

MAQOM SINGING – THE HIGH ART OF EASTERN MUSICAL HERITAGE

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Abstract: This article provides a comprehensive overview of the art of maqom singing as a high form of Eastern musical heritage. It analyzes the historical roots of maqom performance, its stages of development, the role of the master-apprentice tradition, and processes harmonizing with contemporary interpretations. The article details the vocal skills required for a maqom singer, proper breath control techniques, tonal perception, understanding of the system of pitch modulation, and the performance characteristics of maqom sections (Saraxbor, Talqin, Nasr, Ufar, etc.).

Furthermore, it examines the artistic and aesthetic significance of classical poetic texts in maqom songs, as well as the singer's skills in interpreting the text and integrating poetic meaning with musical expression. Historical maqom schools, particularly the vocal styles of Bukhara, Khorezm, and the Fergana–Tashkent maqom traditions, are compared, and differences in their performance techniques and artistic interpretations are illustrated with examples.

Keywords. Maqom, maqom singing, Eastern musical heritage, master-apprentice tradition, vocal technique, pitch modulation, Talqin, Nasr, Ufar, Saraxbor, classical poetry, artistic interpretation, performance art, maqom schools, Bukhara maqoms, Khorezm maqom routes, Fergana–Tashkent maqom route, ensemble, musical heritage, interpretation, stage culture, modern pedagogy, training young performers.

Maqom singing is one of the highest forms of Uzbek and Central Asian musical culture, with roots tracing back to ancient times. Maqom represents a system of musical compositions that encapsulates specific moods, rhythms, and stylistic features. Singing is the art of performing within this system. Maqom singing is not only a form of musical expression but also serves as a means of reflecting the nation's spiritual heritage, traditions, and philosophical outlook.

Throughout its development, maqom art has passed through various historical periods, each contributing its own stylistic characteristics. Although maqoms evolved differently in various regions of Uzbekistan, they all adhere to common musical principles. Historical sources indicate that maqom singing was formed in the 12th–13th centuries and flourished in the 14th–15th centuries, especially in the Bukhara and Samarkand regions. During this period, singers were renowned for their high skill level and distinctive performance styles.

The maqom singing system consists of several fundamental elements: tonic, melodic forms, rhythmic patterns, and ornamentation. When performing maqoms, singers consider not only musical techniques but also linguistic, philosophical, and emotional expressions. Each maqom conveys a particular mood, emotional color, and even meanings related to seasons and times of the day. Therefore, maqom singing requires profound knowledge and emotional sensitivity from the performer.

The study and cultivation of maqom singing demand special attention. Singers traditionally learn within the master-apprentice system. An apprentice not only listens to their master's performance but absorbs their techniques, intonation, and emotional expression implicitly. This process teaches the student not only the technical aspects of singing but also the spiritual and cultural understanding of music. In this sense, maqom singing is not only musical performance but also a process that enriches the inner world of a person.

In the modern era, maqom singing has expanded with new forms and directions. Singers perform not only traditional maqoms but also contemporary compositions. At the same time, maqom art



integrates with other genres, including folk singing, theater, and concert performance. This allows maqom singing to reach broader audiences and harmonize with modern musical culture. Maqom singing also holds significant academic value. Researchers study its history, stylistics, regional features, and pedagogical methods, contributing to the training of new generations of performers. In addition to developing musical skills, studying maqom enhances cultural and philosophical thinking.

Today, in Uzbekistan, maqom singing is preserved as a rich historical heritage, and systems for its modern performance and teaching are being strengthened. National conservatories, music academies, and specialized lyceums integrate traditional and contemporary methods in training singers. International musical cooperation and festivals introduce maqom singing to the global music community.

As a result, maqom singing remains a central element of national musical culture and a means of emotional and aesthetic education. This art form will continue to be an object of academic study for future generations, while its performance, teaching, and development remain an integral part of modern musical culture.

Maqom singing is significant not only as a form of musical performance but also as a vehicle for national culture, emotional development, and aesthetic education. Therefore, teaching maqom should pay attention not only to traditional methods but also to modern pedagogical technologies. The process of teaching maqom develops not only technical skills but also students' emotional sensitivity, intonation perception, and rhythmic and melodic thinking.

Traditional pedagogical methods in maqom singing are based on the master-apprentice system. In this method, the apprentice carefully observes, listens to, and repeats the master's performance. Through this process, the student learns not only technique but also the emotional and philosophical meaning of the maqom. Traditional methods also enable singers to deeply understand maqom and adapt it to their own performance style.

Modern pedagogical technologies support innovative approaches to teaching maqom. For example, a modular learning system allows students to gradually learn maqom elements, testing their performance and theoretical knowledge at the end of each module. This approach helps develop independent performance and theoretical understanding.

Interactive learning technologies are also effectively applied in maqom teaching. Singers listen to and analyze various performances through audio and video materials, comparing them with their own renditions. This method helps students better understand stylistic features, intonation, and ornamentation techniques.

Visualization and multimedia tools play an important role in teaching maqom. Notation, rhythmic patterns, and melodic sequences are displayed graphically, strengthening students' memory and perception. Computer programs and applications allow students to slow down and repeatedly listen to performances, making complex intonations easier to master.

Cooperative teaching methods are also widely used in maqom singing. Students are divided into small groups to perform, analyze, and discuss together, sharing knowledge. This process develops not only musical skills but also creative thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Differentiated learning approaches are equally important. Each student's individual abilities, vocal capabilities, and emotional sensitivity are taken into account. The teacher develops the student's strengths while addressing weaknesses through additional exercises. This approach ensures high-quality performance and stable learning outcomes in maqom singing.

Thus, pedagogical technologies in teaching maqom include the traditional master-apprentice system, modular learning, interactive and multimedia tools, cooperative and differentiated approaches. Integrating these methods allows students to master not only the technical aspects of maqom but also its philosophical, emotional, and cultural content. At the same time, modern



pedagogical approaches strengthen maqom singing as an effective tool for developing national musical culture.

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