

Analysis Of The Art Of Dutor Performance From Traditional And Academic Perspectives: A Socio-Pedagogical Approach

Afruza Yunusalieva

Student, Department of Vocal and Instrumental Performance, Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Art Studies, Fergana State University, Uzbekistan

Received: 23 July 2025; **Accepted:** 19 August 2025; **Published:** 21 September 2025

Abstract: This article provides information about the emergence of one of the national musical instruments — the dator, its performance styles, and processes of development. The traditional direction of dator performance has a centuries-old history, and today, on this basis, an academic school of performance has also been formed and is continuing to evolve. Both directions are steadily developing within the framework of the master–apprentice tradition. The article highlights the essence and significance of traditional performing art and analyzes it from social and pedagogical perspectives.

Keywords: Traditional performance, academic performance, tradition, folklore, contemplation, classic.

Introduction: The musical culture of the Uzbek people has a centuries-old history, which testifies to the fact that traditional musical art was established through the creative activity of many generations of instrumentalists and singers [1]. Traditional music is an artistic process that includes folk musical creativity — created by the people and transmitted through centuries as musical folklore — as well as classical music composed by prominent instrumentalists and composers. These creative samples have been preserved within the oral tradition, polished, and developed as mature works of music.

Uzbek classical music stands out from that of other nations by its profound meaning, complexity, sophistication, and unique traditions [2]. In this musical creativity, the historical traditions of the people and their rich and deep meanings are embedded. Each of these samples is like an echo from the past. Consequently, the more they are studied and the more their hidden aspects are revealed, the more new facets emerge, demonstrating their unique characteristics.

METHOD

Uzbek traditional music historically developed into two directions: the first is musical folklore, and the second is classical music, enriched with the creative musical

thinking of composers. Although they are interconnected and complementary, each has its own distinctive features and qualities [2].

After the independence of our country, profound reforms have been carried out in all spheres of society such as science, technology, sports, and culture. In particular, significant attention has been given to the development of art and culture, the improvement of the education system in these fields, strengthening their material and technical base, and providing new educational literature. The adoption of laws and decrees, as well as the measures taken by our government, serve as evidence of this [3].

It is historically known that the art of musical performance has existed since ancient times and has reached us in its current developed form after passing through a long path of progress [4]. As noted earlier, prominent scholars such as Al-Farabi in his *Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir* (Great Book of Music), Safi al-Din al-Urmawi in his musical treatises, Abdulqadir Maraghi in *Jami' al-Alhan fi 'Ilm al-Musiqi*, Ahmad in *Sazlar Munozarasi* (Debate of Instruments), Zayn al-Abidin Husayni in *Risala dar Bayan-i Qanun wa Amaliy Musiqi*, and Amuli in his *Musical Treatises* not only studied musical instruments but also addressed issues of their

theoretical investigation, providing valuable information about the instruments of their time [5].

Today, genres such as yalla, ashula, katta ashula, dastan, instrumental melodies, and maqoms are considered mature branches of national music. By classical music, we refer to the art created by distinguished Uzbek composers and instrumentalists over centuries, belonging to the cultural heritage of the Uzbek people. This type of music differs from other musical traditions by several unique characteristics [6].

1. Oral creativity. Classical music in the oral tradition is the product of creative activity developed by the people, passed from mouth to mouth, generation to generation, and from master to apprentice. In ancient times, the first examples of music were created by the people themselves [7].

2. Tradition. The samples of classical music have been preserved as tradition and continue to develop. Oral professional music includes complexly developed songs, lyrical compositions, and maqoms. Tradition refers to practices or characteristics that, over time, have been repeatedly tested by the people and adopted as norms. Tradition is a unique social phenomenon that becomes ingrained in people's consciousness and life, passed from generation to generation, repeated over time, and accepted in all spheres of life as a system of rules and practices [8]. It is behavior rooted in everyday life, recurring within a certain period, and consisting of customs, rituals, norms, and habits accepted by the majority.

Uzbek National Heritage and the Dutor

Every nation possesses its own national heritage and traditions, embodied through melodies that reflect the spiritual values of the people and manifested in applied art samples with corresponding musical instruments. It should be acknowledged that the world of Uzbek musical instruments is both spiritually and materially rich, as well as diverse. Moreover, the greater the spiritual heritage of a people, the deeper its history and the more extensive its legacy [9].

The Uzbek national heritage is abundant in musical instruments, each of which is distinguished by its ancient origins, structural development, and technical improvement throughout history. Among these instruments, the dator holds a special place.

The dator is one of the traditional Uzbek plucked string instruments. Having long occupied a worthy place in the practice of folk performance, today it is found in all groups of traditional performance styles. Originally formed as a solo instrument, the dator today belongs to the core group of Uzbek national instruments.

For the first time, the dator was described by the 15th-

century musicologist Zayn al-Din al-Husayni in his treatise *Risala dar Bayan-i Qanun wa 'Amali Musiqi* ("Treatise on the Principles and Practice of Music"), in which he presented its name and explained its structural, compositional, and performance capabilities [10].

In the cultural life of the Uzbek people, teaching and learning instrumental performance, particularly dator playing, has been a long-standing tradition, developed through the master-apprentice system. Within this system, musical training holds a central position. Playing and learning musical instruments are essential factors of traditional performance art. In this tradition, the master is expected to embody both instrumental and vocal performance skills.

Without knowing the secrets of teaching and learning, it is impossible to fully preserve and continue this tradition. Traditional performance and the master-apprentice practice have developed in dator art since ancient times. The process of teaching dator performance is carried out in two stages:

1. Independent observation and auditory perception.
2. Learning through direct visual-auditory experience.

Independent observation and auditory perception depend on the learner's musical abilities. The student listens to the piece presented by the teacher (or through audio recordings), mentally divides it into sections, imagines it, and prepares a draft version of the melody independently.

Learning through visual and auditory experience mainly takes place during weddings, gatherings, and festivities, where learners memorize and later reproduce what they observed.

To master dator performance independently, a student must possess special musical abilities, musical memory, sharp hearing, and attentiveness. At this initial stage, the learner does not yet hold the instrument; instead, they only listen and observe. Often, during their first meetings, masters provide their apprentices with information about the origins of the instrument and its role among other instruments. Later, they set the schedule and structure of lessons. Discipline is a fundamental principle of traditional performance: missing lessons without reason is considered a serious fault.

In traditional dator performance, there are three main postures for sitting. Most dator players adopt the "cross-legged" position (*chordana*). In this style, the performer uses three support points to hold the instrument: the lower support (right leg), the upper

support (right elbow), and the side support (hip). This posture not only ensures the stability of the body but also contributes to the clarity of sound production [11].

Styles of Dutor Performance

The second style of sitting in dator performance is called “tizzalama” (kneeling position). This posture is often used when playing dance melodies and during vocal accompaniment.

The third style of sitting is rare and mostly observed among women performers. In this position, the performer sits with both legs turned to the right side while leaning on the left hip. In all traditional performance practices, special attention is given to the movements of the left hand, as the pressing of frets on the dator requires precision. If the frets are pressed too tightly, the tone becomes constricted, unlike in the tanbur instrument [12].

In traditional dator performance, fingering techniques usually employ four fingers. However, the little finger is relatively weaker and can negatively affect sound quality during performance. In modern notation-based playing styles, the fourth finger is more frequently used, particularly on the prima dator, where it is especially necessary for performing complex works, including pieces from the world music repertoire [13].

Studying traditional performance processes, solving its theoretical problems, and drawing practical conclusions are among the main tasks of contemporary musicology. As in other cultures, the technical parameters of musical performance in Uzbek art are closely linked to issues concerning the development of national musical culture. This allows both professional and amateur dator players to reveal their creativity, imagination, skills, and stylistic innovations [14].

Research on creativity and performance styles, as well as the principles of organizing musical material, reveals the features of artistic thinking in various styles and objectively reflects the specific qualities of traditional dator performance. Each school and style of performance is characterized by its technical richness. Performers select their repertoire in accordance with both their own preferences and the aesthetic tastes of listeners. Without developing a unique style of performance, a musician cannot achieve true artistic success. During performance, spontaneous “inspiration” and “delight” distinguish the performance with artistic originality. A lack of understanding of performance traditions, however, may lead to artificial stimulation of such inspiration, thereby making the performance inauthentic.

Among many dator players, unique expressive gestures, hand movements, facial expressions, and an

inner striving that corresponds to the spirit of the piece can be observed. These features differ across gender groups: in women’s performance, certain elements are more developed than in men’s, while others are less so.

Studies show that among dator performers who graduate from traditional and professional schools, a special form of musical thinking develops regarding the distinctive two-voice texture (bivocality) unique to the dator, which is not found in other national instruments [15].

In different styles, the role of the dator is interpreted uniquely, but the principles of sound production, texture, interval relations of open strings, and other features are common across traditions. Performance mastery, playing culture, and the ability to enrich a piece with various strokes and ornaments are crucial indicators in assessing the professionalism of a dator player.

A performer seeks to study the aesthetics, techniques, and repertoire of different schools and styles. Interpreting vocal melodies on the dator is relatively complex: due to the continuous stretching of human vocal intonations, the joining and resonance of melodies differ from the short and quickly fading tones produced by the dator strings. If a piece is interpreted poorly, its artistic meaning is diminished and its lifespan shortened. However, a skillfully interpreted piece becomes immortal, expanding in meaning, imagery, and artistic scope, thus enriching the personal repertoire of the performer.

Traditional dator performance has included a variety of unique styles. In the past century, based on the mastery of performers, dator players were referred to as “dekachi”, “ipakchi”, or “dastachi”. These terms were applied only when a musician excelled in specific aspects of performance: the ipakchi style referred to the skillful use of melismas and ornamentations; the dekachi style indicated mastery of delicate performance on silk strings; while the dastachi style described the ability to produce rhythms and subtle sounds by pressing or sliding the fingers of the left hand along the resonating bowl of the instrument.

In modern times, with the rapid development of our country, strong and versatile new generations of dator players are emerging.

Modernization of Uzbek Folk Instruments

In the 1920s–1930s, Uzbek master craftsmen such as Usmon Zufarov, Matyusuf Kharratov, Shorakhim Shoumarov, and others began the first efforts to improve national folk instruments. In 1934, at the suggestion of V.A. Uspensky, master Usmon Zufarov led the work on modernizing Uzbek national

instruments at the Institute of Scientific Research in Art Studies. The experiments carried out by Zufarov and other craftsmen were mainly aimed at strengthening the resonance and sound of the instruments [16].

The improvement of Uzbek folk instruments was first mentioned in V.M. Belyaev's book *Uzbekskie Narodnye Instrumenty* (Uzbek Folk Instruments). Systematic work in this direction was initiated in 1935 at the Hamza Music School under the leadership of A.I. Petrosyants. From 1943 onward, such activities were continued in the laboratory established under the Tashkent State Conservatory.

With the establishment of the Experimental and Scientific-Production Laboratory for the Modernization of National Instruments, one of the main tasks was solved — the adaptation of national instruments for performing written musical works.

The emergence of written solo and ensemble–orchestral performance on national instruments marked a completely new phenomenon in the history of Uzbek musical culture. This development required addressing a number of important issues, including:

1. Modernizing national instruments on the basis of 12-step equal temperament, which became the foundation of compositional music.
2. Creating high-, middle-, and low-register instruments for polyphonic ensembles and orchestras performing compositions according to written scores.
3. Developing educational and artistic repertoires for solo and ensemble performance.
4. Preparing pedagogical and performing personnel for middle and higher educational institutions, general schools, concert organizations, and amateur artistic groups.
5. Scientifically improving national instruments and creating conditions for their mass production in instrument factories.

The modernization of national instruments enabled the performance of works by contemporary composers. This, in turn, allowed the wider population, especially the younger generation, to enjoy compositional creativity and the new “academic” written tradition on national instruments.

Among the improved instruments, the dutor was developed into different families. This made it possible to perform world music repertoire more widely. Instead of the older diatonic dutor, a chromatic dutor with two and a half octaves was created. The dutor family included the alto dutor, prima dutor, tenor dutor, sekunda dutor, bass dutor, and contrabass dutor. The alto, prima, bass, and contrabass dutors became widely used in folk orchestras and ensembles,

while the sekunda dutor was especially employed for performing the music of related peoples (Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Karakalpak), as its tuning system matched their tonal structures. The tenor dutor retained the features of the traditional diatonic dutor and was mainly used in the performance of the shashmaqom, the golden heritage of Uzbek music.

However, due to differences in instrumental technique, coordination of performance elements has not always been straightforward. Traditional performers, who acquired skills orally and without notation, often relied heavily on auditory memory. As a result, they sometimes faced difficulties compared to academic musicians trained in the written system.

Comparative Analysis: Traditional and Academic Dutor Performance

When comparing a traditional dutor performer with one trained in the “academic” style, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. **Academic performance system.** The academic performance system confines the musician mainly to written notation. However, this style emphasizes perfection and precision. With the introduction of academic performance, Uzbek musicians gained the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery on the world stage. Works from the treasury of world classical music began to be performed on Uzbek folk instruments.
2. **Traditional performance system.** A traditional performer, by contrast, executes a piece consciously and freely, often based on improvisation. In traditional performance, particularly on the tenor dutor, only national melodies and exemplary works such as Shashmaqom are performed. The diatonic frets of this dutor are especially suitable for playing ornamental passages and variations.

Thus, a significant distinction has emerged between academic and traditional performers. Nevertheless, both approaches maintain their unique value and complement each other.

Over time, academic performers, having grown distant from ancient traditions and lacking preparation in the “language of national intonation,” diverged into two separate directions:

1. Academic performance
2. Traditional performance

In all higher education institutions of Uzbekistan, teaching is now conducted in these two areas. In the traditional performance department, training is based on the master–apprentice tradition, focusing deeply on national maqom art. In the academic performance department, however, instruction relies on written notation and the works of composers.

Traditionally, performers practiced on instruments with diatonic scales. As a result of modernization, semitone frets were added between diatonic tones, paving the way for academic performance. This, in turn, enabled the performance of world classical masterpieces. For example, Monti's Csárdás and Paganini's La Campanella could be performed on the ghijjak, while balalaika compositions could be adapted for the dutor.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of dutor performance from both traditional and academic perspectives reveals the rich diversity and continuity of Uzbek musical culture. Traditional performance, rooted in oral creativity and the master-apprentice system, emphasizes improvisation, freedom of interpretation, and close adherence to national intonation. Academic performance, on the other hand, highlights precision, technical mastery, and the ability to integrate Uzbek folk instruments into the global repertoire of classical music.

The modernization of Uzbek musical instruments, particularly the development of the dutor family, created opportunities for the performance of both national and world classical works. This transformation allowed folk instruments to expand beyond their traditional framework and gain recognition on the international stage.

Despite differences, both traditional and academic approaches serve as complementary directions. Traditional performance safeguards cultural heritage and maintains the living tradition of maqom and folk art, while academic performance opens the door to broader artistic horizons and technical perfection. The coexistence of these two systems within Uzbekistan's higher education institutions ensures the preservation of national identity while fostering integration with global musical practices.

Ultimately, the art of dutor performance reflects not only the aesthetic values of the Uzbek people but also their ability to adapt, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to the world's musical culture.

REFERENCES

1. O'zbekiston xalqlari etnografiyasi va folklori. (2007). Toshkent: O'qituvchi nashriyoti matbaa ijodiy uyi, p. 8.
2. Abdullayeva, O. (2006). Ansambl cholg'ularini o'rganish. Toshkent, p. 32.
3. Toshmatova, I. (2008). An'anaviy dutor. Toshkent, p. 9.
4. Rasultojiev, J. (n.d.). Dutor ijrochiligi. Toshkent: O'qituvchi nashriyoti, p. 36.

5. Leviev, M. (2005). O'zbek cholg'usozlik tarixi. Toshkent, p. 14.
6. Vizgo, T., & Petrosyans, A. (1992). Orkestr uzbekskikh narodnykh instrumentov. Toshkent, pp. 22–23.
7. Vizgo, T., & Petrosyans, A. (1992). Orkestr uzbekskikh narodnykh instrumentov. Toshkent, p. 49.
8. Nasritdinova, M., Nigora, M., & Murodova, D. (2022, February). Uzbek folk art and its place in public life. In Archive of Conferences (pp. 44-48).
9. Murodova, D. (2021). Scientific And Theoretical Aspects of Musical Thinking. Zien Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 1(1), 196-199.
10. Murodova, D. (2022). Янги тараққиёт босқичида ёшларда бадий-эстетик билим ва кўникмаларни ривожлантириш жараёнини такомиллаштиришнинг зарурияти. Science and innovation, 1(B6), 702-707.
11. Murodova, D. R. Q. (2023). Bo'lajak musiqa ta'limi o'qituvchilarining badiiy-estetik kompetentligini rivojlantirish mazmuni. Oriental renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences, 3(2), 644-649.
12. Murodova, D. (2021). The concept of musical thinking and its stages of development. Galaxy International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, 9(05), 245-250.
13. Durdona, M. (2021, May). About dutor and his performance. In Archive of Conferences (Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 29-31).
14. Nasretidinova, M., Toshaliyev, D., & Murodova, D. R. Q. (2022). An'anaviy ijrochilik san'atining hozirgi davr muammolari. Scientific progress, 3(2), 846-850.
15. Муродова, Д. (2023). Бўлажак музика таълими ўқитувчиларининг бадий-эстетик компетентлигини ривожлантиришнинг инновацион педагогик технологияси. Ижтимоий-гуманитар фанларнинг долзарб муаммолари/Актуальные проблемы социально-гуманитарных наук/Актуальные проблемы гуманитарных и социальных наук., 3(S/4), 434-438.
16. Муродова, Д. (2023). Fanlararo hamkorlikda bo'lajak musiqa ta'limi o'qituvchilarining badiiy-estetik kompetentligini rivojlantirish samaradorligi. Наука и инновация, 1(7), 137-140.