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TEACHING THE ART OF BAKHSHI AND ITS ORGANIC CONNECTION WITH MAQOM SINGING

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Abstract

This article explores the teaching of bakhshi art during the Third Renaissance and its intrinsic connection with maqom singing. Bakhshi art and the maqom school, as two branches of folk creativity, mutually influence the cultivation of the human spirit, the transmission of national values, and the development of performance culture.

Keywords: Bakhshi, maqom, epic, singing, oral tradition, performance, transformation, Third Renaissance.

Introduction

In the contemporary period of the Third Renaissance, the revival of national heritage, its systematic study, and its integration into the educational system are among the state's key priorities. Under the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan, national arts, particularly maqom and bakhshi traditions, are considered the foundation for the moral and spiritual education of youth.

Bakhshi art expresses historical, philosophical, and ethical ideas through the performance of folk epics, while maqom singing elevates these ideas through musical and aesthetic forms. Together, they complement each other, functioning as the dual wings of the nation's spiritual life.

For centuries, bakhshis have conveyed the history, aspirations, and philosophies of the people through epics. Works such as *Alpomish*, *Gorog'li*, and *Ravshan* are not only exemplary of oral literature but also represent the highest traditions of

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musical performance. Bakhshi performances integrate melody, text, rhythm, and emotion—a convergence that closely aligns with maqom singing practices.

By the era of Muhammad Rahimxon Feruz, the Olti yarim maqom system was transcribed on paper according to tanbur notation. While sharing some elements with Urfiy maqoms, it differs in terms of modality, pitch systems, and melodic structures. In Olti yarim maqoms, each maqom contains four primary modes, whereas Urfiy maqoms' main vocal forms incorporate thirteen basic modal structures, including Rost, Ushshoq, Sabo, and Panjgoh (Ulmasovich, 2025).

The Khorezm maqom school exemplifies the master–apprentice tradition, transmitting not only musical knowledge but also spiritual values. Today, the study of Khorezm maqoms combines this traditional master–apprentice system with formal academic training.

Methodology

Maqom singing is a complex musical system with roots in folk melodies and oral creativity. The tonal structure of bakhshi performance, the Turkic modal system, and the dramatic intonations of epics closely correspond to sections of maqom, such as Nasr, Tasnif, and Savt.

For example, the rhythmic structure of Ufar or Talqin sections in Bukhara Shashmaqom resonates with bakhshi melodies, confirming the genetic musical connection between bakhshi and maqom traditions. The master–apprentice system in the Khorezm maqom school remains one of the most enduring features of Uzbek musical culture. Its integration into modern education significantly enhances maqom performance and fosters youth loyalty to national values (Yuldashev, 2025; Mamatqulov, 2025).

Results:

Teaching Methods and Transformation Process

Modern pedagogical approaches require integrating bakhshi art instruction with maqom scholarship. Such an integrated methodology:

- Deepens tonal analysis;
- Strengthens national vocal techniques;



- Develops improvisational skills.

Within the context of the Third Renaissance, bakhshi art represents the roots of the nation's spirit, while maqom embodies its scientific-musical expression. Studying them together offers opportunities for innovative pedagogical models. By applying the poetic rhythm of bakhshi epics to maqom singing education, and vice versa, students can gain a modern integrative learning experience, uniting the In the broader context of Uzbek musical culture, the art of bakhshi plays a crucial role in complementing and enriching the tradition of maqom singing. Bakhshi performers, through their oral epic recitations, develop skills in melodic improvisation, rhythmic variation, and emotional expression that closely correspond to maqom performance techniques. The tonal structures, narrative rhythms, and dramatic intonations of bakhshi epics—such as Alpomish, Gorog'li, and Ravshan—create a natural bridge between folk storytelling and the maqom school (Yuldashev, 2025).

Pedagogically, integrating bakhshi studies into maqom training offers multiple benefits. First, it enhances students' understanding of oral tradition as a living practice, emphasizing the importance of memory, improvisation, and stylistic flexibility. Second, the melodic modes (lads) employed in bakhshi performance, while rooted in folk music, often mirror the modal frameworks of maqom sections, including Nasr, Tasnif, and Savt. This modal convergence allows students to perceive maqom not merely as a set of technical exercises but as a holistic musical and cultural phenomenon.

From a methodological perspective, the study of bakhshi epics within maqom education fosters the development of aesthetic judgment, historical awareness, and interpretive skills. The rhythmic and melodic patterns inherent in bakhshi narratives train students in phrasing, dynamic expression, and the conveyance of narrative emotions—essential qualities for any maqom performer. In modern pedagogical settings, this integration supports a transformative educational approach in which students not only acquire technical mastery but also internalize the cultural and spiritual values of Uzbek music (Mamatqulov, 2025; Karimova, 2025).

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Furthermore, the master–apprentice tradition, central to both bakhshi and maqom schools, provides a framework for transmitting nuanced performance practices and ethical values. By observing and participating in guided performances, students learn the subtleties of ornamentation, vocal timbre, and audience engagement, which remain essential to both musical and cultural literacy. Thus, the integration of bakhshi into maqom pedagogy is not merely an additive practice but a synergistic process that strengthens the overall artistic formation of the student.ory, practice, and historical-cultural awareness.

Conclusion

Bakhshi art is one of the oldest oral traditions of the Uzbek people, rooted in the epic worldview, shamanism, and folk spirituality of ancient Turkic peoples. The term “bakhshi” originates from the Persian bakhshi, meaning “gift-giver,” reflecting the artist’s role as a spiritual and cultural benefactor to the people.

Historically, Uzbek bakhshis thrived in Surkhandarya, Kashkadarya, Khorezm, Bukhara, and Karakalpakstan, with each region developing distinct styles, melodic intonations, and performance techniques.

Regional Bakhshi Schools:

1. Surkhandarya-Kashkadarya: Powerful, expressive voices, epic breadth, complex doira rhythms. Key performers: Fozil Yo‘ldosh o‘g‘li, Ergash Jumanbulbul o‘g‘li, Polkan Bakhshi, Islam Shoir.
2. Khorezm: Musical tonal clarity and stage culture; bakhshi melodies harmonize with maqom tones, approaching maqom performance closely.
3. Bukhara and Navoiy: Emphasis on vocal intonation in epic recitation; softer melodic modes.
4. Karakalpakstan-Khorezm border: Synthesizes singing, storytelling, and performance traditions.

Bakhshi art and maqom singing complement each other in Uzbek culture, spiritual life, and musicology. Incorporating their shared features into modern teaching aligns with the cultural and educational demands of the Third Renaissance. Research, methodological manuals, and stage practices in this field

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advance national musical thought to a new level (Karimova, 2025; Borieva & Burieva, 2022).

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