

Features of Formation and Development of Azerbaijani Ballet

Hijran Azizaga Sadigzade[†]

Abstract

Azerbaijani Ballet does not have a long history of development and formation; however, during the analysed period, that is, in the 40-90s of the 20th century, it has become an essential element of the musical culture, both in Azerbaijan and around the world. An essential feature of this genre of artistic creation is a combination of factors and principles of musical construction and expression of Western-European music and, at the same time, folk music, dance, and mugham intonations. Ballets were devoted to historical events and people as well as modern social processes and their participants. Ballet pieces are being continuously improved. In Azerbaijan, the creation of operas, designed for performance, contributed to the growth of the musical culture of the younger generation, as well as general culture and maturation of people, respecting cultural values and actively using those values in their life benchmarks. Over time, some students who took an active part in the performance of operas have become recognised musicians and were awarded honorary titles such as the honoured artist, People's Artist of the Republic, and these are – Samir Jafarov, Teymur Amrakh, Zaur Amiraslanov, etc.

Keywords: Azerbaijani Ballet, Azerbaijani Composers, Features of Ballets, Combinations of Folk and Classical Elements

[†] Theatre Department of the Gymnasium of Arts, 1073-Az, Baku, Azerbaijan, G.Javid St., quarter 506, 4,
E-mail: hsadigzade@yandex.ru

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Introduction

Although Ballet is not a genre of Azerbaijani national music which has a long history, today it occupies a significant place in the musical culture of our country. Azerbaijani Ballet has more than a century-long history of existence. The opera history begins with the production of the first opera by Uzeyir Hajibayov "Leyla and Majnun" in 1908 and during that time has established itself as the leading genre of music in the formation of the musical and general culture of the people of the world as a part of the musical culture (Gretchen, 1989). Increasing integration also characterised the development of the musical culture of Azerbaijan in the 19-20th centuries into the global musical culture. In particular, there were many attempts to bring into the national music the genre and intonational originality of European music (Grant, 1967). Formation of the Ballet genre takes in an essential place in this process, as this genre today has become one of the indicators of maturity of musical art, making a necessary contribution to the global development of culture in general (Lincoln and Muriel, 2004). The article begins with the rationale discussing the degree to which the Azerbaijani Ballet has been researched. Following this, it discusses the methods and the results and discussion of the research.

Rationale

It is well known, that:

Ballet is one of the most sublime and physically demanding of the arts. Each year, more and more people flock to Ballet classes and performances. Yet the drama, glamour, and elegance that provide the lure and excitement of Ballet cannot compensate for the harsh conditions suffered by professional dancers who are encouraged to neglect and starve themselves in pursuit of their art. Gordon, 1984, p. 24

Researchers differentiate various approaches to an understanding of the nature of art by

Russian analysts: a historical-cultural approach, represented by M.S. Kaganov (1992), D.S. Likhachev (1986), A.F. Losev (1995), I.A. Teng (1996); a theory of "subjective" art, represented by L.S. Vygotsky (1986), I. Hete (1994), B. Kroche (1902), Z. Freud (1995), Y. Kheizngi (2001), F. Schelling (1966), A. Schopenhauer (1975), K. Young (1998). Theoretical aspects of powerful means of the Ballet, specifics of its language and artistic form, theatre and decorative design and scenography in the works of B.V. Asafyev, K.Y. Goleyzovski, F.V. Lopukhov, and others (Braylovskaya, 2006).

The peculiarities of pedagogics and performance in Ballet are reviewed in the works of Russian researchers, such as A.Y. Vaganova (1934), A.M. Messerer (1990), (2000), and several Western researchers. This genre in Azerbaijan was researched by the leading musicologists, such as S.A. Kasumova, N.G. Bagirov, Z.R. Bayramova, L. Farajeva, and others (Zulfugarov and Khalilov, 1976). This issue is discussed in textbooks on the history of the musical culture of Azerbaijan. However, there is a need for systematic and consistent consideration of the history of the formation of Ballet in Azerbaijan, links between the creation of this musical genre with music development as an integral part of the spiritual culture and history of social development as a whole. It would be good to know about the originality and evolution of Ballet and a few lines on how is Azerbaijani Ballet different from other forms of Ballet.

If the opera history in Azerbaijan begins with the first opera production in 1908, then the Ballet history starts much later, with the production of the first Ballet "Maiden Tower" written by Afrasiyab Badalbayli in 1940. The fact is that the main musical genres of the Azerbaijani people are folk songs, mugham, ashug melody. Basically, music is vocal and instrumental. This does not mean that there were no folk dances. Dances were widely practised during folk celebrations. Both men and women danced. This genre was widely used by people during festivals and had developed throughout the centuries. However,

Ballet genre characterised the European musical culture, and our composers were the first to use that genre in the 40s of the last century. Azerbaijani Ballet does not have a long history of development and formation, however, during the analysed period it has become an essential element of the musical culture, both in Azerbaijan and around the world. An essential feature of this genre of artistic creation is a combination of factors and principles of musical construction and expression of Western-European music and, at the same time, folk music, dance, mugham intonations. Ballets were devoted to historical events and people as well as modern social processes and their participants. Ballet pieces are being continuously improved.

Methods

The applied method of investigation was the analysis of the works of Azerbaijani authors and the historical process of their formation. Each development stage of the development of the Azerbaijani Ballet was characterised following the general trends in the event of musical literature in the region and throughout the world. The conceptual basis of the analysis was the systematic approach that allows taking into account all the main components in the development of the Ballet art: general world trends in the formation and evolution of modern Ballet, contemporary music and musical history in general (Greene, 2010). A variety of topics related to public needs predetermined the content of operas, their connection with folk melodies, the history of the nation, its prominent representatives (historical figures, epic heroes). The principles of the presentation of the musical text, the structure, and composition of these operas are based on the Western European tradition (Gretchen, 1989).

Here, I set the task to equip this article with a small overview of the phased development of Ballet in Azerbaijan, its connection with the general direction of the development of classical music, and the characteristic features of each composer's creativity.

Results

Unlike opera, which was born in Azerbaijan in 1908, the Ballet has its beginning from 1940 when Afrasiyab Badalbeyli wrote the first ever Azerbaijani Ballet, the "Maiden Tower". Azerbaijani folk music genres such as folk songs, mugham. Mugham is: 1) the general common name of modes of Azerbaijani music. In the past, there were many modes, in the 20th century, there are seven main modes. Each of them has a unique name, such as Rast, Shur, Segyah, Chargah, Bayati-Shiraz, Khumayun and Shushter. All modes are based on five tetrachords different in the structure, which are connected in a certain way; 2) it is also one of the main genres of Azerbaijani folk music, a multi-part vocal and instrumental work. Mughams are performed both completely (Destgah), and in parts by a solo singer with instrumental accompaniment or in the form of solo instrumental works (on tara, kamancha, etc.). Poetic texts of mugham are lyrical verses (gazelles) of the classics of Azerbaijani poetry such as Nizami, Fizuli, Nasimi, Vagif, Sabir, etc., as well as contemporary poets - S. Vurghun, S. Rustam, M. Mushfig.), and minstrel music mainly refers to the vocal and instrumental performance. This does not mean that there were no folk dances. On the opposite, alongside songs and minstrel music, our talented folk musicians created numerous dances which were performed both by men and women.

It means that the opera genre was loved by Azerbaijani people and was being developed for centuries. However, as mentioned above, the piece that was written following the world Ballet genre can be attributed to the 1940th year of the last century.

Let's review the formation and development process of the professional Ballet genre in Azerbaijan (Kasumova and Bagirov, 1984).

The creator of the first Azerbaijani Ballet is Afrasiyab i Badalbayli Badal oglu, who was also a composer, conductor, librettist, music critic and publicist (1907–1976).

He started working on the "Maiden Tower" Ballet in 1936 and completed it in 1940. The same year the Ballet was staged at the Azerbaijani State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre named after M. F. Akhundov, and the public and the musicians welcomed this work. This Ballet has been about the struggle for love and happiness (Sariyeva, 2016).

"Maiden Tower" Ballet's libretto also belongs to A. Badalbayli. The use of Azerbaijani folk music, such as folk songs, dances, mugham intonations was the reason for the acceptance of the Ballet by the broad audience. This is the reason why this Ballet has been popular until today. The Ballet consists of a prologue, epilogue and three acts.

The Ballet describes the story that happened in the palace of one of Baku khans, Jahangir Khan in the 12th century. Jahangir Khan was longing for the son; however, his wife delivered a girl. Jahangir Khan orders to kill the girl, however, Khan's vizier gives the nanny the bracelet which was designed for Khan's son and orders her to leave the palace together with the girl.

Seventeen years have passed since Khan's order. Gulyanag, Khan's daughter lives with her nanny, who has replaced her mother, Ayperi in Khanbulag village. The preparations for Gulyanag's wedding are in full swing. Suddenly, Khan and his men come. Jahangir Khan sees Gulyanag, instantly falls in love with her, and orders her to go with him to the palace and become his wife.

Polad, Gulyanag's fiancé, wants to object to this decision and his fellow villagers ask Khan not to separate Gulyanag with her fiancé. Khan orders to kill Polad, but Gulyanag agree to become his wife to save Polad. But with this, she puts a condition to Khan to build a castle on the Caspian coast. Khan fulfils her dream and orders to build a magnificent castle on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Now that the tower was built, Gulyanag should accomplish her promise. But the only person she can think about is Polad. Ayperi, who comes to the palace, opens the secret of Gulyanag being the Khan's daughter, showing

her bracelet as a proof. Khan doesn't believe it and kills Ayperi. The guests are leaving the palace in shock. Khan is left alone and walks towards the castle. Polad, coming in front of Khan, kills him and starts to rise to the top of the castle to save Gulyanag. Gulyanag hears somebody's steps and thinking that this is Jahangir Khan, Gulyanag steps out of the window of the castle and dies. Polad, who enters the room and expects to see Gulyanag, sees only shawl shaken by the wind.

Despite living only 55 years, Soltan Hajibayov had created beautiful music in various genres. The audience welcomes two symphonies that he wrote in his student years and his works written in the period of free creativity such as "Alexander and Shepherd", the children's opera, "Caravan" symphony board, symphonic overture and symphony concert, songs and musical comedy until today.

The "Gulshan" Ballet has a special place among his other works.

This Ballet which was written in 1950 was staged at the Azerbaijani State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater named after M. F. Akhundov. In 1952 Soltan Hajibayov was awarded the USSR's State Award for this Ballet.

It should be noted that this piece was written on a contemporary topic. The composer extensively used Azerbaijani folk music components, such as mugham and minstrel music in this Ballet.

In the Ballet, events take place in one of Azerbaijan's villages, on a cotton field. Gulshan and her team of girls collect cotton under the melodies of "Shepherd bayati". Azad and Gulshan love each other. Ahmed also loves Gulshan, but his love is unrequited. Azad and his team of workers build the hydroelectric power station. A team of farm workers together with Gulshan come to help them. Suddenly the weather changes, it starts raining and the river begins to overflow. Azad falls into the water. Having seen it, Ahmed jumps into the river to help Azad. Gulshan is grateful to Azad. Gulshan and Azad celebrated their wedding. The Ballet ends with the cheerful

mood, dances of the old and the young, and Gulshan and Azad are happy getting married to each other.

Great Azerbaijani composer, Kara Karayev, was the author of numerous opera, symphonies, musical comedies, symphonic poems, cantatas, soundtracks, songs for grown-ups and children, was also the author of the two world-famous pieces called the "Seven Beauties" and "Path of Thunder".

The libretto was written by I. Hidayatzade based on genius Nizami's "Khamsa" and has become the reason for K. Karayev to create "Seven Beauties" in 1952, and in the same year, the Ballet was staged at the Azerbaijani State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre gaining instant popularity.

Ballet's director was P. Gusev, Ballet master G. Almaszade and F. Gusar, and Kamal Abdullayev was the conductor. In 1953 this Ballet was staged at the State Opera Theatre of Saint-Petersburg and later staged at a number of other USSR cities. In 1959, the "Seven Beauties" Ballet was staged in the new edition in Moscow at the 10 Days of Azerbaijani Literature and Art event.

This Ballet, which is full of beautiful music, consists of 4 acts:

The first act describes Bahram Shah visiting one of the villages near the slums dressed as a hunter. He comes to visit Aisha living in this village together with her brother. Aisha and Bahram like each other. Suddenly, Bahram Shah's vizier brings the news that the enemies have attacked the country. Bahram goes together with Manzar and other villagers. Shah temporarily assigns his vizier to fulfil his duties in his absence. Vizier who wants to seize the kingdom plans to kill Shah, but this plan will not be implemented. Manzar helps the Shah and saves him. But the cunning vizier manages to win the Shah's favour again; Shah forgets the people who saved him and jails seven artists together with Manzar.

But the truth wins. The people punish the vizier. Bahram Shah is expelled out of the kingdom because he failed to govern this

country effectively. Musical scenes of the Ballet are full of vivacity, bright sounds, vary in their content and are emotionally and intonationally complete.

After the "Seven Beauties," Kara Karayev wrote his second major work, the "The Path of Thunder" Ballet. Based on the novel by South African writer P. Abrahams, this Ballet was staged in 1958. The Ballet transmits the feeling of protest against racism with great artistic power and shows the people's fight for their rights. A summary of the Ballet is as follows:

The heart of young mulatto, Lenny Schwartz, is full of hope and dreams. He had just graduated from the University of Cape Town and received a bachelor's degree. His house, friends, relatives, and school are waiting for him. His university friends, comrades who are "black" and "coloured" share his joy. They come to the train station to see Lenny off, with each of them having their homes and beloved jobs ahead. There is vivacity in the small village of Stilleveld. The return of the young teacher to his homeland becomes a holiday for his poor fellow villagers. The young are also dancing and having fun. The girls are dancing with their guitars; their dance is tango, sincere, lyrical and at the same time full of passion and fierce.

The dance successfully shows the characters of Lenny's fellow villagers. Lenny's sister, Lizzi, is also dancing, gradually all village starts to dance, even Lenny's mother starts dancing with the preacher showing everyone the gift that Lenny had brought for her – the shawl. But, suddenly, Hert, the landlord, together with Vilcon and his land manager Smith arrive at the village square. They notice the disobedient young man.

Lenny gets severely beaten. He is saved by Sari, who covers his wound by the scarf and brings him home. The two decide to leave the country, but they get caught by Hert and his helpers. They punish Lenny and Sari, which causes the whole village to stand up and fight for their rights.

The musical accompaniment fascinates the listener. For example, when Sari appeared on

the stage for the first time, her dance with speedy wide leaps was accompanied by a rich melody. The bass sound of this melody with staccato chords help to create the image independent, daring and passionate young girl. The waltz, which is repeatedly sounded in the Ballet, shows another side of Sari – her gentleness, elegance, and dreaming nature. The most influential pieces of music in revealing the quality of the images are adagios. They tell us all the complicated feelings lived by the heroes, in a speechless and original manner.

Adagio is the most passionate moment of the feelings, the culmination of every act, and the most intense point in the development of every dramatic event. The curtain feelings Adagio and the exciting development of the most intense point of the event is happening. The third scene of the second describing the love duet of Saria and Lenny is precisely like this. Opening their hearts to each other breaks all barriers between them. At night, the two are alone in the whole world with their happiness and dreams. The inspirational music of this scene is indeed a symphonic poem. This scene bears in itself a critical and meaningful topic in the Ballet dramaturgy, which is the tragic love and the winning love. The composer uses the principles of sonata form here. Combining the two issues in the anthem-like reprise, he confirms the idea of the ever-winning love.

This dance depicts the image of the people who break their chains. The people stood up and started their fight for their right and equality.

Arif Melikov Jahangir Oglu has created beautiful pieces in various music genres and managed to gain love and popularity of the world with his symphonies (Symphony No. 7), vocal and instrumental compositions, romances and songs, soundtracks and Ballets.

The "Love Legend" Ballet written by Arif Melikov, based on the libretto of great Turkish poet and dramaturgist Nazim Hikmet, has a special place in world music culture. It should be noted that at first, the writing of this Ballet was offered to the teacher of the composer,

genius Kara Karayev. But Kara Karayev assigned this task to Arif Melikov.

The Ballet was staged on 23 March 1961, in Leningrad's (now St. Petersburg) State Opera and Ballet Theater and had great success. Alongside the composer, the director of the Ballet, Y. Grigorovic, artist S. Virsaladze and conductor Niyazi played a significant role in the success of this Ballet. After this piece, A. Melikov writes another Ballet, "The Story of Two Souls" based on the libretto of Uzbek Sh. Rashidov, which is staged at Tashkent Opera and Ballet Theatre named after A. Navai and Kuybyshev Opera and Ballet Theatre. The Ballet was later staged in the US.

The libretto of the "Love Legend" belongs to the famous Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet.

Brief contents of the "Love Legend" are as follows:

Mahmanabanu is the woman governor of one of the Eastern countries. Shirin is her sister and is very ill. The person who wants Shirin to recover would need to refuse her beauty. Mahmanabanu accepts this condition and rejects her beauty to save her sister. Mahmanabanu and her sister Shirin go to visit the palace which is built for her. Here they meet Farhad —, the bricklayer. Farhad falls in love with Shirin, and Shirin and Mahmanabanu both fall in love with Farhad. Shirin and Farhad meet and open their hearts to each other. They flee the palace, but Mahmanabanu orders to catch them and bring back. Angry Mahmanabanu puts a condition in front of Farhad to crack the rock and has water come out of it for the people if he wants to marry Shirin. Farhad starts to work to fulfil Mahmanabanu's order. But Mahmanabanu unable to bear to Shirin's pleas anymore, agrees Farhad marry Shirin without fulfilment of her request. But Farhad would not agree to this and wants to complete his task and stay in the mountains until finishing.

Ballet's music is both contemporary and traditional. If we pay attention to the music describing Mahmanabanu's tragedy, we will see that these pieces such as "The dance of

palace dancers", "The dance of clowns", "Farhad and Shirin's adagio", and "Chase scene" were based on Azerbaijani mughams.

The "Nigella" Ballet brought great success and popularity to Ashraf Abbasov, Azerbaijan's People's Artist who created beautiful music in various genres.

"Nigella" Ballet written by Ashraf Abbasov based on A. Badalbeyli's libretto, was staged on 15 September 1965 at the Azerbaijan State Opera and Ballet Theatre named after M. F. Akhundov staged. The Ballet master was Gamar Almaszade, and the artist was E. Fataliyev. The Ballet was written in 1962, based on the "Fearful stories" of Suleyman Sani Akhundov (1875–1939). The Ballet describes the tragic life of the poor orphan Nigella girl under the accompaniment of musical language and other expression means. She stays at the gardener's house in the wealthy mansion of his master.

The mansion owner has a daughter of the same age as Nigella (the dark-skinned), whose name is Agja (the white skinned). Agja and Nigella become friends. They like to play with each other, but Agja's mother is against this friendship.

Agja's nanny teaches Nigella. Once when there are guests at the mansion, Nigella is dancing during their visit. Parviz, Agja's brother, likes Nigella. Old Piri, having seen this, gets sad.

Nigella comes to Agja's room and tells her tragic story of her life. It becomes clear that after the earthquake, Nigella lost her parents and her house. She was adopted by Yasaman, one of the gypsy women. However, after her death, Nigella was expelled from the village. Old Piri accepted homeless and hungry Nigella.

There are again guests at the mansion. This time it is the celebration of Agja's birthday. Nigella also wants to go to the birthday party and join other children, but old Piri is against it. Agja's brother comes to Nigella's house and tells her that he is in love with her. But his fiancée hears it, and Nigella gets expelled from the mansion.

Young people dance. Agja is carrying roses and flowers and is distributing them among the guests. Flowers are not enough for all the guests, so to take more Agja reaches to the rose bushes, and snake bites her. Even her mother and brother are afraid to approach her to help her. But Nigella having seen what happened to Agja comes to save her absorbs the poison, throwing it away. Agja is saved, but Nigella dies in the arms of old Piri.

On request of Kuybyshev Theatre, in 1962 Niyazi writes "Chitra" Ballet using the motives of the literary and musical works of R. Tagore. In 1972 this Ballet was staged at the Azerbaijan State Opera and Ballet Theatre named after M.F. Akhundov.

Niyazi was attracted by the love story of Arjuna and Chitra in R. Tagore's "Chitragada" work.

The brief contents of the Ballet are as follows:

Abandoned by all former fighters is thinking about the meaning and secret of life in the depths of the forest. He believes that nothing in this world, including love, matters. Because love is not permanent, it is temporary and changing, and the woman's heart is lying and terrible. Thinking like this, Arjuna closes his heart to love and does not pay attention to women showing signs of attention to him.

Chitra, the daughter of Raja, is also far from feeling love. Life did not even give beauty to Chitra. Therefore, she is engaged in the ordinary life of the hunter, with the arrow in her hand, on horseback in the forests all day long. And namely there, getting into the depth of the forest, she meets Arjuna.

Arjuna's serious looks fascinate Chitra, and she instantly falls in love with him. She understands that she won't be able to live without Arjuna after that. She also realises that he is indifferent to her feelings and that love is the greatest happiness in the world. Therefore, Chitra appeals to the God of Love, Madana, and she grants her beauty. Now, beautiful Chitra goes to the forest to meet with Arjuna. Arjuna is fascinated by her beauty, and they start living in the woods as husband and wife. However, Chitra is concerned that her beauty is a lie and

she tells her secret to Arjuna. The same moment Chitra gets her previous looks back, but Arjuna does not seem bothered at all. He needs not her external appearance, but her inner beauty. The old fighter feels love for Chitra, and they both understand what real happiness is.

Fikret Meshedi Jamil oglu Amirov was the author of numerous symphonic works, operas, operettas, various songs for adults and children, concerts, instrumental works, and also the Ballets such as "Nasimi" and "A Thousand and One Nights".

"A Thousand and One Nights" was staged in 1979 at the Azerbaijan State Opera and Ballet Theatre named after M.F. Akhundov, and opened a new page in the musical culture of the former USSR. The Ballet's libretto belongs to writers and dramaturgists, brothers Maksud and Rustam Ibragimbekovs, and choreographer N. Nasirova. In those years, the "Thousand and One Nights" was so popular that got awarded the State Prize of the USSR in 1980 (Zulfugarov and Khalilov, 1976).

The theme of the work is taken from the ancient Chinese folktales.

The Ballet starts with the first meeting of Shahriyar and Scheherazade and continues every night with the new tale from Scheherazade.

In the Ballet, we encounter the meeting with an exciting scene from "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves", the national Arabic fairy tales. These scenes become even more interesting with the accompaniment of Fikret Amirov's emotional and unique music and are very popular with the public. The victory of the good forces over the evil forces is wonderfully conveyed with beautiful music, the artist's work, and strong elements of choreography. It should be noted that the conductor, Nazim Rzyaev, played a significant role in the success of this Ballet. The creators of the "A Thousand and One Nights" Ballet wanted to show that the kindness and love can create wonders.

The main hero of the Ballet, Scheherazade, wins cruel Shah Shahriyar with her kindness

and love. In other words, Shahriar doesn't kill Scheherazade as other women and marries her.

Alongside with opera, People's artist Tofig Ahmed Oglu Bakikhanov created beautiful music in various genres. He wrote "Caspian Ballad" (libretto by S. Mammadzade) in 1968, and it was staged the same year at the State Opera and Ballet Theatre named after M. F. Akhundov. In 1969, this Ballet was staged in France, at "Saint Eliza" theatre and brought the composer great fame. Inspired by this success, the composer later creates two more Ballets – "Eastern poem" and "Good and Evil". "The Caspian ballad" is devoted to the contemporary topic of hard and heroic work of Caspian oil workers (Zulfugarov and Khalilov, 1976).

Thus, even in the most difficult and windy days, the oil workers continue their work without fear, extracting the black gold from the depth of the sea creating a foundation for the happy living of future generations.

This Ballet can be called the anthem of Caspian oil workers.

The Ballet's Ballet masters were People's Artists M. Mammadov and R. Akhundova.

Faraj Gara oglu Garayev was the son of Gara Garayev, the genius composer and created such Ballets as "Shadows of Gobustan" and "Kaleidoscope".

It should be noted that the composer is also the author of symphonies, musical comedies, "The morning of the third day" (Orpheus and Evidika) and several instrumental works.

Alongside various genres, the composer could write in multiple styles. So, if the "Shadows of Gobustan" reflect the use of the principle of organic synthesis of the new meaning of national folk music blended with modern means of expression, in the "Kaleidoscope" the composer addresses the style and principles of Ballet professionals of the past century.

At the "Kaleidoscope" Ballet, the composer used topics from sonatas written by Domenico Skarlatti and managed to create a piece which was completely independent and complete from the dramaturgic point of view.

The "Shadows of Gobustan" consisting of four little novels has prominent musical images.

"Gobustan" Ballet's libretto was written by Ballet masters and directors, Rafiga Akhundova and Maksud Mamedov. In 1969, after Baku performance, it was staged during Paris International Dance Festival.

After that, this Ballet was staged several times in Azerbaijan, but after the fire in the Opera, it has not been staged any more.

In 2013, with the involvement of the American choreographer Maksim Brem, it was staged once again by Rafiga Akhundova and Maksud Mammadov on the open air, among the Gobustan rocks and in the theatre. The Ballet consists of four parts: "Fire", "Sun", "Hunting" and "The Artist". In the first three parts, the characters and their feelings are shown with the help of "Yalli" dance. Ballet dancers' costumes are designed in such a way to convey the feeling that they are nude. Actors are showing that they are hunters. When they want to catch their prey, either fire or heavy rain prevent them from doing that. The fourth part shows the artist who is trying to carve the painting on the rock.

People's Artist Nariman Mammadov wrote "Humay" Ballet based on the "Komsomol Poem" written by the great poet Samad Vurgun at the end of the 1970s, and it gets staged at the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater named after M. F. Akhundov. This work is dedicated to the tragic love of Humay and Jalal. Various dance forms are emphasised at "Humay" Ballet. The music director and conductor of the Ballet was Rauf Abdullayev.

Akshin Alizade Aligulu Oglu, laureate of the State Prize, Azerbaijani People's Artist, the author of symphonies, vocal-symphonic and choral works, soundtracks, instrumental works, had also written the "Babek" Ballet. He completed "Babek" Ballet in 1979. This Ballet describes the distant past of Azerbaijani nation, its heroic history. The libretto of the Ballet was written by the composer based on I. Selvinski's same-named play and was staged at the

Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre named after M. F. Akhundov.

This Ballet describes how Babek, son of the Azerbaijani nation together with brave fellow villagers fights against the Arab invaders. Along with Ballet composer's music, there is also rich folk music which helped the audience to understand the essence of the Ballet better.

The works of the next Azerbaijani composer should be noted separately. Polad Bulbuloglu, a famous Azerbaijani composer, People's Artist, professor, singer, and a state person, has gained glory as an author of beautiful and popular songs, symphonic works and soundtracks.

"Love and Death" Ballet was based on "Dede Gorgud" epic poem. In 2005, the Ballet was staged at the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre by Vakil Usmanov, the Ballet master. Later, the performance was staged in St. Petersburg and at Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow (Mikheyeva, 1981).

The next composer should also be noted. Elnara Dadashova, Honoured Artist, Ph. D. in art science, professor, and composer, was an author of a large number of children's songs, symphonic works, the music of various genres for piano and other musical instruments, as well as of "Sayali", a one-act Ballet.

"Sayaly" Ballet is dedicated to the eternal problem of love. This Ballet was written in 1977, and in 2012 it was staged at the Azerbaijani State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater named after M. F. Akhundov was staged. Ballet's libretto and director was Pulumb Agillin, and the music director and conductor was Jeyhun Jafarov.

The composer used the intonations of Azerbaijani folk music and mughams and managed to create a piece of work which was exciting and memorable.

Brief contents of the "Sayali" Ballet is as follows:

The most favorite holiday in Azerbaijan and other Eastern countries is Novruz. When translated from Persian, it means "new day".

Thus, if the Christian world celebrates New Year on the 31st of December, Azerbaijan and other Muslim countries celebrate it on the 18th of March. Indeed, at this time of the year, nature wakes up, the trees start to blossom, the birds return home from warm countries.

The Ballet describes the events happening during Novruz. Rahim and Karim, two young boys, both love Sayali, and therefore there is a conflict between them. Sayali, in her turn, loves Rahim. Everybody around is aware of this issue. The boys are told that they need to make it up for a holiday. The boys follow the advice of their friends and decide to sink the feud. The Ballet ends with the holiday mood and ceremonial dance.

Discussion

During the performance of these operas, the performing skills of many singers, *khanende* (*mugham* performers), and vocal performers were formed and improved. Those actors and singers included such genius ones as Bulbul, Shovket Mammadova, Rashid Beybutov, the great performers A. Buniatzade, G. Iskenderova, S. Moustafaeva, S. Kuliyeva, E. Akhundov, G. Hajibababekov, G. Idayatzade, Fatma Mukhtarova, Fidan Kasumova, Huraman Kasumova, Azer Zeynalov, S. Jafarov and others, who possess the highest level of performing arts, and who have become famous personalities. Besides, we can also discuss the development of the new creative, composer school associated with opera.

It is necessary to solve many problems of development of the performing arts related to the development of modern society. Here should be noted the growing influence of the musical life in different regions of the world and different countries on the musical tastes of the people, especially the youth (Lunacharskiy, 1981).

It is necessary to identify the patterns of development of musical life, and the musical culture as a whole, of each region and each country (Bayramova, 2009). This requires an analysis of the historical evolution of training of music professionals in the country, the

formation of musical preferences of viewers or listeners, the music business processes.

It is essential to review and analyse each nation's musical traditions, which affect the aesthetic thinking of people, their attitude towards specific musical genres. This is reflected in the involvement of spectators in every Ballet, their attitude towards it. It should be noted, that each period of social life puts forward its demands to the music, including the unique genre of Ballet (Chepurov, 1983). Any interest in music requires the listener preparedness, stimulation of his interest. History of Ballet music has its continuation, which varies in each region and country (Farajeva, 2016).

At the same time, there is a decline in interest in opera. The general tendency of development of the musical culture of the modern society is simplicity and abstractness, surreal and illusory. We believe that the education of a new musical taste, including knowledge and interest in operatic art, is associated with the creation of new forms of opera, taking into account the development of innovative technologies and the formation of a new habitat. (Badalbeyli et al., 2010).

Conclusion

As it can be seen from the article, Azerbaijan's first Ballet was staged in 1940, and the last Ballet in 2012. The author of the first Ballet was A.Badalbeyli ("Maiden Tower"), and the author of the last Ballet was E. Dadashova ("Sayali"). It should be noted that even before the first Ballet was created, Azerbaijani Theatre of Opera and Ballet already had an active enough Ballet group. It is also clear that the current level of Azerbaijani musical art and artistic culture was laid by great Uzeir Hajibeyov. National Opera and Ballet, including a children's opera, emerged in Azerbaijan from European musical traditions, but, despite this, in their development and formation, all analysed works were also based on national musical traditions. These include individual music pieces, genres, elements of music works. Musical flavour created with the use of folk music attaches particular significance to the

Ballet. In addition to this, Baku of the 12th century, especially starting from the 40s, formed a high musical culture. Art and musical art representatives from many cities of Russia and other countries came here and stayed here to work and live. The particular environment where musicians, writers, choreographers, composers, performers, and dancers worked with the great inspiration, contributed to the flourishing of many genres of classical music, including Ballet. Many of the works, as mentioned above, were staged on the global scene, in particular, the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre (Mikheyeva, 1981). The history of formation and development of Ballet school in Baku, the whole Ballet art shows that during the relatively short period there was created a great model of a collaborative effort between musicians and performers, which has justified itself in the future as well.

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