



## THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF UZBEK TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE AND VOCAL ART

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### Abstract

This article explores the historical formation and developmental stages of Uzbek traditional performance and vocal art. As one of the most significant expressions of national spirituality and aesthetic thought, music has always reflected the cultural memory and emotional world of the Uzbek people. The study examines the origins of musical performance in ancient rituals and labor songs, the theoretical and aesthetic essence of performance as a creative triad between composer, performer, and listener, as well as the evolution of vocal art through folklore, maqom, and classical singing traditions. Particular attention is given to the role of 'hofizlik' — the art of the master performer — which represents the highest stage of professional and spiritual mastery in Uzbek music. The paper also analyzes the continuity of this art in modern times, where young performers preserve classical traditions while adapting them to contemporary interpretations. The research emphasizes the importance of preserving hofizlik as a vital element of Uzbekistan's intangible cultural heritage and a means of transmitting national identity and musical philosophy to future generations.

**Keywords:** Uzbek traditional music; hofizlik; maqom; performance art; vocal culture; musical heritage; aesthetics.



## Introduction

Music is one of the most profound reflections of human civilization, moral elevation, and aesthetic thought. It reveals the emotional and spiritual world of humanity, shaping national identity and cultural continuity. Uzbek traditional performance and vocal art form an integral part of this universal heritage. This paper examines the stages of development of Uzbek traditional performance, the essence of hofizlik, and their role in shaping national musical consciousness. "Shashmaqom, "Khorezm Maqoms," and "Farg'ona-Tashkent Maqom Paths." Based on the qualified perception and analysis of the specific "type" structure (syntax) of maqom melodies, it is possible to identify the musical layers of different periods harmonized within them." [5.1294-b.]

## The Origins of Musical Performance

The roots of Uzbek musical culture date back to prehistoric times. Archaeological findings, mythological sources, and oral narratives indicate that music first emerged in labor activities, hunting, and ritual ceremonies. Rhythmic sounds produced by striking stones, wood, or metal objects laid the foundation for the earliest forms of music. Eastern mythology associates the creation of music with divine origins. In the "Mehtarlik risolasi," the story of the angel Jibra'il breathing life into Adam through sacred musical instruments symbolizes music's spiritual nature and its role as a bridge between humanity and the divine.

Theoretical and Aesthetic Foundations of Performance Art  
Performance art, as a vital component of musical creativity, embodies the connection between composer, performer, and listener. According to B. Asafyev's "Triad Theory," the aesthetic value of music emerges through harmony among these three elements. In the act of performance, creativity, interpretation, and emotional communication are equally essential. Scholar Komila Bo'riyeva describes this process as the "expressive stage of musical thinking," in which the performer transmits spiritual content and emotional depth to the audience.



In some cases, special names for the components are used. In particular, the third part of the musical cycle "Miskin" is called "Adoiy," the fourth part "Asiriy," the second part of "Nasrullo" is called "Chavandoz," the third part "Kashgarcha," the fourth part "Taron," the fifth part "Ufar." [5.1295]



The Evolution of Uzbek Vocal Art Uzbek vocal art has passed through several evolutionary stages — from folklore and ritual songs to epic narration, maqom performance, and modern professional singing. The tradition of maqom represents the highest form of musical sophistication in the Eastern world. Within it, the unity of word and melody, improvisation, and emotional expression define the performer's mastery. The singer is not merely a vocalist but an interpreter who conveys meaning, emotion, and aesthetic experience to the listener.

Hofizlik — The Pinnacle of Uzbek Performance In Uzbek music, hofizlik (masterful vocal artistry) is regarded as the highest stage of performance. The term derives from the Arabic "hifz," meaning "to memorize," and refers to the performer's ability to retain and artistically interpret melody, rhythm, and spiritual meaning. Darvesh Ali Changiy's writings mention prominent hofiz singers such as Hofizi Ushshoqiy, Hofiz Miraki Bukhari, and Hofiz Poyanda Bukhari, whose artistry influenced later generations. In the 20th century, masters like Hofiz Abdurasulov, Hamroqul Qori, Hoji Abdulaziz Abdurasulov, Jo'raxon Sultonov, and Ma'murjon Uzoqov elevated hofizlik to new heights, shaping regional schools in Bukhara, Khorezm, and Fergana-Tashkent.

The theoretical requirements of hofizlik include:

- A powerful and expressive voice with emotional depth.
- Strong memory for text, melody, rhythm, and structure.
- Proper breathing and articulation that unite word and melody.
- Instrumental awareness and respect for maqom traditions.
- Profound spiritual and aesthetic understanding of music.

### 5. Continuity of Hofizlik in the Modern Era Today, Uzbek hofizlik continues to develop both in traditional and modern forms. Through maqom festivals, creative competitions, and academic conferences, attention to hofizlik is growing. Young performers study classical

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models while adapting them to contemporary aesthetics. This fusion of heritage and innovation demonstrates the vitality of Uzbek musical culture and its ability to evolve while preserving authenticity.

### Conclusion

Uzbek traditional performance and hofizlik represent the pinnacle of national musical and spiritual expression. Rooted in ancient history and philosophy, hofizlik embodies not only artistic mastery but also moral and spiritual depth. Its preservation and transmission to future generations ensure the continuity of Uzbekistan’s musical thought and cultural identity. Therefore, hofizlik remains a vital link between the nation’s past and future, expressing its aesthetic ideals, emotional richness, and timeless artistry.

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