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THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO FORMING A VOCALIST'S REPERTOIRE IN UZBEK MAQOM PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

The formation of a vocalist's repertoire is a key pedagogical and artistic issue in traditional music performance. In Uzbekistan, the practice of maqom singing—particularly within the traditions of Shashmaqom, Ferghana-Tashkent maqoms, and Khorezm maqom cycles—requires a methodologically grounded and culturally informed approach to repertoire selection. This article examines theoretical principles and pedagogical frameworks used to construct the repertoire of maqom vocalists in Uzbekistan. Drawing on ethnomusicological scholarship, oral transmission practices, performance analysis, and contemporary conservatory curricula, the study argues that repertoire formation is not merely a technical process but a systematic procedure rooted in modal theory, poetry, stylistic norms, and socio-cultural context. The research contributes to a broader understanding of how theoretical approaches shape performance identity and sustainability within Uzbekistan's maqom tradition.

Keywords: Maqom; Vocal pedagogy; Repertoire formation; Shashmaqom; Uzbek traditional music; Modal theory; Professional training; Performance practice; Musical aesthetics.

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Introduction

The art of maqom is central to Uzbekistan's intangible cultural heritage. Unlike many global vocal traditions, Uzbek maqom singing demands a deep mastery of modal theory (maqomot), ornamentation, text–melody relationships, and genre-specific stylistics (Saidov, 2018).

Husayn Voiz Koshifiy writes about the rules in his book "Futuvvatnomai sultoniy." mentorship, what qualities should the teacher and student be equipped with? He writes: "If you are asked what a good teacher should be like, say that he is. He is kind-hearted, able to see his mistakes, and he is a smart person. He cannot be jealous. [8.94-b]

to be angry and not know what ignorance is.

A vocalist's repertoire in this tradition cannot be built spontaneously; it must be shaped through theoretical frameworks that guide:

- ❖ selection of modes (maqoms),
- ❖ genre hierarchy,
- ❖ technical difficulty,
- ❖ poetic content,
- ❖ stylistic authenticity.

Despite its importance, systematic study of repertoire formation in Uzbek maqom singing remains limited. This article addresses this gap by analyzing theoretical approaches used to build a vocalist's repertoire in Uzbekistan.

2. Theoretical Background of Maqom in Uzbekistan

2.1. Modal foundations

Uzbek maqom is based on a complex modal system involving:

- ✓ **parda (pitch positions),**
- ✓ **shuba (submodes),**
- ✓ **tetrachord and pentachord constructions,**
- ✓ **cadential formulas (kadon).**

It is necessary to recall the student-master relationship between Abdurrahman Jami and Alisher Navoi: Alisher Navoi is a student of Abdurrahman Jami, both



in life and in his work. In "Khamsa," he continues the teacher's tradition. He also enriched

"Nafahotul uns" of his teacher and created a new work called "Nasumumul Muhabbat." In his dastans and many other works, he expresses his respect and reverence for the name of his teacher. [9;94-b] These elements determine the structural and expressive characteristics of maqom melodies (Nettl, 1987).

2.2. Genre structure

In Shashmaqom alone, each maqom contains several genres:

- ✓ **Saraxbor,**
- ✓ **Talqin,**
- ✓ **Nasr,**
- ✓ **Talqincha,**
- ✓ **Ufar,**
- ✓ **Savt,**

Knowing this genre hierarchy is essential for repertoire design (Mirzaev, 1979).

2.3. Poetical considerations

Texts (g'azal, ruboiy, qit'a) determine vocal expressiveness. The traditional repertoire uses works of:

- ✓ Alisher Navoiy,
- ✓ Bobur,
- ✓ Jomiy,
- ✓ Fuzuliy.

Thus, linguistic literacy and poetic aesthetics guide repertoire selection (Belyaev, 1960).

3. Methodology

The study uses a qualitative approach involving:

- ❖ analysis of Uzbek maqom musicological literature,
- ❖ study of vocal curricula at Tashkent State Conservatory and art schools,



- ❖ interviews with contemporary maqom performers (based on existing ethnographies),
- ❖ comparison of repertoire-building techniques across regions (Bukhara, Khorezm, Ferghana).

Although the maqom tradition is historically transmitted orally, theoretical models are increasingly formalized in academic settings.

4. Theoretical Approaches to Repertoire Formation

4.1. Modal–pedagogical approach

A widely used model prioritizes teaching the vocalist from simpler modes to more complex ones, for example:

1. **Rost** (stable, balanced mode)
2. **Navo**
3. **Dugoh**
4. **Segoh**
5. **Iroq**
6. **Buzruk** (modal and melodic complexity)

This progression is grounded in maqom modal hierarchy, allowing students to acquire modal competence gradually (Is'hoqov, 1994).

4.2. Genre–gradational approach

Within each maqom, genres are selected according to difficulty:

1. **Nasr / Talqincha** (simpler melodic movement)
2. **Talqin** (broader range)
3. **Ufar** (rhythmic flexibility)
4. **Saraxbor** (ornamentation and breath control)
5. **Savt** (high-level virtuosity)

This helps build both vocal technique and stylistic awareness.

4.3. Text–melody integrated approach

The vocalist's repertoire is shaped by evaluating:

- ✚ diction and textual clarity,



- ✚ compatibility of voice type with poetic meters (aruz),
- ✚ emotional expression required by specific poems.

Teachers often begin with emotionally moderate pieces, later introducing highly expressive ghazals (Sukhareva, 1962).

4.4. Regional stylistic approach

Because maqom traditions differ by region, the repertoire can reflect:

- ✓ **Bukhara school** (ornate, melismatic),
- ✓ **Khorezm school** (powerful rhythmic drive),
- ✓ **Ferghana–Tashkent school** (lyrical, smooth phrasing).

Vocalists are often required to learn at least two regional styles to achieve professional competence (Jabborov, 2001).

4.5. Contemporary academic approach

Modern conservatories integrate:

- ❖ score-based learning (notational analysis),
- ❖ historical recordings,
- ❖ comparative stylistics,
- ❖ stage performance discipline.

These methods allow students to build a repertoire consistent with contemporary performance standards while maintaining authenticity.

5. Analysis: Factors Shaping a Maqom Vocalist's Repertoire in Uzbekistan

5.1. Vocal range and physiological suitability

Teachers consider whether a vocalist's tessitura fits the modal register of specific maqoms.

For instance, **Segoh** and **Iroq** often require high-register control, while **Dugoh** and **Rost** suit mid-range voices.

5.2. Mastery of ornamentation (naqarot, qasr, takrir)

Complex ornamentation is introduced only after mastering basic melodic stability. Thus, repertoire is gradually expanded as technical skills develop.



5.3. Cultural–ethical aspects

Maqom singing carries symbolic and ethical dimensions. Repertoire must align with:

- ❖ traditional etiquette,
- ❖ lyrical themes appropriate for the performer’s maturity,
- ❖ respect for classical poetic content.

5.4. Performance setting

Repertoire varies depending on venue:

- ❖ **concert hall,**
- ❖ **traditional gathering,**
- ❖ **competition,**
- ❖ **solo recital.**

Each setting demands specific genres and expressive intensity.

6. Discussion

The research indicates that repertoire formation in Uzbek maqom is governed by multilayered theoretical processes. Unlike Western vocal pedagogy, which often emphasizes physiology and technique, Uzbek maqom pedagogy integrates:

- ❖ modal theory,
- ❖ linguistic competence,
- ❖ poetic analysis,
- ❖ spiritual–aesthetic values,
- ❖ regional stylistic nuances.

This makes repertoire formation an intellectual discipline, not merely a technical one.

Furthermore, current trends in Uzbekistan—such as maqom festivals, conservatory reforms, UNESCO recognition, and digital archiving—are renewing interest in structured repertoire formation.

7. Conclusion



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A maqom vocalist's repertoire in Uzbekistan is shaped through a complex interplay of theoretical principles. Modal order, genre hierarchy, text–melody unity, stylistic authenticity, regional traditions, and pedagogical strategies collectively form a systematic approach to repertoire building. This study demonstrates that repertoire formation is central to preserving cultural identity and ensuring long-term sustainability of Uzbekistan's maqom tradition. Further research could expand on comparative repertoire systems across Central Musical Traditions. Moscow: Nauka.

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