

## MUGAM IN THE WORK OF COMPOSER N. TIGRANYAN AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ARMENIAN ASHUGH TRADITION

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12571251>

### Abstract

The article is devoted to the modern assessment of exceptional examples of instrumental mugham - one of the unique genres of Armenian monodic music, the musical and scientific views of the composer Nikoghayos Tigranyan and the foundations of his creative ideas. He was one of the founders of new Armenian professional music and the first to record mugham in European notation and skillfully developed various genres of urban music for piano, violin, chamber ensembles and folk instrument orchestras.

**Keywords:** mugham, tradition, genre, N. Tigranyan, Armenian ashugh music.

### Introduction

Nikogayos Tigranyan is one of the founders of Armenian classical music, whose works have long been valued as the most important achievements in the musical history of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This was the significant period when the new foundations of national music were formed, on which later permanent values were built.

The composer's life and activities were extensively covered in Armenian musicology during his lifetime and later occupied an important place in a number of musicological studies and works. On the one hand, N. Tigranyan's experimental, innovative achievements, on the other hand, were revealed in a unique way. Mugham N. in Tigranyan's work are the far reaching ways and trends of his creative ideas. Of course, we are talking about the polyphonic elaborations of folk and oral art samples, which laid the foundation for European type Armenian polyphonic music. This was the ancient path that other peoples had also taken.

A deep connoisseur of the music of the peoples of the East, composer, pianist N. Tigranyan focused his creative searches especially on the study, recording and polyphonic recitation of urban folk and folk music samples. Taking into account the historical and political situation of that time period and the general level of national standards in relation to European values, we can consider the composer's work as progressive and promising.

Alexandropol was one of the commercial, craft and cultural centers of the Caucasus region in the second half of the 19th century. As a bearer of typical features of urban culture, it presents itself with a rich musical characteristic. Among the diversity, urban folk singing, Sazandar and other musical ensembles stand out, on the other hand, the rapid development of specialized folk singing and European, especially unique manifestations of instrumental music. [3, p. 40]

In the description of the urban folk song, such a phenomenon as the singing folk music brought from different urban cultures of Western Armenia and combined in Alexandropol is highlighted. The folk song was closely related to Alexandropol's sazandar art. This important sphere of musical culture was best developed in the traditional genres of instrumental music. The participation of sazandars in the city life was active and very expected.

They were performances in salons, craft fairs, family parties, weddings, and other forms of entertainment. Sazandarian art occupies an important place in Asugha music. As Araks Saryan notes: "One of the main factors of interpenetration of musical art features of neighboring peoples was the activity of troupes and sazandars, who, traveling from settlement to settlement, spread the national and, at the same time, selected and appropriated a number of aspects of the musical art of other nations". [7, p. 106]

Among these common values, the art of mugham, which is widespread and appreciated among the peoples of the Near and Middle East, experienced rapid development and continues to develop artistic values today. Each nation has created mughams according to its cultural values and aesthetic perceptions and taste, under the conditions of the presence of a number of common principles. L. Yernjakyanyan writes about this. "In terms of the interaction of musical cultures, among the professional genres of monodic art, mugham is especially interesting, ... which has received its own interpretation in each nation. Among other professional genres, it was born and honed for centuries in the depths of folk creativity". [9, p. 44]

Composer N. Tigranyan's musical aesthetic views and stable foundations of future ideas. He was one of the founders of the new Armenian specialized music and the first one who wrote down in European notation and skillfully developed the various samples of the urban musical life for piano, voice, violin, chamber ensembles, symphonic and folk music orchestras. "It is no coincidence that N. Tigranyan's life and work, writes L. Yernjakyanyan, a composer who first recorded and processed the instrumental samples of classical music of the East - Persian mughams and dastgahs". [7, p. 50]

In Armenian musicology, the composer's collection, study and processing of mughams were highly appreciated. R. According to Atayan, the coverage of that work can be the subject of a separate research. It is also mentioned about the enormous efforts that the composer directed to the public recognition of the aforementioned works both in Armenia and abroad. [1]

Mugham, as a vital genre of specialized art of oral tradition, was widely spread in the life of Armenians, who played no small role in the development of this genre. According to L. Yernjakyanyan, Armenian musicians have contributed to the development of this

branch of oriental monodic music since ancient times. They introduced the elements of their national culture into the art of Mugham, which is manifested in the characteristics of figurative thinking, performance interpretation, as well as in the structural patterns of the development of the improvisational form [7, p. 52]

The forms of mughams are very complex and full of various sound elements. Therefore, the accuracy of recording the sound material is very difficult. The latter N. Tigranyan coped best.

Moreover, the mughams were written down by Tigranyan from the performances of Aghamal Melik-Aghamalyan, one of the lava-colored improvisers and performers of this genre, whom the composer considered his teacher in the field of oriental music. In addition, Tigranyan considered mugham to be the perfect form of professional folk music, which, being classical in itself, did not require additions by the composer. [2]

The close cooperation with the famous harpist Aghamal Melik-Aghamalyan greatly contributed to the composer's musical activity. He was considered a brilliant connoisseur and an unparalleled performer of classical mughams and dasgahs of his time. According to Tigranyan's definition, his playing was strong and deep, leaving an unforgettable impression on the listeners. "Music was a noble, sacred work for Aghamal, which he always approached seriously, as if filled with the responsibility of performing a sacred ceremony". [8, p. 26]

It is also necessary to talk about the structure of mughams. Usually, the whole multi-part composition of a mugham is based on one tone, after which the mugham itself is called (for example, chargyah, shahnaz, shushter, etc.), however, in different parts of the mugham, the main part can be replaced by other tones. Mughams consist of 3-4 parts, each of which has its own name. The work of Gumrets tells in detail about the content of a number of mughams developed by N. Tigranyan. [6, p. 112]

Thus, Chargyah is characterized as a "poem of war", an epic with deep tragic implications. Each mugham name refers to a separate episode from the events of the war. The Iranian Shiraz Elegy mugham called Bayati Shiraz is imbued with lyrical-romantic content. The various plots and themes of the legends are accompanied by the performance of bayati. In Heydari, the theme of the entire song remains the solemn mood of the holiday. There is a sense of sadness about earthly fragility in Shahnaz Mugham. Then, in the course of the story, the singer is inspired, the enthusiasm reaches its peak and rests quietly in Dubeit. Nowruz-Arabi depicts a morning in Arabia. In Transcaucasia it is also known as Sahara. Images of nature and everyday life are depicted here, ending with the blessing of nature and the praise of the joy of life. [6, p. 112]

Undoubtedly, along with such diversity of content, these episodes are also interconnected by the unity of fictional structure. [6, p. 113]

There was another circumstance that stimulated the active mind of the composer in the above field. The issue was that there was a growing interest in oriental music abroad, and especially in Russia, and it was nec-

essary to take a serious professional approach to the scientific interpretation of this music and to correctly present the performance art. That is why the composer has published scientific publications dedicated to the genre of mugham. They are unique observations on the proper study of oriental music, on taking a serious scientific thought towards it, on collecting the necessary materials, studying, then processing and publishing them. Let's quote one of the important thoughts that express the fundamental position of the composer, whose scientific value is even higher than today's point of view. He writes: "In general, it should be admitted that the basics of oriental music have not been decided yet. To develop those basics, first of all, it is necessary to write down and classify as many mughams as possible. At the present time very little has been done even for the first half of such a work, that is, there are very few records". [6, p. 17]

Thus, he emphasizes and then sets out to write down the material living in the oral tradition, but it is worth noting that not all sounding material was written down by the composer. He expressed a valuable idea about that in the same article: "The singer performs the same piece in one way, on the tar it is performed in a different way, on the chongur in a different way, according to the characteristics of the instrument." In any case, despite the variations, the lad, the base of the melody and the general nature of the rhythm with its emphasis certainly remain stable". [6, p. 22-23] This provision brings the views of the composer closer to the similar position expressed in the work of Komitas.

In this regard, his mughams recorded by Aghamal Melik-Aghamalyan, which, according to eyewitness testimony, he performed simultaneously with the tarist, on the piano<sup>14</sup>, are of exceptional value. In valuing A. Melik-Aghamalyan's musical performance art, the composer's in-depth and incomparable knowledge of Sazandari musical performance art is especially important. Thus, he writes: "Having a highly developed and unmistakable technique of the fingers of his left hand and the paw of his right hand, Aghamal did not emphasize the role of technique while playing, but submitted to the meaning of the piece being played, considering the technique as a means of expressing the meaning of the piece. a means only and not an intrinsic element. The beat of the paw of his right hand was heavy, serious, sonorous and inspiring, every "tone" sounded precise and polished. Mizrab, he hit tap-tak, with a mer-jele, the way of playing like a mandolin, which was quite popular among Karabakh and Baku tar players and, in general, ordinary sazandars". [8, p. 26] It was important for the composer to be a skilled connoisseur of sazandari instruments, because his brilliant knowledge of performance features would later play a decisive role during the creation of polyphonic arrangements of the collection's material.

The composer saw the next step in his activity as the original "translation" of the already recorded traditional genres for the European audience. Let's remember that he had an excellent command of the piano performance art and performed many solo concerts both in Armenia and abroad. The approaches to N. Tigranyan's stable methodology in the polyphonic reharmonization

of the collected material were fundamental. He emphasized the preservation of the original sample intact in any treatment, which, according to the composer's position, would protect the national traditional samples from arbitrary distortions. He writes: "Since the accurate transmission of oriental melodies through the piano, in its tempered order, has always encountered many purely technical difficulties, then I, for a more perfect transmission of the musical content, had to resort to such harmonization and accompaniment that corresponded to the unique nature of the melody. Moreover, I had to take into account the fact that local musicians and people are completely unfamiliar with polyphonic music". [8, p. 21]

In terms of artistic merits and musical historical assessment, undisputed, N. Tigranyan's mugams are an important contribution to the establishment of Armenian professional music of this period. It is known that at the beginning of the Soviet years, and to some extent even later, there was a musico-aesthetic point of view, according to which mugham was alien and unsuitable for Armenian national music. It is true that, next to this, clear scientific definitions that completely refute that point of view were voiced and laughed at, and the evaluations of the national standards of that genre and musicality were given. Ambiguous evaluations of the aesthetic perceptions of mugams on a purely temporal basis seem probable. Getting to know N. In addition to the formative and stylistic features of the mugams developed by Tigranyan, we can mention the high artistic merits and unique creative solutions contained in them.

By today's standards, perhaps they can be perceived only by the evaluations appropriate to the time of their creation, and in this matter the musicians have an important role, the evaluation given by them will be essential for today's concert performances of these works. We strongly believe that mugams are of historical interest and as such are unprecedented in the musical history of that time and period. We are sure that they still represent a certain interest in the field of modern mugham music. We are also convinced that these works can be valued in a new way from the point of view of the gradually developing Armenian-Iranian cultural ties, contribute to the present-day appreciation of the common values created in the boundaries of the centuries-old interactions of the two cultures.

### Conclusion

Thus, if we draw parallels between the views expressed by musicologists and performers about the mugams written and developed by the composer, we will come to the conclusion that N. Tigranyan's works are both simple and complex at the same time. The composer tried to introduce some clarity and completeness into the vague improvisational form of mugams, by which he wanted to make the mugham more clear, restrained and understandable. In this way, Mugham becomes comprehensible to a European listener as well.

Nikoghayos Tigranyan's mugams have exceptional artistic value and continue to maintain their role and huge contribution in Armenian music, being included in the repertoire of musicians.

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