

"UZBEK BOWED STRING INSTRUMENTS: HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE (The traditional and contemporary kobuz as an example)"

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Аннотация

Ўзбек торли-камонли мусиқа чолғулари қўбуз чолғусининг назарий, технологик ва ижрочилик имкониятларини миллий анъанавий санъат ривожини нуктаи назардан ёритиб бериш.

Аннотация

Осветить теоретические, технологические и исполнительские возможности узбекского струнного музыкального инструмента кобуз с точки зрения развития национального традиционного искусства.

Abstract

To highlight the theoretical, technological and performance capabilities of the Uzbek stringed musical instrument kobuz from the perspective of the development of national traditional art.

Калит сўзлар

Муסיкий, Жаҳоншумул, Нозиктаъб, Тембр, Эффе́кт.

Ключевые слова

Музыкальный, Всемирный, Разборчивый, Тембр, Эффект.

Keywords

Musical, Worldwide, Coherent, Tembr, Effect.

The kobuz is an ancient bowed string instrument that was already well-known in early times in Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand, and other cities and regions of Central Asia. It is considered one of the typologically related varieties, similar to the Kazakh qyl-kobyz and the Kyrgyz kyl-kiyak.

The ladle-shaped instrument has two strings made of unspun horsehair, and it is played with a curved bow. The kobuz embodies a deep, velvety timbre and rich overtone resonance, which ultimately contribute to creating a distinctive timbral-phonetic character and forming its unique sound. A light touch of the left-hand fingers on the strings in all registers produces a clear and resonant flageolet (harmonic) effect. *“This indescribably colorful sound of the kobuz is further enhanced by performers through*



the skillful use of extremely delicate dynamic shades.”

Abdurauf Fitrat, in his book *“Uzbek Classical Music and Its History”*, describes the kobuz as follows:

“The kobuz is the oldest Turkic musical instrument. Its body consists of one tailpiece, one bowl, one neck, and one head. The upper part of the tailpiece is covered with thick leather, while the top of the bowl remains open. The combined length of the tailpiece and the bowl is equal to the length of the neck and the

head.” The kobuz is a two-string instrument played with a bow, and each of its strings is made from a bundle of horsehair. The first string contains fewer hairs than the second, which indicates that the first string produces a higher pitch, while the second string produces a lower one. The tone quality of the kobuz is plaintive and expressive. This instrument is preserved as a unique exhibit under inventory number 45 in the *Museum of Musical Instruments* at the Uzbekistan State Conservatory.

According to various legends, the kobuz was the instrument of the bakshi–ozons, the



ancient epic poets of the Turkic peoples. In the old Turkic dictionary “*Dīwān luġāt at-Turk*”, words such as “*kobuz*” and “*kobuzlamoq*” are recorded, and the name “*kobuz*” can also be found in the works of several Chagatai poets, including Navoi, Lutfi, and Mirhaydar Majzub. (In the musical treatise of Hafiz Darvish Ali, there is a legend stating that during the time of Sultan Uvays Jalayir of the Ilkhanids, the kobuz was made using an instrument called “*ozon*.”).

Researchers emphasize the attractive sound qualities of the kobuz, noting that these characteristics historically ensured its wide demand in various forms across many countries of

the East. The musical and aesthetic sensibilities of listeners directed the perception of the kobuz’s sound world, particularly highlighting a more tangible appreciation of the tones produced by musical instruments. With the emergence of new methods of sound production in musical instruments, interest in the kobuz gradually declined. It is known that in ancient times, the distinctive feature of playing the kobuz was its natural production of harmonic (flageolet) tones. “The strings were touched and pressed very lightly, resulting in harmonic-like (flageolet) sounds across all registers of the instrument.”.

The modern revival of the kobuz is associated with the establishment of the folk instruments of the orchestra. This was carried out in order to strengthen the lower register with instruments possessing a bass timbre, thereby achieving polyphonic harmonious sounds. For this reason, A. Petrosyants included the kobuz family in the bowed string instrument section of the folk instruments of the orchestra. The kobuz family is also documented in A. Tashmatova’s “*Catalog of the Museum of Musical Instruments*”, which states the following:

“A family of ghijjaks and kobuzes was created to meet the requirements of modern performance practice. The ghijjak family consists of prima, alto, bass, and contrabass ghijjaks based on the ghijjak and kobuz, while the kobuz family consists of prima, alto, bass, and contrabass kobuzes. Due to the wide variety of timbres in this group of instruments and their extensive performance possibilities, they fulfill one of the main

roles within the orchestra.”. Undoubtedly, in Uzbekistan, due to the revival of ancient spiritual values and nearly forgotten art forms, interest in kobuz performance has been steadily increasing. In particular, the establishment of the professional art directions of dastan performance and bakhshi traditions at the Yunus Rajabi National Institute of Music, as well as their integration into practical training, provides a foundation for the revival and further development of the kobuz.

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