

The Artistic–Aesthetic Characteristics Of Female Performers Of Karakalpak Folk Songs (On The Example Of Ayimxan Shamuratova And Gulxatisha Ayimbetova)

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Abstract: This article examines the artistic and aesthetic characteristics of female performers in Karakalpak folk singing traditions through the creative heritage of Ayimxan Shamuratova and Gulxatisha Ayimbetova. The study focuses on vocal aesthetics, repertoire interpretation, emotional expression, stage poetics, and the interaction between folk heritage and professional performance culture. Furthermore, the article analyzes the artistic individuality of both singers and comparatively evaluates their contribution to the development of Karakalpak musical identity. The research demonstrates that female performers played a decisive role not only in preserving traditional songs but also in transforming them into aesthetically complex forms of professional musical expression.

Keywords: Karakalpak folk music, female performers, artistic aesthetics, vocal poetics, repertoire analysis, national identity.

Introduction: Karakalpak folk song tradition represents a multidimensional artistic phenomenon in which music, oral heritage, emotional symbolism, and cultural memory intersect. Folk songs are not merely melodic texts designed for performance; rather, they function as repositories of collective experience, historical consciousness, social emotion, and national worldview. Therefore, the artistic value of folk songs cannot be understood independently from the performer who gives them voice, emotional substance, and aesthetic shape. In this regard, female performers occupy a particularly important position in Karakalpak musical culture because they have significantly contributed to the continuity, refinement, and professionalization of folk singing traditions [1, 13-16].

The aesthetic nature of folk song performance depends upon several interconnected artistic elements, namely vocal timbre, emotional projection, repertoire interpretation, stage behavior, and stylistic authenticity. Consequently, successful performance requires much more than technical singing ability. The performer must be capable of transmitting cultural

meanings, emotional tensions, and symbolic dimensions embedded within traditional repertoire. These artistic principles become especially evident in the creative activities of Ayimxan Shamuratova and Gulxatisha Ayimbetova.

Ayimxan Shamuratova occupies a unique place in the history of Karakalpak musical and theatrical culture. As one of the leading representatives of Karakalpak vocal art, she embodied an artistic model in which musical expression and dramatic performance were inseparably linked. However, her importance lies not simply in her biographical path but rather in the aesthetic language she created through performance.

One of the central artistic characteristics of Ayimxan Shamuratova's creativity was her mezzo-soprano voice, which became a powerful medium of emotional communication. In vocal aesthetics, the mezzo-soprano register is frequently associated with expressive warmth, dramatic intensity, and tonal depth. Shamuratova employed these qualities not as purely technical devices but as instruments for constructing emotional narratives. Her performances

frequently conveyed sorrow, longing, courage, tenderness, and existential reflection [2, 214-220].

This emotional complexity can be observed in her interpretations of Karakalpak folk songs such as "Bozataw" and "Ariwxan." These songs possess deep cultural and emotional significance within Karakalpak musical consciousness. Nevertheless, their artistic impact largely depends on interpretative execution. Shamuratova's approach to these songs was characterized by psychological immersion and emotional authenticity. Instead of delivering songs as static musical texts, she transformed them into living emotional experiences.

For instance, her performance aesthetics relied heavily on dramatic phrasing, carefully controlled vocal dynamics, and emotionally meaningful pauses. Through these techniques, musical narration acquired dramatic architecture. The listener was not merely hearing a melody; rather, the listener was entering an emotional and symbolic environment shaped by the performer's interpretative choices.

Moreover, Shamuratova's theatrical background substantially enriched her musical expression. Her performances in dramatic productions such as "Teñin tapqan qız," "Tabanlı tartıs," and "Gúlsara" developed her sense of characterization, emotional embodiment, and stage communication. Consequently, her musical performances exhibited a strong theatrical dimension. Gesture, facial expression, posture, and psychological projection became integral components of her artistic language [5].

This integration of theater and music represents an important aesthetic feature of her creativity. In traditional folk performance, emotional sincerity is highly valued; however, professional stage culture additionally requires compositional discipline and interpretative control. Ayimxan Shamuratova successfully synthesized these artistic dimensions. Therefore, her creativity may be interpreted as an important transitional model connecting oral folk expression with institutionalized professional performance.

Another significant artistic contribution of Shamuratova concerns her role in constructing national cultural symbolism through music. Folk songs in her repertoire did not function solely as entertainment. Instead, they served as symbolic expressions of collective memory and national identity. Through emotional intensity and interpretative depth, she transformed traditional repertoire into a cultural statement concerning belonging, historical experience, and emotional resilience.

While Ayimxan Shamuratova reflects the foundational

stage of professional Karakalpak performance aesthetics, Gulxatisha Ayimbetova represents a later artistic paradigm shaped by institutional music education, ensemble professionalism, and recording culture. Ayimbetova graduated from the J. Shamuratov State College of Arts in Nukus in 1983. This formal education significantly influenced the stylistic precision and technical discipline visible in her performances.

The artistic individuality of Gulxatisha Ayimbetova is fundamentally connected with her vocal characteristics. Her voice is described as clear, resonant, broad-ranged, and pleasant, qualities that enabled exceptional interpretative flexibility. Unlike performers who rely primarily on dramatic vocal force, Ayimbetova developed an aesthetic strategy grounded in tonal balance, melodic transparency, and expressive elegance.

Her artistic development within the "Ayqulash" ensemble and later the "Ámiw tolqını" ensemble played an essential role in shaping her stylistic identity. Ensemble culture requires refined listening skills, collective coordination, and musical adaptability. Therefore, these experiences strengthened her sense of musical architecture and expanded her interpretative possibilities [4].

Aesthetic analysis of Ayimbetova's repertoire reveals another important dimension of her creativity. Songs such as "Muwsa sen yarı," "Nazlıniń," "Jaqsıraq," and "Ne bilsin" occupy a central place in her artistic portfolio. These songs frequently revolve around themes of emotional attachment, lyrical sensitivity, interpersonal devotion, and emotional contemplation. However, Ayimbetova's artistic achievement lies not simply in selecting meaningful repertoire but in reshaping traditional songs through stylistic refinement.

Her performance style emphasizes lyrical fluidity, melodic clarity, and controlled emotional articulation. Rather than relying on overt dramatic gestures, she frequently cultivates emotional intimacy and aesthetic delicacy. Consequently, her performances create a different emotional environment from that of Ayimxan Shamuratova. If Shamuratova's aesthetic world may be described as dramatically monumental, Ayimbetova's artistic language can be characterized as lyrically nuanced and vocally polished.

An equally important aspect of Ayimbetova's creativity concerns her interpretation of composed songs by Karakalpak composers. Works such as N. Muxammeddinov's "Keń dala" and "Ata mákan," as well as Q. Xilalov's "Watan," "Ana topırağım," and "Ózbekstan," expanded her artistic range beyond traditional folk repertoire. These compositions

introduce themes of homeland, cultural belonging, patriotic emotion, and collective identity.

From an aesthetic perspective, Ayimbetova's interpretation of these works demonstrates the productive dialogue between folk tradition and modern musical professionalism. She maintained traditional vocal sensibility while adapting repertoire to professional concert presentation and media recording formats. Importantly, many of her performances were preserved in the archives of Karakalpak Radio and on gramophone recordings, including "Gulxatisha Ayimbetova atqaradi" (1982). This archival preservation transformed her artistic activity into a lasting component of Karakalpak cultural memory [3, 937-942].

A comparative analysis of Ayimxan Shamuratova and Gulxatisha Ayimbetova reveals both continuity and stylistic divergence within Karakalpak female vocal performance traditions. First, both performers demonstrate strong attachment to national repertoire and deep commitment to preserving Karakalpak musical heritage. Furthermore, both artists successfully elevated folk songs from oral cultural practice to aesthetically sophisticated professional performance.

Nevertheless, the artistic mechanisms through which they achieved this goal differ considerably. Shamuratova's aesthetic model relies on dramatic embodiment, emotional monumentality, and theatrical symbolism. Her performances frequently foreground emotional confrontation, psychological density, and expressive intensity. In contrast, Ayimbetova's artistic system privileges melodic sophistication, vocal transparency, and interpretative refinement.

Their differences are also connected with broader cultural transformations. Shamuratova belonged to a historical period characterized by the institutional formation of Karakalpak professional arts. Consequently, her creativity carried the mission of legitimizing folk aesthetics within professional theater and stage culture. Conversely, Ayimbetova worked within a more developed artistic environment influenced by formal music education, ensemble organization, recording technology, and concert professionalism.

However, despite these stylistic differences, both artists fulfilled a shared cultural function. They preserved national musical memory, expanded the expressive possibilities of Karakalpak vocal art, and established influential models of female artistic creativity. Their contributions illustrate that female performers should be regarded not merely as interpreters of inherited material but as active creators

of aesthetic meaning and cultural continuity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the artistic and aesthetic characteristics of female performers in Karakalpak folk music can be profoundly understood through the creative legacies of Ayimxan Shamuratova and Gulxatisha Ayimbetova. Their artistry demonstrates that vocal performance is not limited to technical singing but involves complex interactions between emotional symbolism, national identity, dramatic embodiment, and interpretative aesthetics. Ayimxan Shamuratova established a powerful synthesis between theatrical expression and folk vocalism, whereas Gulxatisha Ayimbetova developed a refined aesthetic grounded in lyrical elegance, technical sophistication, and professional vocal culture. Therefore, their artistic heritage remains an indispensable source for future studies in ethnomusicology, performance theory, folklore studies, and cultural history.

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