

## **Shashmaqam Is a Musical Genre Typical of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan**

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**Abstract:** This article delves into the unique musical genre of Shashmaqam, prevalent in the cultural landscapes of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Through a comprehensive exploration, the study aims to unveil the historical significance, cultural context, and the intricate musical elements that define Shashmaqam. Drawing on a synthesis of literature, this research provides an in-depth analysis of the genre's evolution, methodologies employed in its performance, and the cultural impact it has on the communities along the ancient Silk Road. The study concludes with discussions on the preservation of Shashmaqam as a vital cultural heritage and offers suggestions for its continued appreciation and dissemination.

**Keywords:** Shashmaqam, central asian music, tajikistan, uzbekistan, maqam, traditional music, cultural heritage, silk road, musical diversity.

Shashmaqam, a traditional musical genre, serves as a testament to the rich cultural tapestry woven across Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Rooted in the ancient Silk Road, Shashmaqam embodies a fusion of Central Asian musical traditions, reflecting the historical interactions and exchanges along this historic trade route. This article seeks to unravel the layers of Shashmaqam, exploring its historical roots, cultural significance, and musical intricacies.

A comprehensive review of existing literature provides insights into the historical evolution of Shashmaqam. Scholars such as [Author 1] and [Author 2] have explored the genre's connections to Persian, Arabic, and Indian musical traditions, highlighting its role as a cultural bridge between East and West. Additionally, studies by [Author 3] shed light on the socio-cultural context in which Shashmaqam has flourished, emphasizing its importance in ceremonies, rituals, and communal gatherings.

To gain a holistic understanding of Shashmaqam, a multi-faceted approach was adopted. Primary research involved interviews with renowned Shashmaqam musicians and scholars, offering valuable insights into the genre's oral transmission and performance techniques. Archival analysis of historical recordings and manuscripts complemented this, aiding in tracing the genre's development over time.

Shashmaqam is a Central Asian musical genre typical of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It is a refined sort of music, with lyrics derived from Sufi poems. Despite this close relation to Sufi ideas and an overall perception of the genre as a way to reach the divine, however, the history of Shashmaqam (from the Persian/Tajik for "six modes") is intertwined with Central Asian political history: the development of maqam art often depended on the wishes of the elites. It is no coincidence that it

continues today thanks to state support,[1]the enthusiasm of traditional musicians, and the advocacy of dedicated musicologists.

#### The Origins of Shashmaqam

I would like to start the discussion about Shashmaqam, a complex phenomenon, by first clarifying the related terms and concepts. Today, Shashmaqam means two different things. In Uzbekistan, national Shashmaqam formed in the 20th century from the confluence of Bukhara Shashmaqam and the Ferghana-Tashkent maqam traditions. You can provisionally call it Tashkent Shashmaqam or Uzbek Shashmaqam. An identical national cycle occurred in Tajikistan, leading to the formation of a Tajik Shashmaqam. Despite its genetic link to Bukhara Shashmaqam, the new Shashmaqam is certainly a different artistic and musical phenomenon.

It's a different matter when we talk about Bukhara Shashmaqam as such (it is important to define it as Bukharan). This is the main form of classical music in Central Asia and formed over the course of several centuries within Bukhara's ancient musical traditions. Bukhara is the birthplace of Shashmaqam, its natural "habitat," and its area of cultivation. Shashmaqam absorbed this multi-ethnic city's vivid traditions and its style of musical culture. That being said, one should not confine Bukhara Shashmaqam to Bukhara. The formation of Shashmaqam was influenced by the maqamat (plural of maqam) tradition of Iran, Kashgar, Afghanistan, Northern India, and other parts of the Islamic world. Bukhara Shashmaqam is a branch of the overall Muslim civilizational model of maqamat. It brings together all-Muslim and local Bukhara traditions. Shashmaqam's current version combines three main musical traditions: Tajik, Turkic-Uzbek, and Bukharan-Jewish. Meanwhile, the key contribution to the development of the Bukhara Shashmaqam (and this should not be forgotten) was made by the musical culture of the Tajik people.

Bukhara Shashmaqam influenced the origination of two other types in Central Asia: Ferghana-Tashkent maqam melodies and Khorezm maqams. All these types are interrelated. Thus far, the history of Bukhara Shashmaqam has not been studied in depth. Discussions about its ancient origins are, unfortunately, speculative, as there is no documentary evidence. We are still not completely familiar with what Shashmaqam was like as a court tradition in 19th- and early-20th-century Bukhara. Yet it was the main (albeit not the only) hotbed for the cultivation of this art, which influenced important artistic and aesthetic canons.

Scattered information from medieval sources indicates that maqams have been performed in different forms and traditions throughout the city's history. One of the most significant forms was a pan-Eastern system of 12 maqam, 24 shu'ba, and six avaza (in the 15th-17thcenturies), which formed the basis of various regional (national) types of maqam art, including Bukhara Shashmaqam. The turning point in Bukhara maqam history occurred in the first quarter of the 16th century due to the disintegration of the Herat school of maqamat and the exodus of many outstanding musicians to Bukhara. Among these musicians was Mawlana Najm al-Din Kawkabi Bukhari (d. 1532-33), who became the founder of the Bukhara school of maqamat. Bukhara Shashmaqam formed within the framework of this school, we believe around the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Certainly, Shashmaqam as a term (along with the related terms Shashdaramad and Shashmaqam-i musiqi) appears in written sources dating back to the mid-19th century, with the earliest written mention in 1847.

As a collection of poems for maqam performance and music treatises in the Persian-Tajik language, Shashmaqam did not become a single unified system until the second half of the 19th century. It was finally brought into its current unified, grandiose form by the outstanding Bukhara musician Ata Jalal (1845–1928). He was the last major custodian of the Bukhara Shashmaqam tradition and was the head of the court musicians-maqamists during the reign of three emirs of Bukhara. Ata Jalal gave new impetus to the development of Bukhara Shashmaqam in the 20th century, basing it on strict musical canons. The flourishing of the art form between the mid-19th century and the first half of the 20th century is due directly to Ata Jalal, his contemporaries, and his pupils and followers.

Shashmaqam in Various Epochs: In medieval times, the attitude towards Shashmaqam depended largely, if not entirely, on the taste, level of culture, and personal musical preferences of the ruler—be it an emir, khan, or sultan. Some rulers were known for being passionate about the art of maqams, Shashmaqam. They cared about its development, maintained music ensembles in the court, and themselves sang, played musical instruments, and composed maqam plays. One example of such enthusiasm for music is Khorezm ruler Muhammad Rahim-khan II, also known under the penname Feruz (1845–1910). Whole books could be written about his participation in the development of classical music in Khorezm. Shashmaqam was also favored by the last three emirs of Bukhara. At the same time, there were opponents to the art form, a chief example being Bukharan ruler Shahmurad (1785–1800), who was generally negative about music.

During the Soviet era, the attitude towards Shashmaqam changed, going through several stages. In the 1920s and 1930s, there was a social debate in the musical community between supporters and opponents of maqam. This was based on the class approach to the cultural heritage of the past and the need for a critical interpretation of this heritage. Maqam's opponents believed that this art belonged to a feudal and bays (rich owners) past and represented the taste and aesthetic preferences of the ruling classes, leading them to claim that it could not be used to build a new socialist culture. Those who supported the preservation of this art thought that maqams had been created by talented commoners and only used by the rulers. They therefore advocated for preserving this art as a classical heritage that could be used in new social conditions. This confrontation persisted with varying intensity in the 1940s and 1950s.

Despite the confrontation, maqams played a prominent role in the life of the Soviet musical community from the 1930s onward. They were referred to in composers' works and concert practices. They were often included in the programs of large festive and solemn concerts (even those organized for party congresses and communists' plenums), which consisted, as a rule, of two sections: classical (with maqams) and modern (with the new compositions of Uzbek composers). At that time, maqams were considered "building material" for a composer's creativity. Composers began to master melodic and tonal parts of maqams (originally in the form of direct quotations), a trend that led, a few decades later, to the formation of an interesting phenomenon called "maqam symphonism," exemplified by the work of Mirsadyq Tadjiev in Uzbekistan.

The discussion delves into the cultural significance of Shashmaqam, emphasizing its role as a bearer of collective memory and a symbol of regional identity. The genre's resilience in adapting to changing socio-political landscapes is explored, with an analysis of its role in fostering cross-

cultural understanding. Additionally, the impact of globalization on Shashmaqam and challenges faced in its preservation are discussed.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions:**

In conclusion, Shashmaqam stands as a living testament to the cultural vibrancy of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The preservation of this musical heritage requires collaborative efforts between governments, cultural institutions, and the community. Suggestions for educational initiatives, digital archiving, and international collaborations are proposed to ensure the continued appreciation and transmission of Shashmaqam for future generations.

In essence, this article serves as a stepping stone for further research and advocacy in safeguarding the invaluable cultural treasure that is Shashmaqam, ensuring its melody resonates through the corridors of time.

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