

American Councils

Final Report

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Through the support of American Councils I was able to conduct research in Tajikistan pertaining to the historical development of the classical repertoire of traditional music, known as *shashmaqom*, during the 19th century. My findings have shed light on the early history of the *shashmaqom* and have revealed much about the ties between 19th century *shashmaqom* performance and an earlier tradition of suite performance that became widespread in Central Asia and northern Iran during the late 17th century. Based upon critical study of 19th century musical treatises held in the Institute for Written Heritage in Dushanbe, and a comparative analysis of the modal suite performance tradition according to late 17th century treatises, there is much evidence suggesting a direct and continuous historical development of the *shashmaqom* from the 17th century repertoire of four large modal suites known as the four *shadd*,

My research in Tajikistan has revealed a possible 17th century prototype or antecedent of the *shashmaqom* suites of the 19th century, but has also shown me that Tajikistan is a country rich in scholars, resources, and potential collaborative research endeavors. The educational and institutional infrastructure that has been in place since Soviet times continues to provide a supportive environment for cultural

and scholarly activities such as conferences, seminars, and workshops. There are many archives and state institutions dedicated to cultural studies and the preservation of Tajik cultural heritage, and scholars and institutions are very welcoming to international scholars and collaborative projects.

Research into the early history of the *shashmaqom* tradition is problematic due to the complete lack of 18th century musical literature. The *shashmaqom* suites emerge in 19th century literature as a well formed and highly developed musical system and repertoire, but scholars have been left to ponder how and when this performance tradition developed and have suggested an 18th century origin. A small body of Persian-Tajik musical manuscripts from the late 17th century, which have been largely overlooked by scholars in Central Asia and abroad, provide clues to the early development of modal suite performance in Central Asia, and have been the subject of much of my doctoral research. The American Councils sponsored research opportunity allowed me to examine the earliest 19th century compendiums of *shashmaqom* poetry and performance, and to compare these with late 17th century treatises describing the performance of the four *shadd*.

The processes by which the four *shadd* evolved into the six suite cycles of *shashmaqom* performance, are difficult to discern, but a comparative analysis of the modal progressions of both traditions has shown possible and probable ways in which the accumulation of classical repertoire and their integration into the *shadd* suites may have resulted in the formation and extraction of two additional which branched off from the body of the four *shadd* suites.

The *shashmaqom* literature of the 19th century is primarily in the form of *bayoz*, which are generally compendiums of poetry, but the *bayoz* of the *shashmaqom* include not only the sung texts of the musical repertoire, but are also presented in a distinct order as to mirror the performance of each *maqom* suite, usually indicating the *maqom* name and rhythm in which the piece is to be performed. As such, they act as performance manuals revealing the traditional guidelines inherent in suite performance practice and the well-established rhythmic and modal progressions therein. The elucidation of the *shashmaqom* suite structure of the 19th century is also very relevant for discerning musical characteristics of musical performance in the early 20th century which soon became obsolete as a result of the heavy handed Soviet policies on art and music which effectively changed the ways in which music was taught and learned in Central Asia.

To better understand how such changes may have occurred as a result of Soviet policies, I utilized early phonogram recordings made by masters of *shashmaqom* performance from 1909-1936 in order to see how musical practices differed in the early decades of the 20th century. Many of these recordings capture the performances of the last masters of the 19th century, musicians who had mastered their art in the 19th century and later acted as the transmitters of musical knowledge to the first generation of the 20th century. Based upon study of these recordings, we find the use of neutral thirds in many of the musical modes of the *maqom* suites. The use of neutral intervals was soon deemed ‘primitive’ by Soviet policy makers in the late 1920’s and early 1930’s, and instruments began to be constructed with diatonic divisions of the octave, thereby changing the fundamental

scale structure which had long been one of the defining and distinctively Central Asiatic elements of musical performance.

The teachers and director of the Academy of Shashmaqom also proved to be a rich resource and collaborative partner. In order to more closely examine the 19th century division of the octave and to discern the *parda*-fretting of the *tanbur*, which is the quintessential instrument of *shashmaqom* performance, I joined forces with Sirojuddin Juraev, a talented musician and professor at both the National Conservatory and the Academy of Shashmaqom. Together we were able to track down the actual *tanburs* that had belonged to the last *shashmaqom* masters of the 19th century and have remained amazingly well preserved and unchanged and unplayed in the past century. We were able to take measurements and make recordings, which we then used in comparison with old recordings from the early 1900's. We also made use of several software programs in order to take accurate measurements of the intervals. This collaborative project will certainly require further research in the near future, but our findings have contributed to uncovering long obsolete character traits or early 20th century *shashmaqom* performance which have become nearly extinct today but may soon experience a revival, as many musicians seem curious and anxious to recover their musical heritage from the past century.

While the history of *shashmaqom* in the 19th century has come to gain greater attention from musicologists in Central Asia only in recent years, there remains much to be discovered. The elucidation of the musical life of Central Asia during the 18th century will certainly require the uncovering of yet undiscovered musical

literature. However, there remains much extant literature that still has not been sufficiently examined, and a juxtaposition of various treatises over a span of several centuries is also needed in order to place each treatises in its proper geographical and chronological context so that we may better understand larger processes of musical change. For example, a comparative reading of treatises from the 15th – 17th centuries reveal a gradually shift in focus from theoretical issues to practical issues of proper musical performance. While 17th century treatises are self-proclaimed treatises on the ‘science of music’, the scientific and systematic measures of describing musical theory that had been championed in 14th and 15th centuries soon fell to the wayside, and we find that these 17th century treatises are developing new ways to describe musical practice and especially the prestige of the four ‘great’ suites known as the four *shadd*.

This trend of an increased focus on aspects of musical practice seems to have continued. By the 19th century there is no longer any focus on musical theory, and the there is actually very little literature that discusses music or music performance. We do however find a grand suite tradition based upon six *maqom* which in many ways bears resemblance to the four *shadd* of the late 17th century, when the focus of musical literature had begun to include the four *shadd* as the most prestigious and elevated musical practice., its prestige being supported through its ties to the complex modal and rhythmic cycles of the ‘science of music’.

A study of the extant 19th century *shashmaqom* literature is also revealing about the place of music in traditional Tajik and Uzbek culture and reveals much about the niche which musicians filled within the societal structure of the urban

environment centered around the capitals of the various autonomous emirates which ruled in Central Asia during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The many *bayoz* attest to the well established repertoire and suggest the *shashmaqom* was generally held in high regard as an elevated art form, appreciated by the general population as well as circles of intellectuals and dignitaries surrounding the royal courts in the khanates of Khorezm, Bukhara, and Qoqand.

Biographical information about the great musicians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries confirm that the rulers of Bukhara, Khiva, and Qoqand also acted as patrons for the great musicians of their day. The khans of Khiva had commissioned the development of a musical notation system in order to record all of the melodies of the *shashmaqom* in writing. Their request resulted in the creation of a *tanbur* tablature notation system by which Khivan musicians of the late 19th and early 20th century wrote down all of the *shashmaqom* repertoire as it was played in Khorezm. These notations are one of the most exceptional and valuable sources for the study of 19th *maqom* suite performance. Although these *tanbur* notations were not immediately available in Tajikistan, I was able to access recently published materials including a republished edition of the Khorezmian *tanbur* notations.

The *tanbur* notations of Khiva mirror very closely the Bukharan *shashmaqom* tradition that is portrayed in the *bayoz* manuscripts. According to the Khivan musicologists writing in the early 20th century, the Khivan *shashmaqom* tradition was brought to Khiva from Bukhara in the first half of the 18th century. The great similarity in all structural and nominal aspects of the *maqom* suites can attest to this common origin. There are however other aspects of the Khorezmian *shashmaqom*

repertoire which seem to have remained intact while they gradually fell into obscurity in the Bukharan tradition. There are various mode names preserved in Khorezm that are also found in the Bukharan *bayoz*, but are no longer used today. One of the more interesting aspects of the history of *shashmaqom* in Khorezm during the 19th century, is that we find an example of how an expanding repertoire can result in the extraction of a ‘new’ *maqom* suite. The emergence of the *maqom* suite *panjigoh*, which had previously been played as part of *maqom rost*, shows how the accumulating repertoire can result in the extraction of a new *maqom* within the span of a century and provides a possible model for similar process of musical change which may have led to the formation of the six *shashmaqom* suites from the body of the four *shadd* of the late 17th century.

While this study into the 19th century history of the *shashmaqom* has produced fruitful results, it has also opened up new outlets for further pursuits in the field of historical ethnomusicology. As Tajikistan is a very welcoming place for researchers and is ripe for collaborative projects, I have every intention of returning to Tajikistan in order to continue inquiry into topics relating to the history of *shashmaqom* and its late medieval antecedent, the modal suite practice of the four *shadd*,