

**ANALYSIS OF MUSIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AT THE SAMARKAND
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Abstract: This article examines the formation and development of the national music education system in Uzbekistan during the 1920s–1930s from a historical and cultural perspective. It analyzes the activities of the early music schools established in 1920, which were based mainly on European musical traditions and notation systems, while paying little attention to indigenous Uzbek music and the involvement of local teachers. Special attention is given to the establishment of the Samarkand Institute of Music and Choreography in 1928 under the leadership of N.N. Mironov, which became the first scientific center for the study of national music. The article highlights the contributions of prominent musicians and scholars such as Mukhtar Ashrafiy, Toshmurod Sodiqov, and Sharif Ramazonov, who collected and transcribed folk songs from various regions of Uzbekistan. Their efforts played a crucial role in preserving traditional melodies and integrating them into academic study. The findings show that during the 1920s–1930s, the system of national music education in Uzbekistan evolved through the synthesis of European theoretical approaches and local musical traditions, laying the foundation for the emergence of the Uzbek school of composition.

Keywords: national music education, Samarkand Institute of Music, N.N. Mironov, Mukhtar Ashrafiy, folk songs, folklore, European music theory, 1920s–1930s, Uzbek culture, musicology.

Introduction

Historical realities within society and the transition from one era to another are primarily reflected through profound transformations in its cultural and spiritual spheres. At the end of the 19th century, the conquest of Turkestan by Tsarist Russia and the subsequent continuation of this regime under Soviet ideology led to the introduction of new principles into the lives of the peoples of Central Asia. During this period, *Rus-Tuzem* (Russian-native) schools emerged, where students received both religious and secular education. Alongside this system, the newly introduced *Jadid* (modernist) schools also functioned successfully.

The national *Jadid* enlighteners, who worked tirelessly for the freedom and literacy of the peoples of Turkestan during the periods of the Emirate and Tsarist colonial rule, as well as under the subsequent Soviet regime, also made remarkable contributions to the field of music.

The 1920s became a significant period in the cultural life of Uzbekistan, marked by the formation of a national music education system developed along European lines. During this decade, specialized national music schools were established; however, their main focus was directed toward the European notation system, music theory, and performance techniques. This situation revealed the absence of an

educational framework grounded in national musical traditions and the shortage of local professional instructors.

This article analyzes the initial stages of the formation of the national music education system in Uzbekistan during the 1920s–1930s.

Methods

This study was conducted using a historical-analytical approach. The primary sources included the works of musicologists and researchers active during the period under study (such as N.N. Mironov, V.A. Uspenskiy, O. Matyoqubov, and others), archival manuscripts, information about music schools, and relevant scholarly literature. In addition, the historical interrelation between national music education and creative traditions was examined through documentary sources and publications. The research employed historical-cultural analysis, comparative musicology, and source criticism (documentary analysis) methods. The main focus was directed toward the following objectives:

1. To identify the stages of formation of musicological scholarship in Uzbekistan and Central Asia during the 1920s–1940s;
2. To elucidate the essence of the scientific cooperation between Russian and Uzbek scholars.

The development of Uzbekistan's musical culture, along with its ideological reflection in the discipline of musicology, represents a process full of contradictions and complexities. At the same time, it marks an era in which highly qualified specialists, devoted scholars, and outstanding figures emerged and made significant contributions to the field.

Results

1. Establishment of National Music Schools

In 1920, special schools for teaching the performance of national musical instruments were established in Uzbekistan. However, these schools were organized according to European models, and the teaching staff consisted mainly of Russian pedagogues such as Drujinin, Karin-Karo, Drobnich-Pekarskiy, Karseva, Petlina, Kastalskaya, Kubliskaya, Zagurskaya, Damanskaya, Vlasov, Vayn, Karelin, Mironov, Romanovskaya, Yakubovskiy, Kulyabko-Karelskiy, and others. There were no local teachers qualified to teach traditional Uzbek music at that time [1, p. 67].

2. Music Education and Curricula in Turkestan

Between 1921 and 1924, music lessons were introduced as a mandatory subject in the educational institutions of Turkestan. However, the curricula were primarily designed for Russian educational institutions, emphasizing music literacy, Russian music theory and history, and revolutionary choral works. As a result, the study of national music traditions remained outside the formal educational process [2, p. 276].

3. The Beginning of the Scientific Study of National Music

During the 1920s and 1930s, the folklore and professional music of the peoples of Central Asia began to be studied from a scientific and theoretical perspective. Music was recorded using phonographs, transcribed into notation, and analyzed through the introduction of principles of polyphonic composition. These efforts marked the beginning of systematic research into national musical heritage.

4. The Role of the Samarkand Institute of Music and Choreography

Founded in 1928, the Samarkand Institute of Music and Choreography, led by N.N. Mironov, became a central institution for the study of national music education and folklore. Upon the recommendation of A. Fitrat, Mironov invited renowned traditional masters — Ota Jalol Nosirov, Domla Halim Ibodov, Abdurahmon Umarov, Matyusuf Xarratov, Xoji Abdulaziz Rasulov, Ahmadjon Umirzoqov, and Abduqodir Ismoilov — as well as the literary scholar Gʻulom Zafariy to take part in the institute's activities [3, p. 166].

Among the institute's first students were Mutal Burhonov, Tolib Sodiqov, Shorahmat Ramazonov, and Mukhtar Ashrafiy, who participated in recording and notating folk songs. As a result of their collective efforts, the anthology *"Songs of Fergana, Bukhara, and Khiva"* (*Pesni Ferganʻy, Buxarʻy i Xivʻy*), edited by N.N. Mironov, was published in 1931 [4, p. 10].

Mukhtar Ashrafiy recorded 25 folk and classical melodies, performed by Abdurahmon Umarov, Nasriddinov, and Toyirjon Davlatzoda. These recordings are invaluable sources for the study of the history of Uzbek national music. The collected pieces display rich genre diversity, encompassing classical works such as *"Qosimbegi," "Abdurahmonbegi," "Soqiynoma,"* as well as folk songs that reflect everyday life, including *"Vo bolam," "Ustam qoshiq," "Sho duxtar,"* and *"Boljuvon"* [5, p. 37].

Discussion

During the 1920s–1930s, two distinct intellectual trends emerged in the process of developing national music education and the study of folklore in Uzbekistan:

1. Advocates for preserving national musical traditions;
2. Proponents of fully adopting the European style.

As a result, under the influence of European ideology, a new cultural environment began to take shape. However, this process also contributed to the development of a scientific approach to national music, enabling its preservation through written documentation. The folklore materials collected by composers such as Mukhtar Ashrafiy, Tolib Sodiqov, and others became a crucial foundation for the system of national music education.

This stage laid the scientific and creative groundwork for the emergence of a national music school and, later, became a decisive factor in the formation of a distinct Uzbek composer's school.

As noted in archival sources, “In 1928, the Samarkand Institute of Music and Choreography began its activity under the leadership of N. Mironov. The Institute set itself the educational goals of studying folk creativity, teaching national singing and dance arts, collecting historical materials on music, and creating notated examples” [4, p. 3].

The institute’s scholarly activity yielded significant results. Textbooks such as *Music Literacy (Musiqqa Savodi)* were published in Uzbek and Tatar languages. Graduate students Mukhtar Ashrafiy, Tolib Sodiqov, and Shorahmat Ramazonov compiled collections respectively titled *Folk Songs of Bukhara*, *Folk Songs of Fergana*, and *Folk Songs of Khorezm*, all edited by N. Mironov and published in 1931. That same year, these authors also released their own individual monographs.

In 1930, V.M. Belyayev published the first scholarly article dedicated to Uzbek music — “*O muzyke uzbekov*” (“On the Music of the Uzbeks”) — in the journal *Proletarskiy Muzykant*. Between 1930–1931, Belyayev worked in Turkmenistan, and from 1931–1933 served as a consultant to the People’s Commissariat of Education of Uzbekistan (Narkompros).

Throughout the 1920s–1940s, the classical and folk musical heritage of Central Asian peoples began to be studied within new methodological frameworks, departing from traditional descriptive ethnography. During this period, efforts were made to transcribe national music into European staff notation, record performances using phonographs, and reinterpret musical heritage as a universal human value grounded in national principles.

Nevertheless, ideological pressures of the time often led to the narrowing of musical thought, forcing it into a single, ideologically defined trajectory. Consequently, a large part of the scholarly legacy of the 1920s–1940s remained neglected for decades.

In 1920, special schools were opened in Uzbekistan to teach performance on national musical instruments. Yet, these institutions operated according to European standards — the curriculum was dominated by notation systems and European music theory. For instance, in the Old City of Tashkent, a music school for Uzbek students employed teachers such as Drujinin, Karin-Karo, Drobnichuk-Pekarskiy (violin class); Karseva, Petlina, Kastalskaya, Kubliskaya, Zagurskaya, Damanskaya (piano class); Vlasov, Vayn, Karelin (vocal class); and Mironov, Romanovskaya, Yakubovskiy, Kulyabko-Karelskiy (music theory) [1, p. 67].

It is evident that during this period, there were no classes dedicated to Uzbek national music, nor any local teachers of national origin in these schools. Between 1921–1924, music also became a compulsory subject in the pedagogical institutes of Turkestan, but the curricula were again modeled on Russian conservatory systems, emphasizing notation, Russian music theory and history, and revolutionary choral repertoire [2, p. 276].

In the 1921/22 academic year, a school for training professional musicians operated in Fergana, consisting of seven departments: piano, violin and viola, cello, double bass, wind instruments, choir, and folk song performance [2, p. 276].

During the 1920s–1930s, the professional and folk music of Central Asia was studied according to new theoretical and methodological principles. Researchers focused on notating music in European systems,

making phonograph recordings, reworking folk materials, and introducing polyphonic principles into local traditions.

This process gave rise to debates: while some sought to preserve the rich ancient traditions, others called for complete Westernization of the musical sphere. Consequently, a Europeanized cultural ideology gradually took root in the region, accompanied by the establishment of new musical institutions.

The Samarkand Institute of Music and Choreography, founded in 1928 under N. Mironov, became a leading center for research and education in national music. Following the advice of A. Fitrat, Mironov invited renowned masters from different regions: *Ota Jalol Nosirov*, *Domla Halim Ibodov*, and *Abdurahmon Umarov* (Bukhara); *Matyusuf Kharratov* (Khorezm); *Xoji Abdulaziz Rasulov* (Samarkand); and *Ahmadjon Umirzoqov* and *Abduqodir Ismoilov* (Fergana Valley). The poet and playwright G‘ulom Zafariy was invited to teach literature [3, p. 166].

Among the institute’s first students were Mutal Burhonov, Tolib Sodiqov, Shorahmat Ramazonov, and Mukhtar Ashrafiy. The institute undertook tasks such as collecting, transcribing, and publishing folk materials. Due to the shortage of professional researchers, students themselves actively participated in this work. Thus, M. Ashrafiy recorded Bukhara folk songs, T. Sodiqov — Fergana songs, and Sh. Ramazonov — Khorezm songs. These rare collections were published in 1931 under the title *Pesni Fergany, Buxary i Xivy* (*Songs of Fergana, Bukhara, and Khiva*), edited by N. Mironov [4, p. 10].

Mukhtar Ashrafiy personally recorded 25 samples of folk and classical music, performed by Abdurahmon Umarov (tanbur), Nasriddinov (Afghan rubab), and the famous Bukhara musician Toyirjon Davlatzoda, from whom Ashrafiy also studied dutar playing. These examples are remarkable for their antiquity and genre diversity — combining classical compositions such as *Qosimbegi*, *Abdurahmonbegi*, *Soqiynoma* with folk-dance songs like *Vo bolam*, *Ustam qoshiq*, *Sho duxtar*, and *Boljuvon* [5, p. 37].

While Mironov’s editorial commentary provides valuable insights, certain inconsistencies can be observed — for example, the repeated mistranscription of the classical structural term *bozgo‘y* (“refrain”) as *bosge* or *besge*, slightly diminishing the artistic precision of the publication. Furthermore, the absence of lyrics beneath the musical notation complicates the full reconstruction of these works. Nevertheless, Mironov’s theoretical contributions remain significant for the study of early Uzbek ethnomusicology.

Among the pieces recorded by Ashrafiy, the folk song “To‘lqin” (rendered as “*Talkun*” in the collection) reflects the rhythmic motion of millwork, according to Mironov’s interpretation. Several instrumental pieces labeled *mashq* (“exercise”) exhibit march-like character, likely intended for preparatory or ceremonial contexts such as military formations.

The melody “Qosim begi,” composed in the Dorian mode, is said to have been named after its creator. Similarly, “*Abdurahmonbegi*” follows this naming tradition, consistent with the modesty of Eastern composers (*bastakor-musanniflar*), who often dedicated their works to patrons or rulers rather than naming them after themselves.

A later piece, more contemporary in style but still imbued with national spirit, was composed by Abdurahmon Umarov, reflecting the political climate of the time within the sphere of musical creativity. Most of the other pieces in the collection are written for dutor and are characterized by a joyful, rhythmic quality.

The samples presented by M. Ashrafiy in this anthology are unique in both sound and spirit. Their tonalities and even titles bear distinctly Bukhara characteristics, often with Persian nomenclature. From these observations, it can be concluded that Ashrafiy's early ethnographic and creative endeavors became a cornerstone of his later artistic career, which would be marked by monumental musical achievements.

Conclusion

The music education system of Uzbekistan during the 1920s–1930s was characterized by the simultaneous preservation of national musical traditions and their reinterpretation within a European scientific framework. During this period, the Samarkand Institute of Music and Choreography emerged as the first academic center for the study of national music. The creative activities of figures such as Mukhtar Ashrafiy and Tolib Sodiqov played a decisive role in integrating folk musical heritage with professional education, laying the foundation for the development of modern Uzbek musical art.

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