calling, but blessed it after strolling with his son through Kabul. More commoners hailed the pop singer than the prime minister.

**braggart** -  
empty boasting

**Pushtun** -  
people of eastern regions of  
Afghanistan

**rubble** -  
a loose mass of angular frag-  
ments of rock or masonry  
crumbled by natural or human  
forces

tile -

a flat hard material such as baked clay or plastic, laid in rows to cover walls, floors, and roofs

If Zahir's life mirrored his country's brightest fortunes, his death was a harbinger of the carnage to come. In 1979, a few months before Soviet troops invaded, Zahir was killed in a car crash believed to have been arranged by Hafizullah Amin, who was to become Afghanistan's president before getting killed himself. Today, Zahir's rebuilt tomb is disappointing in much the same way as Afghanistan's wider reconstruction effort. Though better than the heap of rubble that it replaced, the tomb was redone on the cheap: several marble **tiles** have already fallen off.

**SOURCE:** The economist, Elvis Lives, in Persian, Dec 4th 2003, The Life and Death of the "Afghan Elvis".

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

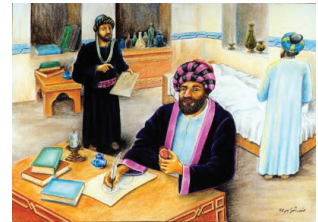
1. Who was Ahmad Zahir and what was his role in the development of pop music in Afghanistan?
2. What were the reasons for Ahmad Zahir's popularity in Afghanistan and also outside of the country?
3. Why did the people start to rebuild Zahir's tomb? What is the role and the nature of music during civil war? What is the role of music in old and modern Afghanistan?
4. Rock 'n' Roll's emergence challenged "poverty, isolation, and ignorance." What was Zahir's challenge to modern Afghan society?
5. What made the life of Ahmad Zahir similar to Elvis Presley's? Why do people search for similarities with Presley? Why not with Yo-Yoma? Can there be "Orientalism" in Music?
6. How can the concepts of music presented by Skvorecky and Adorno explain the music of Ahmad Zahir? What do you know about Afghan music today? Write a short story about rock and pop music today?



## IKHWAN AS-SAFA: ON MUSIC

Let us continue our discussions on the spirit of music according to Renaissance thinkers in the 10th century of Islam. During the Islamic cultural renaissance many thinkers had realized the role and significance of music in the spiritual life of people and its general use in all fields. We could have quoted several similar texts from al-Farabi (10th century philosopher from Baghdad), Abdurakhman Jami (15th century poet from Herat), Navoi and others. But considering the simplicity of the texts, we've chosen a text that was written by the 10th century encyclopedist – Ikhwan as Safa, "The Brethren of Purity". This work examines the nature and designation of music. The authors of the treatise show the close relationship between the various forms of human activity, human condition, and the spirit of music.

Ikhwan as Safa (The Brethren of Purity) is a secret, scientific, and philosophical association of Encyclopedists that was established in Basra in the middle of the 10th century. They had significant impact on Farabi, Ibn Sina, Beruni, Tusi and other thinkers. The works of The Brethren under the common name of the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity are published in 12 volumes (Beirut, 1957, 1991) and cover all aspects of scientific, philosophical, religious, social, and political problems that were relevant at that time. The Brethren devoted quite a number of their works to the problems of arts and literature.



MUSLIM SCHOLARS

### ABOUT MUSIC. THE FIFTH TREATISE. MATHEMATICS.

« ... Music is sounds and tones that produce effect in souls... In this case under the (influence) of melody and sounds a human being that is occupied with wearisome industrial work is cheered up and his productivity increases... It (the melody) is used in military action and battles, and particularly when special songs devoted to soldiers praising of their feats of arms are sung ...

... This is evidence that music may have been used as the way to stir people for war and battle as between the Arab tribes for a very long time. These lines also result in understanding that music provokes concealed anger in humans and is able to affect quiet and calm souls, and ignite in them a fire of fury ...

...These and similar lines also breed anger in people's hearts and excite their souls, ignite in them a flame of hatred, inducing them to kill their cousins, relatives and friends...

And melody and tonal sounds also (result in) comforting the heat of wrath, dissolving hatred and resuming peace, **inculcating** consent and unanimity among people. In this regard, they say that one time two angry men that were old enemies and disliked each other came to a feast. When they drank wine (under its influence) both men became angry and both of them wanted to kill their companion. And then the music began to play and they listened to the melody. The musician was skillful in his trade and tuned his instrument to play a soft and calming melody that casued them to stop and listen. He continued playing until their wrath was consigned to **oblivion**. (Finally) they stood up and hugged each other, reconciling.

Under the influence of melody and musical tones souls move from one state to another; they change the inclination of souls from one side to its opposite. They say that

**inculcate -**

to impress (something) upon the mind of another by frequent instruction

**oblivion -**

the condition or quality of being completely forgotten

**merit -**

quality or worth

there was once a group of very skilled artists that were invited by a very powerful ruler. At that meeting he made arrangements according to their **merits** and professionalism. Suddenly a man in **shabby** clothes and of lower rank entered. The host offered him a seat higher than the others and that caused them great displeasure. He wanted to show his worth and soften their anger. To do so, the ruler asked him to perform something from his art. That man took wooden bars that were on him, put them together (in the form of a musical instrument), strung it, and began to play. All those who were at the meeting cheered up with pleasure. Then he retuned his instrument and played (another melody) the tenderness of which saddened their souls and brought people to tears. Then once again he retuned his instrument and played (yet another melody) that put all of them to sleep. After that he got up and left and still no one knows who he was.

All of the above proves that music has various forms of affecting souls of listeners that may be likened to the affect of artisans on materials and that's why it has been used by all humans since Adam, as well as many other animals. The evidence that music influences souls is the fact that people use it when they are happy and rejoicing, during weddings, feasts and celebration, or when they are sad, feel sorrow, unhappiness or mourning, or in worship houses, and during holidays, in marketplaces and at homes, while traveling and when settled, when resting and when tired, at meetings of rulers and at homes of subjects. Men and women, children and elders, scholars and ignoramuses, artisans and traders, and all other kinds of people use music.

You should know, my brother, and let Allah help you and show his mercy is to us! – that various types of arts are being rendered by wise men with their wisdom and then people study this art, and that of others and it becomes a heritage from wise men for common people, from scholars to followers, and from teachers to students. Music was also rendered by wise men with their wisdom and people studied it and, like other types of art, used it for their everyday purposes in accordance with their goals. The use of music by clergy in temples accompanying the reading of prayers, sacrifices, entreaties, requests, and mourning is like what David (Peace be upon him) did, reading of psalms by Christians in their churches and Muslims in their mosques (in the form of) pleasant musical tone and melody. All this is done to soothe people's souls, command their obedience and reverence, and encourage them to follow the God's commands and commandments together with the application of the letter of the religious law.

And you should know, oh, my brother, let Allah help you and may his mercy be upon us! – that one of the reasons for the appeal of wise men for the establishment of religious laws and the use of legends is that they consider the rule of celestial bodies a cause of happiness or unhappiness coinciding with changes in the life's laws from price increases or decreases, from draught to yield, famine, illness, plague, cholera, or malicious and spiteful rulers that affects changes in time and events. When for them (clergy) that became obvious, they resorted to **cunning** that (comprehension) saved them from (those events) that were really malicious and they found pleasure in it, but they couldn't find a way to save themselves and nothing could help them in using the letter of the divine law – fasting, prayer, sacrifice, entreaties, although they were worshipping Allah, praised be His name! Submitting to Him and shedding tears they addressed Him with a request to deliver them from (disaster) and that impute to (man) those disasters and calamities by managing celestial bodies.

(Wise men) were not skeptics as they addressed Allah loyally, sincerely, guiltily and contritely and (asked God) to deliver them from those things they were afraid of, redeem them from those things by which they were gripped, accept their **penance**, show mercy to them, accept their prayers and requests, and reward them. During their prayers, praises

**shabby** -  
showing signs of wear and tear

**cunning** -  
skill in deception

**penance** -  
an act of self-mortification or  
devotion

(to God), and reading (of religious verses), they used some kind of musical tones that are called “al-Muhzin” (Grief). They touch human souls and bring tears to the eyes; souls repent for previous actions, (a sense of guilt) awakens, and **redemption** from bad actions and improvement of conscience appears. That was one of the reasons for reproduction of musical art by wise men, its use in temples, during sacrifices, prayers and entreaties.

Wise men also reproduced other tunes that were called “al-Mushadja” (Encouraging). They were used by army commanders during battles and combats. They give courage and determination to souls (in battle).

They composed another tune that was used in hospitals for hypnotizing, for reducing a sick person’s pain and easing their **outbreaks**, and truly it heals many illnesses and diseases.

Wise men also composed other tunes that were used at the time of mourning, grief and sorrow. They **soothe** souls and **alleviate** the pain of mourning people, consigning sorrow to oblivion and assuaging their grief.

They composed yet other tunes that are used during penal servitude and exhausting work just like those used by porters, builders and sailors. (The melody) facilitates exertion and reduces weariness of souls.

Wise men also composed tunes that are used in times of happiness, joy, pleasure, and rejoicing, during weddings and feasts. They are still popular in our time.

This art is also used with respect to animals. For instance, a cameleer uses music during travels and at nighttime to invigorate camels so they move actively, as well as to alleviate a (feeling) of gained weight; it is used as a whistle by shepherds of sheep and cows, and horse-herds when (for instance, these animals) come to water and they want to drink. Also in regard to animals another musical experience is used for the female of the species; another tune is used during their milking so they give milk in abundance. For antelopes, hazel hens, partridges, etc., hunters use another type of tune in the middle of the night, and, with the help of this tune, the victims fall into their traps. Women sing to their children a melody that calms them down and puts them to sleep.

We’ve already mentioned earlier that musical art is used by everyone as well as all animals that have ears. Musical tunes exert influence upon sacral souls just as other trades have influence on material substances.

Now, we’ll say that music is singing, musician is a singer and an orchestra – musical instruments. Singing is creating a melody with the help of voices in the air as a result of **corporeal** things colliding with each other as was mentioned in the “Sense and Sensitivity” treatise. It is necessary to mention it in this treatise also.

As to the means of sensing music through hearing (above all) you should know, oh, my brother, that there are two types of sounds: animal and non-animal (judging by their origin). There are also two types of non-animal sounds: natural and instrumental. Natural sounds are the sounds of stone, iron, tree, thunder, winds and other bodies that don’t possess a spirit; they are of non-organic substances. Instrumental sounds are the sound of a drum (tubl), horn (boock), pipe (zamr), string instruments, and so on. There are two types of animal sounds: notional and non-notional. Non-notional sounds are the voices of other

- redemption** -  
recovery of something pawned  
or mortgaged; being saved
- outbreak** -  
a sudden eruption
- soothe** -  
to tranquilize or calm
- alleviate** -  
provide physical relief
- corporeal** -  
of a material nature

animals that do not possess the gift of speech, and notional are voices of people that are also divided in two; functional and non-functional. Non-functional include laughter, crying and screaming, in short any sound that doesn't have a pronunciation rule; and functional are coherent words and phrases that have pronunciation rules. Each one of these sounds is a vibration (knock) in the air (that is generated) by the collision of material bodies. That happens because air, due to the pressure of its delicate and soft substance and the speed of movement of its components, permeates all material bodies. If one body collides with another, then the air slips through the middle, rushes forward and makes oscillatory movements on all sides. A round-shaped form is generated from its movements and it enlarges just like glass enlarges when a bottle is blown. Every time that form enlarges, its movements and **oscillations** reduce until it is stable and (the movement) is stopped. And those of people or animals that have ears and who were near to the person (would feel) that from that air movement rises a wave and permeates the acoustic canal at the end of the brain and disturbs air there. Then the hearing will feel movement and change.

And you should know that every sound has a descriptive modulation and spiritual image different to other sounds. And air, due to its substance and delicacy of its elements, contains every sound with its image and properties, and preserves them so that none are mixed with others and spoils their image. Thereby, it brings it to the maximum excess before (generating) an acoustic force to bring it to the imaginary force that is located in the front lobe of brain. And that is predestination of the Almighty God that provided us with hearing, vision and mind in small quantities and you are thankful (to Him) for that.

So, we've finished our explanation of the essence of sounds, methods of air movement and understanding of the acoustic force for (generating it)...

... One of the goals of our treatise is to explain the essence of music that is composed of motives and rhythmic melodies that form melody as a result. So, as it was already mentioned, music is composed of motives and rhythmic melodies. Rhythmic melodies are generated only with successive movements and alternating pauses between them. First of all, it is necessary to understand what movements and pauses are. We say that a movement is the transfer from one point to another in time and a pause is its antonym - it is a stop firstly in place and secondly in time. There are two types of movement; fast and slow. Fast movement is when a moving person passes a long distance in a short period of time and slow is when that person passes a shorter distance for the same period of time. These movement wouldn't be regarded as two where in not for a pause between them. A pause is a stop of a moving person for a period of time during which he would be able to make a movement.

As we have finished our explanation of what was necessary, now we should say that according to form (of expression), sounds are divided into eight types and each pair of them is opposite to (another) one that is consonant and added (to it). These sounds may be strong, weak, fast, slow, soft, harsh, loud and quiet. The sound of a drum may serve as an example of large and small sounds added to each other. If we add the sounds of other drums to the sounds of a drum (that accompany processions), then in comparison the latter is more powerful. If we add the sounds of a big drum to kuus, then in comparison the former are weaker. If we add the sounds of a big drum to sounds of thunder and lightning, they (in comparison) are weaker. Kuus is a gigantic drum that is used in border areas of Khorasan for announcing mobilization of the military. The sound of that drum could be heard from afar. Just like them, there are many powerful and weak sounds that may be added to one another.

Sounds may be with each other; they (their tempo) are fast and weak. Their nature is such that they have a short pause between blows. The sounds of short hammers and

**oscillate -**

to swing back and forth with a steady, uninterrupted rhythm

sledge hammers are an example of it; they are fast, as well as the sounds of blows produced by rice threshers and gypsum setters (p. 193).

And you should know, oh, my brother, and may Allah help you, that the state of mind and nature and of living creatures are different. Suitable tunes are peculiar to every human and his nature, as well as pleasant melodies and their number is known only to Almighty God. The argument proving the validity of what we've said and described is that if you think about (the culture of) some nation, you will see that some melodies and tunes that they enjoy do not enchant others. For instance, the singing of Kurds, Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Negroes, Persians, Byzantines, and other nations have different languages, natures, customs and traditions. Also you may find within one nation those who take pleasure in melodies and tunes that are disliked by others. Also you may find one persons that at the one time finds pleasure in one tune and at another time that same tune is not pleasant for him and even provokes antipathy and causes pain. They also feel the same towards food, drink, smell, clothes and other delights, adornments and beauty depending on changes of their temper, the diversity of their natures, their type of body, and their time and place of residence.

And you should know, oh, my brother, and may Allah help you, that if celestial objects did not have any tunes or melodies, their inhabitants would also be deprived of hearing and if they were deprived of hearing they would be deaf mutes. And that is the conditions of minerals – stark and inferior creatures...

**SOURCE:** AKHP translation. «Ихван-ус-сафа», Трактат пятый. Из области математики. О музыке, Бейрут, 1991.Т.1.стр.184-237.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the essence of the spirit of music according to Ikhwan-us safa?
2. In Ikhwan-us safa's opinion, what aspects of the human condition and society can music reflect?
3. Can the spirit of music promote changes in human intentions or improve a human's temper and nature?
4. What role does music play in religion and how is it different from the everyday functions of music?
5. According to this text, what is the original nature of music?
6. How are the variety of melodies and sounds connected? Why is the composer's self-expression important? What is its effect on people?
7. Can all human emotion be reflected in music?
8. What roles can music play and not play in life?
9. Do celestial objects really have melodies and tunes? If yes, how do they influence people?
10. Compare the texts concerning the spirit of music: are there similarities and differences between Inayatkhan's and 'Ikhwan-us-Safa's concept of music?

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS (CHAPTER FOUR):

1. Describe briefly the main ideas of the texts on music and human condition (Elvis, Bhangra and Ahmad Zahir). How did the authors organize the system of their argument about music and dance, the voice and “body politics”- especially in the story about female singers and dances in Cairo?
2. Is there any relationship between traditional and modern music and dance? What do you think about the Sufi dance during *zikr (sama)*?
3. Have you ever heard of the Ta'ziyeh performance in Iran? If yes, can you find any forms of domination in the performance of Ta'ziyeh? If yes, what are they? If not, why not?
4. Do you agree with the point that modern dancers, such as Isadora Duncan, started out by stripping the female body of the colonizing discourses of classical ballet into which it was framed, in order to reveal the ‘natural’ body?
5. What is the relationship between music, dance, and the issues of domination and colonization in the world? Bring some examples, evidences from this field using your personal experiences as observer or spectator? What are the evidences for the argument that the “body in modern dance also became subject to colonization”?
6. What are the connections between music, dance and liberation? How does body as “the instrument of dance...provide access to what is repressed in culture”? What are the connections between dance and language? Do you agree with the point that dance is a metaphor of writing with the body? If not, why not?
7. What kind of debates and discussions concerning the understanding of dance are in your country, and in the community and society surrounding you? What is the role of dance in Central Asia? What are the differences between traditional and modern dances in your region?
8. How do Central Asian societies and regional scholars interpret dance - the language of the body? Is there any ‘resistive potential’ with Central Asian dance? What is the effect of central Asian ‘binary gender oppositions’ (Derrida) on implementing and understanding of the role of dance in society?
9. What is the origin of dance? What is the spirit of dance? What are the differences between music and dance in expressing human conditions? Can a dance be a danger to society and politics?
10. What would your answer be to fundamentalist (mullahs), traditionalists (community of Raymali-aga) and others in approaches to the arts (music and dance)?

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## CHAPTER FIVE: DANCE AND HUMAN DIVERSITY

153

**INTRODUCTION** This chapter continues the discussions of the previous one, but focuses mostly on dance. The debates in this chapter specifically engage the issue of the relationship of dance to human diversity. Obviously, dance is part of everyday life, but people usually do not think about the nature of dance itself. Why and when do people dance? What are the connections between dance and social life and political order? What are the reasons for the existence of different types of dance in the world? How can dance express racial, gender, social, sexual and other differences and issues through individual and collective performances? How are issues of desire, identity and domination expressed in dance, and how can we analyze it? The case study on Duncan discusses *how women can express their soul through dance, and how dance can be an instrument of beauty*.

Why are there so many different forms of dancing in the world? One of the film presentations in this course is on the Tibetan dancing culture, “Dancing With Long Sleeves” (Tibet, China), and the diversity of dancing forms presenting the history and cultural heritage of this ancient nation. As an alternative you can watch Central Asian ballet during the Soviet time. This genre of ballet was a new invention for Central Asians and had never existed in this part of the world before. That naturally leads to a lot of questions: Did any forms of dancing exist within nomadic parts of Central Asia before the Russian revolution? What was the nature of these kinds of dances? What were the conditions of women dancers in the settled part of Central Asia, the Bukharan Emirate? How did Bukharan Muslims deal with dance performances by women?

In this chapter, Judith Jynne Hanna addresses the issue of the masculine domination of dance in the nineteenth century and the rebellion of women against it. According to her:

*“Women’s critique of the nineteenth-century system that excluded them from key economic and political roles and relegated them to the home and the realm of morals took a variety of forms. Women created new fields such as modern dance, social work, kindergarten teaching, and librarianship rather than compete in male professions”*

Salome in an interview with Suhaila Salimpour, the American belly dance icon who emigrated from Iran, raises the question of dance and women’s freedom. According to Salimpour, her mother and she ‘felt the sense of freedom only outside of house through performing dance’: “dancing made me feel alive, shameless and fearless. My life had meaning and joy only while dancing”. The issues of the meaning of dance are central for many dancers, and they can be different for different audiences as well.

How should people look at dance, dancing, and dancers' bodies? The issue is not only how music can influence people's actions, but also how spectators can affect performers....to study the relationship between performers and spectators in dance is also a new and interesting area for anthropological research. The excerpt from Susan Manning's book on "Modern Dance, Negro Dance" looks at the idea that "dancing bodies carry different meanings for different spectators." The author discusses the issues of "how dancing bodies are framed by presentation, how multiple social identities (black and white, negro dancers, leftist dancers, etc) inflect but do not determine spectators viewing."

This chapter also looks at dance from the racial point of view and domination.

But let us return to Central Asia. How do Central Asians and Russians find their place in the globalized musical world? Are there any connections between the dancing traditions in Bukhara and belly dancing at weddings in Egypt? Probably not, but.... probably Central Asia as well as Russia is already integrated into the global world due to the creative talent and popularity of their dancers. For example, originally from Central Asia, Nour, now an "oriental dance star of Egypt", found her beginnings in the folk dances of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan in her motherland Russia. How can we analyze contemporary Muslim dance in order to find the roots of belly dancing in the Muslim past?

Among the many issues (which will arise during the class and your independent readings), these are some of the issues addressed in this chapter.

## BARBARA O'CONNOR. BAREFOOT DANCER, - IN RUSSIA (THE STORY OF ISADORA DUNCAN)

Here we discuss the connections of human body and human diversity, how women can express their soul through dance, and how dance can be an instrument of beauty. The author, Barbara O'Connor, originally from South Carolina, graduated with a degree in English from the University of South Carolina. She moved to Los Angeles and lived there for many years. Now she lives in Duxbury, Massachusetts, with her husband, Bill and her son, Grady. She is the author of *Mammolina: A Story About Maria Montessori*. In this text the author depicts the life story of Isadora Duncan, a famous American dancer at the beginning of the 20th century who came to the USSR in order to build a new school of dance. Unfortunately, the Soviet government didn't support her much and her marriage with Russian poet Sergey Esenin was not successful. She lost her children. Nevertheless, she remains the mother of modern dance. Reading this text we should pay attention to the issues relating to women and dance, the impact of art on personal life, and how artistic people sacrifice personal life for professional acquisition. [for photos and more info on Isadora see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/isadora\\_duncan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/isadora_duncan)]



“On July 12, 1921, Isadora boarded the *SS Baltanic*, bound for Russia. Of the three remaining Isadora Duncan dancers, only Irma was willing to go with Isadora on this new adventure. More than anything, Isadora wanted to believe that this time her school would become the “temple” she had spent her life trying to build.

The Russian government presented Isadora with a two-story mansion in Moscow that featured rosewood columns, gold molding, marble staircases, and a staff of sixty, including a doctor, a cook, a typist, and even a plumber. Her staff also included Ilya Schneider, a Russian man who served as Isadora’s interpreter and secretary and helped manage the school. Isadora was presented with 150 children, from whom she selected 40 to attend her school.

Within a few months, Isadora and Irma were ready to begin teaching classes. Isadora didn’t speak a word of Russian, but she needed no words to show the children how to flutter like leaves in the wind or move as gracefully as flowing water. The Russian children loved their new dance lessons and thrived under Isadora’s direction.

Soon the children were ready to give their first performance. The night of November 7, 1921, was the fourth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, which had freed Russia from a controlling czar, or king, and had led to the formation of the Soviet Union. The audience at the Bolshoi Theater was bustling with excitement over the opportunity to see Isadora Duncan and her pupils perform on this special night. All three thousand seats of the theater were filled. Even the communist leader, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, was there for the occasion.

In honor of the revolution’s anniversary, Isadora danced a solo to Tchaikovsky’s “Marche Slav.” In this dance, she portrayed a slave, a symbol for the Russian people. With her hands bound behind her back by invisible chains, she struggled, then stumbled and fell to her knees. But before the dance ended, she had broken her chains and freed herself.

Although Isadora had created this dance almost four years earlier, this was the first time she had performed it before a Russian audience. Their response was overwhelming. The crowd rose to their feet, cheering. Among them, Lenin shouted, “bravo, bravo, Miss Duncan!”

The *Marche Slav* was a significant dance of social protest. Like *la Marseillaise*, it would have a profound influence on dance choreography in later years by inspiring other dancers to compose dances with political and social themes.

Her warm reception made Isadora wonder if she had found a home in the Soviet Union. But shortly after her *Marche Slav* began with Isadora’s hands tied behind her back by invisible chains in her magnificent performance at the Bolshoi Theater, she received some devastating news: a sudden change in political policy had eliminated the aid the government had promised her. There was no more money for her school. She was welcome to stay in the Soviet Union, but she would have to support her school herself.

Isadora felt cheated and betrayed. Now she was faced with a decision. Should she abandon the school and return to Europe, or should she go on tour to raise the money to keep her Russian school alive? She had struggled too long and too hard to give up her school. She decided to tour.

The school wasn’t Isadora’s only reason for wanting to stay in the Soviet Union. She had fallen in love again, this time with a famous Russian poet fifteen years younger than she. Sergey Esenin was an artist, and Isadora had always understood artists. However, he spoke only Russian. Isadora still knew very little Russian, so she attended daily lessons. One day, her elderly teacher was shocked and embarrassed when Isadora told her, “you’d better teach me what I ought to say to a beautiful man when I want to kiss him.”

In the spring of 1922, Isadora had a chance to make another tour in America. She needed the income, but she wanted Sergey to go with her. Unfortunately, this presented a problem.

Many Americans did not like Russians. These Americans believed that the Soviet Union’s communist government opposed the ways of the United States democratic government. Thinking Sergey might be in danger in the United States; the Soviet government was reluctant to allow such a popular and highly-valued poet to go there.

Also, Isadora knew that Americans would consider it improper for her to travel with a man who was not her husband. When she toured the United States with Paris Singer in 1909, Americans seemed to pretend not to notice. But Paris was an American millionaire. Americans might not be so forgiving of a poor Russian like Sergey. If Americans did not approve of Isadora and Sergey, they were not likely to donate money to her school.

Isadora knew that the only answer was to marry Sergey. Having an American wife would give him legal protection in a country hostile to Russians. Isadora had opposed marriage all her life. Not even the birth of her three children had changed her mind. But now she gave in.

Conveniently, however, the soviet marriage contract was quite fair. Neither husband nor wife was financially responsible for the other, and the marriage could be annulled, or ended, by either person, at any time and for any reason. In case anyone thought she had acted against her principles, Isadora told reporters, “such a marriage [of equal partners] is the only convention to which any free-minded woman could consent, and is the only form of marriage to which I have ever subscribed.”

On May 2, 1922, Isadora and Sergey were married. The next day, with her school in the capable hands of Irma and Ilya, Isadora and Sergey left Moscow. Seeing them off at the airport was a busload of her pupils, bearing a large sign that read: “a free spirit can exist only in a free body! Duncan school.”



ISADORA DUNCAN



The fortune-teller's unbelievable prediction had come true. Unfortunately, she had not predicted that Isadora's marriage would be doomed from the start. Sergey's boyish charm quickly disappeared. He was spoiled, temperamental, and jealous of his wife's fame. He also drank heavily, and in fits of anger, he **hurled** insults – and sometimes a lamp or table – at Isadora. Isadora realized she had made a terrible mistake.

To make matters worse, traveling in the United States was not pleasant. Although neither Isadora nor Sergey were communists, they were treated with suspicion and even hatred. Reporters followed the dancer everywhere. When she realized they were not interested in her art, Isadora became impatient and even rude. They wanted gossip and scandal. Isadora's drunken Russian husband, her **scanty** costumes, and her unconventional lifestyle provided plenty of that. A well-known evangelist named Billy Sunday blasted Isadora from his pulpit. "That Bolshevik hussy doesn't wear enough clothes to pad a **crutch!**" He shouted.

Isadora could not understand this preoccupation with her costumes, and she delighted the hungry press by defending herself. "Why should I care what part of my body I reveal?" She said. "Why is one part more evil than another? Is not all body and soul an instrument through which the artist expresses his inner message of beauty?"

By January 1923, just three months after her arrival in the United States, Isadora had had enough. She and Sergey boarded a ship for Europe. In her usual dramatic style, she called to reporters gathered to see her off, "Goodbye, America. I shall never see you again."

Isadora hoped her relationship with Sergey would improve when they returned to Russia. It didn't. His drinking got heavier, their arguments became fiercer, and Isadora's spirits sank lower. Sergey began to disappear for days at a time. His absences became longer and more frequent, and by the fall of 1923, the couple was living apart.

On her own again, Isadora felt an almost exhilarating sense of freedom. She could now get on with her work. In a burst of creative energy, she composed a group of dances to seven revolutionary songs. These works, like the *Marche Slav*, would have a significant impact on the social protest dances popular in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. Such dancers as Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Helen Tamiris would later use political revolution as a theme for their dance compositions.

In the fall of 1924, Isadora began touring again. Irma and Ilya were doing a fine job running the Russian school, but as always, the school was struggling financially. Her earnings were not even enough to pay for fuel to heat the enormous building during the frigid Russian winter. The studios were often so cold that classes had to be canceled. Even food was becoming scarce.

But Isadora wasn't ready to give up. That winter, Isadora decided to begin writing her **memoirs** in hopes that she could earn some much-needed money. In a letter to Irma, she called the project "my only hope."

The following year brought more sorrow to Isadora's life. Margot, one of the six original Isadora Duncan Dancers, died. These pupils had been like daughters to Isadora, and Margot's death must have awakened the terrible memories of the loss of Deirdre and Patrick twelve

**hurl -**

to throw with great force

**scanty -**

rarely sufficient or adequate

**crutch -**

a staff or support used by the physically injured or disabled as an aid in walking, usually designed to fit under the armpit and often used in pairs

**memoirs -**

an account of the personal experiences of an author

years earlier. Then, in December 1925, Sergey committed suicide. Although he and Isadora had been apart for two years, she was still very saddened by his death.

For the next year, Isadora gave a few concerts, corresponded with Irma about the Russian school, and made halfhearted plans to open a new school in France.

Now forty-nine years old, Isadora had dyed her white hair to keep it copper red, and she had grown quite heavy. But although Isadora had lost her girlish figure, she had not lost her charm. She was still surrounded by handsome men. "I love potatoes and young men, that's my trouble!" she once told a friend. As always, she was plagued by money troubles and managed to convince someone else to pay for the luxuries she enjoyed. Even Paris Singer was still lending her money.

She continued to dance, though one critic wrote of her performance at this time, "her art was seen to have changed. . . . Across her face, tilting this way and that, flee the mortal looks of tragedy, knowledge, love, scorn, pain." Isadora had certainly known all of those and more in her life.

By 1927, Isadora had lost her children, her husband, and her girlish figure. But she continued to dance and enjoy the finer things in life.

One day in September 1927, Isadora saw a beautiful red Bugatti sports car at a garage in Nice, France. A friend, Victor Seroff, suggested that she should pretend she was interested in buying the car so that the garage owner would let her have a ride. Isadora must have liked that idea, because on September 14, she asked for a driver to bring the Bugatti to her hotel.

Isadora was in good spirits that day. Waiting in her hotel room with some friends, she put a record on the phonograph and danced happily around the room. When the car arrived, she threw a favorite red-fringed shawl around her shoulders and ran downstairs. One friend suggested that the shawl was not warm enough, but Isadora wouldn't listen. She leaped gaily into the car and, with a smile and a wave, called out in French, "Farewell, my friends, I go to glory."

When the car started moving, Isadora's shawl became tangled in the spokes of one of the wheels and tightened around her neck. Within seconds, Isadora Duncan was dead. As if she had written her own death scene, Isadora died as dramatically as she had lived.

Isadora had devoted her life to proving that dance was a creative art like the paintings, music, sculpture, and literature that inspired her. Although she did not live to see the effects of her revolutionary style of dance, almost everything about her work, from her choice of music and costume to her spontaneous, natural movements, inspired the dancers and choreographers who followed her.

Considered by many to be the mother of modern dance, Isadora Duncan was a true original, both in her life and in her art. But for Isadora, life and art were one. "My art is just an effort to express the truth of my being in gesture and movement," she wrote in her memoirs. "From the first, I have only danced my life."

**SOURCE:** O'Connor. *Barefoot Dancer: The Story of Isadora Duncan*, Minneapolis. 2001. pp. 75-85

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the main idea of this text? Why did Isadora want to go to Russia and why did she spend her life trying to build a “temple”? What kind of temple was it?
2. What was the attitude of the Russian government and Lenin to Duncan at the beginning of her career in Moscow? What was the reason for the change of Russian political policy towards Duncan? And what were the reasons for Isadora “to stay in the Soviet Union” after the change in policy? How can ideology affect the success of an artist and how can they become the victim of political policy?
3. How would you comment on Isadora’s answer to people: “Why should I care what part of my body I reveal?” “Why is one part more evil than another? Is not all body and soul an instrument through which the artist expresses his other inner message of beauty?” Do you agree with this point?
4. What are the differences between the religious view about the “body as an instrument of the soul” and the artistic view of the body as an “instrument of beauty”?
5. How can families affect professional success? How can we separate the life and dance of Isadora Duncan? Why was her love affair with Esenin not successful?
6. What can you say about the origins of Isadora’s dance? What was the revolutionary spirit of Isadora’s dance? What are the connections between the human body and human diversity?
7. How can women express the soul through dance? How did Duncan and other feminists address the issues of gender domination through dance performances? What are the connections between women’s dance and women’s liberation?
8. Write an essay on women’s dance in Central Asia today? What problems do you face and must you address?

**COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the connections between the texts about Isadora Duncan and the texts and theory presented in Chapter Four?
2. What are the similarities and differences between Isadora’s dance and Muslim-culture dances?
3. Does every form of dance have revolutionary character, or only some?
4. What is the nature of revolutionary dance in other cultures and in your own culture?



**DANCING SOUL**

## DANCING WITH LONG SLEEVES

**Director: Yang Xiaolu, He Wei, produced by the Center of International Cultural Exchange; presented by The Bureau for External Cultural Relations, Ministry of Culture, P.R. China. Languages: English, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, Japanese and others. (some fragments)**

To learn about the dances of different nations and countries neighboring with Central Asia is impossible without visual observation of them. We will start introducing the features of dance as part of humanities from Tibet, with its amazing mountains and culture.

Dance has been a very important part of life for the people of Tibet over the past 5,000 years with its unique style and elegant forms. Presented in this film are dances from 'traditional and religious songs, filled with a mystical feels' that have survived over the centuries. Tibet is both ancient and modern, its dance and songs are actually a 'unique jewel of all humanity'.

Watching the film we should pay attention to the relationship between dance and human conditions. Why is it so necessary to create a dance for various occasions? What is the role of environment in implementing and maintaining the particular styles of beliefs, culture and arts?



**SOZANDA**



## NIZOM NURJONOV DANCERS (BUKHARIAN‘SOZANDA’S)

We will continue our discussion on dance and human diversity involving the material from traditional, popular and court dances of women in Central Asia. The author, professor Nizam Nurjanov, is one of the most prominent ethnomusicologist from Central Asia (Tajikistan), who has spent all his life searching traditional folk music and dance (traditional theatre). He has traveled to all settled Tajik regions (in modern Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and made descriptions of all currently existing dances, making connections with dances from other parts of the world. Professor Nizom Nurjonov is senior researcher at the Institute of History and Ethnography of the Academy of Science. After graduating from university he received a doctoral degree from Saint-Petersburg (USSR, Russia). In this text he tries to show the life and professional destiny of female singers and dancers (*sozanda's*) from Bukhara, the capital of the Bukhara Emirate (19-20th c.). He documents their success and death in the name of dance. Reading and analyzing the cases from the text we will consider the conditions of the dancing profession in Bukhara and connect them with issues of human diversity.



The art of professional Bukharan folk dancers, singers and musicians, “*sozanda*”, is the highest achievement of dance theater. *Sozanda* was only for female members of the household who were completely isolated from the males. Their performances were one of the favorite and almost the only entertainment and pleasure for Bukhara women. Not a single wedding or other family celebration was held without them: their music and dances were not only an entertainment but also presented a much-needed area of spiritual activity for people. It is not by accident that the art of dancers takes one of the leading places among other kinds of original national arts of the ancient city and is famous outside it because of its high art.

*Sozanda* could be found in some large districts of Bukhara, for example, in Ghijduvan. But it was lacking in the villages that surrounded the city as the majority of people who lived there were poor and didn't have money for such entertainment. Besides, the small size of its population and its low cultural activity level didn't allow artists to have regular work. At wedding parties women entertained themselves persistently inviting one another to dance. And in villages women danced without protruding their arms out of their sleeves.

*Sozanda* art was also popular in Samarqand, Kerky, Kermin, Shahrisabz, Kutab... but the number of artists in companies was not fixed. Mostly the group consisted of two *doira* players and one dancer, or one *doira* player and two dancers. In Ura-tube where customs of seclusion were strictly followed and women covered their faces even in the presence of a seven-year old boy, there were no dancers. The companies consisted only of *doira* players. And only the wives of *karnay* players and *urnay* players could do that. *Doira* players were invited to family celebrations and female-spectators danced to the accompaniment of the *doira*. In northern areas of Tajikistan the artists were wives, daughters-in-law, and other relatives of *urnay* and *karnay* players. At the

*karnay* and *urnay* -  
types of flute

*lulii beostin* -  
Per. a gypsy without sleeves

beginning of the 20th century in Khojent a leader of one such company was called “**lulii beostin**”. She was called so because when she played *doira*, she rolled up her sleeves and bared her arms. She had two dancers (*juvon*) – Kamolkhon and Barakhon. Later one of them was substituted by Mastonkhon.

The nickname of “*lulii beostin*” was then given to all artists who performed for females during family celebrations and for their fee from the spectators through “*sargardoni*”. Artists lived in the same area as *karnay* players and entered into marriage only in their milieu. Kamolkhon and Barakhon were not afraid to perform for males. There was one very talented, young and beautiful singer among the “*luli*” called Zebokhon. She played *dutor* and sang. Sometimes she dressed like a man and was a leading singer (*sarnaqsh*) when singing *naqsh*. She lived in a brothel (*jalabkhona*).

People despised artists. “*Surnaichi oru nomous nadorad*” (surna players do not have any shame or honor), they said. That’s why they did not marry female artists or marry off their daughters to artists. In Konibodom, when artists came, the hostess gave them six nons and sweets. Only after receiving this initial compensation did the artists begin to perform. During performances spectators would give one tanga but wouldn’t dance themselves. Now people do dance and give money to *doira* players. The repertory of Konibodom dancers consisted of a customary dance and a dance with spoons (*qoshuqbozi*).

In Chusts a company that consisted of 2-3 musicians played *doiras* and sang “*yalla*”. And the spectators inviting and inducing each other to participate in the dance, danced in turns almost under compulsion. In Konsoi there lived Muborak-yallachi whose husband was a dancer (*bacha*). One of the actresses who performed to the accompaniment of songs and *doira* was called Ibokhon.

In 1976 there was a group in Chusts led by a *doira* player, Oinisoqli. There were also two dancers, Tuhta and Ugul, in this group. Spectators presented them with money, national hats (*toqi*) and shawls that they embroidered themselves. Influence of the Bukhara *sozanda* reached even some district of Kulob province.

In the populated and cultural centers, Kulob and Baljuvon, one could see the performances of professional dancers (*bozinger* and *sozanda*). Every group (*dasta*) had a leader. Often, the person that organized the group was the leader. Usually it consisted of 4-5 people. An older woman who used to be a dancer in her younger years was the leader and accompanist. She also was called “**gholib**”. The group mainly performed at rich weddings and also in big villages located not far from the city. Group members lived separately in their houses. Husbands usually readily allowed their wives to be engaged in such profitable occupation.

The group’s main income came from weddings; they collected money from the spectators through “*sargardoni*” – when 4-5 dances were danced, a tambourine player (*doiradast* or *dafovi*) spreaded out a kerchief in front of her and began to tap out a special traditional tune consisting of several measures. That meant that the “*sargardoni*” had begun. The spectators gave a few small silver coins, rings, embroidered kerchiefs, etc., at their discretion. After that dances began again. The second round ended with a special dance “**qandchini**”: while dancing the dancer stopped in front of each woman and the latter put “**qandi safed**” in her wide, long sleeves. Besides these presents from the spectators, the hosts of the wedding also gave dancers money or clothes before they left. Everything was then divided equally among group members.

To illustrate the above, I’d like to give an example from the life and work of a group of professional dancers that existed at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in Baljuvon. An older but very smart woman, Odinamohi pahmdara (i.e.

**gholib** -  
winner  
**qandchini** -  
gathering sugar  
**qandi safed** -  
white sugar

Odinamoh from the village Pahmdara) organized this group. She lived in the village of Kaltachinor in the Baljuvon district. Her group consisted of five women. Three of these women, Guliboghimurod, Qumrikhon and Oiumkhon, were dancers. Odinamoh and her sister, Obidamoh, accompanied them on tambourine (*dairadast, dafovi*). They both were widows and the other group members were married. Their husbands didn't work and lived on the income earned by their wives. The group was invited to weddings and female gatherings in almost all the villages in Baljuvon.

Sometimes, people who wanted to have a magnificent wedding specially came from remote districts (Khovaling, Muminobod, Kulob, Kangurt, Hisor) to get this group. Usually the group came to the village solemnly, on horses that belonged to the hosts. The best dancer in this group, Guliboghimurod was known all over Kulob province. She performed "zangbozi" and "qairoqbozi" perfectly. Besides, she skillfully danced with two lighted lamps (*loltan*) in her hands.

One of the local people told us that around 1914-1915 he invited Odinamoh's group from Baljuvon and another group of dancers from Kulob for a festival dedicated to circumcision of his son. The performance of Odinamoh's group was a great success and many people enjoyed it. The group from Kulob couldn't even play tambourine properly. Odinamoh told the following joke to the Kulob dancers :

*My dear, raisins are sweet,  
Don't grieve, my friend.  
We'll go and you'll have Kuliab all to yourself.*

This story shows how Odinamoh's group was noted for the skill of its performances. Not every group could gain such a status. Groups of professional dancers existed at the end of 19th to the beginning of the 20th century among the Uzbek population of Qoqand as well. They were known as "yinchil"...

.... At the court of Bukhara the Emir had a special *sozanda* company that constituted a dance theater of female quarters "*urdai khosagi*" (personal harem) where the emir's mother was ruling. The most talented and famous *sozanda* were accepted in that company. The emir's detectives used to search for beautiful girls for the court harem and were also looking for such performers.

One of the oldest dancers, Mihali Karkigi, told us that at the beginning of the 20th century she was very famous among the Kerka population. The detective, Muharram (the Emir's investigator), learned about it and Mihali was forced to move to Bukhara to the Emir's palace. She gave birth to her first child (she gave birth to a daughter, Halir) when she was 14 and after that she bore 19 children. But Karkigi continued to dance until she was forty. When she was 34, her daughter Halir began to dance, and Karkigi gradually became doira player.

Actresses who were accepted to the court dance theater continued to live at home but had no right to perform at ordinary family celebrations. Only occasionally were



**DANCE WITH  
"DOIRA"**

**doira -**  
Persian word for tambourine

they allowed to dance at weddings and other celebrations organized by prominent officials and rich people who sent requests to the emir's mother in advance and gave her special gifts. At court the dancers obeyed the senior dancer, the "gholib". Dancing performances were the main (if not the only) entertainment for court women. They were organized on the occasion of marriages of the emir's dignitaries; celebrations of circumcision of their children, putting a baby in a cradle, the son's first haircut, reaching maturity by boys and girls, celebration of the new year, and receptions. Such celebrations were organized once or twice a month. Dancers were even invited when the Emir's mother was bored. After receiving an order to bring the dancer immediately, the detective went to her home. The dancer, in her turn, stopped whatever she was doing at home, hired a carriage and went to the palace. Only occasionally was a carriage sent out for *sozandas*.

First of all, the dancers came to pay their respects to the emir's mother: they came to her chambers bowing and kissing her hand. Then they went to a special room for artists and got ready for their performance. Quite often celebrations went on for a whole week (or two). That's why the dancers had to make themselves comfortable in that room which was equipped with even a place for babies.

A feast for women was organized in a big (approximately 30x20m) beautifully-decorated hall called "**sozkhona**". Its walls were decorated with wonderful murals; the floor was covered with expensive and beautiful carpet (*coshma*) and above it with thick and soft cloth with gauze ornaments. Long mats covered with silk were laid along the walls for guests to sit on. The hall was illuminated with big lamps hanging from the ceiling and walls. The Emir mother's throne was decorated with golden cloth with fringes and tassels and stood in the interior of the hall. Two women sat by the throne: one was fanning the regent with a big fan and the other served her tea.

Wives and relatives of the former and current emir and dignitaries were invited to the feast. Out of those who lived outside the palace only wives of the most distinguished dignitaries were invited. Guests wore gorgeous clothes, sat on the mats and observed a very strict etiquette in the presence of the regent. They all called her "**Podshohbibi**". Children (boys as well as girls) and men were not allowed into the *sozkhona*. The dancers and *doira* players usually sat by the entrance doors in the lower part of the hall (braziers stood in front of the accompanists). Usually, at small celebrations, four *doira* players and four dancers took turns. At big festivals the number of dancers and *doira* players reached ten. The costumes of court dancers were distinguished by their luxury. Every dancer wore up to ten dresses made of various expensive fabrics: one could see a common brocade (*zarduzi*) and **kundal**, and fine silk (*harir*), and smooth velvet, and printed velvet (*gulbakhmal*). The sleeves of these dresses could have been seen under each other. The dancers wore pants made of *kundal* and *farang*. They decorated their heads with *peshonaband*. They also wore gold rings, bracelets, earrings and other jewelry. The clothes and jewelry belonged to the dancers.

The feast in the *sozkhona* began at 10 in the morning. Following a signal from the *Podshohbibi* the dancers entered, accompanied by *doiras*, to the area where guests were not sitting. Spinning smoothly they came close to the regent, kneeled and sang "**ulang**". Then, bending, the dancers moved back, took their castanets and performed "**qairoqbozi**". Then other dances followed. They sang and performed songs that were performed in homes of Bukhara people. Only a dance of dervish's "qalandari" was lacking. As the majority of dignitaries were Uzbeks, *sozanda* also sometimes sang Uzbek songs in response to their requests. For instance, "**sochi jamolak**" and "**almacha anor**".

**sozkhona** -

a hall for feasts and performances

**Podshohbibi** -

padishah's mother

**kundal** -

brocade of the high

**ulang** -

a song that praised the emir and his family wishing them good health, longevity and happiness

**qairoqbozi** -

dance with castanets

**sochi jamolak** -

false braids

**almacha anor** -

pomegrate tree

The *sozkhona* was spacious and comfortable, and *sozanda* used this space making three or four rounds “*charhi zonu*”. Karkigi – *khanum* told the author: “*mo kaik barin meparidem*”. Dances continued until the emir’s mother made it clear that it was time to feed guests. Usually, after the afore-mentioned dance, a “*forward*” followed. If, after that, the *poshshobibi* didn’t give a corresponding sign, *sozanda* danced again and sang another song. While guests ate their first course (roast meat), the dancers retreated to their room to get some rest and change clothes. Dances started again and didn’t stop until *plov* was served at the regent’s sign. While guests ate, the emir’s mother usually went to another room. A *dastarkhan* was spread for dancers also and they ate the same food as the guests. Servants put the remaining sweets in bags that *sozanda* brought with them.

If the celebration was ordinary, the feast continued till evening. In such cases “*zang*” wasn’t performed. It was usually performed at big weddings and celebrations dedicated to circumcision. The guests were entertained not only during the daytime but in the evening as well. And dancers danced until the light of a new day could be seen in the windows located near the ceiling. Quite frequently such performances were organized in the yard. Everything took place around a bonfire “*davri ugur*”. The dancers danced barefoot. Often, after continuous dances on brick flooring, the soles of their feet cracked and after performing “*charkhi zonu*” blood came from their knees. The dancer nicknamed *guli surkh* could go seven rounds around the bonfire on her knees.

Five *sozandas* performed “*zang*” in the yard. The dance went on without any special changes. To the accompaniment of tambourines the dancers went around the hall two-three times swirling constantly. “*Zang*” was interrupted only for 5 or 10 minutes so the dancers were able to answer the call of nature or feed their babies. Mihali Karkagi told that she gave birth to her first daughter half an hour after the end of a big celebration that lasted for three days and three nights. Ten or fifteen days after delivery the dancers resumed their performances. Exceptions were made only for the gravely ill.

No matter how tired dancers were, they had no right to stop dancing or singing until the Emir’s mother said: “enough”. Eyewitnesses described how *sozanda* Halirkhon came to court. She “was delicate, graceful, with a very slim waist (probably that’s why she was called Halirkhon) (chiffon), and a cheerful and playful woman.” Once a luxurious carriage padded with red velvet came to her house. Golden-embroidered covers were on the horses’ backs. She got ready very quickly and left. The dancer put on a wide, pink dress tightened at the waist with fluffy ruffles on the skirt. She put on a hat with narrow plaits and attached small bells to her hands and feet. Halirkhon entered the big hall. Eight tambourine players were already there. She came to **Eshon-oiim** who sat on a bed, bowed before her three times, kneeled down and kissed the hem of her dress.

Tambourine players began to play. My aunt (Halirkhon – n.n.) was in the center, she was dancing solo and all others joined in a song. Once she danced in a big festival.

**charkhi zonu** -

spinning on her knees

**mo kaik barin meparidem** -

Persian: we were jumping like fleas

**guli surkh** -

red flower

**Eshon-oiim** -

the author calls Emir’s mother



Halirhon “was pregnant and was scared to come to the palace, but who would listen to her desires! That time she was singing and dancing for a very long time but the mistress (the Emir’s mother – n.n.) didn’t respond.

I looked at her bed – she was sleeping! No one was allowed to wake her up... Halirkhon was moving as if unconscious and looked like she was about to collapse. Someone couldn’t endure it any longer and carefully woke up the mistress and pleadingly pointed at my aunt. The mistress, yawning, allowed the dance to stop. Halirkhon barely left the room and fell down just as she reached the threshold. She gave birth to a stillborn son. Sometimes in the intervals “*bibikhalifa*” would read books upon the emir’s mother’s request. That was the second entertainment for court women but it was very minor in comparison to *sozanda* performances.

When they danced for the court, *sozanda* didn’t collect money from the spectators. The dancers were given presents at the end of the feast before they went home. Every one was paid 2,040 *tangas* wrapped in paper and received a tray with a set of clothes (for instance, a white silk dress or a dress made of fancy fabrics of that time – *kundal*, *kimhob*, *gulbakhmal*, a camisole made of *kundal* and a length of *farang* for pants. The presents corresponded to the level of endowments and skillfulness of the performers: the best *sozanda* usually got a more expensive attire, and other dancers and doira players something cheaper. Usually the payment was given to their leader who then distributed it. The payment had to be shared with a whole assembly of high-ranking servants because not only the work of the dancers depended on them but even their life and death.

Sometimes the dancers received gifts directly from the *Podshohbibi*. That happened when she really liked a performance. In the presence of guests she solemnly sent a *sozanda* one of her dresses (sometimes she took it off of herself). The dancers received gifts when they gave birth to children. Someone from their family came to the palace and received a robe or something else as a gift for joyful news. The dancers left some of the presents as a dowry for their children and the rest they sold.

At the end of 20th century a poor woman and her daughter came to Bukhara and the girl was accepted by a *sozanda* as a student. Soon this talented girl with a beautiful voice became an excellent dancer and singer. For her frailty and grace people nicknamed her Maida (little one). She was also called that because she was younger than her teacher, Tillo. People say that when this delicate, graceful creature began to dance, her infatuating dance conquered spectators with the nobility and resplendence of its nuances. As the attitude of the dancer to her art was sublime, the spectators also felt joyful excitement as they prepared to meet the beauty. That’s why spectators always waited for her performances with enthusiasm. Once, the Emir was informed that she planned to perform for male company. But in fact she had been tricked and brought to the feast of rich, young men. Maida just sat, her foot to the house, when it was surrounded by police. She was seized together with two organizers and participants of the feast. The men were punished and received 75 blows with a stick and then they became soldiers. Maida was shot at night not far from the *ark*. Her hands were tied to two sticks with a prop for armpits that were dug in the ground. She was killed under a *chachvan* because Islamic laws didn’t allow women to open their faces in public even when they died. That happened around 1903. This fact is also confirmed by M.C. Andreev. Probably, such stories undermined the *sozandas*’ reputation although they were quite respectable in regard to moral issues. The story of the *sozanda* Maida was not the only one. That happened often. Hundreds of stories described by S. Aini in his “memoirs” can be found in support of it: people were tied to horse tails, thrown down from minarets, publicly executed in squares, etc. This company as well as other

**bibikhalifa -**

a woman who studied in theological Islamic school for girls

**kimhob -**

a special kind of brocade

**gulbakhmal -**

a variety of velvet with weaved in ornaments



representatives of folk theater were considered the lowest strata of society. That's why *sozanda* mainly married artists.

At the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century *sozandas* Azizaoui, Maksadcha, Naverakhon, Jannatkhon, and Bepustkhon were well known in Samarqand. Here the art of dancing was simpler than in Bukhara; dance sequences and some movements were lacking there (for example, “*larzon*” or when a dancer takes the end of one of her braids with both hands and goes in circles on her knees (*charkh*)). The songs were also different and the performance used to begin with the “*abdurah-monbegim*” song.

The names of many dancers of the last centuries have vanished forever. Some of them can be found, but only occasionally. For instance, we know of one Samarqand singer and dancer of the second half of the 15th century, Saily Oshik. In his book “**Bade'-ul-vaqoe**” the Tajik writer, Zainiddin Vosifi, writes about a famous actress from Herat, Shakarkhonum who was performing in Samarqand from the beginning of the 16th century. She could sing and play *chang* with great mastery.

Since 1870, the name of another famous dancer, Qurbonkhon, is also mentioned. She was born in Samarqand in 1858. Her father was Iranian and weaved silk. He was killed in 1868 when the city was under siege and all their property was looted. Her mother was in great need and had to marry Qurbonkhon off to get the bride-money. A year after her marriage Qurbonkhon learned that her husband had a second wife, divorced him and became a dancer. “Possessing beauty, voice and manners she bravely performed on a scene enjoying support of the Russians.” Her dances drove spectators into ecstasies and they were calling frantically: “**jon!**”.

... In approximately 1915, the Bukharan dancers were mostly Tajik. But in the second half of the 20th century local Jews began to become *sozandas*. Earlier, those dancers performed in other towns, for instance in Kerki (the majority of population there were Jews). In feudal Bukhara, where racial discrimination was very obvious, the Jewish population had a very vulnerable status. Bukharan nobles didn't invite them under the pretence of them being dirty, so mostly Tajik dancers danced during weddings. Jews were often invited by common people. Soon some Jewish dancers became popular due to their talents and skill.

The involvement of local Jews in vocal art (*shashmaqom*) and the art of singing and dancing (*sozanda*) can be explained in several ways. For some Jews (especially those who adopted Islam) it was easier to become engaged in the arts than in other spheres of life because although performers were regarded as the lowest caste, it was a profession accessible only to talented people. There were many gifted people among local Jews. Their women quickly learned the art of dance by observing Tajik dancers. They understood the language as Central Asian Jews and had assimilated the Tajik language a long time ago and spoke it with their own peculiar dialect. In public everyone tried to speak following the accepted norms of the Tajik language. Moreover, in the time of very strict Sharia laws not every Tajik woman would dare openly sing and dance, even among her

**Bade'-ul-vaqoe** -  
a book literally means -  
surprising events  
**jon** -  
dear; darling

friends. That's why there were not enough *sozanda* companies in the city. But the demand for them was growing. Jewish women were able to help, satisfying both their creative aspirations, and finding a good source of income. Besides, Jewish women felt freer. Although they were wearing a veil, they dared to show their faces. After the October Revolution brought liberty, the number of Jewish *sozandas* grew larger and they began to compete with Tajiks in mastering the *sozanda's* profession, making efforts to become proficient in performance to gain popularity among spectators to monopolize this area. The fact that Jews became engaged in performing the *shahmaqom* and *sozanda* can also be explained by their great inclination to singing. It is not by chance that they weren't involved in other arts (puppet show, *maskharabozes*, male dance theater, folk circus, etc.). Jews assimilated the *shahmaqom* and *sozanda*, accepted and mastered Tajik performance movements, all canonic forms, and living conditions and tried to hold to the tastes of the public that for centuries had been brought up with their national artistic traditions. Certainly, while mastering the traditional art of one nation, they brought in their individual peculiarities but they didn't dare change or add, or enrich it with new material from their culture. Besides, Jews the had forgotten their native language and arts for their history had been so harsh.

The first Jewish dancers appeared around the 1890s in Kermin. The emir's father who lived in this town recommended the best and most famous dancers for performances at the emir's palace. That's how the wonderful dancers, Shishakhon and Malkoi, and Oshma, arrived there. The real name of Shishakhon is Booloor. "*Shisha*" means "glass" and "*Booloor*" – crystal. Both names corresponded to her appearance; she was fair-skinned and white-headed. Malko was compelled to renounce her religion but to no avail; *sozanda* was firm. Tuvoi karkigi (i.e. Tuvo from kerki) became famous before the October Revolution. Her daughter, Mikhali Karkigi, was also very famous for she had inherited her mother's skill.

During the first years after the revolution and the beginning of the new life and liberation of women, the number of Tajik dancers grew, and many of them soon became very popular, such as Saidakhon, Muhabbatkhon, Nazirakhon, Mahbubakhon, Bahshankhon, and Jamilakhon. Such talented Jewish *sozanda* as Kundal, Chervonkhon, Haliri, Karkigi, Gubur, Bahmal, Noshputi, Nabot, and Turunj also won the recognition of spectators. But local people preferred Tajik dancers and not Jews.

From the times of old there existed a tradition: when spectators noted something peculiar in the skills or appearance of a dancer, they gave her a nickname. For instance, Sozanda Koghazpech was nicknamed so because she was famous for her song where every line ended with a word "**pechondi**". Here is one line:

*Man mushk budam, ba koghazam pechondi*

Eyewitnesses told that **Koghazpech** was pockmarked but very charming and fiery, notable for her artistry. Sozanda **Tillo** was called such because during her performances she decorated herself with gold jewelry. She was absolutely not a beauty (she was dark-skinned and her face looked as if it was pressed down) but she fascinated everyone with her high professionalism, emotional generosity, and fine taste. When she was dancing she was stately and dignified; when she was singing, lyrical and melodious. The spectators were driven into ecstasies with her dances and gave her gold. The real name of Sozanda Kundal is Adino. She liked to dress in high quality brocade (*kundal*) and that's why she was nicknamed so. There was another dancer who was called Adino and her nickname was Chervonkhon for the spectators gave her new paper money (*tchervontsy*) that was difficult to get at that time. *Sozanda* Fireho coquetted with

**kogazpech** -  
literally "wrapped in paper"

**pechond** -  
you've wrapped

**man mushk budam, ba kog-  
hazam pechondi** -  
I was musk, you wrapped me  
in paper

**tillo** -  
gold

spectators and minced a lot while she danced. People began to call her **Karashma**. The spectators found something in common with the soft shape of a pear in the appearance of *Sozanda* Hevsy. That's why she was nicknamed Noshputi.

In 1924 three *sozanda* were invited to a big wedding: Kundal, Noshputi and another Hevsy who was nicknamed that day. It was derived from a word "gumbur" ("m" was omitted) meaning quickly, swiftly. In fact, when she danced the choreographed part of her performance she introduced in it a lot of dynamism, agility, energy and optimism. Her performance was full of vigor and she tapped her feet in a rhythm. The spectators caught on to this feature of hers and called the dancer Gubur. Her real name was Hevsy. In the 1920s and 1930s Gubur became the favorite folk dancer. She was, so to say, on fire within when she danced. Vivid, lively motives seemed to spring from her emotional movements and singing. Gubur introduced so much sincerity, inexhaustible energy, emotional output and lively dynamism that from her first dance she absorbed the spectators' attention. Her plasticity was very expressive and noted for its dynamic *charkhs*, and peculiar poses.

Gubur (Hevsy Aronova) was born in 1906 in Dushanbe village. Soon her family moved to Bukhara. Being afraid that the girl would be taken to the palace (one time the detectives noticed her and nearly took her there; Hevsy was saved only because her mother showed her little sister instead of Hevsy) and willing to get rich at the same time, her father married thirteen year old Hevsy off to a sixty year old *bayi* who already had several wives. Her husband took Hevsy to Dushanbe but after the October Revolution he ran away. Hevsy was caught by the Basmachi. She managed to escape and was caught by a Red Army unit where she began to work as a cook. In 1921 she returned to Bukhara and performed as a *sozanda*. Hevsy had learned that art from her mother. She learned many things from the skilled dancers, Tillo and Mukurramchi, as she performed alongside them many times. Gubur's aunt and some other female relatives were also *sozanda*. Gubur's mother, Mazol, began to dance when she was 15. As she brilliantly performed the "yusufi shamolak" song, she became very popular. As with many other *sozanda*, Gubur liked to dance right up till giving birth, satisfying the requests of her customers. A wide Bukharan dress helped to hide her pregnancy. She gave birth to her third son, David, at 4 a.m. In 1939 and before that she performed "zang" at weddings. Gubur was one of the last dancers who truly inherited and observed *sozanda* traditions. She was particularly famous in the 1920 and 1930s. The most attractive thing in her art was that Gubur was able to enthrall spectators with her temperament, emotionality and musical talent. She had some devoted admirers (one of them was the aunt of the author of this piece) who followed her without invitation to various family celebrations where she performed. Gubur tutored many dancers. Tuhfa was especially popular. She was born in 1928 in Bukhara into a family of teachers. Tufa learned well and continued to follow *sozanda* traditions.

Oliyakhon Hasanova (born in 1937) was another popular *sozanda* in the 1970s and 1980s. Her real name was Olima but people called her Oliya. She told us that she

became a dancer because of particular circumstances. When the girl was eight her father died (he was a barber). Her mother had six more children and she was in difficult straits, so she married Olima off when she still was very young (only sixteen). Soon Olima's husband was arrested and she was suffering from poverty with her four children. Once a doira player, Rizvon Rahimova, felt sorry for the young woman and invited Olima to her company. Her group also consisted of Jamila, Salomat, Hakima, Sharofat and Rizvon. Jamila and Salomat were dancers and others accompanied them on doiras. People came to Rizvon's house to invite the company to their feasts and Rizvon then informed her artists. Often one of the women refused to go and only four people performed. "Rizvon was the first who raised my hand", said Olima (Dasti, Mana, Bolo, Kardagi, Apai, Rizvon). She learned how to dance from the dancers Jamila, Hakima, Rahima, and later, Tufa.

Oliya is a *sozanda* with a very refined and high style. All her movements, including that of the tips of her little fingers are refined, conscious, gracious and fascinating. Dancing in a splendid ancient Bukharan costume, Oliya dances softly, graciously, unhurriedly, enchanting everyone with her professionalism and the melodiousness of the dance. The process of dancing gives her immense pleasure. She enjoys the beauty of her every movement and gives the spectators a chance to enjoy it too. Short pauses, poses fixed for a moment still contain an echo of some fascinatingly graceful gesture, the sweet expression of her eyes or happy smile that conveys warm feelings to the spectators. When singing a song "hr, ranche, voi, voi ty ranchie" (oh, grief, oh, my grief), Oliya in turns sits in all four corners of a room where spectators sit along the walls. She makes these stops so smoothly and gently that the hem of her dress spreads widely forming a regular circle and accentuates her upper body like a beautiful statue on a pedestal.

Traditional performances of dancers continued up to the beginning of the 1930s. Then professional theaters began to invite them. Individual performances weren't encouraged for some time. After the Great Patriotic War *sozanda* began to actively perform at various family celebrations that were usually held on weekends. Dancers worked intensively on weekends for they were in great demand and had to perform at 3-4 celebrations every day. Their repertoire consisted of traditional dances "kairakbozi" and "zang". But their modern version is modified and very simplified. Another social order has replaced the former era, another time has come. The social environment and way of life have changed. Cut-back versions of singing and dancing heritage are in use now. Modern-day *sozandas* have lost the superb dancing techniques of the previous skillful dancers; they don't use the best artistic performance techniques in their songs and dances. However, the artistic *sozanda* traditions haven't perished. They are preserved by the people and they continue to develop, enriching professional forms and genres of choreography.

**SOURCE:** AKHP translation. Nizam Nurdjanov: Dancers // Traditional Tajik Theater. Dushanbe, 2002, Vol.I p.276.

### **DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the main idea of this text? What was the main feature of *sozandas*? How are gender issues reflected in *sozanda* activities? What was the traditional attitude of people to the artists? Why was it negative in many cases?
2. What were the marriage issues of the *sozandas*? What did their husbands think about

their wives' occupations? Why did the artists' main income come from weddings?

3. What can you say about the case of Odinamohi Pahmdara from Kulob? Who organized the sazanda's group, her income, and the role of husbands in this profession? What are the differences between the lives of actresses who were accepted to the court dance theater and the artists serving family celebrations?
4. Please describe the first dancers to show their respect to the emir's mother. What was the life of Mihali Karkagi like in the court? What can we say about the rights of dancers to stop dancing in court for the Emir's mother? Describe the story of Aunt Halirkhon.
5. What was the destiny of *sozanda* Maida (little one)? Can you justify her punishment because of her performance for a male audience?
6. What were the particular reasons local Jews began to become *sozanda* in Bukhara? Please describe the arts of *sozanda* Tillo (gold) and Gubar. What were the reasons that traditional performances continued up to the beginning of 1930s?
7. Why have modern-day *sozandas* lost the superb dancing techniques of the previous skillful dancers?
8. How did the *sozanda's* dance express the issues of human diversity?



**DANCE "ZANG". P307**

"Traditonal Tajik Theatre" vol I  
Dushanbe 2002

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

1. What were the similarities and differences in conditions for the female *sozanda* dancers of Bukhara, and Isadora Duncan in Soviet Russia during the revolution?
2. Can you find the connections between the texts, films on the diversity of dance and Bukhara dance by *sozandas*? What was the purpose of the *sozanda's* dance in Bukhara: purification of souls, therapy, or pure entertainment?
3. What are the similarities between the dances of *sozanda's* and female singers in the entertainment business in Cairo in the 1920s?
4. Hypothetically, how could one answer the mullahs from the film regarding the dancing *sozanda's* and the emir's mother from Bukhara?
5. What kinds of gender issues and problems of domination (sexual, class, race, etc.) can we find in the texts we have read in this chapter?





**GENDER AND DANCE**



## JUDITH LYNNE HANNA, DANCE, SEX, AND GENDER: SIGNS OF IDENTITY, DOMINANCE, AND DESIRE

In this part of our discussion we will talk about the language of dance expressing the issues of human diversity: men, women, homosexuality etc., and dance as an instrument for rebellion against different forms of domination. The author, Judith Lynne Hanna is a senior research scholar in the Department of Dance at the University of Maryland, Bethesda, and an education program specialist at the U.S. Department of Education of Educational Research and Improvement. Her books include "To Dance Is Human", also published by the University of Chicago press.

Is dance a "language"? Why not? "Dance also has symbolic potential, and in that sense more often resembles poetry than prose; how do we learn to "speak" and "hear" the language of dance? How does dance communicates ideas, stories, emotions, and moods using space, level, amplitude, focus, grouping, and rhythm and so on?"

In this text the author discusses the question of the relationship between human diversity and the dance profession and how it has affected the approaches to dance throughout history: male domination, women's liberation, gay men's liberation and etc. [See: Judith: <http://www.rio.rj.gov.br/centrocoreograficodorio/en/ensaios002.html>]

### MEN, WOMEN, AND HOMOSEXUALITY

*Dance for Women's Liberation: Indict, Dismantle, Create*

Turn-of-the-century modern dance was in part a rebellion against male domination in both dance and society. Role strain characterized the Victorian era, a period of rapid change. While men were expected to be sexually aggressive, the middle class was at the same time expected to be self-denying so as to serve the needs of the bureaucratized industrial society of managers, professionals, and entrepreneurs. Charles Rosenberg speaks of the expository metaphor of the mercantilist body, an image of "a closed energy system, one which could be either weakened through the discharge of energy or strengthened through its prudent husbanding" (1973, 243). The work imperative demanded that men bottle up emotion, repress sex, and regulate population. There were also conflicting streams of religious thought about sexuality. Whereas some theologians embraced sexual passion as redemptive and innocent ecstasy (the body was redeemed by accepting its desires) (Gardella 1985), other theologians adhered to a degeneracy theory (too much sex made people sick) (Money 1985).

Women's bodies were viewed as thoroughly **saturated** with sexuality and governed by sex-linked irrationality (Foucault 1978, 6). Slotted as they were, daring women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who were cut off from male **prerogatives** took advantage of the behavior attributed to their gender: they acted emotionally through the physical medium of dance, drawing upon what researchers have recently documented to be their superior sensitivity to nonverbal communication as well as their "emotionality" (Henley 1977; hall 1979a). Men generally manifested emotion indirectly through other more "intellectual" arts.

**saturated -**  
unable to hold or contain  
more; full

**prerogative -**  
the exclusive right and power  
to command, rule, or judge

Women's critique of the nineteenth-century system that excluded them from key economic and political roles and relegated them to the home and the realm of morals took a variety of forms. Women created new fields such as modern dance, social work, kindergarten teaching, and librarianship rather than compete in male professions. Affirmation and female control of the body was one thrust of the women's critique. In the birthing and further development of modern dance, women looked to themselves for inspiration as they formed female-dominated dance companies similar to the small businesses that ethnic groups owned, controlled, and found to be vital instruments of upward mobility. About her 1937 *trend*, a signature work that depicted a society being destroyed by its false values, early modern dance trailblazer Hanya Holm reflected in 1984: "The subject matter would still be good today. . . . Only women danced it. There were no men then. . . . Women at that time had to be as strong as a man would be" (quoted in Dunning 1984b).

Emphatically beyond traditional domestic life to which women had been relegated, theater dance epitomizes a public world; from a cross-cultural perspective, women appear oppressed or lacking in value and status to the extent that they are relegated to the domestic world; "women gain power and a sense of value when they are able to **transcend** domestic limits, either by entering the men's world or by creating a society" (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974, 41).

Through modern dance and its affirmation of the female body, women chose to be agent rather than object. Constrained economically as well as physically by male-imposed dress styles that distorted the body and hampered natural movement, by restricted education, and by health practices that prevented them from breathing fresh air and eating a sensible diet, some innovative women displayed their strength and their displeasure with traditional roles by breaking the rules of the rigidly-codified traditional ballet. They extended the boundaries of dance with revolutionary movement vocabularies, grammars, composition techniques, themes, and costumes. Women offered new dance systems and images alongside the *dame d'école* developed by men, showing their new choreography onstage invited audience admiration, empathy, and contact, perhaps relieving some women's male-imposed feelings of social and physical insignificance.

The dance medium also permitted women to control and sublimate their sexuality, which had been dominated by men. To get ahead in an uncharted avant-garde, some women needed a nunlike dedication; other middle- and upper-class respectable women in dance had love affairs in and out of marriage to show their new sense of social/sexual equality.

Asserting themselves as individuals against traditional female destiny, ground-breaking American modern dancers through onstage dress helped to de-corset wasp-waisted females. Tight lacing oppressed the body and enforced sexual taboos, whereas unlacing signified sexual release. While the corset worn in ballet helped pull up the body and enabled the woman's male partner to get a good grip when lifting her, it also prevented from feeling her flesh (Kunzle 1982, 84). What women wore closely mirrored their changing role in American society. The rigid female silhouette of earlier years collapsed with the quest for changes in feminine education, health, and professional opportunity. Intrigued with the interplay of body, intellect, and spirit, female dancers investigated and experimented. Braless, corsetless, and bare-foot, most modern dancers' free style of dress symbolized physical freedom and a renewed, diversified self image as the twentieth century progressed, taboos on what parts of the body could be shown slowly disappeared. With the advent of tights and new dance movement, spectators saw the body – crotches, asses, thighs, and breasts – from every possible angle.

Modern dancers' aggressiveness paralleled women's late nineteenth- and twentieth-century questioning of patriarchy, which included change in conventions surrounding choice of a spouse, rise of marital equality and mutual decision making, campaigns for women's suffrage and higher education, and middle-class women's entry into the labor market during and after world war ii. Modern dancers extended women's fight to gain control over their own bodies (Degler 1980; Douglas 1977).

Initially women's achievement, modern dance bore their style-setting stamps. Females were choreographers, dancers, company founders, and managers. They established schools. ...critic Anna Kisselgoff (1985) notes, "a premise about movement became a basis for a dance technique in each case and, by extension, became a metaphor for an esthetic – for what each dancer wished to say through her dancing." Modern dance stood for freedom for personal expression through one's own movement idiom.

Duncan (1938, 49, 56, 69, *passim*) believed ballet projected a socially pernicious image of women: virginal, disembodied *syphide*, frail, sexually passive. She denounced the recruitment of dancers from the slums as exploitation of the rich by the poor and a perversion of artistic values in favor of the prurient. Considering movement to be an antidote to the rigidities of modern life, Duncan, with messianic zeal, founded schools for children.

St. Denis, mother of the most flourishing lineage of modern dance, began her career in the flurry of vaudeville. There she had performed her rapid-fire stunts about eleven times a day on a stage adjacent to the presentation of midgets and two-headed calves in jars. She turned to exotica, for non-western cultures offered visual beauty and spiritual messages, in contrast to western industrial life. The critique of traditional women's options through new forms of dance was thus in some ways indirect and symbolic; ballet choreographers had also drawn upon exotic cultures, but to make their art innovative. In a 1952 address to the students of Bernard College, St. Denis said, "Today is woman's hour. It is woman's chance to offset what men may be doing in the realm of politics and war. It is woman's place to foster and develop the cultural forces of civilization." She lauded the plans for a new world's fair that would include the placing of "dance upon a level of dignity and power" (*New York Times*, June 4, 1932).

Graham's movement vocabulary redefined the art of dance: stunning, sharp, and percussive patterns of torso contraction and release (movements corresponding to life's breathing, sexual tension, agony and ecstasy), twisting and spiraling spinal movements (ballet focused on limbs, with the torso held as a single unit), parallel and inwardly rotated positions of the legs (ballet uses a turnout), flexed feet (ballet feet are pointed), an Egyptian-inspired walk in which feet move in one direction while the upper body twists open against that base, pelvic isolation, and falls to the floor. Graham thematically presented earthy and socially relevant *sturm* and *drang* dynamics dealing with dominance, **unbridled** passion versus duty, attraction and repulsion, and submerged guilt and open eroticism to counter ballet's **ethereal** fantasies. She began teaching in 1925. Former graham dancer Ernestine Stodelle (1984), in an uncritical

**unbridled** -  
uncontrolled  
**ethereal** -  
highly refined; delicate

apologia for her mentor, believes that dancers who flocked to Graham (active as a dancer and choreographer over nearly six decades – the longest creative period of any choreographer) came to identify with an ideal and a person greater than themselves who symbolized the creative act,

A younger writer and dancer, Eleanor Luger, puts into words what has been a resoundingly female theme: “what I have been interested in from a woman’s point of view, what I have experienced in my own dancing, is trying to tie up movement with one’s own image as a woman” (Luger and Laine 1978, 66). Movements carry the inner feelings and cultural overlays of sexuality and sex role identities.... Graham portrayed settler women of America’s pioneer history in frontier and *Appalachian* spring. She also dealt with the great lovers and haters of Greek tragedy.

Contributing to the foundation for the popular androgyny of the 1980s, exemplified by singer Michael Jackson, some women such as Anna Halprin and Meredith Monk fulfilled their gender movement impulses and went on to express in performance the male and female possibilities within us all. That is, either or both sexes do the same movements in abnegation of stereotyped gender actions. Monk also has experimented with makeup and costuming to obscure sex identity; for example, she sometimes wears a mustache. Senta Driver’s choreography extends women’s early use of “male” weight and power by reversing dancers’ traditional gender roles: her women lift and carry men.

Participants in postmodern dance (Banes 1980), a rebellion against modern dance that both women and men have been developing since the 1960s, have tended to deemphasize sexuality and genderspecific movement, which audience members may, nonetheless, still perceive. Growing in tandem with an increasing acceptance of recreational sex and unisex dress and behavior, a postmodern dance gained much of its inspiration from Merce Cunningham, who had been a Graham discovery, protegee, and company member. As part of the movement to give men more substantive roles onstage, discussed later, Cunningham did away with the need for dance to follow a musical structure, story, psychological pattern, or even the demands and rules of traditional theater. ...

...Female dancers have thus challenged the typical male supremacist and female submissive scripts. Women, and some men, now call for men to pay attention to their own bodies and sensuality so that they may discover physical desires apart from a socialized desire to dominate. Joseph Pleck (1979) argues that the relative privilege and false consciousness of it that men get from sexism may allow them to reconcile their subordination in the larger political economy. Keeping women as an underclass reduces the stress of competition and preserves a level to which man cannot fall. Because male powerlessness or refusal to compete becomes imbued with the imagery of homosexuality, male domination of females in dance may prop up the level of social prestige to which men cannot fall.

## **GAY AND MEN’S LIBERATION**

Having addressed the part of the question about female participation in dance, I now turn to why male homosexuals are disproportionately attracted to dance. On the fringe of society and receptive to the unconventional, the art world offers gay men an opportunity to express an aesthetic sensibility that is emotional and erotic, an insulation from a rejecting society, an avenue of courtship, and an arena in which to deal with homosexual concerns. It has been argued that “the male homosexual has found the means to *pass* by identifying himself as artistic/romantic rather than simply gay. So

the social rejection on the basis of sexuality is refocused by the justification of art.” Especially important for the perpetuation of dance as a magnet for gays was nondancer Sergey Diaghilev, himself gay, founder and director of the ballets Russes, and renowned in the twentieth-century art world for over two decades. Gay dancers basked in the aura of the respect showered upon Diaghilev. Seeds for homosexual themes onstage were sown when he introduced his lover, Vaclav Nijinsky, to the west in 1909.

Barry Laine, a gay American writer and amateur dancer, has said that homosexual males who pursue a dance career do not have as much to lose as other males (Pers. Com. 1980). Because gays have already broken the compact of mainstream sexual behavior, their occupational deviancy is less threatening to them. Although some Americans consider homosexuality immoral or sick behavior, the arts professions, marginal itself, historically has been tolerant of all kinds of marginality, including homosexual orientation.

In *Alienated Affections: Being Gay In America*, English professor Seymour Kleinberg writes about the homosexual sensibility of elegance, sensitivity, and ironic distance between the self and the world and “aesthetic discrimination of the finest sort” – whose mythic impact has been felt in the elite culture of the arts (1980, 38, *passim*). . . .

...Kleinberg (1980) calls male homosexual sensibility feminine and erotic. Male dancers share more with females and are expected to be more emotionally expressive than mainstream American men, who are allowed to show emotion physically only in such well-defined situations as celebrating athletic success, when they break taboos against men touching by patting each other on the buttocks and hugging. Gay men identify with the effeminate yearnings, feelings, and romantic idealization of the ballet, which is not marked by sexual preference so much as by sexual grace for both sexes.

Moreover, in presenting an image of interaction between men and women that is rarely consummated, ballet presents an illusion experienced by some gay men as parallel to their relationships with women and the difficulties some gays have in establishing long-term relationships with each other. Dance themes may permit homosexuals to play roles demanded by society that they cannot fulfill in real life.

Asked about whether there is such a thing as gay sensibility, choreographer Christopher Beck replied, “It goes beyond homoerotic themes. . . . I’m striving to balance out male and female form and feeling. This is a very important aspect of the gay aesthetic” (quoted in Laine 1980a. 30).

Dance companies usually have a self containment that insulates a male against the plight of being homosexual in a heterosexual society that assaults their ego and validity; this plight conjoins with that of the low-paid artist in a materialist culture. In the world of ballet, male homosexuals can compensate for self-questioning, and even self-loathing, and can sustain a sense of personal and social strength through identification with a powerful ballet master, choreographer, or director as well as an accepting group. Besides, gay men as men can still feel themselves to be superior to women in western culture. Gay male dancers attain perfection and power through the rigorous, esoteric demands of ballet training with its ritualistic language, dress,

and studio-stage routines. But this concentration brings with it the danger of ridicule from males engaged in athletics, business, or war. Through dance, gay men set themselves apart from the outside world to which they assign imperfection and from which they feel rejected. At the same time, positive heterosexual audience reaction to “superhuman” physical and artistic achievements onstage indicates acceptance and enhances a performer’s self-esteem.

...Because the dance profession offers a more physically and psychically integrated presence than the typical nine-to-five world of work, dance provides opportunities to explore the range of unconventional options without the consequences of real-life sanctions. During times of men’s somber dress, ballet has had the attraction of colorful costume, glamour, and makeup.

Men in America aggressively compete in sports, business, and love. Not only does dance combine this masculine expression with unabashed athletic feats, but it also allows graceful communicativeness or romantic interdependence. The act of men dancing together may create a sense of belonging and a return to basic human relations unimpeded by industrialism’s distortion of the natural rhythms of social life. Laine (1979) said that gay or bisexual men often find their way into the arts because they sense (consciously or not) that the arts make it easier for them to explore their homosexuality.

Members of the Mangrove all-male workshop (which includes straights and gays) explore their physical parameters in contact improvisation, a dance form that arises from spontaneous interaction rather than from a predetermined pattern. They play with the physical laws of mass, gravity, momentum, and inertia. Eventually they lose the self-consciousness that accompanies close physical contact with another person’s knees, chest, pelvis, soles of the feet, neck, and armpits. Improvisers take risks in the “on-goingness.” One dancer said, “We struggle to share our vulnerabilities as well as our strengths.” Another remarked, “The impact of several men dancing in a group can be overwhelming: our size, our smell, our presence, not to mention the social/sexual dynamics which arise.” Emile Durkheim pointed out, “It is only by expressing their feelings, by translating them into signs, by symbolizing them externally, that the individual consciousnesses, which are, by nature, closed to each other, can feel that they are communicating and in unison.” (1964, 336),

Certainly money and its power were not the attractions for men who followed a dance profession, because dancers are paid very little. Most could not easily support a wife and family on their earnings, a requirement to be a “real man” in America. Because women could marry and be supported by their husbands, they could indulge in the arts, which most Americans considered a luxury rather than a necessity.

What about lesbians in dance? They were probably always present, as in other fields, but were not visible. The literature on this subject is scant. Perhaps gay men were more visible because male homosexuality was against the law and harshly punished in some western countries; thus men became politically active to confront the discrimination. Male homosexuality was a capital crime at the time of Henry VIII. The English law that Americans inherited in the colonial era led to male homosexuals being hanged, castrated, jailed, and lobotomized (Oaks 1980). However, although a 1656 New Haven law prescribed the death penalty for male homosexuality, lesbianism was not generally a crime (Katz 1976). Puritan men may have thought only males were capable of experiencing and acting on sexual attraction to their own sex. Furthermore, lesbianism is often sexually arousing to heterosexual males.

According to Vern Bullough, one reason lesbianism was not prosecuted was that the “male establishment was convinced that most women knew nothing at all about the



subject, and to pass a law against lesbianism would make women feel guilty about their own gregariousness. The male establishment was willing to tolerate lesbianism, convinced of their own superiority” (1976, 582). These men dismissed what women could do together on the grounds that it did not amount to much. “Only when it threatened their status or position in society did they move against it” (p, 446). Men may have denied lesbianism because “to see women as sexually independent is bound to challenge notions of male dominance and seeing women as mothers touches on the deeply-rooted ambiguities about women as life-giver or castrator” (Wandor 1981, 78).

Without court cases against them, lesbians had no compelling reason for a public campaign on the matter. Their interests were closely associated with the oppression of all women, and they did not want the added burden of society’s hostility to their sexual preference (...). Women are vulnerable financially and socially. After a woman has trained herself to her potential in dance, given the difficult, time-consuming work demanded, she may not want to take on publicly, in addition to the identity of a dancer, the even less acceptable identity of lesbian. Loic Fuller, choreographer dancer Wendy Perron (1980) argues, would have been more generally seen as a founder of American modern dance if she had not been so obviously a lesbian. Fuller predated Duncan in her love of natural movement and in her belief that individuals can find their own approach to dance. In 1900 it was Fuller who presented Duncan to Viennese society. However, Duncan was reluctant to be associated with Fuller’s dozen or so beautiful girls who grouped about her, stroking her hands and kissing her.

Over the past two hundred years society has been slow to accept men as professional dancers. (The show business dance of Broadway musicals and Hollywood films, which permitted conventional male images and incomes, was exempt from the sissified and effete image.) Critic Walter Terry said, “Equal rights for male dancers in America has not been really realized even as the 20th century draws to its close” [...].

Men’s reemergence in dance, the abatement of audience preference for female dancers, and homosexual expression onstage gained impetus when Diaghilev introduced Vaclav Nijinsky, forerunner of the twentieth century American male dancer, to the west. The Diaghilev era (1909-29) lauded the virtuosity and passion of the Russian male dancers and of Adolph Bolm and George Rosai. Nijinsky created a sensation with his **unsurpassable** standards of excellence, phenomenal technical **pyrotechnics** (as in his enormous leap through a window in *le spectre de la rose*), mesmerizing stage presence, and sensuous virility. His provocative androgynous mystique appealed to both women and men. ...

...Another of Diaghilev’s ballet stars who promoted the role of the male dancer was Serge Lifar. He embodied the physical beauty and nobility of the romantic hero and excelled as a dancer. “In addition to successes in the classical repertory, Lifar created roles in such precedent-shattering works as Balanchine’s *apollon musagete* and *the prodigal son* . . . True heroes at last, not just gilded playthings come to life” (Siegel 1977, 105).

**unsurpassable** -  
not to be exceeded  
**pyrotechnics**  
an impressive show of  
someone’s skill as a public  
performer

Recall that before Nijinsky's time, the proximity of dance to social, economic, and political power (as in the era of Louis XIV), had sharply declined with the French and industrial revolutions. Men were less attracted to professional theater dance, and women in the profession outnumbered men. Then, with the invention of the toe shoe in the nineteenth-century, the role of the male dancer was reduced still further to that of a simple porteur, sometimes a handsome cavalier foil, lugging the ballerina around while making her look charmingly featherweight (the women were not as thin nor as well trained as they are today!). But the **impetus** for dance to become a respectable profession for men did not go far after Nijinsky and Lifar.



PLAYING MUSICIANS

While numerically women dominated ballet onstage but not off during the first half of the twentieth century, they dominated the “first phase” of modern dance both onstage and off, as choreographers and company managers. With the exception of Ted Shawn and Charles Weidman, few men were in modern dance during its early years. Shawn, the self-styled “papa” of American modern dance, eventually married Ruth St. Denis; they choreographed many works and co-founded the Denishawn School. Later, Shawn, a bisexual, founded his own all-male company. Charles Weidman, a 1920s student of Doris Humphrey's at the Denishawn School, formed a company with her in 1928.

Women's dominance in modern dance catalyzed a reaction from men. Shawn said male dancers were necessary if dancing was to have any weight or depth at all. For him dance without men was like a symphony played only by piccolos and violins. Reflecting a prevalent male chauvinism as well as his turbulent personal relationship with St. Denis, Shawn wanted to restore male dancing to the dignity he believed it possessed in ancient Greece. Breaking away from St. Denis, he selected proven athletes and established the Ted Shawn and his Men dance company in 1933 to present the male dancer as “jock.” He proselytized dance through athletics (his dances include fencing, dribbling a ball, and shooting baskets) and championed “virile” dancing. *Kinetic Molpai* was one of his most famous works. The 1936 *Olympia* piece on sports was also a success. Terry (1976), who meets the issue of Shawn's homosexuality with candor, finds irony in the effort and time Shawn's men dancers spent trying to prove that they were not what Shawn and many members of the company were. Barton Mumaw, a principal Shawn dancer and his lover, said that their relationship could not be divulged because knowledge of it would have destroyed Shawn's campaign to establish a respected role for men in serious dance. Mumaw was even forbidden to use Shawn's first name in public. Shawn was fortunate to have the cooperation of those who were in a position to reveal his secret and wreck his enterprise.

Shawn developed a training system for the American male body that was based upon experience with his own six-foot, 175-pound frame. ...

...One of the most famous Denishawn students was Martha Graham, whose own dances until the late 1930s were for women. Then, in 1938, Erick Hawkins, a Harvard University student captivated by dance, became a member of Graham's company and in 1948 her husband for a short time after nine years of their living together. Graham's choreographic use of strong effort, resistance, sheer physical strength, gymnastics, and simple, direct angular patterns, as well as her portrayal of key male characters from Hebrew and Greek mythology and American history, appealed to American men, even though the central role was always danced by a woman.

Like St. Denis, Graham spawned a male reaction. Graham's artistic progeny determined the profile of the male-dominated “second phase” of modern dance. Hawkins went on to become one of America's prominent dancers and choreographers, he saw that ballet favored the female and that modern dance glorified women. Disturbed

about his own identity as a male dancer in America, he went on a pilgrimage of insight, spending an entire summer driving through new Mexico and Arizona where he watched American Indian ceremonials. ...moreover, Hawkins developed a movement idiom influenced by buddhism that emphasized harmony with nature and human constitution in contrast to the ballet and graham styles...

...choreographers of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Nicolais and subsequent post-modern dancer-choreographers, eschewed male and female polarized stereotypes in favor of unisex movements and androgynous dancers. About sexuality and gender, Nikolais explained, "I've always abhorred the idea of male and female as opposed, as if we were all walking around in heat. Modern society forces you to be a sexual object rather than a person" (quoted in Dunning 1985).

Dance was an open field for some groups to enter and develop, although women and men of respectability did not dance onstage. But dance has been a vehicle to transform stigma to stardom; a deviant figure on the knife's edge of creativity could become a charismatic attraction.

**SOURCE:** Judith Lynne Hanna. *Dance, Sex, and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, and Desire*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1988, 131142.

### DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. What was the reason that "turn of the century modern dance was in part a rebellion against male domination"? What is the meaning of the metaphor of the 'mercantilist body'?
2. Why and how can we explain Foucault's point that women's bodies were viewed till the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century as thoroughly saturated "with sexuality and governed by sex-linked irrationality"?
3. What forms did male domination of women in society take (excluding them from key economic and political roles)? How did women extend the boundaries (created for them by men) of behavior, dress and dance within the revolutionary movement?
4. How did the dance medium allow and permit women "to control and sublimate their sexuality, which had been dominated by men"? How did women choose to be agents rather than objects and what was the result of this?
5. Please comment the on St. Denis's points that *Today is woman's hour. It is woman's chance to offset what men may be doing in the realm of politics and war. It is woman's place to foster and develop the cultural forces of civilization.*"
6. Explain the point of the dancer: "call for men to pay attention to their own bodies and sensuality so that they may discover physical desires apart from a socialized desire to dominate". How has the homosexual found "the means to pass by identifying himself as artistic/romantic rather than simply gay"?

7. What are the differences between minority male dancers and mainstream American men? What was the reason that men denied lesbianism and what is its connection to domination?
8. What is men's reaction to women's dominance in modern dance? Why according to Nikolais, "modern society forces you to be a sexual object rather than a person"? How can you explain the point: "Dance has been a vehicle to transform stigma to stardom"?
9. Please state the author's arguments supporting the main ideas of this text. How can one express the language of dance through human diversity?

#### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:

1. Find the similarities and differences between the theory of domination in dance, issues of gender and sexual opposition. How can dance talk about human diversity and human nature using its language?
2. What are the differences between the dance languages of Bukharan *sozandas* and modern women's dance? How can you explain the correlation of stigma and stardom in *saranda's* art and in the traditional art of central Asia?
3. Considering traditional and modern dance, how might one discuss the issue of Bukharan *sozandas* in terms of being an "object rather than a person"?
4. Are there any kinds of debate concerning the relationship of dance to human diversity (gender, sex) and socioeconomic conditions in Central Asian societies?
5. How and why do men and women dance differently? What part do emotion and understanding play in dance?
6. How do male chauvinism and the women's and gay liberation movements affect dance?





## INTERVIEW WITH SUHAILA SALIMPOUR

The author of this interview is Salome. She is a modern oriental dancer and writer on dance. “I classify my style as contemporary American oriental dance. My repertoire includes improvisational and choreographed works to recorded and live Near and Middle Eastern music. Her additional skills include choreographing, floor work, veil, sword, and glass goblets. In the late 1970s my mother, Cynthia, took up “belly dance”. She was the quintessential picture of the time; performing in coined bedlah to the strains of George Abdo and the flames of Arabic orchestra. Throughout childhood she supported my interest; I studied classical ballet, jazz, took a crash course in tap and dabbled in oriental. [see: <http://www.orientaldancer.net/about-salome.php>] Salome shows in this interview the life of Suhaila Salimpour, the icon of American belly dance, originally from the Middle East. As we will see, the life of Suhaila is an example of how women can have success changing their environment for professional development, challenging the traditional approaches to the dance (and women) and opening up new opportunities for the younger generations.



Suhaila, an icon in American belly dance, truly is a sought after performer and instructor. Daughter of legendary Jamila Salimpour, Suhaila’s talent, vision and creativity have built an empire. In addition to touring the Middle East, Europe and the U.S. her belly dance instructional, fitness fusion, and performance videos abound. She has produced CD’s, written belly dance manuals and even has her own logo wear on the market! Suhaila also offers “the first certification program ever available in Middle Eastern dance” which includes 5 levels of books and a soon to be released video and DVD series.

She maintains the Suhaila Salimpour school of dance, directs the Suhaila dance company and recently revived her mother’s famous tribal dance company Bal Anat. Suhaila was a natural choice for producer Miles Copeland to work with in a series of performances, videos, and films for belly dance superstars. She is progressive, controversial, celebrated and here to share herself with us.

**Salome:** People are aware of Jamila’s presence in your life but perhaps not so of your father. Can you share your experience growing up in a Persian household, how that affected you and your relationship with dance?

**Suhaila:** It was very difficult being raised with my Persian family. They had a totally different set of values and rules that were so confusing as a child. I remember my grandmother cursing at the television when she would see a girl in shorts or a swimsuit. She would spit and call her a “whore” and it was really an overall feeling of what she felt about the freedom women have in this country. I thought the girl on the television was pretty and someday I wanted to have a pair of shorts like that, but I knew that would mean my grandmother would think of me that way too. I was only allowed to wear clothes that went below my knees and long sleeves. My Persian family prayed 5 times a day and was teaching all of us kids to do the same. When I was sick

my grandmother and aunts would mix up spices, cook them over the stove, call me into the kitchen and say some chants and then throw the spices over my left shoulder. On the first day of kindergarten I was sent to school with henna on my hands and feet for protection from the evil eye. Nowadays my daughter loves henna tattoos, but back in the early 1970s it was just weird and everyone thought I was a freak.

Dancing was the only time I ever felt happy since my Persian family's house was very depressing. My father was dying and no one accepted my mother into the family since she was not Persian, so I felt so alone. My uncles were very abusive to us kids and I would run away in my dreams and my secret hiding places just to fantasize about dancing. The family allowed my mother to take me to her classes since they thought it was harmless at the time, but they hated the thought that she or I would dance in public. They assumed it was just for Americans so they allowed it, but not with any support. Each day my mother would come home from teaching her classes and hand my grandfather all her money.

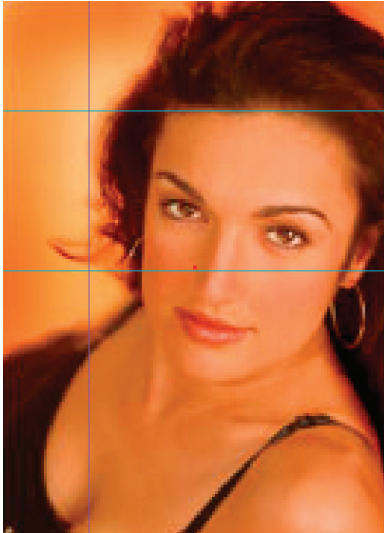
My mother and I would sneak down to the basement to put our make up and costumes on and leave out the basement door to go to different performances. It was a dark basement with only one hanging light bulb and a small mirror the size of a post card. We didn't talk but just tried to hurry up and get ready in case the family would change their mind and not allow us to go. When we left the house I felt like I could breathe freely for the first time. Dancing made me feel alive, shameless and fearless. My life had meaning and joy only while dancing. My mother and I shared this secret bond that was felt while we looked into each other's eyes. I know my mother felt the same as I did in her heart, which is why she brought me with her instead of leaving me home with the family. When we were done with a performance we would have to come back into the basement, take off our entire make up, put on our regular clothing and then come up the stairs and act like nothing happened, not ever speaking a word of our day that had anything to do with dance. I think they felt that if we didn't talk about it then it didn't happen. But it was the only thing that gave me any strength in my life.

When I got older and was graduating from high school I was on the cover of Habibi Magazine for the first time (I have done 3 covers), my family called me and told me how disappointed they were in my career choices. They felt I was disgracing my family name and the memory of my father (my father passed away in 1976 from a brain tumor). They stopped speaking to me and to this day I have no relationship with them.

**Salome:** You are an icon in American belly dance and as you said "no one is going to just let me express myself without having an opinion about it". How do you deal with criticism, do you read comments about you and your projects, how does it affect you, do you let it dictate your presentations to any degree, do you think criticism has a place in our genre and if so how?

**Suhaila:** Nothing any critic could say would come close to the battle for my dance and life that I had to endure from my Persian family growing up. It just makes me sad that women don't support women more in this dance form. If you look at other artists and allow them the freedom to explore and express then you look at the moment so differently. I can look at a body of work from an artist and not understand some stuff, but I can say with all my heart that I will try and understand the effort, hard work, and vision.

I don't look at my life as one thing at a time; I look at my life as a series of explorations into my soul. How could anyone critique a person's soul? I could never do that. I



SUHAILA SALIMPOUR



know that people might not “understand” me, but that is because of who I am, what I have been through, and what I am trying to say. Maybe we all need to stop, listen, feel something, and then walk away and think to ourselves “how did that make me feel”? To talk about a costume, if we wear high heels or not, or if someone is too skinny or too fat makes me so sad. When you walk into a museum and want to experience art, you walk around, open your heart, and try and get into the mind of the painter and ‘feel something’. We need to look at our dance form that way.

I never let anyone or anything dictate what I am working on. I just listen to my heart and do what feels honest to me at the time. I feel that I grow each day and I want my dance to project that. Even I can look back on some stuff I have done and say “oh my **gosh**..... What was I thinking” and laugh, but then if you look at my whole body of work you can see a thread and then it all makes sense. I actually enjoy pushing people’s buttons (it’s a secret though). If someone has a hang up – I like to hold up a mirror to it. They might not get that it is a mirror looking back at them. But when someone is so judgmental it means they are closed, lonely and afraid. I just push them a little more (wink).

**Salome:** Being a second generation dancer, second generation of the Jamila legacy no less, what are your fears, hopes and dreams for your daughter Isabella with regards to oriental dance?

**Suhaila:** I can only hope that my daughter grows up to feel free, uninhibited, alive, empowered, and full of hope and creativity. I want her to respect her heritage, understand her lineage, and embrace her individuality. She is so special and full of life. I look at her in amazement and know that she is not going to go through the pain I went through being a cultural schizophrenic. She has no guilt or shame around her dance like I did growing up. The best part is that she started doing her gluteus exercises from age 2. I can’t wait to see her hip work when she is older. So she has the best of my mother and the best of my world all wrapped up in one free spirit.

She dances because she loves it with no desire to escape her reality (like I did when I was young). She has a wonderful and healthy relationship with her father and feels good about herself. That is what I wish for. I don’t care if she grows up and takes over the family business. That will be up to her.

**Salome:** One of the questions I always pose in an interview is about his or her feelings on a standardized vocabulary and certification system. However in this case you have developed a certification process. Can you tell us about the format you have developed, what is its purpose, and do you see it having universal application or is it specific to your style?

**Suhaila:** Ah yes.... One of my favorite subjects. I can only say that both my mother and I feel that it is the future of this dance form to have a format and language. My

mother was the first one to have a format. She put names to steps that she learned from her experiences working with dancers from all over the world. She would find similarities in countries from which dancers were from, create a family of steps and then grow from that. My mother's classes today are still challenging and everyone leaves dripping sweat (and she is 78 years old too).

For me it was a natural evolution. I grew up my mother's daughter plus having my mother throw me into jazz, tap, ballet, flamenco, Indian, and hip hop. So with all the other formal dance training I was getting it was natural that I would want the same progression for my art form as well.

By the time I was 12 years old I had learned everything. I wanted more and felt that there had to be more. I didn't want to just keep doing different choreographies over and over again. I felt stuck. When I was in high school (the 80s) the music began to change and we had compositions coming in from Egypt that were complicated. You couldn't just do 4 of these and 4 of those anymore. My brain began to really open up and I had visions of what I wanted my body to do. But I physically couldn't do what I could see in my head. I decided to develop my body muscularity (like every other dance form had taught me to do) in order to do what was in my head. That is how I created the muscle work and famous glute work that is now so popular.

Everyday after I came home from high school I put on prince's purple rain album and just sat on the floor and squeezed my **glutes**. I practiced with my back up against the wall (to keep my spine straight) and within one year my body had totally changed and so did my dance. My mother was so happy with my progression because she felt it was time for the dance to move on as well. I would watch a video of a dancer from Egypt one time and I could do her whole dance from beginning to end and imitate her. So I was bored and needed more from the dance and knew I had to create it.

I mainly created it for myself so I could do what was in my head, but then people were chasing me to teach them the "steps" they had seen me do. I would just look at them and say "well, squeeze your glutes for 6 months and then call me so I can tell you what to do next". No one understood that I couldn't just show them the step because it wasn't just another step I was doing... It was the technique that they were wanting.

After I returned from my last tour performing in the middle east I wanted to realize my dream of a school - a safe and creative environment for women to express themselves through the dance. I decided to develop, structure, write, and begin my school and certification program.

The certification program is very important in keeping the standards of my format up. I grew up watching my mother teach someone for 6 months and then watch them leave and start teaching saying they teach Jamila Salimpour technique. My mother would be so angry and want to do something about it. Even today people use her name and she doesn't even remember them in class. Plus, my mother was growing and expanding herself, but if a student stopped coming to class and felt she learned it all then how can that student say they are teaching my mothers format?

It was really my husband that structured the certification program. I wrote out the levels and process and he organized it like the belt and ranking system that is used in martial arts. Since he is a second-degree black belt he totally understood what I was trying to do with my art. As he was getting to understand my perspective on the dance form and the future of the dance he looked at me one day and said "Oh I get you... you are like the Bruce Lee of belly dance". We laughed so hard, but then I thought about it and felt finally understood. I come from tradition, learned my history and lineage, combined and included more elements from other forms for the progress and

forward movement of the art, and then created a format. Now to insure that people do not just take from me for 6 months and say they teach Suhaila Salimpour style, I created the certification program so they can see the levels, go through the process, and then stay connected and continue to grow, as I will. It isn't the only way... but it is my way.

I don't say I certify in "belly dance". I say it is the Suhaila Salimpour format. I feel that the dance is changing and that technique and a common language are crucial for the future of this dance. My format teaches someone such strong foundation that they can then create and incorporate in whatever "style" they want. You learn many styles in my school after you have strong technique, but not before. That is just my opinion.

If you were to learn guitar, would you grab it and just start strumming? No. You would learn the history, how to hold it, notes, chords, and then a series of chords. After hours of that practice and committing it to muscle memory you might then try to learn a song (very basic), and then, after you have learned the song so well that you can do the movements without thinking about it, you might try and put an emotional perspective to the song. I would hope you wouldn't just pick up a guitar and start strumming and singing.... Ouch.

**Salome:** You have manifested many things that are likely on most dancers' wish list. What direction do you see yourself taking in the future, what vision(s) have you yet to realize?

**Suhaila:** I want so much for this art form that it burns a fire in my heart each day. It saved my life as a child, gave me hope and continues to fill me with the passion that I can only dream to pass on to others. I want to continue to create supportive environments for dancers to explore in. I want to use the dance to help women in their personal life by allowing them to feel connected to their body and soul. I want to use creative ways to donate to women shelters that need funding. I want to set up a scholarship program for teens so they might be able to see the beauty in life and themselves. I want to continue to build a community that has been lost in our society today. I want this dance form to be lifted each day and have the same respect and loyalty that other dance forms have. I want to create a strong future for my students so they can have a long life in this art form. I want to nurture my school to produce dancers that can go beyond me and carry on the torch so I can stay home and receive post cards of them and feel proud. I want my daughter to be proud of me and know that I tried to do the best I could. And most of all I want to grow old with my best friend and man I love... my husband Andre. (By Salome).

**SOURCE:** Interview with Suhaila Salimpour. <http://www.orientaldancer.net/star-interviews/suhailasalimpour.shtml>

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What can we learn from the life of Suhaila? What was the route to professional success for Suhila?
2. How did Suhaila break the traditional family approaches to the dance profession?
3. How did she change her body for dance?
4. Comment on the point: "I want to use dance to help women in their personal life by allowing them to feel connected to their body and soul. I want to use creative ways to donate to women shelters that need funding"
5. What are the reasons that women face so many obstacles in their quest for success?

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

1. How can belly dance help to express women's feelings? Compare the texts from Chapter Five and find similar problems and different ways of solving the complexities of human diversity through dance?
2. Imagine, what would be the destiny of Suhaila's art, if she had lived in the Bukharan emir's court and served him as a dancer?
3. How can we explain the life and success of Suhaila through the theories presented by Judith Hanna and other theorists (male/female domination, transformation of stigma to stardom, dance as an object, etc.)?

## SUSAN MANNING: MODERN DANCE, NEGRO DANCE: RACE IN MOTION

Our discussion on dance and human diversity concludes with Susan Manning. Susan is associate professor of English, Theater, and Performance Studies at Northwestern University. She is the author of *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman*, winner of the 1995 De la Torre Bueno prize for the year's most important contribution to dance studies.

The author is examining the phenomenon of the relationship between performer and spectator, how dancing bodies are framed by presentation, how moving from frame to frame they carry different meaning for different spectators, and how multiple social identities (black and white, negro dancers, leftist, liberal dancers, etc.,) influence but do not determine spectators viewing. The role of the dissident middle class in this process is also considered. This text opens the way for new scholarship and research in the field of humanities for students from Central Asia.

### INTRODUCTION: AMERICAN BODIES IN MOTION

"...My model for spectatorship posits and demonstrates three claims: first, spectators read theatrical constructs of blackness and whiteness in implicit and explicit relation to one another. Second, spectators from different social locations may view the same performance event differently. Third, some spectators may catch glimpses of subjectivities from social locations that differ from their own, a process termed *cross-viewing*. Cross-viewing has the potential to alter how the public read bodies in motion and thus effect social and artistic change.

As the momentum for civil rights intensified at midcentury, crossviewing between African-American and Euro-American spectators in New York City transformed how spectators read the racialized meanings of bodies in motion. During the 1930s viewers from Greenwich Village were less adept at recognizing black self representations in Negro dance than were viewers from Harlem. Then, during the years surrounding World War II, Negro dance became broadly legible to viewers both downtown and uptown. At the same time modern dance revised its representations of whiteness and broadened its downtown audience. A new counterpoint of blackness and whiteness emerged during wartime and continued through the postwar era.

During a period that witnessed the transition from segregated to integrated seating in theatrical **venues**, African-American and Euro-American spectators were well aware of one another's presence at performances of Negro dance and modern dance. Although scholars have focused scant attention on this momentous transition, it seems clear that de facto segregation in theater seating persisted in northern cities well into the 1930s and that integrated seating did not become the norm until after World War II. African-American spectators long had experienced one-way cross-viewing,

**venues** -  
the scene or setting in which  
something takes place

sitting in the balcony and watching white spectators watch black performers. But integrated houses introduced two-way cross-viewing, where spectators across the color line watched one another watching. Even though white spectators predominated at performances of modern dance and Negro dance, an integrated house significantly changed the dynamics of spectatorship.

Spectators also recognized their differences across class lines and political affiliations. For crossviewing does not happen along a single axis alone, but along multiple axes simultaneously. During the 1930s, leftist dance briefly flourished as a practice that addressed workers, artists, intellectuals, and activists committed to Marxism. Employing techniques derived from modern dance, leftist dance also drew liberal viewers from the dissident middle class, a class fraction opposed both to established elites and to middle-class respectability. The dissident middle class housed many modern dancers, Negro dancers, and their audiences along with leftist artists, although not their radicalized working-class audiences.

Not surprisingly, given the factionalized politics of the depression years, Marxist and liberal critics engaged in combative cross-viewing, often mocking one another's responses to leftist dance. More surprisingly, Marxist critics distanced themselves from the responses of unionized and unionizing workers. The few documented responses to leftist dance by working-class viewers suggest a wildly different perspective from their dissident middleclass observers. During the Red Decade cross viewing in relation to class and political affiliation defiantly worked in two directions.

After 1940 crossviewing in relation to class and ideology nearly disappeared, as modern dance and Negro dance absorbed practitioners of leftist dance. Audiences became increasingly upscale, as working-class spectatorship was closed off and middle-class and upper-middle-class viewers joined dissident middle-class viewers. These broader audiences typically read modern dance and Negro dance not in terms of class conflict but in terms of the nation, an "imagined community" in Benedict Anderson's familiar formulation. Thus modern dance became an exemplar of Euro-American culture; Negro dance, of African-American culture. Although modern dancers and negro dancers long had aspired to national status, they did not draw the heterogeneous publics that realized their ambitions until the 1940s.

Spectators from diverse social locations in New York City – from uptown and downtown; from the dissident middle class, the radicalized working class, the middle class, and the upper middle class – also engaged in crossviewing in relation to gender and sexuality. Indeed, viewers' variable responses to Negro dance and modern dance often turned on this axis. Whereas many spectators perceived an eroticism in Negro dance lacking in modern dance, gay spectators perceived a **queer** subtext in Negro dance that **eluded** many, but not all, straight viewers. A related dynamic held for modern dance: whereas many viewers perceived its representations of gender dissidence, mostly gay viewers perceived its representations of sexual dissidence. Cross-viewing in relation to gender and sexuality more often worked in one direction than in two directions. That is, spectators who lived out gender and sexual dissidence saw what spectators whose lives conformed to normative expectations saw but also perceived other possible meanings. At times the dynamic reversed, as normative spectators caught glimpses of dissident subjectivities and social identities.

This axis of cross-viewing also underwent a subtle transformation around 1940. Choreographic imagery of gender and sexual dissidence was more transparent in the 1930s than in subsequent decades. Thus spectators had to adjust their strategies for interpretation as they encountered the translucent imagery of the 1940s and 1950s.

**queer** -  
gay; homosexual  
**elude** -  
to avoid or escape



Historicizing the spectatorship of Negro dance and modern dance in New York City, I have come to see the war years as a critical period of transition. In fact, wartime mobilization was a crucial agent for changing conditions of production and reception in modern dance and Negro dance. As spectators engaged in cross-viewing during the years surrounding World War II, they altered their perceptions and preconceptions of bodies in motion – of what made one body “black” and another “white,” one body “normal” and another “queer,” one body representative of a class and another representative of a nation.

For Lott and Rogin, popular audiences for blackface performance onstage and onscreen reconfirmed their whiteness (and their masculinity) through their spectatorship. In contrast, the limited audiences for Negro dance and modern dance largely rejected the use of blackface during an era when minstrelsy declined and then disappeared as a genre of professional entertainment. Yet the conventions for racial representation encoded in minstrelsy did not change overnight on the New York stage. It took more than a decade from the early 1930s to the mid-1940s for Negro dancers and modern dancers to fashion alternate conventions for black self-representation and the privilege of whiteness. In this sense, the story of Negro dance and modern dance picks up where Lott and Rogin left off.

How is it possible to historicize spectatorship as a series of socio-historical encounters between performers and viewers? My approach first assumes the fundamental precepts of cultural materialism and then adapts these precepts for studies of theatrical spectatorship. As articulated by Raymond Williams and developed by subsequent scholars, notably Alan Sinfield, cultural materialism extends the thinking of western Marxism in its insistence on the **inextricable** link between artistic forms and social formations. Understanding artistic production and reception as a set of social relations, Williams and Sinfield analyze twentieth century culture in terms of dominant cultures in the plural (established elites, mass media, middle-class norms), dissident middle-class cultures (class fractions opposed to both upper-class privilege and middle-class norms), and subcultures (social formations premised on collective experiences of systematic discrimination, common life choices, and/or shared tactics for maneuvering within dominant cultures). Of course, it is impossible to recover the full range of spectatorial responses to performance events staged decades ago. But it is possible to argue from the surviving evidence for the probability of divergent responses from divergent social locations, social locations defined in terms of dissident and dominant cultures and subcultures. It is also possible to argue from the surviving evidence for the probability of cross-viewing.

My evidence comes partly from performance archives – photographs, programs, reviews, video and film documentation, choreographic notes, oral history – and partly from an extensive search of relevant periodicals. My comprehensive survey of the black press, leftist press, dance press, and arts press turned up many sources that

were missing from performance archives. Equally important, my survey revealed which performance events editors considered more worthy of record than they deemed modern dance and Negro dance.

Synthesizing diverse sources of evidence and reading them against gaps in the documentation, I attend to multiple frames for bodies in motion. However evanescent, dancing bodies are framed by venue (physical location, architectural scale, cost of attending performance); publicity (advertising outlets and design, featured photographs, advance notices, length of run, single concert or part of subscription series); and program (titles, program notes, placement within sequence of event). Dancing bodies are also framed by presentation (costuming, musical accompaniment, stage design); casting choices (single-sex, mixed-sex, cross-gendered, racially or ethnically homogeneous or **heterogeneous**); and choreographic structure (agitprop, social commentary, musical visualization, dramatic narrative, mythic abstraction). Although bodies in motion leave only traces, multiple frames track their presence.

Moving from frame to frame, dancing bodies carry different meanings for different spectators. My model for historicizing spectatorship attends to these differences and thus provides an alternative to unitary and binary models of spectatorship. At mid-century a unitary model prevailed in dance studies and across the humanities. For example, in *The Modern Dance* John Martin theorized what he called “metakinesis” as the process whereby the spectator re-experienced “the physical and the psychical” dimensions of dance movement, for Martin believed that “any bodily movement arouses a sympathetic reaction in the mind of the spectator.” Yet the evidence for spectatorship at mid-century suggests otherwise, for black and white critics often responded differently to the same performance of modern dance or Negro dance.

After Negro dance gave way to black concert dance around 1970, the unitary model of spectatorship gave way to binary models in dance studies (this shift paralleled developments across the humanities). Responding to the ethos of the black arts movement, critics and scholars concurred that Africanist retentions characterized diverse genres of black dance. Going one step further, some critics and scholars posited that not all spectators were equally cognizant of these retentions and introduced a binary model of spectatorship that differentiated a more authentic Afrocentric reading from a less authentic Eurocentric reading.

The application of feminist theory to dance studies also resulted in a binary model of spectatorship, a model **premised** on a distinction between the erotic gaze of the male viewer and the resisting gaze of the female viewer. The encounter with gay and lesbian studies and queer theory added another **binary** model to dance studies, as scholars explored how queer spectators perceived dance differently from straight spectators. All these models ascribe distinctive ways of looking to identifiable social groups. Ironically, in attempting to avoid the universalizing of spectatorship that characterized earlier unitary models, binary models threaten to essentialize spectators’ responses around differences of race, gender, and sexuality. The problem, of course, is that these social identities necessarily overlap, so that binary models of spectatorship cannot account for how spectators’ multiple social identities inflect their viewing.

Not that my model for historicizing spectatorship can do so. But that’s precisely the point. Spectators don’t react in monolithic blocks. Spectators’ multiple social identities inflect but do not determine their viewing. The complexity of any one individual’s viewing – how watching Negro dance and modern dance shaped and reflected that individual’s habitation of multiple and overlapping social formations –

**heterogeneous** -  
completely different

**premise** -  
to state in advance as an  
introduction or explanation;  
to build on

**binary** -  
characterized by or consisting  
of two parts or components

remains beyond the reach of historical research. Yet the historian can demonstrate the possibility of cross-viewing and in so doing suggest that theatrical performance affords spectators an opportunity to consider perspectives other than those conditioned by their social identities outside the theater. Indeed, theatergoing may well illuminate the socio-historical process whereby physical bodies accrue social meanings, what performance scholars have termed perform nativity or the “scriptedness of everyday life....”

...“Black and white, workers unite!” Edith Segal’s *Black and White*, 1930-35.

Among the leftist dancers, Edith Segal was the most devoted to black themes. Like Hy Glickman, Segal did not differentiate among casting conventions for black-themed works during the 1930. ...

...The daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants, Segal grew up on the Lower East Side. There she studied rhythmic movement at the Henry Street settlement house and ethnic and interpretive dancing at the neighborhood playhouse. Although she studied Graham technique and used Graham’s movement vocabulary in her choreography, she did not perform in Graham’s company, as other leftist dancers such as Sophie Maslow and Anna Sokolow did. From 1924 she staged dances for Communist Party rallies, including large-scale works for the Lenin memorial pageants held at Madison square garden in 1928 and 1930, and taught dance to communist youth, women, and workers. In 1932 she helped found the workers dance league, and she was one of the affiliates who made no secret of her membership in the American Communist Party.

In one sense, Segal not only originated leftist dance but also remained the dancer most committed to communism. Teaching at leftist camps during the summer, Segal performed during the remainder of the year as a soloist and directed not one but several dance groups – the red dancers, nature friends dance group, children’s dance group for the international worker’s order, and the needle trades workers industrial union dance group. Following a stint with the federal theatre project in Detroit, Segal retired from professional performing at the end of the 1930. However, she continued to teach at Camp Kinderland, a Jewish socialist retreat, until the early 1970s, and she also developed a second career as a poet. Not surprisingly, during the red scare she was called to testify before a legislative committee in New York investigating communist subversives.

Not all Segal’s dances based on African-American sources targeted racism as explicitly as *Scottsboro* and *Black and White* did. For example, in 1933 Segal choreographed a solo, *Third Degree*, set to a revised version of “**Crucifixion**,” one of the spirituals that Tamiris had used for her cycle two years earlier. Authored by the communist poet V. J. Jerome, the revised lyrics transformed the experience of Christ’s suffering into the experience of a leftist martyr. As Segal recalled years later, in place of “they nailed him to the cross, and he didn’t say a Mumbalin’ word”, Jerome substituted, “where do your comrades live? And he didn’t say a mumbalin’ word.” She also remembered performing the solo before an audience of striking

workers “in an old Polish hall in Toms River, New Jersey. . . . Some of the young fellows in the audience were a bit unruly, and one of the strike organizers made a speech. . . . ‘you guys don’t know nuttin’. We didn’t tell you what they done to us in that jail, but this lady *showed* you what they done to us, and now you know. And if you don’t shut up, she ain’t gonna *do* another dance!’ They shut up” (emphasis in original). As this anecdote suggests, there was ample reason why Segal developed the reputation as the leftist dancer whose works were the most easily understood by audiences of workers.

The reception of Segal’s *black and white* vivifies the complexity of spectatorship within the cross-class alliance of the cultural front. Whereas intellectuals repeatedly criticized the dance as simplistic in concert settings, workers reportedly welcomed the dance in nontraditional performance settings. While it is quite easy to recover the responses of intellectuals through published reviews, it is harder to recover the responses of workers to *Black and White* in its myriad stagings in union halls and at political rallies and summer camps. Yet all the evidence for spectatorship in these nontraditional performance spaces – advertisements and occasional articles in the leftist press and black press, oral history with leftist dancers, even the commentary of white intellectuals – points toward the popularity of *Black and White* with audiences of workers. Even though white critics recognized the dance’s popularity with workers, they never tired of complaining that they had seen the dance too often and found it wanting. Politicized workers and politicized intellectuals did not necessarily view dancing bodies in the same way.

**SOURCE:** Susan Manning. *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion*. University of Minnesota, 2004.pp.xlIII,

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. How may spectators from different social locations view the same performance event differently?
2. How does cross-viewing have the potential to alter how the public reads bodies in motion and thus to effect social and artistic change?
3. What was the role of segregation, the separating of white and black in spectatorship, on black and white critics in America? What was the reason for the flourishing of leftist dancers during the 1930?
4. Why, after 1940, did crossviewing in relation to class and ideology nearly disappear? How can you explain the point that: “Moving from frame to frame, dancing bodies carry different meanings for different spectators”?
5. How did feminist theory on dance studies result in a binary model of spectatorship? When did the unitary model of spectatorship give way to binary models in dance studies?
6. What were and are the shortcomings of unitary and binary models of spectatorship? How and why did Segal develop the reputation as a leftist dancer?
7. Why didn’t politicized workers and politicized intellectuals necessarily view dancing bodies in the same way?

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS (CHAPTER FIVE):

1. How can we use the debate on unitary and binary model of spectatorship in research on humanities in Central Asia?
2. Do you know any kinds of similar theatrical research in your country? Can this kind research be done based on your own dancing culture? If yes, please, describe how would you conduct it?
3. Can we show any example of dancers from Central Asia, or local dancing bodies carrying different meaning for different spectators? What were the conditions of spectatorship during Soviet times? What are they now? How does human diversity affect dance performance in general?
4. How does globalization impact the diversity of dance? Please express your thoughts on the connections between human diversity, dance and globalization?

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**Susan Manning.**

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University of Minnesota, 2004. pp.xlII

see: [http://www.asrp.info/academic\\_staff\\_personal2.php?id=57](http://www.asrp.info/academic_staff_personal2.php?id=57)



## CHAPTER SIX

### GLOBAL MUSIC AND MODERN TRADITIONS

199

**INTRODUCTION** The process of globalization has already reached the borders of music and dance. To what extent is this process dangerous, or on the contrary, is it effective for the spirit and the future of art and music? This chapter focuses on modern trends in music but also continues the discussion of music as a market domain, when the musical profession becomes an identifiable commodity of modern and global industry. What is global about music and dance?

Does the global music market have any alternatives? What is the impact of market forces on art and culture, particularly music and dance? Can we identify the negative and positive market forces on art and culture? How do we reduce the negative forces and increase the positive ones?

Can we look at global music positively? How can it bring people together? What musical heritage brings together Persian, Arabic and Turkish people? What is the mission of art performers in the politicizing of culture? How can people with mixed identity influence a divided world and challenge and check modern xenophobia? Ted Swedenburg discusses this issue in his article on Natasha Atlas. “Natasha’s primary middle eastern “genetic” background is Sephardi. Her identification with Judaism therefore is rooted in the Middle East and is affiliated to Islam” according to Swedenburg. “with her hybridized, music Natasha and her company tries to change the mind of ordinary European, white youth towards Islam... to bring them into her spiritual world,” and “to attack Islamophobia” in the west. Can such efforts help? What is the place of the Central Asian musician in global music? Music, like human beings, can be in exile. What is the nature of music in exile? How can migrants’ music survive in a globalized world?

Additionally, what happens with local music when it meets with music which has state or even imperial support and the latter becomes a model, or pattern for local music? Theodore Levin’s analysis of Central Asia’s musical heritage, ‘*Shash-maqam*’- the traditional Tajik-Uzbek melody focuses on how music was constricted to serve ideology (nationalism for one) during the Russian and Soviet colonialism and even now. How did the ‘*Shash maqam*’ which was very spiritual music become a part of the normal national instrumental ensemble? Is this musical heritage really now a “frozen music”? How is it possible to regenerate the spirit and power of this deeply-rooted musical tradition in the contemporary world?

The destiny of traditional music in the modern world is also the issue for discussion in Muhammad Tahir, “Turkmen Music loses out to Hip-Hop”, the case from the tradition of Turkmen classical “bakhshi” music in Afghanistan. What will be the result

of the globalization of music? As traditional music sheds its exotic aura and becomes part of the popular global musical culture will it also shed its local roots? Will the impact of this be positive or negative for communities that traditionally practiced these distinctive forms of music? Will this new phenomena of globalization of the arts deplete local cultures or enrich them by mainstreaming them?

**“SACRED TRADITIONS IN SACRED PLACES”.**  
**The Christensen Foundation; The Aga Khan Humanities Project, Kino Service Ltd, Tajikistan 2005.**

Ideas for discussion: How do religious, folk and mystical music and local traditional knowledge come together to make individual and social life easier in mountainous countries that have severe weather conditions. The authors have tried to show how the culture (tradition) and faith can help people save respect for life, biodiversity and the environment. Some of these current traditions are connected with the 11th century poet and philosopher, Nasir Khusraw. Within the musical traditions are “madhiyakkhani” spiritual singing and the “charokh rawshan” ceremony: “We know innumerable folk tales still exist in the oral form. And these tales demonstrate people’s love and respect toward Nasir Khusraw. Over 900 years they were transmitted by word of mouth, across the generations ...” (M. Ilolov). The main question for discussion here is: what will be the destiny of philosophical, cultural and musical traditions in this time of globalization?



**STILL FROM THE FILM: “SACRED TRADITIONS IN SACRED PLACES”**  
**VISITING A MAZAR**



## TED SWEDENBURG NATASHA ATLAS: A HUMAN GAZA STRIP

Ted Swedenburg, the ethnomusicologist raises a question:- What is the mission of performers in politicizing culture, how can they find the ways to challenge modern xenophobia. In this part we discuss the issue of music and the complexity of national and cultural identities. Natasha Atlas is the best example for this. “Natasha Atlas (born March 20, 1964) is a singer born in Belgium. She is known for her fusion of Arabic and north African music. She once termed her music “cha’abi moderne” (i.e., an updated form of Egypt’s pop music). It also includes many influences from styles like hip hop, drum ‘n’ bass, and reggae; ... She became the lead singer and belly dancer of the very eclectic crew Transglobal Underground (TGU) which focuses on mixing eastern and western sounds as well as other styles” [for more see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/natacha?atlas??themaingroupforour> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/natacha?atlas??/>]

The main topic for our current discussion is how TGU and Natasha Atlas try to challenge various phobias, including Islamophobia presented in the modern world?



“Although Transglobal Underground (TGU) and their lead vocalist Natasha Atlas are not, strictly speaking, hip-hop artists, I include them here because hip-hop is one of the key constituent elements of their work. It has been difficult, in fact, for music critics and the music industry to pin a label on TGU’s music. Among the many contenders are: ethno-dance, global fusion dance-trance, ethnodelic, dub hop, global groove, world dance fusion, cross-cultural funk, Arab funk, polymorphic trance, ethnic techno, radical global pop, world techno, dub-rave-dance-trance-world, cross-cultural fusion, etc.. Most recently, TGU has been marketed in the US under the category of “electronica.”

Without disputing that TGU has exotic and appropriating tendencies, I want to suggest that if one focuses on “Islam,” the picture looks somewhat different. I will argue, contra to Hutnyk and Hesmondhalgh, that TGU and especially singer Natasha Atlas *do* articulate a progressive politics, although not in as overtly “militant” a fashion as fundamental, and that “Islam” plays a critical role in this regard. But first, it is necessary to clarify TGU’s image. It is incorrect to describe TGU as “white,” or even “predominantly white.” Band member Count Dubullah, in response to such claims, notes his own Greek Albanian background, that Natasha Atlas has “Arabic” roots, and that, in performance, the band expands to include Africans, Indians and Sikhs (Morrell 1996). TGU moreover is not outside the orbit of progressive Asian bands and anti-racist activity, for it performs at anti-racist festivals, on the same bill as the “political” bands. Hutnyk’s model “political” band Asian Dub Foundation in fact got its start on the concert circuit by opening for Transglobal Underground on several dates in late 1994 (Luke N.D.) and has since opened for Natasha Atlas solo dates. Finally, TGU records for Aki Nawaz’s nation records, has shared personnel with Fundamental (Count Dubullah and Neil Sparkes have recorded with both groups), and several of its singles have been remixed by Aki Nawaz.

TGU singer and solo artist Natasha Atlas is the key to such a strategy. Natasha once described herself as a “human Gaza strip,” which one press account acutely glossed as referring to the “complex melange of influences” both genetic and environmental--that have shaped her both as an individual and as a performer” (“Natasha Atlas” N.D.). Natasha’s “genetic influences” are hybrid, to say the least: her father, a Middle-Eastern Jew, born in Jerusalem; grandfather, “was born in Egypt, and his family came from Palestine. He came to Europe when he was 15” (Nickson 1997); her mother, an English hippie, fan of Pink Floyd, devotee of Gurdjieff (Barbarian 1996; Assayas 1996). Appropriately enough, Natasha grew up in the Moroccan and Jewish districts of Brussels, absorbing music from both cultures and listening to her father’s old Arabic records (ali 1995:53; assayas 1996). When her parents divorced, she relocated in England, and reportedly became “Northampton’s first Arabic rock singer” (“Natasha Atlas” N.D.). At age 24, she went back to Belgium, where she belly-danced professionally in Arab and Turkish clubs and listened carefully to the Arab classicist musicians accompanying her. She describes going back to Belgium as a “return to her roots” (barbarian 1996). By her own account, Natasha doesn’t suffer from an “identity problem,” asserting rather that she feels equally at home in more than one culture (“in town” N.D.).

Natasha’s primary Middle Eastern “genetic” background, therefore, is Sephardic (or, to use the more politicized term, Mizrahi). Her “identification” with Judaism therefore is rooted in the Middle East and is affiliated (even by “blood,” in some complicated and unspecified way) to Islam. This is not as incongruous as it might appear from a Eurocentric Ashkenazi perspective, for as Ammiel Alcalay so carefully shows in his *After Jews and Arabs* (1993). “Eastern” Jewry was for centuries intensely integrated into Arabo-Islamic civilization. The title of Natasha’s first solo album, *Diaspora* (1997), refers, Natasha says, not just to the “first dispersion of the Jews of Palestine but also those of all the races that have suffered injustice...the uprooted are everywhere. Iraqis, Yugoslavs or Palestinians...” (Barbarian 1996). It is noteworthy that all the Diasporic peoples she names are Muslim (majority) peoples--assuming that that by “Yugoslavs” Natasha means Bosnian Muslims. One of *Diaspora*’s most compelling songs is entitled, “Laysh Nata’arak” (Why Are We Fighting?), which goes:

*Why are we fighting  
When we’re all together?...  
Between me and you there is a long history...  
Let’s return to peace  
Let’s make peace, we are brothers*

The song addresses its call for peace to Arabs and Israelis *in Arabic* (the translation is mine), and therefore the primary *Israeli* addressees are the majority second-class Mizrahi Jews. Moreover, Natasha sings, “let’s return to peace [emphasis added]” (*yalla nirga’ li-al-salâm*), evoking a time, before the creation of Israel, of amicable relations between Arabic-speaking Jews, Muslims and Christians in the Middle East.

The plaintive title cut from *Diaspora* elaborates on these themes. Natasha sings, in Arabic:

*My heart is wounded, my country...  
Without you  
And my life is torture  
And the pain increases*



The song's achingly beautiful atmospherics evoke Atlas's feelings about her own family's "uprooting": "I don't even know how we arrived in Belgium. I feel a great sadness, a feeling of loss" (Barbarian 1996). For Natasha, the Diaspora is contemporary, a dispersion from the Arabo-Islamic Middle East, where "until the creation of the state of Israel" Sephardi Jews were "at home." This is a Mizrahi, not an Ashkenazi, European-Jewish vision of Diaspora. As Alcalay (1993:1) observes:

*The modern myth of the Jew as pariah, outsider and wanderer has, ironically enough, been translated into the postmodern myth of the Jew as "other," an other that collapses into the equation: writing=Jew=book. By what sleight of hand?...such an exclusive address... ultimately obscures the necessity of mapping out a space in which the Jew was native, not a stranger but an absolute inhabitant of time and place.*

At present Natasha is a kind of riposte to the postmodern myth who chooses to divide her time between London and...Cairo, rather than Tel Aviv or Jerusalem.

Natasha voices her orientation toward "Islam" on "dub yalil" (from *Diaspora*), where she sings the opening lines of the *idhân*, the Muslim call to prayer "**allahu akbar, ashhadu an la allah illa allah**", over a dub beat. But Natasha does not complete the opening of the call to prayer, whose next phrase is, "**wa muhammad rasûl allah**". Instead, she sings, "**allah ana bahibbak**". The fact that she recites the *idhân* without mentioning the prophet Muhammad, that she sings this religious text rather than "chants" it, that her singing is set to a dub-reggae beat, and that she uses the phrase, "God, I love you", all make this a highly heterodox "Islamic" production. Nonetheless, the song testifies to her Islamic affiliations. While growing up, Natasha states, her father used to tell her about Judaism and her mother about Gurdjieff, but she wasn't interested. Now, she asserts, "I feel myself to be very Muslim, in fact. Sometimes I go to the mosque, last year I did [fasted during] Ramadan" (Assayas 1996).

Islam is also critical to Natasha's understanding of her own and TGU's cultural intervention in Britain. I would argue that, given an over-arching atmosphere of Islamo- and Arabo-phobia and racist violence against immigrants of Muslim origin, Natasha's and TGU's attempts to insert Arabic/Middle Eastern music into the British public sphere attests to a progressive cultural-political agenda. Natasha has been the key figure in this subversive activity, beginning in 1990 with her work in world dance fusion outfit ¡loca! (on the compilations *fuse* and *fuse ii*) with Jah Wobble's invaders of the heart (for instance, on *Rising Above Bedlam*) and with Transglobal Underground, and finally in a solo capacity (while continuing to work with TGU). She did vocals on Apache Indian's top 20 hit, "Arranged Marriage"; the music press asserts, with typical hyperbole, that she was the first woman to sing in Arabic on the television show, *Top of the Pops* ("Natasha Atlas" N.D.). Natasha has also worked with Daniel Ash (on *Coming Down*, 1991), and her vocals are featured in the film, *Stargate*. As

"allahu akbar, ashhadu an la allah illa allah" -

God is greatest, I witness that there is no God but God

"wa muhammad rasul allah" -

and Muhammad is the messenger of God

"allah ana bahibbak" -

God, I love you

Natasha has gained visibility, she has tended to use more and more Arabic in her singing, whereas her earlier recordings featured more vocals in Spanish and French. Natasha's articulation of Arabic has become clearer as she has gradually gained better control over the language, and her Arabic lyrics are now also more elaborated (Small 1997). According to Atlas, "now, something more [of Arabic music] is getting through [in Britain]. It's no longer an alien sound" (Ali 1995:50). If the Arabic sonic presence is now somewhat more "normalized" in Britain, this is due in no small part to Natasha Atlas's efforts. TGU member Alex Kasiek claims that Arabs, especially those living in the west, are pleased with what the group is doing:

*For a lot of Arabic people if you start playing Arabic music they see it as a compliment. The west is contemptuous of their culture, they see it being some sort of frightening "other." So the Arabs tend to find it as a mark of respect. (Small 1997)*

As for audiences in the Middle East, Atlas claimed in 1997 that her solo recordings were considered too avant-garde for the mass market, but that she had won acceptance for *Diaspora* among Moroccan youth (Snowden 1997:33). Since then both Natasha and TGU have had more impact on Middle Eastern markets. Natasha's 1997 album *Halim* (released in the US in 1998) has been more successful, due no doubt to the fact that *Halim* sounds like a sixties/seventies style Egyptian-Lebanese pop album, with the addition of some dub and hip-hop beats. In July 1998, Natasha traveled to Beirut to perform her single "Amulet," which has enjoyed some success in the region, on Lebanese television station LBC. Meanwhile in 1997, popular Egyptian singer Hakim, interested in expanding his sales beyond the Egyptian market, enlisted TGU's help in remixing a collection of Hakim's greatest hits. Released in Egypt in 1998, the album (*Shakl Tânî Remix*) is a remarkable fusion of Hakim's intense *Sha'bî* vocalisms and TGU-style rhythms and deep bass. Although I was unable to obtain sales figures, the Hakim/TGU album seemed to be doing well in Cairo when I visited there in August 1998. *Shakl Tânî* is expected to be released in Europe soon. Meanwhile, Slam!, Hakim's record company, assisted Natasha Atlas in the production of her new album, *Gedida*, which was just released (February 1999) in Europe. (It will be released in the Arab world as *Gazouri*, minus a few tracks that are too political or sexy).

As for the non-Arabic speaking English audience, Natasha considers "Islam" key to her success. The music press frequently calls attention to the exotic, "chiffon-draped belly dancing" she does on stage with TGU ("Transglobal Underground" 1996), and she has been criticized in some quarters for reproducing stereotypes of sexualized Middle Eastern women (Hesmondhalgh 1995: 9). But Natasha seems to prefer to stress her performances' *spiritual* appeal:

*I love the profundity of Arabic singing and the formality of it, and the way it seems to touch on the religious. I believe the Muslim call to prayer is the sound of God, that's what ignites me and ignites westerners who hear it and are moved by it. ("Diaspora finally available" 1997)*

Natasha is aware that the kids in the audience "don't know what the fuck I'm singing about, but they have a feeling." When she hits the high notes, she says, their eyes are shut, and "they look as though they're reaching for Allah. It makes them feel good, spiritual" (Ali 1995:50).

**Halim -**  
a tribute to the canonical  
Egyptian singer 'Abd al-Halim  
Hafiz

So whereas Natasha's colleague Aki Nawaz employs "Islam" to shake up white youth, Natasha employs "Islam" to bring them into her spiritual world. The two strategies, I would argue, are complementary. The genius of TGU and Natasha Atlas is their sly insertion of subtle attacks on **Islamophobia** into a complex, multi-targeted, "club-friendly" (Wright N.D.) and upbeat, danceable mix that blends hip-hop, techno, Indian film soundtracks, African chants, and dub reggae with Middle Eastern stylings. While I think Hutnyk and Hesmondhalgh raise important criticisms regarding the exoticizing effects of TGU/Atlas performances and mixes and their appropriations of un-credited samplings, I do not agree that TGU and Atlas simply produce images of unmarked otherness and a depoliticized notions of hybridity. Instead, their hybridized music is heavily "Islamicized," and therefore, politically charged.

**SOURCE:** Ted Swedenburg. "Islamic Hip-Hop vs. Islamophobia: Aki Nawaz, Natasha Atlas, Akhenaton." [www.comp.uark.edu/\_tsweden/index.html].

**Islamophobia -**

prejudice against or demonization of Muslims, which manifests itself in general negative attitudes, violence, harassment, discrimination, and stereotyping

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. How should we label TGU? Do modernist tendencies produce primitive, exotic and romanticizing significations of 'the other'?
2. Is TGU a progressive Asian and anti-racist band, or do TGU and Natasha Atlas represent de-politicized exotic/hybrid/postmodernist musical tendencies (world dance fusion)?
3. Is it possible to identify Natasha Atlas by her origins? Is national identity important for an artist like Natasha Atlas?
4. How would you explain Natasha's point and the the progressive political agenda of her group in the UK and her protest against racist violence against immigrants: "I feel myself to be very Muslim, in fact. Sometimes I go to the mosque, last year I did [fasted during] Ramadan"? Or "I love the profundity of Arabic singing and the formality of it, and the way it seems to touch on the religious. I believe the Muslim call to prayer is the sound of God, that's what ignites me and ignites westerners who hear it and are moved by it".
5. To what extent can music and artists moderate Islamophobia in the West and its counterpart in the East?

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the intellectual missions of music and musicians in the modern world?
2. How can global means save modern musical traditions? Compare TGU activities and modern hip-hop culture.

3. Is the musical passivism of mullahs (remember the film “Rock Stars and the Mullahs”) or the social activism of musicians (like Natasha atlas) more important in preserving Muslim and other cultures in these time of market forces and globalization?
4. What is the spirit of global music, how does it differ from the music of the Manas epos, from the steppe music of Kazakh 'kyuy', and from Falak and Shash maqam?
5. Write a small essay on the global character of any musical performance, tradition, or tendency in your region?
6. How do musicians and scholars in your country try to take the initiative for progressive agendas in order to solve problems, relating to music and the humanities: gender, minorities, socioeconomic issues, human rights, human diversiy, domination, forms of tyranny etc.?

## THEODORE LEVIN: “FROZEN MUSIC”

Globalization is not a completely new phenomenon. The roots of globalization are deep in history. The colonialization of Central Asia was one of the steps and the Russian Revolution (1917) continued this process by the westernization of local cultures. This piece is from Theodore Levin's book. As you may already know Theodore Levin authored the book 'The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels In Central Asia'. He began conducting musical and ethnographic research in Uzbekistan in 1978 and then in Tajikistan. He was involved also in AKMICA - The Aga Khan Music Initiative for Central Asia. The aforementioned book presents living musical and ethnographic traditions, beliefs, and social relationships in Muslim and Jewish central Asian cultures during and after Soviet rule. This text discusses the issues connected to the traditional music of Shash-maqam, the unsuccessful attempts of Soviet establishments to 'modernize' (ensemblization) it during Soviet times, dividing the common musical heritage of Central Asia into different parts. Is innovation harmful to traditional music? How can it be developed in new ages in the modern world?



“...Uzbek classical music was different. Although groups of men still listened to solo or duo performances of classical music at a morning *osh* or an evening *gap*, the *shash maqam*, the centerpiece of the classical repertory that I had come originally to Tashkent to study under the tutelage of professor Karomatov, was a musical tradition propped up from above by the policies of Uzbekistan's culture *apparatus*. Patronage was, to be sure, not new to the *shash maqam*. Like other art music traditions in the core Islamic world, the *shash maqam* had always been the domain of professional musicians whose support came largely from wealthy merchants and the nobility. With its sophisticated poetics, complex melodic modulations, and glacially-paced tempos, the *shash maqam* was an aristocratic music intended for cultivated audiences whose knowledge of music and poetry made for a kind of spontaneous dialogue between performers and listeners. But that knowledge had gradually receded, and the art of the *shash maqam* had begun to stagnate.

Though I couldn't put my finger on it, something had seemed not right about the performances of *shash maqam* I heard when I first came to Tashkent. Put simply, they lacked life. As taught and performed at the Tashkent conservatory, the *shash maqam* could have been compared to a dying person being kept clinically alive on a respirator. The respirator was controlled by the Ministry of Culture. It was the ministry that had approved the resuscitation of the moribund *shash maqam* in the late 1950s and had stage-managed its ideological repositioning as a leading exemplar of Uzbekistan's "national" music (this after a near-death experience in the early 1950s in which the ministry had decreed that the *shash maqam* had been too close to the feudal culture of the emirs, too distant from "the people," too infused with undercurrents of Sufism, and thus had to be suppressed).

For both soviet and post-soviet Uzbekistan, the *shash maqam* comprised an important cultural property that provided evidence of an Uzbek literary and musical great

tradition. Soviet cultural politics had fostered the creation of such great traditions for each official soviet nationality, often aided by a reimagining of cultural history that produced notable distortions in the way that both cultural boundaries and cultural commonalities were perceived and reified. For example, in cities such as Bukhara and Samarqand (presently in Uzbekistan) and, as Maruf Xaja had pointed out, in Khojend (Tajikistan), musicians thoroughly bilingual in Uzbek and Tajik have traditionally performed lyrical songs whose texts are drawn from poetry in both languages. Singers switch almost unconsciously from one language to the other, and it is not uncommon to find Uzbek and Tajik couplets mixed together in the same song. But during the Soviet era, in order to bolster Soviet-created national identities (“Uzbek,” “Tajik,” etc.), the bilingual art song repertory of Bukhara, Samarqand, and other cities was commonly divided into two separate entities: “Uzbek classical music” and “Tajik classical music,” each with poetic texts exclusively in the “national” language of the appropriate republic. Commercial recordings, radio and television performances, musical pedagogy, and publications of musical notation all reflected this essentially political nomenclature. The *shash maqam*, for example, was split in two: a Tajik *shash maqam* was published in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, with tajik texts, and an Uzbek *shash maqam* was published in Tashkent, with Uzbek texts. The Tajik publication made no mention of the Uzbek *shash maqam*, and the Uzbek publication made no mention of the Tajik *shash maqam*.

By the early 1980s, the absurdity of this artificial division had become too obvious to support, and the separate Tajik and Uzbek *maqams* were reterritorialized into what became known in Uzbekistan as the Uzbek-Tajik *shash maqam* and in Tajikistan as the Tajik-Uzbek *shash maqam*. The Uzbek-Tajik, or Tajik-Uzbek, *shash maqam* has survived until the present, but in the current highly nationalistic atmosphere of Uzbekistan, the *shash maqam* seems to be undergoing yet another reterritorialization from above aimed once again at promoting urbanization: singers at the radio station in Bukhara, a thoroughly bilingual city (Uzbek and Tajik), have apparently been told to use only Uzbek texts in their broadcasts of *shash maqam* music.

In the conservatory’s Department of Eastern Music, the *shash maqam* was taught from a six-volume set of musical transcriptions compiled by professor Karomatov and a fellow musicologist, Is’haq Rajabov. Students memorized the various songs and instrumental tunes in the *shash maqam* by reading the transcriptions. The transcriptions were in standard staff notation and provided a single melodic line that gave the core pitches of each song and tune. Details of interpretation – dynamics, melodic ornamentation, tempo – were conveyed by teachers during private lessons with such unerring exactitude that they may as well have been inscribed in granite.

The *shash maqam* is not the only Islamic court music repertory to have been transcribed in western staff notation. Iranian *dastgah*, arabo-andalusian *nuba*., ottoman *makam* – all have their volumes of transcriptions compiled by scholars whose aim has been to fix a certain version of these traditional repertoires as an authoritative canon for contemporary performance. But in none of these repertoires do performers so rigidly adhere to the canonical transcriptions as in the *shash maqam*. I was startled by the extent to which the *shash maqam* had been frozen, not only on paper but also in performance.

The man who froze the *shash maqam* was a musician and self-styled musicologist, Yunus Rajabi (1897-1976). For a musicologist, Rajabi is unusually famous in Uzbekistan- (1897-1976). Born in Tashkent, Rajabi sang and played the *dutar* from an early age. His talent attracted the attention of some of Tashkent’s older musicians, and he was quickly drawn into the musical community of the city. As a listener, Rajabi was also familiar with Russian and European popular music. Thanks to the regimental brass



band of the occupying Russian garrison in Chimkent, not far from Tashkent, where he had worked in a slaughterhouse before the revolution, Rajabi came to know the standard repertory of Russian marches and dance music.

Rajabi entered the Turkistan People's Conservatory in 1919 and studied in the division of folk music, where he learned not only to perform, but also to transcribe folk music in staff notation, compose it, and arrange it for ensembles. He wrote a number of the *Agitprop* marches and folk songs, as well as musical dramas that were the vogue of the immediate post-revolutionary period. In 1923, Rajabi was dispatched to Samarqand to teach music in a high school and organize music for the Samarqand Theater of musical drama. In 1927, when the fledgling Uzbek radio called for the organization of a national folk music ensemble, Rajabi was a logical choice to serve as director. His conservatory training, combined with his traditional background, placed him in an ideal position to form just the sort of bridge that was needed between pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary musical culture.

Rajabi did for Uzbek music in the first part of the twentieth century what scribes and bards living at the dawn of literacy had done for oral literature like the genesis story and the Homeric epics: he listened, and he wrote down what he heard. And as was presumed to have been the case with his ancient Near Eastern and Greek predecessors, he didn't listen to just one source. Rajabi had a wide circle of musical contacts. He listened to many versions of a single song and took the one that he considered "most authentic." When he didn't find a version he liked, he took bits and pieces of different musicians' versions and used them to synthesize his own.

Assembling his chosen versions of the *shash maqam's* many songs and instrumental melodies, he created a redaction of the entire repertory. In light of the ongoing skirmishes between Uzbek and Tajik cultural ideologues for control of the *shash maqam*, it is ironic that Rajabi's primary informant and many of his secondary informants were Bukharan Jews.

It is the Rajabi version that is taught in the conservatory, and conservatory graduates in turn teach it to younger students in music high schools. The radio and television ensemble – largely composed of conservatory graduates – performs the Rajabi version and has recorded it on a twenty-volume set of long-playing records. The Rajabi version has also been enshrined in a biannual *shash maqam* competition at the conservatory – a kind of provincial imitation of Moscow's famed Tchaikovsky competition. Somber performers dressed in suits or formal gowns take the stage and compete before a panel of judges to see who can offer the most excruciatingly exact rendition of a song or melody from the Rajabi canonization.

Most recently, Uzbekistan's strongly nationalistic post-Soviet leadership (essentially the same lineup as that which served the republic's erstwhile Soviet masters) has adapted the cultural strategies of Soviet nationalities policies to serve its own ideological aims. The foremost of these aims is arguably the abiding struggle to consolidate national consciousness in a society in which social groups and group identity traditionally revolved around clans, tribes, religious affiliation, and territories ruled



**SINGER (BUKHARA) P.306**

"Traditional Tajik Theater" vol I  
Nizam Nurjanov, Dushanbe 2002

by local nobility. National consciousness can have no future without a past, and thus post-soviet Uzbek cultural strategists have found themselves in essentially the same bind as their soviet predecessors: obliged to forge a singularly Uzbek great tradition from a cultural history that more objective accounts show to have been interlaced with the influences of myriad social groups.

The manipulation of the *shash maqam* for ideological ends has not been motivated only by the “national question,” as it was known in the former Soviet Union. Another kind of manipulation stems from the same founding postulate of Leninism that influenced Uzbek composers like Mutavaqqil Burxanov: the notion that the adoption of European art forms held the key to cultural advancement for the indigenous peoples of what became Soviet Asia. One of these European art forms was what one might call music for large ensembles. A veneration of ensembles and music composed or arranged for ensembles has been one of the enduring vestiges of the cultural politics of rapprochement and fusion (with Europe) in non-Russian parts of the Soviet Union. In Uzbekistan, the creation of ensembles modeled on European orchestras and choirs began in the 1920 with workers’ choirs that performed a mixture of arranged folk songs and newly composed revolutionary songs. After that came the infamous folk orchestras, which featured traditional Uzbek instruments altered to facilitate a merging with European music. Rajabi adopted ensemble performance as a key element in his renovation of the *shash maqam*. The *shash maqam* ensembles represented in some sense a merging of a workers’ choir and a folk orchestra: between a half-dozen and a dozen singers, both male and female, sang in a unison monophony that alternated with solo episodes, all backed up by a consort consisting usually of at least eight instruments (*tanbur, dutar, ghijak, nay, qdshnay, chang, kashgar rabdb, dayrd*), and often included doublings. The result was that the limpid, filigree texture of the melody lines that is such an essential feature of the *shash maqam* became lost in the ensembles’ bloated heterophony of voices and instruments.

Notwithstanding the post-Soviet Uzbek leadership’s nativist tendencies to try to expunge the most conspicuous vestiges of Soviet and Russian colonialism from Uzbekistan’s cultural landscape, the *shash maqam* ensemble, like the Uzbek national chorus, has remained an *idee fixe* of both musicians and the cultural *apparat*. The *maqam* ensemble that Yunus Rajabi founded in 1958 still rehearses five mornings a week at the Tashkent Radio Komitet Building, and one morning in the fall of 1994, I attended their rehearsal.

With my prejudices against the heavy handed, ideologically motivated ensemblization of *shash maqam* performance, I had expected Abduhashim-Afaz to be an odious, robotic music director. I couldn’t have been more mistaken. As I watched Abduhashim rehearse his group, it became clear that he was a talented musician who conveyed a real passion for his work. He knew the Rajabi redaction of the *shash maqam* from memory, and neither he nor the musicians looked at musical notation at any time during the rehearsal (Abduhashim and the singers occasionally glanced at loose leaf notebooks of song texts). When questions arose about how to perform a particular passage, Abduhashim sang the passage, and both singers and instrumentalists repeated it. “I teach from the voice,” he said. “If the musicians worked from notation, it would be as if they were playing the piano.”

“I love our national music,” Abduhashim told me during a break in the rehearsal. “My whole life has been devoted to it, and I’m doing what I do from my soul. Our national music is alive. It’s not like a house, not like a mausoleum. It has to live. You have to add something. After you, someone else will add something different. You

have to hear the music and add your own soul; you have to find a place to add things so that it will be interesting. I'm trying to continue and develop the work of Yunus-Afaz [Rajabi]. I've been the artistic director of the ensemble for eight years, and in those eight years, we've made more than fifty changes in the way Yunus performed the *shash maqam*."

"Fifty changes in eight years?" I repeated Abduhashim's statement back to him to make sure I had understood correctly.

"Yes, fifty changes," Abduhashim repeated proudly, "mostly in ornamentation." For all of Abduhashim's talk about music being alive and about the importance of adding one's own soul, musical liveliness and soulfulness did not for him seem linked either to radical innovation or to a fundamental rethinking of the Rajabi canon and the Rajabi-ordained performance style. Rather, Abduhashim seemed like a devoted caretaker of the Rajabi shrine. His efforts were aimed at recovering, or where evidence failed, deducing, the great man's true musical intentions where they had been distorted by a lack of performers with the technical means to realize them.

I could understand and respond to Abduhashim's passion for music, and I could appreciate his efforts to help his performers play and sing musically. Yet the results of his passion and his musical energy seemed in the end no less lackluster than I had found them eighteen years earlier, when, considering a doctoral dissertation on the *shash maqam*, I had listened to the old melodiya recordings of the radio station ensemble and almost dropped the idea of going to Central Asia because the music had seemed so dull. But reader-listeners may judge for themselves. I have included on the accompanying compact disc (track 5) an excerpt from the performance of the *maqam* ensemble, recorded with Abduhashim's permission during the rehearsal I attended. The excerpt is from the beginning of the *saraxbar* section of *maqam-i segdh*. (The sudden fluctuations of dynamic level are not the result of a technical defect in the recording but represent Abduhashim's efforts to extract musicality from his performers.)

Om's analysis of the *maqam* ensemble phenomenon was larded with a gloom that had come to characterize his outlook on official Uzbek culture. "Abduhashim is a talented musician," said Om. "But his talent exceeds the limits of his worldview. Even if he were to think about the idea that maybe his ensemble isn't really necessary or desirable for the performance of *maqam* music, he wouldn't dare to speak about it publicly, because he'd simply be replaced. The ensemble idea has been surgically implanted in people's minds. Bureaucrats, leaders, musicians, students – they all believe that you have to have a *maqam* ensemble. It's part of the grandomania of socialist culture – the idea that national music has to be grandiose, pompous. Two performers would have been considered an anachronism for the performance of *shash maqam*. The authorities would have said, 'there are twenty million Uzbeks; why such a skimpy ensemble?' They wanted the *shash maqam* to be like a cantata, an oratorio, with voices shifting back and forth. Rajabi created his *shash maqam* with a huge vocal range to make the point about the need for ensemblization, where one voice would pass off

to another, higher voice. His version was made expressly so that no one singer could sing the entire *shash maqam*.

“The ensemblization of the *maqam* was a sin against the aesthetics of this music. But it wasn’t Rajabi’s fault. He wasn’t some kind of evil jinni. He was a son of his epoch and believed deeply in the politics of his time. He was a soviet man, a communist man. He thought that there would be a *maqam* ensemble in every school and that people would come to hear it. He spent a lot of energy trying to do it well. He had a clean soul.”

**SOURCE:** Theodore Levin. “Frozen Music” *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels in Central Asia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. Pp. 45-51.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main idea of this text? How does the author organize the arguments supporting the main idea?
2. The author *said that* “*shash maqam* had always been the domain of professional musicians whose support came largely from wealthy merchants and the nobility.” Is the condition of implementing of music already changing? Who supports the *shash maqam* now?
3. Historically, *shash maqam* was aristocratic music? Is it still an aristocratic? What was the impact of communist ideology on *shash maqam*?
4. How did Soviet ‘national’ ideology connect the music and national identities of Tajiks and Uzbeks? Can the language change help for making the universal music “national”?
5. What do you think about the need for the ensemblization of *shash maqam*? Why did Ted Levin call *shash maqam* music in modern Uzbekistan a ‘frozen music’?
6. Do you agree with Levin’s interpretation of Central Asia’s classical musical heritage? What is your personal view on this issue?

### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:

1. What is the effect of globalization on *shash maqam* music in Central Asia? What might be the impact of hip-hop culture on *shash maqam*?
2. What do you think about the similarities and differences between *shash maqam* music in Central Asia and *shash maqam* in the Middle East? How can music help to mobilize peoples and nations? Does political implementation of music destroy the spirit of music? Write a short essay on the destiny of this music in Central Asia?

## MUHAMMAD TAHIR TURKMEN MUSIC LOSES OUT TO HIP-HOP

What is the future of traditional, classical music in a time of globalization? How can Turkmen music survive and develop amidst the influence of the neighboring Tajik and Uzbek cultures in Afghanistan? These questions have been raised in this article. The author is Muhammad Tahir, a Prague-based journalist and writer, who discusses the destiny of classic Turkmen music in modern Afghanistan and the concerns of solo singers "baghshi" and scholars. According to them the ignorance of the younger generation of Turkmen about classical music is more dangerous than the Taliban's pressure. This example shows that the conditions for traditional music and its survival vary. Do you agree with the author's point of view? Can the relationship between cultures and music be dangerous for the musical heritage of a nation?

"Modern music and lack of interest inflict more damage on a unique art form than even the Taliban could do. Sitting cross-legged on a carpet, Araz Baghshi strikes up the first notes in a mournful song about love on a "dutar" or traditional Turkmen lute.

Araz, 62, who recently gave what he said would be his final public concert, is regarded as one of the last remaining classical singers of the ethnic Turkmen of Afghanistan.

"I am not optimistic about the future of this music in Afghanistan," he said.

Araz, whose title "Baghshi" denotes a solo singer, belongs to the high-art Turkmen classical tradition rather than the folk music of the villages.

"The classical songs performed by baghshis always held an important place in Turkmen culture," he explained. "Performances by baghshis were an especially important part of wedding parties, where they used to sing late into the night."

Serdar Antep, a music professor at Bilkent University in the Turkish capital Ankara, is an expert on Central Asian music who fears that the Turkmen classical style and the oral tradition it preserves are under threat.

Professor Antep says very little is known about the musical forms of the Turkmen of Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkmenistan.

Most of the Turkmen minority in Afghanistan belong to the Ersari tribe and inhabit a thin strip of territory running nearly the entire length of the north of the country, from Herat in the west to Kataghan in the north-east. They live a rural farming life, while smaller numbers reside in the capital Kabul, where they work in the carpet trade, which is dominated by the famous red-colored Turkmen rugs.

These days, there are very few professional baghshis and top-notch players of the dutar. Where musicians exist, they are generally rural folksingers or flute players, while women are restricted to the tambourine and Jew's harp – and they can be seen playing and dancing only in the special all-female area at a wedding party.

The cultural disruption of the last two decades, in which many Turkmen left their homes in northern Afghanistan to live as refugees in Pakistan, was compounded by



#### TURKMEN MUSICIANS

the imposition of Taliban rule in this region in 1998. The Islamic movement proscribed most art forms, including the secular tradition of the baghshi.

But Araz Baghshi argues that Turkmen music is now in worse shape than it was in the Taliban years, when at least there was a covert demand for it.

“Today’s younger generation think it’s a sign of backwardness to listen to classical Turkmen music, and such views have meant baghshis have been replaced at weddings by pop singers who can’t even sing in the Turkmen language properly,” he said.

Pop and rock music, and even hip-hop, are increasingly popular and are displacing the older styles.

Kabul-based social worker and Turkmen language expert Parween Tahir says such modern influences are unavoidable. But she believes increased cultural contacts with Turkmen communities abroad could help revitalize the old forms.

However, Muhammad Mousa, a former baghshi now living in Turkey, blames Turkmen community leaders in Afghanistan for failing to support an indigenous art form whose professional performers found it hard to survive the years of war and poverty.

And he holds out little hope that help will come from abroad. “The young Turkmen generation in Pakistan and Iran are especially far removed from our musical culture, since they’ve grown up under the influence of many other entirely different cultures such as Punjabi and Indian,” he said.

Inside the country, Turkmen singing styles have been modified by the influence of the more numerous Uzbeks, who speak a related Turkic language but have their own musical forms.

That influence was dictated by the harsh politics of the time, argues Abdul Nabi, who runs a music shop in the Kunduz region.

“During the two decades of mujahedin struggle against the central government, Turkmen [militia] commanders always served in a low-ranking capacity under the leadership of Uzbek and Tajik commanders,” he explained.





“This fact automatically led them to choose Uzbek-style songs at their late-night musical parties, which were attended by their Uzbek and Tajik bosses. Since these dancing parties were the only form of entertainment for the military, this [style] was soon transmitted to the whole Turkmen community via these young soldiers.”

Even Ahmed Baghshi, who died in 1995 and is regarded as perhaps the pre-eminent baghshi of the late 20th century, is said to have adopted a more Uzbek style in his latter years.

Mousa Baghshi says it made sense for singers to change their style both to earn more money and to please the Uzbek warlords who called the tune in every sense.

There are some signs of interest in keeping the music alive. Apart from Araz, at least two other recognized master musicians give performances, Hemra Baghshi and Server Baghshi. And after decades of silence, at last some of their music is being broadcast on the Turkmen-language service of Radio Kabul.

In his Kunduz shop, Abdul Nabi is busy converting aging tape recordings into digital-format CDs. But apart from such private projects, there are no efforts to carry out more comprehensive archiving to prevent old recordings deteriorating and being lost forever.

As professor Antep said, “There is no proper institution teaching and promoting

musical culture in northern Afghanistan. There are just a few individuals trying to keep it alive, entirely on their own.”

**SOURCE:** Muhammad Tahir. *Turkmen Music Loses Out to Hip-Hop*. Muhammad Tahir is a Prague-based journalist (RCA no. 451, 6-june-06); Url: [http://www.iwpr.net/?p=rca&s=f&o=321437&apc\\_state=henprca](http://www.iwpr.net/?p=rca&s=f&o=321437&apc_state=henprca).

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are the reasons for the pessimistic view on the Turkmen classical tradition in Afghanistan: globalism, hip-hop, influence of neighborhoods, or something else?
2. Why does the younger generation think that listening to classical Turkmen music is a sign of backwardness? Are there any other opportunities to develop Turkmen classical music today? What is the responsibility of local communities? Can we blame Turkmen community leaders in Afghanistan for failing to support indigenous art forms?
3. Why do people usually blame others for the corruption of their traditions and arts, but not themselves?
4. What is the role of institutions in teaching and promoting musical culture in modern times? Can people find in the globalization of music anything but threat and menace?

### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:

1. Find and discuss the similarities and differences between the texts on global music and modern traditions.
2. Is globalization and global music the main factor (as a market, global industry etc.) which damages the originality and beauty of traditional music?
3. What is the future of music and dance as forms of human expression?
4. Present your ideas on global music using one musical example from your own region or country.
5. What are the positive and negative sides of global music and the features of modern traditions? Please, write an essay on musical tradition and global music: present and perspectives.

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221

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## **RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT**

Editors: *Jonathan Edwins, Farrukh Ashrapov*

### **UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA**

#### **Aga Khan Humanities Project**

47A, Druzhbi Narodov avenue

734013 Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Tel. (++992-372) 245823

Fax (++992-372) 510128

Email: [akhp.dushanbe@ucentralasia.org](mailto:akhp.dushanbe@ucentralasia.org)

<http://www.ucentralasia.org>





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