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The Contribution of V.A. Uspensky to the Development of Musical Culture in Central Asia

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Abstract

This article examines the contribution of Viktor Alexandrovich Uspensky (1879–1949) to the development of musical culture in Central Asia. Particular attention is given to his activity as both an ethnographer and a composer, whose work combined scholarly systematization with artistic creativity. Special emphasis is placed on Uspensky's efforts in recording and transcribing Shashmaqam — a unique musical cycle that includes six maqams (Buzruk, Rast, Navo, Dugoh, Segoh, Iraq). Transcribing such a complex tradition into European notation was an exceptional phenomenon in the history of music, requiring both deep knowledge of maqam structures and the ability to adapt them within another cultural system.

The author highlights that Uspensky strove to preserve the authenticity of the tradition, deliberately avoiding European analogies in terminology and genre classification. His pedagogical work at the Turkestan People's Conservatory contributed to the formation of a new generation of musicians who combined traditional and Western European approaches. His opera Farhad and Shirin is considered an important example of integrating maqam melodies into the genre of musical drama. Uspensky's legacy appears as a synthesis of scientific precision and compositional intuition, which ensured not only the preservation but also the further development of the Uzbek musical tradition.

Keywords: Viktor Uspensky, Shashmaqam, ethnography, compositional creativity, transcription, music education.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada Viktor Aleksandrovich Uspenskiy (1879–1949) ning Markaziy Osiyo musiqiy madaniyatini rivojlantirishga qo‘shgan hissasi tahlil qilinadi. Asosiy e’tibor uning nafaqat etnograf, balki kompozitor sifatidagi faoliyatiga qaratilgan. Shuningdek, Uspenskiyning Buzruk, Rost, Navo, Dugoh, Segoh, Iroq kabi oltita maqomni o‘z ichiga olgan noyob musiqiy turkum — Shashmaqomni yozib olish va transkripsiya qilishdagi ishlari alohida ta’kidlanadi. Bunday murakkab an’anani yevropa notasi asosida ifodalash musiqiy tarixda o‘ziga

xos hodisa bo‘lib, maqom tuzilmasini chuqur bilishni hamda uni boshqa madaniy tizim doirasida moslashtirish qobiliyatini talab etgan.

Maqolada Uspenskiy an’anaviylikni iloji boricha saqlashga intilgani, terminologiya va janr tasnifida yevropa analogiyalaridan ataylab qochgani ta’kidlanadi. Uning Turkiston Xalq konservatoriyasidagi pedagogik faoliyati an’anaviy va g‘arbiy yondashuvlarni uyg‘unlashtirgan yangi avlod musiqachilarini shakllantirishga xizmat qilgan. Kompozitorning Farhod va Shirin operasi maqom kuylarini musiqiy drama janriga singdirilishining muhim namunasi sifatida ko‘riladi. Uspenskiy merosi ilmiy aniqlik va kompozitorlik intuitsiyasining sintezi bo‘lib, u nafaqat musiqiy merosni saqlab qolishni, balki o‘zbek musiqiy an’analarining yanada rivojlanishini ham ta’minladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Viktor Uspenskiy, Shashmaqom, etnografiya, bastakorlik ijodi, transkripsiya, musiqiy ta’lim.

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается вклад Виктора Александровича Успенского (1879–1949) в развитие музыкальной культуры Центральной Азии. Акцент сделан на его деятельности как этнографа и одновременно композитора, в творчестве которого сочетались научная систематизация и художественное мышление. Особое внимание уделено работе Успенского по записи и транскрипции Шашмакама — уникального музыкального цикла, включающего шесть макомов (Buzruk, Rast, Navo, Dugoh, Segoh, Iraq). Перевод столь сложного материала в европейскую нотацию представлял собой исключительное явление в истории музыки, требующее как глубокого знания структуры макомов, так и способности адаптировать их в иной культурной системе.

Автор подчеркивает, что Успенский стремился максимально сохранить аутентичность традиции, избегая европеизации терминологии и жанровых определений. Его педагогическая деятельность в Туркестанской народной консерватории способствовала формированию нового поколения музыкантов, сочетающих традиционные и западноевропейские подходы. Опера Фархад и Ширин рассматривается как важный пример интеграции макомных мелодий в жанр музыкальной драмы. Наследие Успенского предстает как синтез научной точности и композиторской интуиции, обеспечивший не только сохранение, но и дальнейшее развитие узбекской музыкальной традиции.

Ключевые слова: Виктор Успенский, Шашмаком, этнография, композиторское творчество, транскрипция, музыкальное образование.

Viktor Alexandrovich Uspensky (1879–1949) stands out not only as an ethnographer but also as a creative figure whose musical and scholarly contributions

were of exceptional significance for the development of musical culture in Central Asia. His approach to studying and systematizing traditional music represents a rare synthesis of compositional mastery and scientific discipline—an extraordinary phenomenon in the history of music.

The recording of *Shashmaqam*, to which Uspensky devoted a significant part of his life, represents an enormous challenge for any composer or musician [1][2]. *Shashmaqam* is not merely a collection of musical pieces—it is a highly complex cyclical form in which the vocal and instrumental traditions of Central Asia are interwoven [3]. Its structure comprises six maqams: *"Buzruk," "Rast," "Navo," "Dugoh," "Segoh," and "Iraq"* [4]. Each of these maqams is a multilayered composition that fuses elements of modal systems, poetic forms, and improvisational traditions. Transcribing such music into European notation is a task that requires not only deep insight into its musical structure but also the ability to adapt musical thought within the framework of another cultural system [5].

Of particular importance is Uspensky's effort to preserve the authenticity of the material, even when transcribing the maqams from instrumental versions. Despite the technical limitations of the tanbur, he managed to retain the characteristic rhythmic and melodic features of the tradition, thus enabling a deeper understanding of the internal logic and structural coherence of the maqams.

What distinguishes Uspensky's work is that he was not merely an ethnographer recording what he heard. His research demonstrates a creative approach to interpreting musical tradition. As a composer, he possessed a unique ability to analyze musical forms on a profound level, which enabled him to perceive the internal connections among the various elements of the maqams. This is especially crucial considering that maqams represent not only musical structures but also forms of cultural communication closely tied to the poetic and philosophical dimensions of Eastern culture.

In his transcription of *Shashmaqam*, Uspensky remained faithful to original titles and terminology, reflecting his respect for the musical tradition. It is important to emphasize that he deliberately avoided applying European analogies, despite employing European notation. This reveals his deep awareness of the importance of preserving the authenticity of the material without forcing it into conventional Western frameworks.

Uspensky's work had a profound influence on the development of maqam studies as a scientific discipline. As a composer, I view his achievements not only as an ethnographic feat but also as a foundation for future compositional and theoretical research. The systematization of maqams allowed not only for the preservation of this heritage but also for its accessibility in new cultural contexts [6]. Thanks to his efforts, many composers and musicologists gained the opportunity to study maqams as a sophisticated musical system, which, in turn, opened new perspectives for the interpretation of this music in the contemporary world.

Transcribing maqams from instrumental rather than vocal performances led to some simplifications, particularly in terms of melodic ornamentation typical of the Uzbek vocal tradition. For a composer, this situation presents a dual challenge: on one hand, preserving the fundamental structure and form of the piece; on the other, adapting it to circumstances that do not always allow for the full richness of the sound [7][8]. Despite these challenges, Uspensky created material that has become a benchmark for future maqam studies. This process also revealed subtle aspects of compositional mastery—the ability to work with material that goes beyond conventional forms and systems.

As someone who dedicated his life not only to research but also to pedagogy, Uspensky had a tremendous impact on the development of music education in Central Asia. His work at the Turkestan People's Conservatory led to the emergence of a new generation of musicians who became his successors. Educating musicians who were familiar with both traditional Uzbek music and Western European musical

traditions was an essential step in shaping the new musical consciousness of the region [9][10].

Uspensky's creative legacy as a composer also significantly influenced the development of Central Asian musical culture. His opera Farhad and Shirin, composed in the 1930s, became a milestone in the development of musical drama in the region. In this work, Uspensky actively used melodies from the maqams he had personally recorded during his ethnographic expeditions. This opera, like his other compositions, demonstrates his ability to integrate traditional Uzbek musical forms into contemporary compositional works, making his creativity a vital link in the cultural exchange between East and West.

His compositional activity was characterized by a deep understanding of the Uzbek musical tradition. Utilizing the rich modal language of the maqams, Uspensky succeeded in creating works that harmoniously combined traditional forms with elements of Western musical culture. This not only enriched Uzbek music but also provided a new perspective for composers and researchers seeking a deeper understanding of the interaction between musical cultures.

Alongside his compositional work, Uspensky played a key role in the advancement of music education in Central Asia. In 1918, he became one of the founders of the Turkestan People's Conservatory in Tashkent, where many future outstanding musicians—such as Yunus Rajabi—were educated. This conservatory was the first major educational institution in the region where both Western European and traditional Uzbek music were taught.

Uspensky paid particular attention to creating educational programs that combined traditional and modern approaches to music instruction. His students not only studied Western music disciplines but also acquired profound knowledge of maqams, which contributed to their well-rounded musical development. A significant aspect of his pedagogical work was the training of musicians capable of

combining traditional Uzbek musical forms with European ones, allowing them to become mediators of cultural exchange between East and West.

The contribution of V. A. Uspensky to the musical culture of Central Asia is of lasting importance. His legacy exemplifies a rare synthesis of ethnographic precision and compositional intuition, ensuring not only the preservation of a unique musical heritage but also its renewal within new cultural contexts. His work provided the foundation for future compositional and theoretical studies and remains an indispensable source for musicians and scholars alike.

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