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PERFORMING ARTS

(CINEMA, THEATER, TV, RADIO) IN ECO REGION

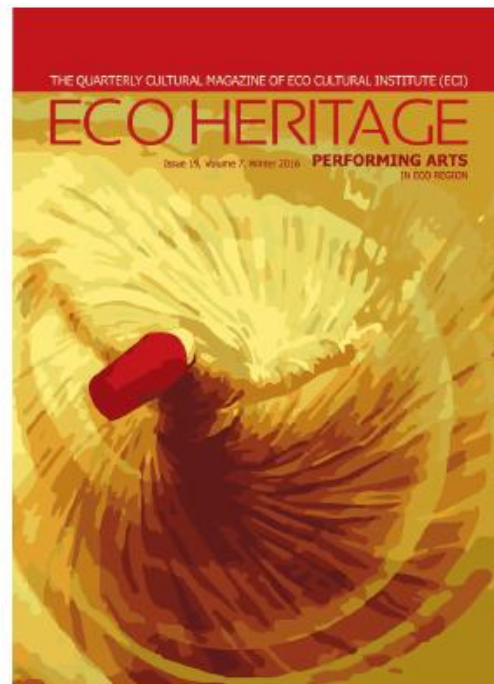




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ECO Cultural Institute
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The ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) is an independent specialized agency within the ECO family which aims at fostering public awareness and preserving the rich cultural heritage of the ECO region as a basis for promoting cultural cooperation between and among its members in the fields of visual arts, performing arts, literature, media, and sports.

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A Whirling Dervish Performing Sama Dance

ECO HERITAGE

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CONTENTS

AFGHANISTAN

- Performance Art in Afghanistan 5
- Post-Taliban Cinema 9

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

- Cinema of Azerbaijan 15
- Dynamics of Development & A Palette of Activity of Television & Radio in Azerbaijan ... 19
- Social Portrait & Aesthetic "Map" of Azerbaijan Theatre 29

IRAN

- The Iranian Cinema, Said & the Unsaid 35
- A Glance at the Achievements of the Iranian Cinema in the Int'l Arena 41
- The Iranian Cinema, A Brief Survey 47
-

KAZAKHSTAN

- Media & Broadcasting in the Republic of Kazakhstan 51

KYRGYZSTAN

- Performing Arts in the Kyrgyz Republic, An Overview 57

PAKISTAN

- Performing Arts in Pakistan 61
- PTV - A Way of Life 69
- Pakistan National Academy of Performing Arts .. 73

TAJIKISTAN

- Tajik Cinema & Theater 77

TURKEY

- Reflection of Turkish Cultural Identity in Theaters 87
- Turkish State Theater 104
- Sufi Whirling Dancing 107

TURKMENISTAN

- Performing Arts in Turkmenistan 113

UZBEKISTAN

- Theatrical Traditions of Uzbekistan 117
- Bright Prospects for Cinema of Uzbekistan 122

EDITORIAL

Theatre has its origin and roots in myth, rituals, culture, ethnic and national customs and traditions. Early societies perceived connections between certain actions performed by the group or leaders in the group and the desired results of the whole society.

These actions moved from habit, to tradition, and then on to ceremony and ritual. The formulation of these actions, and the consequent repetition and rehearsal, broke the ground for theatre. Later, the content and structure of theatre plays were presented, developed and broadened to deal with all kinds of human relations.

The life of a classic text within the environment where it was created is an important principle of the classic system. For theatre, it is also very important to realize old texts within new socio-cultural environments. The great epics in the region need to be staged every year in order not to fall into oblivion.

Since the translated works have found their way to the performing arts, the stage became a meeting place for different cultures and permitted direct dialogue between different national mentalities. The question of how interesting and understandable this dialogue and the translation may be for spectators, promotes mutual understanding

In the line of staging, orientalization has occupied its own proper place, which seemed impossible in the previous criteria system. This tendency combines striving towards the new with an orientation to the classic traditions of spiritual culture, both Western and Eastern.

Foretelling the vitality of this tendency in the 21st century we can state: with a deficit of modern dramaturgy not only in theatre, sharpened with the problem that all existing literature subjects have been already used, it is possible for the intensity of new attempts to grow. Essentially the global art process has already faced the total secondary interpretation of accumulated spiritual values.

Against this background occurs the need to search for cultural dialogue in theatre, cinema and TV. In this case, the art of theatres and cinema have good opportunities for unique experiments synthesizing cultural values of the ECO Region and further introduce them to the world.

However, building such a platform for professional dialogue and exchange between performing arts professionals in these regions is a long-term process. To that end, ECI aims to improve knowledge in the region and hopes also to strengthen cultural connections between the countries in the region.

Given that such knowledge is in perpetual evolution, this periodical is only a starting point, and will highly benefit from any contributions its readers might add to it.

PERFORMANCE ART IN AFGHANISTAN

PROF. ALEM FARHAD

Dean of Fine Arts Faculty, Kabul University



Attan dance, Afghanistan

FOLK DANCES

Folk dances are performed at weddings, engagement ceremonies, when sending young men off to perform their military service, at national and religious festivals, after victories, going to and coming back from the high plateaus and at meetings.

Dances are generally performed in all suitable open areas, but may also be performed in close areas as well. People who enjoy reputation as good folk dancers are especially invited to wedding ceremonies. These are respectable people who have knowledge of that region's music and folk dances. Folk dances owe their rich variety of moves to such people, who happily improvise while performing in order to show off their skills. In this way, dances are successfully passed on to people who may or may not be capable of dancing themselves, especially the young ones. People wear daily or special costumes in line with the reasons behind the particular dance. In Afghanistan, folk dance is invariably accompanied by musical instruments. Folk dances are named

after their creators, geographic regions, or the natural events or stories they relate.

Folk dance may be divided into those that describe the relationship between man and nature, those that deal with rain, mist and rivers, those that describe plants, those that are defined as numbers, those that describe the relationship between man and animals and those that take social events such as fighting, war, love and courtship as their subject matter.

Then there are those that reflect the ceremonies performed when a young man is about to go off to this military service. There are dances about agriculture, the harvest and damaged crops. Other dances describe different occupations, such as shepherds. Men can perform dances that mirror the everyday lives of women.

Then there are dances that describe daily tasks such as baking bread and milking, and others that describe a production procedure such as spinning yarn. Folk dances eventually moved away their natural environment and

became an art form of their own by means of contest and festivals. Arrangements are being made to adapt these dances to the stage.

PERFORMANCE ART

As the name suggests, performance art refers to a type of art presenting a show to the audience along with other artistic disciplines. Performance art links other art elements such as theater, music and visual arts together. Also called 'live art', performance often contains political, social and philosophical concepts and is very close to conceptual art.

Performance art, performing arts and visual arts are somehow related in different European countries. However, some believe that performance is a type of fine art that emerged in America during early 1970s out of combination of different art types.

The world chaotic situation may have been the basis of the establishment of the art of performance and yet, the art is experiencing an

astounding speed in growth and efficiency almost around the world.

FACTORS SHAPING PERFORMANCE ART

Performance is a nontraditional art form often with political or topical themes that typically features a live presentation to an audience or onlookers (as on a street) and draws on such arts as acting, poetry, music, dance, or painting. Therefore, elements of performance include video, sound and performance that derived from popular culture and the daily lives.

While enquiring about the roots of formation of visual and performance arts, I was shocked by the complexity of the concept of art.

That is when an artist named Henry stepped in to help grasp the idea of the art. Prior to theater and performance, Henry had experienced visual arts of painting and sculpture and was of the opinion that business is the driving factor for artists nowadays.



Mehrigan film festival, the first Afghan funded film festival, held on January 13-17 2014 in Kabul by the Academy of Art and Cinema and funded by Mehrigan Foundation

CHARACTERISTICS

The specifications of the art are as follows:

1. Performance art is not a story and does not want to have a story.
2. Performance art makes the audience engaged and brings unexpected reactions to the show.
3. Performance is a type of show that is performed only once. Thus, if it is repeated, it could not be included in the category of performance art anymore.
4. The artist's main medium is his/her body.
5. It is a random piece of work where the audience has no idea what will happen next.

PERFORMANCE IN AFGHANISTAN

During 1970 and in the face of a serious political and socio-economic crisis beset by the country, Art was absent in Afghanistan as a phenomenon and the artists quietly surrendered to the situation.

Afterwards, efforts were made to institutionalize the arts as an important element in the forefront of change.

The social changes of the country have played a great role during the last decade, particularly since 2001 onwards.

In communication with the countries of the world, Afghanistan has experienced a series of developments in contemporary arts.

It has become familiar with new technologies of the World. The poor political, economic and social situation has forced the artists of various fields to make progress and do not fall behind the world of art.

Afghan artists have created numerous works in different areas of modern art, such as painting, calligraphy, and miniatures to name a few.

Also included are areas that do not have a long tradition in Afghanistan's art history like installations, modern sculptures, street art, video- and sound art, as well as modern music, photography and performance art.

A number of young artists are active in the field of performance art, the most outstanding of which was a piece of performance planned by the 27-year-old Kobra Khademi who made an eight-minute walk in Kabul.



8th Annual National Theatre Festival, Kabul.

POST -TALIBAN CINEMA IN AFGHANISTAN

CHALLENGES & HOPES*

For many years, speaking of a concept as Afghan cinema was merely a historical definition, without any roots in the deep layers of socio-cultural life of Afghan people. It lacked the basic connection to the realities of the related society. Obviously, any cultural and artistic creation needs the proper ground and the most essential factor in providing such ground is peace and socio-economic stability.

Years of war with the former Soviet Union and subsequently Afghanistan occupation by Soviet army had a deep impact on the body of Afghanistan social structure in general and it's various cultural fields in particular. The Soviet invasion in 1979 delivered a severe blow to the Afghan film industry by imposing censorship and the production of propaganda films.

Though during 1980s, some positive changes took place and Afghan cinema experienced visible developments. Following the withdrawal of Soviet army, the civil war broke out and with the Taliban forces establishing themselves as the new government of Kabul in 1996, a dark era began. During Taliban's regime the body of cinema along with the whole infrastructure of the country were scorched and destroyed. Movie theaters

were wrecked and almost the art of cinema was eradicated by burning a part of Afghan films archive (though a big part of them were hidden by some of the staff), filmmaking was prohibited strictly and punishment was charged for filmmaking. That was the fiercest experience that Afghanistan cinema faced in its entire history.

With the fall of Taliban in 2001, Afghan society gradually came out of the darkness and silence of decades of war, political and social suppression and censorship. The dawn of a new era has brought many hopes and changes in different areas of culture including media and cinema. Certainly, Afghan cinema is in early phases of finding and establishing its own place on the international stage but the development of media and subsequently cinema has been quite promising considering the relative short period of peace brought to Afghanistan by the new government.

The most significant changes brought to Afghanistan through transitional peace process during the recent years are undoubtedly the relative freedom of speech and free environment for emerging of private radio - television channels and



Sarwa Ruddin at work: restoring historical Afghan films that had to be kept hidden from the Taliban

private productions. In renovation of the country, among all, the trend to give more freedom to media as the fourth pillar of government powers has been visible to some extent, although there were challenges and obstacles on the way of this process.

AFGHAN CINEMA THE HISTORY

Amir Habibullah (1901-1919) introduced film industry in Afghanistan, but in the royal court only. In 1923-24, the first projector - "magic box" or "mageek lantan" (magic lantern) - displayed the first silent film in Paghman to the public. The first Afghan film, "Love and Friendship" was produced in 1946. In 1968, the Afghan Film Organization was established. The history shows that the first idea of using cinema as an entertainment tool and a medium for the elucidation of the government's program to the people in Afghanistan was raised when the progressive king Ghazi Amanullah Khan initiated to build cinema theaters and encouraged production of theatre plays and film making, beginning with participation of the royal family itself in the events as part of his social progression programs in picnic places and newly built cinema theaters in the 1920s.

That is why the early generations of Afghan filmmakers and cinema activists started their work with theatre and then they entered cinema. The most thriving period of cinema during the last century, started in late 1960's, with the founding of the Afghan Film by King Mohammad Zahir Shah, which, as well as making newsreels and documentaries, produced a number of full length films, such as "Escape," "The Criminals" and "Migratory Birds." In the late 1970s, some foreign films including Indian and American films such as *Horsemen* (1971) found their ways into Afghanistan, a good opportunity indeed for the unskilled Afghan cinema activists to gain new experiences and establish further contacts with the outside world.

But the government still continued to supervise cinema; consequently, any challenges or problems that the government faced, directly affected the cinema and film industry. The Afghan Films also triggered the emergence of new film studios in Afghanistan, such as the Nazir Films, Ariana Films and Shafaq Films, whose movies drew applause at film festivals in the former Soviet Union and

Eastern Europe. On the other hand the cultural and political relations with India opened a path for their films to come to Afghanistan.

In these years, many youth showed interest in cinema and a few more films were produced through government supports which are still popular among the Afghan people. The 1980s are known as the golden years of Afghanistan cinema when the government officially recognized the importance of cinema.

On the other hand, a few more Indian and western films reached Afghanistan while at the same time some short term and long term scholarships were offered to Afghans by cinema schools at India, Russia and some eastern European countries. As a result, more films were made in the 1980s and it was hoped that Afghan film industry was going to boost thereafter. However, the Soviet invasion followed by the civil war and the emergence of the disastrous Taliban regime hampered the Afghan cinema from further developments, causing a long gap in the history of film making in Afghanistan.



Horace Shansab at the 6th Annual Tribeca Film Festival



Osama (2003)

POST-TALIBAN FILM INDUSTRY

Since 2000, the cinema of Afghanistan has slowly started to emerge from a lengthy period of silence. Before that, the Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf attracted world attention to Afghanistan with his celebrated movie, 'Kandahar'. It was an attempt to let the world know about a forgotten country. The film brought the cinema of Afghanistan to the Cannes Film Festival for the first time in history. Later Samira Makhmalbaf, Siddiq Barmak, Horace (Hares) Shansab, Yassamin Maleknasr and Abolfazl Jalili made a significant contribution to Dari cinema (cinema of Farsi language) in Afghanistan.

Siddiq Barmak's first Dari/Pashtu film 'Osama' (2003) won several awards at film festivals in Cannes and London. Barmak is also director of the Afghan Children Education Movement (ACEM), an association that promotes literacy, culture and the arts, founded by Iranian film director Mohsen Makhmalbaf. The school trains actors and directors

for the emerging cinema of Afghanistan.

In 2006, Afghanistan joined the 'Central Asian and Southern Caucasus Film Festivals Confederation'. 'Zolykha's Secret' (2007) (original title: 'Raze Zolykha' in Dari) is also among the first feature films of the post-Taliban Afghanistan cinema. Lyrical and tragic, the film has played to full houses at major film festivals. The film's director, Horace Ahmad Shansab, trained young Afghan filmmakers and made the film entirely on location in Afghanistan.

Along with Dari cinema, Pashto cinema is also flourishing in Afghanistan. Several Pashto language films have been made since the fall of the Taliban. Also several Pashto films have been made by foreigners like 'Good Morning Afghanistan' (2003) by Camilla Nielsson. Today, the political situation in Afghanistan reveals a tone unique for this part of the world. The new political establishment demonstrates enthusiasm for the Afghan film industry as well as the determination to support it.

The Ministry of Information and Culture,

although in a critical financial situation itself, provides as much financial aid as possible to local filmmakers. It is not only the backing of the Afghan government that gives momentum to the Afghan cinema; the credit also goes to the Afghan filmmakers themselves who have shown a remarkable maturity while approaching filmmaking in the new sociopolitical setting.

In order to reconstruct the infrastructure of Afghan film industry, Afghan filmmakers have also been receiving supports from foreign producers and investors. For example, a major cinematic event such as the International Documentary and Short Film Festival in Kabul has been recently co-sponsored by Tolo TV channel- Afghanistan's private media channel, the center of art and culture (currently named Afghanistan Cinema Union), Afghan film, Educational University of Kabul and foreign institutes such as Goethe Institute and French Culture center in Afghanistan (who were the primary initiators of this event).

After six years of total repression of any social affair which could be sniffed as sinful manifestation of evil (defined by Taliban forces), it was hard to

imagine the flourishing of any kind of cultural-artistic activities, let alone the cinema, but the further events proved this has been a wrong idea. Life went on and along came a young enthusiastic generation of Afghan youth who were eager to experience and express their experiences.

However, cinema has not become as much popular as TV. In recent years, private TV channels in Afghanistan have flourished rapidly. One can find small radio stations in provincial small towns, which have been established by members of a family even at their own residence. Along with music and some entertaining programs, these radio stations broadcast local news and information which are of particular interest to locals. In these private radio stations, you can find the father of the family as the producer, the son as the voice behind the commercials and the daughter as the radio host. Odd as it may seem, yet it shows the level of people's interest for expressing their views and to have their own share in the new atmosphere after years of war and political suppression.

But cinema is a different story. Indian cinema, as pointed out earlier, has had a deep impact on



A scene from Afghan film 'Kabuli Kid' directed by Barmak Akram (2008)



Siddiq Barmak, Winner of Best Foreign Film, 61st Annual Golden Globe Awards

Afghans' view of movies. The typical Afghan moviegoers are attracted to Bollywood productions and the general opinion regarding the movie theater is a place for sheer entertainment; they do not consider it as a strong cultural medium for representation of Afghan people on the international level. In fact few audiences who go to the theaters are familiar with such idea; their ideal movies are Hollywood trash movies or Indian movies which involved a lot of parties, singing and dancing.

Participation of women in cinema, whether as the audience or as one of the crew members in a film production, has been a major problem since 1990's because theaters are not considered proper places for ladies to go or spend time. Working in crew is another issue, because it involves working of men and women together which has not been an acceptable issue in some parts of the country.

Many Afghan filmmakers say proudly that they are everything rolled into one – screenwriter, director, cameraman, editor, and producer. What is lacking

is a film school that teaches the fundamentals. But the search for identity and raising their own voices has made many Afghan youth to form their own experimental way of expression. Today there are young Afghan filmmakers inside the Afghanistan who do not have an academic cinematic background but their enthusiasm and passion inspires them to continue their efforts and establish their unique cinematic language.

Moreover, immigration of Afghans during more than 2 decades familiarized Afghan artists and filmmakers with the modern techniques of this art and provided the ground for this young generation to learn the modern techniques in cinema and theater. The role and activity of different Afghan cultural associations in Iran and their cooperation in various theaters and artistic events in this country is a sample of the formation of a new generation of young Afghan cinematographers.

* Compiled from relevant sources on the subject by Mitra Lotfi, M.A. Art Studies, Tarbiat Modarres University

CINEMA OF AZERBAIJAN

YUSIF SHEYKHOV

Cinema Historian, Republic of Azerbaijan

The article is the courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Tehran



'Arshin mal alan' directed by M. Leshenko, R. Tahmasib, 1945

Azerbaijan is one of the few countries with a film-making history dating back to the 19th century. The Baku photographer, A. Mishon, shot documentary footage of several local scenes and a short humorous film, and screened them for audience on 2 August 1898, marking this date as the beginning of the art of cinema in Azerbaijan which is celebrated every year by the Presidential decree.

At the beginning of the last century, when the oil boom was at its height, a number of well-known foreign film companies (Pathé, Pirone, Filma, etc.) made feature films in Azerbaijan. "In the Kingdom of Oil and Millions", based on I. Musabekov's novel and starring the outstanding Azerbaijani actor, G. Arablinsky, was an important feature film in the history of the national cinema.

The Soviets regarded cinema as vital to the ideological education of the proletariat, and so all aspects of film-making were state-controlled. The state itself had firm views on what the cinema should be doing – and these dictated the thematic and ideological content of all the films produced.

The Photo and Film Organization of Azerbaijan (PFOA) was established in 1923. The PFOA was involved in nationalization and integration of photo agencies, cinemas and movie distribution offices, owned by individual businessmen. The PFOA was at that time also operating the cinemas in Baku and the two-part "The Maiden Tower Legend" was screened in 1924. The film producers highlighted Eastern exotics in this ethnography-oriented movie.

In 1925, PFOA initiated the establishment of a studio, under its own, for training film directors and actors in Azerbaijan. This is the studio where J. Jabbarly, M. Mikayilov, A. Tahirov, A.M.Sherifzade and others studied.

Later on, the PFOA was known as "Azdovletkino" (1926-1930), "Azerkino" (1930-1933), Azfilm (1933), Azerdovletsenayesi (1934), Azerfilm (1935-1940) and the Baku Film Studio (1941-1959). It was named Azerbaijanfilm studio after J. Jabbarly in 1961.

On a certain level, however, national cinema could assert itself, and there were some masters, with

their own creative style, who managed to leave a distinctive mark on it. For example, "The cloth peddler" ("Arshin mal alan"), "If not that one, this one" ("O olmasin, bu olsun") became "cult" films.

The next generation of film directors marked new trends in the 1960-1980s. New heroes appeared on the scene, aiming to perceive the world in a new way. They were in a constant process of searching for their proper place, sometimes succeeding in achieving this goal, sometimes failing. The poetic metaphorical cinema of the '60s and '70s, which involved poetic expression and fable-like narration, was replaced by prosaic cinema, due to the realistic nature of the issues on which the directors of the "new wave" tried to focus.

Directors of various generations who considered the moral and ethical state of society, the relationship between society and the individual, torn relations, human choice and society included Hasan Seidbeyli, Tofiq Tagizadeh, Shamil Mahmudbeyov, Huseyn Seyidzadeh, Eldar Guliyev, Rasim Ojagov, Oktay Mirgasimov.

Towards the end of the Soviet era, Azerbaijanfilm, the country's only studio, was producing 7 or 8 films a year, commissioned by the State Cinema and the Central Soviet Television Service. Its annual output also included 20-25 documentaries and 2-3 animated films. From the earliest days, some 350 full-length features, over 150 short features, over 2000 documentaries and some 100 animated films were made in the country.

Previously, the state subsidized the purchase of

foreign films for screening in cinemas throughout the USSR. It also covered the cost of building, repairing and equipping cinemas, and maintained the regional cinema network.

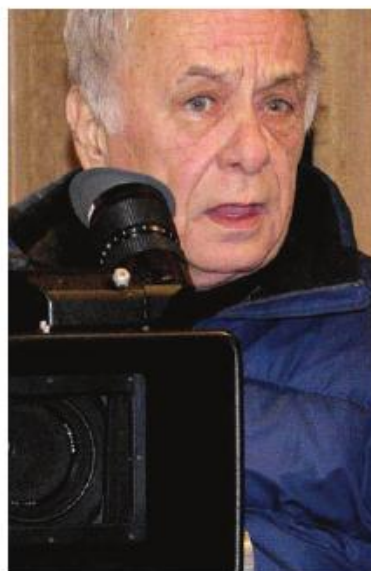
In 1991, the political and social life of Azerbaijan changed radically when film-makers and cinemas were expected to cover their own costs.

In 1990-1993, film production, which is a hugely costly business, lost all the backing it previously received from the state as its only customer for feature, documentary and animated films of the time.

Around the same time, various private structures, with money to invest in film-making, started to appear. In the early 1990s, about 20 private studios – headed by directors who were setting out to make films on their own expenditure – came into being. Rapid inflation in the first half of the decade quickly made a number of private banks, investment companies, etc. very rich, and some of them decided to invest in film production. With the help of these funds, 4-5 films were produced annually in the early nineties. Fifteen full-length feature films were made on private money between 1991 and 1993. Between 1994 and 1997, there were only 8. Since 1998, there have been none.

Currently, we are noticing the revival of the private cinema market. In 2015, 12-14 low-budget, full-length films were produced. This year even more films are in the production process.

New Azerbaijan Cinema focuses on searching for national identity on many levels – national,



Eldar Guliyev



Oktay Mirgasimov



Eelcin Musaoglu



Ayaz Salaev

historical and individual – raising the fundamental questions to perceive the modern world. Directly or indirectly, these questions are present in the majority of films: a reaction to the political and social cataclysms that Azerbaijan experienced during recent years in the films of Vagif Mustafayev, Huseyn Mehdiyev, Ayaz Salayev, Yaver Rzayev, Elchin Musaoglu, Asif Rustamov, Elkhon Jafarov etc.

Practically, the only source of funding in Azerbaijan today is the state, which commissions films from the state studios: features from Azerbaijanfilm, documentaries from Salname and Yaddash, animated films from Azanfilm, Debut, etc.

Between 2008 and 2016, the state spent approximately \$45,3 billion a year on 4-5 full-length features, 20-22 documentaries, 2-3 animated film, 7-10 short feature films.

The Azerbaijani film industry may not have made many films in recent years, but it has made its mark internationally. In the last 5-6 years, a number of Azerbaijani films have been screened and won prizes (including first prizes) at various international festivals. This is a tribute to the directors' professional skills, and an acknowledgement that they – and their country – have something new to offer.

The Azerbaijani film industry has the professionals it needs to succeed – specialists, who trained as directors or scriptwriters at VGIK in Russia and other countries.

Training with main specialisms is also available in Azerbaijan itself. The Baku University of Culture and the Arts runs courses for directors, cameramen, scriptwriters, set-designers, actors, etc

Special attention is given to the joint movie production. Shooting of the feature and documentary films together with Russia, Turkey, Germany, Italy, France and others are in process with plans to broaden this activity.

Having peaked in 1985 (66.1 million), cinema attendance in Azerbaijan declined in the years after that. The first reason for this is that films and funds are no longer supplied by Moscow. The second is that state subsidies for the construction, maintenance, repair and modernization of cinemas have dried up. Stationary and mobile cinematographs have been stopping functioning – chiefly in the provinces.

It is worth noting that attendance figures were not always accurate under the Soviets. Usually, they were too high: for example, anyone who sat through two screenings was counted twice, and the same applied to double-feature programs. Attendance figures for Western films were widely conflated with those for Soviet films (audience figures for home-produced or Soviet films were a vital ideological parameter, and were used both to justify awards and to encourage cinema workers, all the way up from humble technicians to studio bosses). Once the need to "massage" the figures was removed, they obviously fell – another reason for the statistical "collapse".

At the moment, the audience is getting bigger as the entrepreneurs are paying great attention to the movie industry. There are more than 50 screens equipped with digital projection equipment most of which started to function during last 3-5 years. The process of the increasing the cinema theaters network keeps on proceeding.

One aspect of cinema, which has no commercial potential, but is important solely from the film heritage standpoint, is the acquisition and storage of significant home-produced and foreign films. In 1993, the Government set up the State Film Archive for this purpose, giving it premises and a budget of its own. One of only two film archives in former Soviet countries, it joined the International Federation of Film Archives in 2000. New storage building with the required technology for the restoration and storing of the films was build for the State Film Fund.

"Nizami", one of the oldest cinemas of the country, opened its doors for the visitors in 2011 again after substantial reconstruction within the framework of the "State Program on Development of the cinema of Azerbaijan in 2008-2018". It has been given the status of Cinema Centre.

The Cinema Act was passed by the Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1998. It guarantees state support for the national film industry, protects the creative freedom and copyright of film-makers, and regulates various other matters.

The Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan ratified the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production in 1999.

DYNAMICS OF DEVELOPMENT & A PALETTE OF ACTIVITY OF TELEVISION & RADIO IN AZERBAIJAN

PROF. DR.GAFAR JABIYEV,

Deputy Chairman, National Television and Radio Council of Azerbaijan

The article is the courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Tehran



After Azerbaijan restored its state independence at the end of the 20th century the great success has been achieved in development of democracy and providing freedom of speech and expression. The pluralism of opinions and freedom of speech at the high level have found its reflection in the new Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted in 1995.

Also elimination of censorship by the national leader Heydar Aliyev in 1998 has played the defining role in ensuring freedom of speech and information in the country. Narrating about importance of cancellation of censorship, the great leader Heydar Aliyev stated: "We have abolished censorship, have completely provided freedom of speech and the press defined in the Constitution, and have created great opportunities for media.

The press in Azerbaijan is, actually, free and independent. And it means that there are freedom of speech and freedom of opinions." So, favorable conditions for fast development of the free speech, independent media, and also, systems of television and radio broadcasting have been created.

Naturally, under such conditions, an important issue like legal state regulation of television and radio broadcasting in the country has arisen for dynamic and successful development of this sphere.

For this purpose, in 2002 the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Television and Radio Broadcasting" was adopted to implement the state policy in the sphere of television and radio broadcasting and the National Television and Radio Council was established. The course established by the great leader Heydar Aliyev has been continued and developed by the President Ilham Aliyev and real guarantees for achievement of great success in new conditions have been provided.

As a result, as well as in other areas, new quantitative and qualitative changes have been achieved in the sphere of television and radio broadcasting. Currently there are 11 national, 14 regional, 1 satellite, 1 foreign television broadcasters, 17 cable network and 13 IP-television broadcasters in Azerbaijan. Besides, 14 national and 3 regional radios are daily on

air. Public television (ITV) and radio (ICTIMAI), as well as 4 state-run broadcasters (AZTV, SPORT, CULTURE, CBC Sport) and 1 radio station (REPUBLIC) are financed from state budget. We would like to remind that only for regular activity of the Azerbaijani State Television, 50 million manats (appr. 33 million US \$) in average are allocated annually from the state budget, keeping at the same time, its right for revenue from advertisements. Apparently, today, there are state, public and private broadcasters in Azerbaijan. And during the period when Azerbaijan was in Soviet Union, there were only 1 state television and 1 radio channels.

In Azerbaijan, radio was launched in 1926, and television in 1956. Naturally existence of alternative broadcasters, private or public channels was at that time impossible.

Along with it, for the sake of justice, it should be noted that during the Soviet Union, the Azerbaijan television and radio have played a significant role in preservation and promotion of national culture, language and art.

Creation of Public Television of Azerbaijan on

November 5, 2004 with the presidential decree on introduction of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Public Television and Radio Broadcasting" became expression of desire of the people and public of Azerbaijan.

Naturally, the Azerbaijani State, with signing of the document on creation of such a democratic institute, has shown the commitment to freedom of speech and the press, to creation of pluralism. Creation of Public Television, one of the main attributes of democratic society, was based, first of all, on positive world practice in this sphere.

Creation of Public channel, its organization, the broadcasting principles and also, mechanisms of public control over it have been reflected in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Public Television and Radio Broadcasting".

According to this law, for the purpose of ensuring interests of all social groups the Broadcasting Council consisting of representatives of Confederation of Trade Unions of Azerbaijan, National Academy of Sciences, Press Council, Council of Businessmen, youth and women's organizations, the sports organizations, religious



'If not these ones, that one', directed by Huseyn Seyidzadeh, 1956

faiths and the creative organizations is created.

Members of Broadcasting Council are approved on an alternative basis by parliament of Azerbaijan after serious discussions. Apparently, members of Broadcasting Council represent various public organizations and different sectors of society.

As a result, public control over public broadcasting in the country is provided as much as possible. Taking into account the facts that members of Broadcasting Council are exposed to rotation, new public organizations are involved in representation in Council, the picture about transparency and democratic character of broadcasting policy of the country will become more distinct.

In modern times, financing of the television and radio companies which are engaged in public broadcasting is one of fundamental conditions. In different countries of the world, there are different attitudes to this issue. In Azerbaijan, the issue of financing of public television and radio is also regulated by law and submission of public broadcasting to commercial interests is prevented. Azerbaijan is one the few countries in the world,

where public television and radio are fully financed by state budget.

In the sphere of television and radio broadcasting of Azerbaijan, special attention is being paid to the issue of introduction of the modern world standards. In this sense, it is possible to emphasize that important works are performed in transition to digital broadcasting in Azerbaijan.

At the Regional Radio communication Conference held by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in May 2006 in Geneva, the relevant decisions in connection with transition to digital broadcasting have been adopted and the agreement between the region countries on completion of transition to digital broadcasting by summer of 2015 has been achieved.

In 2004, digital broadcasting in test regime has been launched in Azerbaijan. On 10 February, 2011, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan by its Decision No.26 approved a "Program of Introduction and Development of Digital Television Broadcasting system in DVB-T standard on the territory of the Republic of



A view of Baku with 'Baku Flame Towers' on the left



Azerbaijan". According to the Decision of National Television and Radio Council adopted on 22 December, 2011, irrespective of organizational-legal form, all television programmes which is being transmitted by terrestrial means in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan starting from 22 December 2011 are broadcasted simultaneously in analogue and digital platform using DVB-T standards. For more than 3 years, analogue and digital broadcasting are carried out simultaneously.

Now digital broadcasting is fully covering the population of the republic. Obviously, Azerbaijan is in leading positions among CIS countries in the sphere of transition to digital broadcasting.

Launching of the national satellite "Azerspace" has to be regarded as one of the important reasons of development of television and radio broadcasting in the country.

Besides that, technical equipment and provision of modern technologies of television and radio broadcasters of Azerbaijan are up to the highest

standards. There are many new broadcasting centers, studios and pavilions that meet international standards in our country. Especially, the administrative office building of private broadcaster KHAZAR TV which is recently put into operation is considered as the most modern and well-equipped television center in the South Caucasus.

Television and radio broadcasting companies in regions of the country have technical equipments and buildings for conducting high-quality broadcasting, too.

By the way, it should be noted that existence of regional channels are important from the point of view of providing media coverage of economic and social-cultural life of regions.

Improvement according to the modern international standards of legislative base of media, including television and radio broadcasting as one of basic elements of process of creation of the democratic constitutional state and civil society has yielded favorable results from the point of view



Khazar Media Center

of legal regulation of this sphere. In this context, the adopted amendments in the legislation and the regulations adopted by National Television and Radio Council in recent years are very important. For the purpose of improvement of the legislation, by an initiative of National Television and Radio Council, additions and amendments have been made to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Television and Radio Broadcasting".

Some regulations in the sphere of television and radio broadcasting have been adopted by National Television and Radio Council and these regulations have been included to State Register. During implementation of a state policy and activity of regulation in the sphere of television and radio broadcasting of the country the international practice is constantly considered.

In this sense, being a governing regulating body in the relevant sphere, the National Television and Radio Council constantly studies the international practice in the sphere of television and radio broadcasting and establishes the business

cooperation with regulating authorities of other states. The cooperation with regulatory authorities of Turkey, Georgia, Ukraine and other Western countries has been established and study business trips of Council employees to these countries have been carried out.

National Television and Radio Council has established active cooperation with international and regional bodies in this sphere and participated in international events. Since 2007, National Television and Radio Council is a member of EPRA – European Platform of Regulatory Authorities, which consists of 57 members from 52 countries. The representatives of relevant bodies of Turkey and Georgia have carried out study visits to Azerbaijan many times.

On April 7, 2007, "The Protocol of Cooperation" between Radio and Television Supreme Council of the Republic of Turkey and National Television and Radio Council of Azerbaijan was signed.

On June 30, 2008, BRAF – the Regulating

Authorities Forum of the Member States of the Organization of Black Sea countries Economic Cooperation and on November 17, 2011, IBRAF – the Regulating Authorities Forum of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was founded. National Television and Radio Council is a member of both forums.

Today, like around the world, in Azerbaijan television and radio activity has turned into one of the most favorable sectors of the business. Television and radio broadcasting companies of Azerbaijan are important subjects of business and taxpayers.

However, along with it, as well as around the world, in Azerbaijan serious social responsibility is conferred on television and radio broadcasting companies. These issues have found reflection in broadcasting legislation of the country.

According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Television and Radio Broadcasting", in preparation of programs for broadcasting the preference has to be given to educational, literacy and cultural issues, and also it is necessary to avoid from filling air only with commercial, information or other alike programs. So, according to requirements of the legislation, in their activity the Azerbaijani broadcasters pay special attention

to questions of literacy, including to presentation and promotion of historical and cultural heritage of our people.

In spite of the fact that it concerns all broadcasters irrespective of their form of ownership and legal form, in reality, the huge burden falls on broadcasters whose financing is carried out at the state budget.

Naturally, it would be naive to expect in this direction of the maximum results from private broadcasters. Because they are the private organizations, in most cases, they have to think only of benefit. In other words, maneuvering in the environment of the competition, they have to prepare only those programs which bring high ratings.

This moment increases a role and the responsibility of the broadcasters financed at the state budget - AZTV, CULTURE, SPORT, and in particular, ITV in preservation and promotion of cultural heritage of the people. These television channels using the resources allocated from the state have an opportunity to create various television projects, without thinking of creation only for rating and entertaining programs which are means of achievement of the maximum material benefit for payment of salaries and taxes.



'Interrogation', directed by Resim Ojagov, 1979

It is very important to note that the state keeps in constant attention the issue of promotion of national - cultural heritage and values of the people, takes necessary steps for prevention of the available and possible problems in this sphere.

For example, after declaration of the state independence of Azerbaijan, in the country, new television channels have started functioning. Naturally, sharp increase of number of television channels in the country, where during the 70 years of existence of the Soviet Union there was only one TV channel, has led to emergence of certain problems, including demonstration of low level TV series/sopa operas. In 2012-2013, the president of the country allocated 15 million dollars for production of national TV series. As a result, dozens of interesting local TV series has been produced.

The monitoring carried out by National Television and Radio Council show that broadcasters financed at the state budget are allocating more room in their program grid to the presentation and promotion of both national and world cultural heritage.

Speaking about the role of TV channels in this sphere, it should be noted that the work of the Azerbaijani State Television is some kind of standard for others. It is possible to list some such projects of the Azerbaijani Television. For example, it should be noted especially one of such projects - Mugham's Competition which has aired since 2005.

During the 1st Mugham Competition carried out by Azerbaijan State Television, initiated by the Foundation of Friends of Azerbaijan Culture, supported by Heydar Aliyev Foundation and with assistance of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the jury, consisting of professional performers of a mugham listened to performances of about 500 gifted young people from Baku and other regions of the country, more than 100 hours of broadcasting time have been allocated for performances of 20 best performers and for commenting them.

The Mugham Competitions in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015 having increased the territory of coverage have received the international status. It is necessary to remind that Mugham Competitions, each of which on average lasted 100 hours were

broadcasted lively on AZTV and CULTURE channels and has collected with great success a very wide audience.

In promotion of national moral values, it should be noted especially a role of the CULTURE channel created in 2010. Apparently from the name, the main mission of the channel envisage informing the world community about ancient and rich culture of Azerbaijan, and also, promoting pearls of world culture in Azerbaijan, thereby shaping art and esthetic taste of the younger generation. CULTURE channel has an exclusive right to broadcast all cultural events organized in the country.

Now CULTURE channel, with program grid consisting of 26 programs, broadcasts 12-15 hours daily. But in near future, it is expected to reach broadcasting time to 24 hours daily. The programs of the channel that promote cultural heritage of the people covers following directions: review of literary and art creative processes, the analysis of traditional and current trends in the world literature, illumination of life and creativity of outstanding historic, cultural and art figures, the past, the present and the future of other branches of theater, cinema and art, language and religion, philosophical problems, programs about classic and national music, illumination of samples of historical - cultural heritage, etc.

In the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Public Television and Radio Broadcasting", it is emphasized that public channel shall pay special attention to the presentation and promotion of national, as well as world cultural heritage. In other words, public channel is an educational channel that preserves national-cultural and universal values and serves for their development. Preservation of performances, feature, animation films and documentaries, as well as series that produced on the basis of works of the Azerbaijani and world authors, works of art, video registered important historical and cultural events is considered a direct duty of the public broadcaster. Besides that, according to the legislation the task of translation into Azerbaijani and presentation of the best feature and animation films, documentaries made in other countries also imposed on public broadcaster. Finally, programs of public broadcaster shall reflect all diversity of national-moral values, national customs and traditions, culture and fine arts. At present, public television channel ITV,

according to its philosophy, is implementing many projects in cultural-educational sphere.

These projects cover following directions: detailed information about the history of national and world culture; programs about life and creativity of outstanding representatives of the Azerbaijani and world culture and art; programs and documentaries on the history of the country and world, and also the historic figures; programs devoted to the folklore samples, historical and cultural features of regions where ethnic minorities live; programs on religious education, and also national and religious tolerance as an important element of historical and cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people; display of outstanding samples of national and world cinema and music, etc.

It should be added that by the order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the year 2016 is declared as the year of multiculturalism. Naturally, in this context, duties and cares of the public broadcaster have even more increased. Since its creation in 2006, the production unit CARCIFILM of the public broadcaster has produced more than 600 feature films and historical documentaries.

Public channel from time to time airs feature films about life, traditions of the small nations, about historical monuments, about the holidays Nowruz and New Year and also, about life and creativity of the famous figures.

Azerbaijan is a country with ancient history and rich cultural heritage. The history of very first settlements of mankind in the territory of Azerbaijan counts 2-2.5 million years. During the recent years, television channels of the country carry out very serious educational activity presenting and agitating this history, monuments, burials - keepers of this history, archaeological works carried-out on them as well as numerous material and spiritual samples found there. For example, the historical documentary series "Secrets of Azerbaijan" produced by ATV channel could inform wide audience on dozens of the ancient cities, towers, fortresses and other historical monuments. The 24-episode series "Azerbaijani Fortresses", the 17-episode series "Baku Villas", 9- episode series "Azerbaijani Carpets" produced by the LEADER TV channel can be considered as samples of activity in the field of the presentation and promotion of cultural heritage.



'The 40th Door', directed and co-produced by Elcin Musaoglu, 2009

The programs such as "Hello to the Past" and "Independence" broadcasted on ANS TV, "Door of Miracle", "Nostalgia" and "Banu" broadcasted on SPACE TV, "Naneli", "People's Star", "Clear Voice" and "Baku Time" broadcasted on ATV, "Friend", "Our heart world" and "Set of traditions" broadcasted on KHAZAR TV and so on, play a significant role in presentation and promotion of national and world historical-cultural heritage.

REGION TV channel, which begun its activity recently, has also made significant contribution to the promotion and presentation of cultural heritage. As the name suggest, the channel allocates much of its broadcasting time to the bringing to the public the cultural heritage of the region as well as their creators in different regions of Azerbaijan, remote districts, towns and villages.

It should be pointed out that regional television channels from different parts of the country are actively participating in the field of presentation and promotion of cultural heritage. In this context, it is necessary to note the activity of local channels broadcasted in Khacmaz, Sheki, Yevlakh, Lenkeran, Gandja, Sumgait and Tovuz cities.

As mentioned, many efforts have been made by television and radio broadcasters towards the promotion of cultural heritage in recent years. The good job being done by television and radio is not only a creative activity, but is also a work of citizenship and patriotism.

The television and radio broadcasting in Azerbaijan is developing dynamically today. The quality and quantity indicators clearly show the trend of this development. The Azerbaijani State is considering as a priority of its duties the development of television and radio broadcasting in the country and supporting this field at maximum level.



Samil Mahmudbeyov & Rasim Ismayilov

SOCIAL PORTRAIT & AESTHETIC "MAP" OF AZERBAIJAN THEATRE

AYDIN TALIBZADEH

Theatre Critic & Professor

The article is the courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Tehran

Azerbaijan is a country located in southern-east of Caucasus, on the coast of Caspian Sea, combining 9 conditions of climatic zones; a country of oil, gas, tea, grape, carpet, great ethnic music and jazz and most importantly, it is a multicultural country.

There has been historical development trends, tendencies of theatre and scenery of contemporary theatre process which will be discussed in the frame of an aesthetic "map".

Development of theatre in Azerbaijani culture begins with the theatrical elements of open-air folk performances, the Zorkhana games performed by Pehlevans (wrestlers and weightlifters), folk sketches, religious ceremonies and rites, from Ashyks (Azerbaijan folk poets and singers) playing the Saz (an Azerbaijani long-necked lute) and narrating folk epics, to traditional mystic plays, mythology and dervish dances. However, professional theatre only became part of institutional culture at the end of the 19th century.

After 20 years of lapse following the creation of a dramaturgy that could be classified as "national" by its artistic and aesthetic parameters, if not by its form, a group of Azerbaijani intellectuals prepared an amateur performance of the comedy "The Vizier of the Lenkaran's Khan" by Mirzah Fatali Akhund-Zadeh in 1873. This was in the eve of "Novruz" holiday. Therefore, 10th of March is celebrated as the day of national Azerbaijan theatre.

From 1873 until the 1920s, the Azerbaijani theatre was the theatre of strong passions - "theatre of hot-tempered heroes" which was created by a few amateurs combining of rough severity and shy naturalism. In 1883, the first permanent establishment known locally as "the Taghiyev's Theatre" opened in Baku. This was a period of large-scale development in the oil industry, the shaping of the national bourgeoisie and increasing economic interest from the West and Russia in this eastern city.

In the first stage of development, this theatre has nothing to do with the state: it survived only at the expense of actors themselves, box office and donations. Finally, after 46 years from the date of the first performance, in October 1919, the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan announced the opening of the State Theatre. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan theatre was reaching the point of

balance between the borders of amateur and professional art. It started forming as a primitive romanticism, intuition and passion theatre.

From 1920, following the intervention of the Bolshevik Red Army into Azerbaijan, a process dynamic Sovietization of the European-type theatre began. During 1920 to 1990s, Azerbaijan theatre benefited from the professional Russian theatre traditions, took principles of Stanislavsky system as a priority of creative process and theatre education. Azerbaijan Soviet theatre was formed as monumental theatre, inclined towards Baroque style in terms of distribution of sound and emotion, turned into pathos and pathetic theatre, always imported contemporary theatre tendency from leading Moscow theatres, even in some cases was engaged in direct imitation of performances. Azerbaijan theatre has formed itself in philosophical and poetic embodiment of social and moral themes, permanently performing social-ideological orders of government and only after 60s tried to re-establish itself in existential conflict direction.

To summarize, formation and development of Azerbaijani theatre was in accordance with Russian theatre model during 1920-90. In this model, theatre absolutely depended on government, government budget and subsidies for culture.

After regaining its independence in 1991, Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, remaining faithful to this tradition, patronized Azerbaijan theatre and funded it from the budget. Today, there are 26 State Theatres in the country, 11 of which are drama theatres.

There is an officially registered (2013) independent "Oda" Theatre ("room theatre"), that is active on a self-financing principle. In terms of classification, it can be considered as amateur vanguard-basement theatre type. "Oda" in its "Ado" variant tries also conducts interactive performances and tends to primitive version of epatage of western contemporary underground.

Azerbaijan theatre has neither donors nor sponsors. Of course, sometimes local amateur play writers bring sponsors along with them through providing their plays to the theatre. Usually, these sponsors are relatives or friends of playwright and have no specific goals. Then the theatres decide whether to work with the playwright or not.



Lack of independent theatres in Azerbaijan, absence of theatre fundraising system is explained with the fact that theatre is out of audience interest. Theatre does not wish to or cannot speak the language that the nation understands; the mass does not understand or does not want to understand the language that the theatre speaks. Although Azerbaijan government doesn't decrease efforts in order to keep the theatre alive.

In 2007, Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed a decree "On the development of the Azerbaijani art of theatre". Two years later, the President also signed the "State Program on the Azerbaijani Theatre in 2009-2019". I can't even remember whether presidents ever have signed such decrees in the history of world theatre or not! I think, this measure taken by Azerbaijan President is an extraordinary one taken in the history of culture!

To make it brief, we can say that just after signing of such decrees, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has intensified projects on theatres. All state theatre buildings are being reconstructed

according to European standards. Material and technical base of theatres have improved, books about theatre art are published by the Ministry, national theatre festivals are being held and also logos of International Puppet Theatre Festival as well as Baku International Theatre Conference are being added to the "theatre map" of Baku with an interval of 2 years.

Despite of all efforts in 90s, Azerbaijan theatre could neither realize itself nor turn into the instrument of national identification. In these years, State "Yugh" Theatre performed as vanguard of national theatre culture, tried to synthesize national art tradition with dervish dances in epic theatre parameters using post-modernist tendencies and attracted the attention of art elites, but couldn't open up for a wide range of audiences and lived despite the inertia of rich experience.

In 2000s, Azerbaijani theatre had difficulties to find the ways of active interaction with audience due to some ongoing processes in the republic: neither could it develop aesthetic principles of old soviet theatre nor Modern Europe theatre models.



Even it couldn't develop its own program based on its traditions. Meanwhile, plays of Elchin Efendiyev and Ali Amirli, some absurd comedy and comic adventures of real life provided great opportunity for the formation of a more relevant theatre performance for the audience.

During 2005-2015, till the aggravation of Syria crisis in political and economic view of the world, the Ministry of tourism has up active relations with theatres of Western Europe and CIS countries, international theatre organization such as UNIMA, ASSITEJ, IFTR, ITI and tries to revive theatre using assistance of external specialists, holding international theatre festivals and launching pilot programs.

This resulted in that Azerbaijan theatre artists saw harvest of productive creative process in the context of pure professional interests. For example, Azerbaijan State Theatre of Young Spectators, with a troupe of 96 actors that are mostly youths who want to study the core of the troupe, to change and renew it. Theatre prefers stage realism in the performances prepared for adults but uses

the aesthetic of fairy tales and hyperbola magic suitable for children. The theatre staff members are open to any growth of professional skills, any projects purely related to art.

There are two performances in the repertory of Azerbaijan State Theatre of Young Spectators towards which no one can remain indifferent so they are often invited to festivals in the CIS countries. One of them is "I have come, girls" spectacle staged by the head director of the theatre Behram Osmanov (2013) based on "War" play by Lars Noren. The director has an important statement: "If the house of God is forgotten, it turns into a garage. Then anything can happen and wars become inevitable".

The other successful spectacle appeared as a result of projects realized by Ministry of Culture and Tourism and The British Council. On this project, Jan Willem van den Bosch was invited from Great Britain to stage trilogy of Irish playwright-Martin McDonagh- The Leenane Trilogy in 2014. The spectacle was very attractive due to stage arrangement, light, clothing texture balance and

fully imitated Irish village life in authentic domestic format. Director staged each performance according to the idea "all social aggressions are product of intra-family egoism and fascism".

However, historically, Azerbaijan State Academic Drama Theatre, always considered as a central theatre determining the theatre fashion in the republic, which is still true today. Today, the theatre that was once defined as word, declamation, passion and repertory theatre cannot exactly specify the functions, aim and the audience segment for which it is working. Therefore, most of the plays on the theme of historical problems of national identification (rarely deconstruction characterized) take place in the repertory.

Theatre also tries to prepare and present psychological and intellectual drama and also comedy for the audience. The most successful of such stage performances is "Shakespeare" spectacle staged by Moldavian director, Petru Vutcarau in 2014 based on Elchin Efendiyev's cognominal. The play was even staged in London Vanguard Theatre.

The youngest and most dynamic spectacle of 2015 (maybe the last 10 years') in the repertory of Azerbaijan State Academic Drama Theatre is "Monsieur Ibrahim and the Flowers of the Koran" which was staged by Arshad Alekperov based on cognominal composition of Eric Emmanuel Schmitt, that tuned on 60s mood, created an interesting "bicycle and flowers" story.

Azerbaijan State Pantomime Theatre is representative of physical theater in Azerbaijan that was born out of the synergy of clowning, dance and physical theatre.

Azerbaijan State Puppet Theatre usually uses sprinkles puppets in its spectacles. Mostly puppets are played by rods. Actors walk together with the puppets and don't hide under the folding screen.

Azerbaijan State Opera and Ballet Theatre had its wonderful building since 1910 according the highest standards of that particular time and was constructed in order to bring the best European Opera singers and traditions to Azerbaijan.



The genius composers of Azerbaijan, U. Hajibeyli and M. Maqomayev created an absolutely new genre- mugham- opera. Hajibeyli's "Leyli and Majnun" mugham- opera which is still being played in different new modifications, was written in 1908 and based on cognominal poem of classical poet of XVI century, M. Fuzuli.

Azerbaijan composers- Q. Qarayev, F. Amirov, A. Malikov's "The path of thunder" and "Seven beauties", "Thousand and one nights" and "The love's legend" ballets were staged on the most prestigious opera theatres of the world. Today, Azerbaijan State Opera and Ballet Theatre actively invites famous opera and ballet soloists and also choreographers.

Azerbaijan State Musical Theatre dates back to early XX century. The film version (1945) of the first Azerbaijan operetta- "Arshin mal alan", written by U. Hajibeyli in 1913, travelled all Europe and USA. Today, the spectacles are prepared in two languages of Russian and Azerbaijani.

The local classical compositions are the most successful theatre plays. Historically, the troupe of the theatre was formed not as operetta, but as a musical comedy theatre.

Theatre life in Baku is centralized and the fashion of other village theatres is determined specially from here. If you ask the opinion of a leading theatre critic, he would tell you that if theatres are left to self-financing, many of them will be facing the threat of closing. But I hope that Azerbaijan State will never give up the theatre.



Ali Amirli- playwright

*Azer Pasha Nemet- Director of
National Drama theatre*

*Behram Osmanov-Director of
Theatre of Young Spectators*

Elchin Efendiyev- Playwright

THE IRANIAN CINEMA: SAID & THE UNSAID

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Persian-English Translation: Parisa Firouzkouhi



Dariush Mehrjoui's prize-winning "The Cow"
(original title: *Gav*)

On the subject of the Iranian cinema as well as its national and international significance, much have been said and written. The history of cinema and the motion picture industry in Iran practically begins with that of its counterpart in the America and Europe and experienced different phases of life: from that of a local, commercial cinema to a 'different' or intellectual one, reaping critical acclaim at international forums.

All throughout the vicissitudes of the history of its development, the influence of politics over the Iranian cinema, or better say its interaction with governments, stands out the most. In other words, a review of political history of the Iranian cinema may serve as the main lead to a better

understanding of this art-industry within the intellectual and cultural aura of the country.

In the paper ahead, effort has been made to study such interaction through a brief study of the history of Iranian cinema as well as its plus and minus points.

As previously stated, right after the invention of cinematograph in Europe, the new born technology made its way to Iran with a bit delay and served similar purposes. Shooting snapshots of everyday lives of people as well as the newsreel footages of the ongoing political developments and events were the only functions of cinema; yet these functions alone, appeared so enchanting and magnificent.

It was the same charm that enticed the royalty of the time, King Muzaffar uddin Shah of Iran, to purchase the equipment which consequently, established a symbolical link between politics and cinema in Iran.

Being unaware of the real role and capabilities of this novel art-tool as compared to his Soviet politician, Lenin, the Qajar King was only interested in the entertainment value of the medium. Perhaps that is the reason why despite passage of years since the introduction of cinematograph in Iran, no movie was made and a few movie theaters of the country were only host to the commercial productions of other countries, including India. Hence, as the first film in the history of Iranian cinema, 'Abi & Rabi' (1929) only aimed to amuse the public while around a decade ago, Europeans had seen Griffith's "Birth of a Nation" (1915) or other avant-garde productions of the Europe on silver screens.

But Iran was a different story. It was just to experience the mass production of a particular type of films titled "Farsi Films". Being poor in both artistic themes and technical skills, the scenarios of these films appeared to be deeply rooted within the national/local mythological or popular stories that the public could identify with. Such films also lacked maturity.

These two features of Farsi Films, i.e. narration of stereotype stories and concepts that had nothing to do with the real lives of people besides using the most primitive and inartistic ways of production, were the main stumbling blocks to draw the

attention of International film festivals and circles towards such films.

Alternatively, the desire of a new generation to break free of the conventions of the mainstream Iranian cinema led to the birth of a new genre in 1960s and 1970s called 'different cinema' to reflect real-life situations as well as the artistic, aesthetic taste of the society. From this perspective, the year 1964 may be marked as a new chapter in the history of Iranian cinema when Farrokh Ghaffari produced and directed 'Night of the Hunchback' (original title: Shab-e Quzi).

The film was a comedy based on a story from the popular 'One Thousand and One Nights' stories but arranged in a more realistic and modern setting, fit for the contemporary conditions of the time. The film that was also both artistically and technically more advanced as compared to its antecedents was highly admired by a veteran film critic of the time, Hajir Darioush, who dubbed it as 'the birth of the Iranian cinema'. Darioush was of the opinion that this film set the scene for the onset of the New Wave Cinema in Iran.

Other key progenitors of the new trend include Ebrahim Golestan and Fereydoun Rahnema. It is interesting to know that the majority of these so-called 'intellectuals' had received academic education abroad; yet their works were not much welcomed by the ruling class at home for depicting real-life situation of the society particularly the underprivileged.

The first signs of conflicts between politics and art in the area of cinema may have emerged in this period. Nevertheless, there exists another significant stage in the pre-revolution era that left a great impact on the future of Iranian cinema. With the establishment of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in 1965, a new wave of pioneering artists emerged in the field of cinema the most representative of which are some leading cineastes such as Bahram Beizaei, Abbas Kia Rostami, Naser Taqvaei, Amir Naderi, etc. who initiated their professional careers here only to pave the way and lay the groundwork for the production of notable works in the years to come.

In such an ambience in the year 1969, an unprecedented phenomenon, unique throughout the entire history of the Iranian cinema, took place:

Masoud Kimia's landmark film 'Kaiser' (original title: Qeysar) and Darioush Mehrjooi's prize-winning 'The Cow' (original title: Gav) were produced, laying the foundations for the establishment of a new trend in the Iranian cinema called the New Wave (Moj-e No).

Besides being heralds of new movements within the spheres of public and the intellectual cinema, each of the two films opened up fresh avenues for making political analysis/interpretation of movies on their own and tried to deliver political messages through the use of implied metaphors or poetry. According to Hormoz Key, it was with the creation of these two films in 1969 that the Iranian film industry passed in to the arena of politics.

For example, the film 'Cow', which was an adaptation of one of Gholam Hossein Sa'edi's novels, was taken as a call to stand up and rise against the state of affairs prevailing over the concluding



A scene from Reza Mirkarimi's "Today"

years of Pahlavids reign. It was during 1970s that the Iranian cinema prospered. During the first half of the decade, some key and influential films were produced by acclaimed Iranian filmmakers such as Mehrjouee, Taqvaee, Naderi, Kimiavi, Shahid Sales, Beyzaee and Kimiaee who produced their most outstanding movies then.

During 1974 and 1975, the Iranian cinema was the scene to two main incidents: due to some political interpretation, Naser Taqvaee's 'Peace in the Presence of others' (original title: Aramesh Dar Hozour-e Digaran) is banned and then heavily censored upon its release in 1974 while Sohrab Shahid Sales's 'Still Life' (original title: Tabi'at-e Bijan), with its poetic disposition yet sad tone, wins the Silver Bear of Berlin Festival in 1975.

During the last years of the Pahlavids reign, the Iranian cinema undergoes a sharp downfall both as for the volume and the content of the films produced goes for a state of almost total collapse to the extent that some press call it 'the death of Iranian cinema'.

In fact, the revolutionaries rejected cinema and condemned it as being morally offensive and eth-

ically corrupting. Due to the so-called platitude prevailing over most of the movies, mainly those labeled 'Farsi Films', the religious leaders stood against cinema, sometimes destructing movie theaters in angry demonstrations.

In 1979, Iran witnessed the fall of one type of cinema and rise of another one. During the early years of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, due to the drastic deterioration of the public image of the film industry and the predominant viewpoint that cinema is the medium for the promotion of western values, there was much debate over approving or declining the very existence of cinema.

Nonetheless, the remarkable reference made by the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the onset of his arrival in the country puts an end to the debate: Imam Khomeini clearly declares that he is not against cinema; on the other hand, to him, "Cinema is one of the manifestations of culture and it must be put to the service of man and his education".

On this basis and due to the events that follows shortly after, cinema's pathway changes radically: the imposed war of Iraq against Iran opens up



A scene from "Children of Heaven" by Majid Majidi



A scene from "Life+1Day" by Saeed Roustaei

fresh avenues for the dawn of a new genre in cinema called 'sacred defense cinema'.

This fresh trend evidently utilizes cinema as a medium for highlighting the valor of the soldiers of war, inspiring other individuals and citizens to resist and occasionally becomes a publicity tool for conveying the message of the revolution. This era is the most representative of the reciprocal impact of cinema over politics and vice versa.

That is how a new generation of revolutionary cineastes such as Ebrahim Hatami Kia, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Rasoul Molla Gholipour, Rasoul Sadr Ameli, Morteza Avini, Ahmadreza Darvish, etc. appears on the sphere of the national cinema. Together with this new generation, the forerunners of pre-revolution cinema resumed working, keeping in mind the newly established morality codes and regulations. The efforts made by both the groups, backed by the support provided by organizations such as Farabi Cinema Foundation, led to the booming of the Iranian cinema during 1980's, making it the most productive epoch in the history of Iranian cinema when international fame and

acclaim was garnered and most number of awards collected.

Concurrently, the distinction between the two approaches emerged: on one side were the ones claiming to illustrate the revolutionary and Islamic values and on the other, the so-called intellectuals that believed their works are rooted within the national values and that art, above all, is the depiction of reality.

Hence, the society and real life events became the dominant theme of films made by the cineastes of the second group while the first, endeavored to keep alive the memory of the braveries of war. Most representative filmmakers of the latter were Ebrahim Hatami Kia and Morteza Avini with the most internationally known personality of the Iranian cinema, Abbas Kiarostami, being an advocate of the former approach.

Kiarostami's works during the 1990s' not only highlighted the borders existing between the two approaches more but attracted much attention of the foreign audience towards the Iranian cin-

ema. Through producing films distinctive in form that dealt with deep philosophical and humanitarian concepts straightforward, Kiarostami soon was ranked by the world critics as one of the key, leading filmmakers in the history of cinema along with celebrities such as Hitchcock, Rossellini and Kurosawa.

Nevertheless, because he was categorized as an 'intellectual', his works were not much received by the domestic public audience which is a rare incident! There are two reasons: first and foremost is the artistic aspect of Kiarostami's works because like any other modern movie, the comprehension of the message he intends to deliver in his works requires the active participation of the audience. At the same time, his films move around the tough reciprocation of politics and arts within the cultural, social and political settings of the country. Anyways, other filmmakers later follow Kiarostami's way of composition of real situations and stories.

With two of his best films 'The Color of Paradise' (original title: Rang-e Khoda) (1998) and 'Children of Heaven' (original title: Bacheha-Ye Aseman) (1997), Majid Majidi is among those auteurs whose art ensures the presence of Iranian cinema in the international arena. Since its early days, Majidi's cinema has been praised as concept-oriented. Thus, with his film 'The Weeping willow' (original title: Bid-e Majnoon) (2004), he faces a different domestic fate than that of Kiarostami.

Definitely, the roots of decline in the number of audience of 'different' films should be sought in the change of public taste due to the ongoing political and social developments of the closing years of 1990 and beginning of the 3rd millennium. Such developments that initiated with the presidential elections of the 1996 affected many fields of culture including cinema. It was since then that the so-called 'political' films lost their charm, giving way to the concept of attracting more audience and moving towards producing commercial, box office films.

Perhaps this explains the reason behind the booming of comedy genre in this period. Another major characteristic of this era is the emergence of active, female filmmakers and the surge in their productions of politically-oriented films.

The first decade of the 3rd millennium should be marked for the growth in diversity as well as the

bulk of general film production on one hand and a decline in the creation of special ones on the other, as if taking steps towards industrializing the cinema and the introduction of new technologies leads to the production of films that are neither very good nor very bad.

Right throughout the same period, i.e. around 2010, debates over the social and political functions of cinema grows within the cultural and political circles and titles such as festival cinema, national cinema, religious cinema, etc. are more deliberated upon. Furthermore, the advocates of the two aforesaid approaches towards cinema form a new arrangement against each other.

Contemporaneously, a fresh phenomenon reappears on national and international arena: the upshot of the technical and intellectual developments of the Iranian cinema that was going to become an ordinary commodity of daily life is revived and presented by Asghar Farhadi. Thus, a new trend is established in the Iranian cinema, reproducing the technical and artistic aspects of which becomes the dream of young filmmakers.

Perhaps, the most important fact about Farhadi is the same contribution he made towards the improvement of the technical and artistic standards of Iranian cinema. It seems that from now on, those filmmakers who are aware of the importance of concepts such as screening or distribution of their works, or say the industrial aspect of cinema, find a touchstone for comparing and improving their art and technique of cinematography.

Despite the fact that the most representative characteristics of such standard couldn't be defined; however, the results of such training and progress is noticeable in the works of present day, young filmmakers.

The most prominent of such works is Saeed Roustaei's 'Eternity and A Day' (original title: Abad va Yek Rooz) screened at the 34th edition of the International Fajr Film Festival held in 2016.

In fact, the path that the Iranian cinema has trodden from decades ago till its present day zenith could be traced in this film. More noteworthy therein is the interchange, or better say, the balance that seems to have been struck or at least agreed upon between the two main approaches or trends in the Iranian cinema!

A GLANCE AT THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE IRANIAN CINEMA IN THE INT'L ARENA

SEYED ROUHOLLAH HOSSEINI

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Persian-English Translation: Parisa Frouzkouhi



A scene from "The Song of Sparrows" by Majid Majidi

"Iranian cinema is one of the world's most important artistic cinemas", comments Werner Herzog, one of the world-renowned, contemporary German filmmakers over the Iranian cinema. Many more similar comments and observations have been made on the Iranian cinema by many more celebrated filmmakers and critics. But when and where did such reputation take root?

Having passed its embryonic phase thorough overcoming the common stereotypes and also laying off copying the traditions of other countries' film industries, the Iranian cinema started to get recognition during 1940 when a generation of visionary filmmakers appeared on the scene.

Having the benefit of knowledge of the native and local features of the society and its trends, they commenced creating novel works.

Sohrab Shahid Sales, Ebrahim Golestan, Fereydoon Rahnama, Samuel Khachikian and Hooshang Kavousi were among the first cineastes to contribute to the worldwide recognition of the Iranian cinema outside the national boundaries and

particularly in Europe. They are the forerunners of a movement called 'auteur cinema'; a movement to develop within the next two decades through which new celebrities such as Darioush Mehrjouee, Naser Taqvaaee, Bahram Beyzaee and Masoud Kimiaee would attract the attention of international festivals with their distinct productions.

The movie 'Cow' (original title: 'Gav'), the brilliant film by Mehrjouee in 1969, is amongst the key productions of the era which stood out in different festivals specially Venice. However, the history of the first major achievement of the Iranian cinema in foreign festivals goes back to Farrokh Ghaffari's feature film 'Night of the Hunchback' (original title: 'Shab-e Quzi'). Produced in 1964, the film was not much welcomed nationally but was praised widely within foreign festivals, particularly Cannes.

"The cheerful comedy of Shab-e Quzi is believed to be the advent of a new genre of cinema... the movie director has real flair for cinema which is reflected in the pleasant yet strong implicit references permeating all throughout his film. Its novelty ensures its commercial success in France",

stated George Sadoul, the most celebrated French cinema critic of the time while admiring the film.

Subsequently and mainly since 1972 onwards, several productions of the Iranian cinema took part in Berlin and Cannes film festivals. Farshid Mesghali's 'The Gray Town' (original title: 'Shahr-e Khakestari'), Bahman Farman Ara's 'Long Shadows of the Wind' (original title: 'Sayeh-haye Boland-e Baad') and 'Prince Ehtejab' (original title: 'Shazdeh Ehtejab') were among the ones that represented Iran in Cannes Festival before the Islamic Revolution.

Meanwhile, Soharb Shahid Sales, another pioneer of the Iranian New Wave Cinema, presented two major films of 'A Simple Event' (original title: 'Yek Ettefagh-e Saadeh') (1973) and 'Still Life' (original title: 'Tabiat-e Bijan') (1974) to the international festivals, the latter winning the Berlinale Silver Bear. Two years later, Parviz Kimiavi secured the same prize once again for 'Stone Garden' (original title: 'Baagh-e Sangi'). But the real reputation of Iranian cinema and its spread outside the national borders began just after the conclusion of Iran-Iraq war in 1980s. In a while, the Int'l Fajr Film Festival and Farabi Cinema Foundation were

established in 1982 to lift up the Iranian cinema in terms of quality and quantity; besides, a new genre of war cinema movement had taken root on the ruins of the Iran-Iraq war, the two playing a significant role in the advancement of Iranian films and the international fame garnered.

The first film to catch the world's attention after the Islamic Revolution was the much praised movie of Amir Naderi titled 'The Runner' (1985) (original title: 'Davandeh') which won the Golden Balloon of the 'Nantes Three Continents' Festival.

Ten years later in 1995, Jafar Panahi was awarded the Golden Camera prize at Cannes Festival for 'The White Balloon' (original title: 'Badkonak-e Sephid'). In 1997, the again Pahani obtained the Golden Tiger of Locarno Festival for 'The Mirror' (original title: 'Ayeneh').

The international recognition of this Azeri language filmmakers doesn't end here. In 2000, he was awarded the Golden Lion of the Venice Festival. In the same year, Bahman Ghobadi obtained the Golden Camera Award of Cannes for 'The Time for Drunken Horses', (original title: 'Zamani Bara-ye Masti-e Asb'ha').



TASTE OF CHERRY

Abbas Kiarostami "Taste of Cherry" 1997) (original title: Ta'm e guilass)

But during these years, the one filmmaker that attracted more international attentions towards the Iranian Cinema was Abbas Kia Rostami. Kurosawa, the renowned Japanese filmmaker comments on Kia Rostami: "I believe his films are stunning. The words cannot express my feelings in this regard.

I can only advice you to see his works ". Nevertheless some professional individual within the Iranian cinema sphere during the recent years describes Kia Rostami's cinema 'a diplomatic medium' that opened new avenues for Iran in the west .

Even if we don't heed to this political interpretation, we cannot ignore the fact that the overall attention towards Iranian cinema started with Abbas Kia Rostami.

In other words, before 1997 when he acquired the Golden Palm Award, for other countries and festivals the Iranian cinema was parallel to Chinese or Korean film industries that were, once in a while, producing notable films.

But since then, the Iranian cinema turned into one of the pillars of the world cinema in a way that in every internationally significant festival, an Iranian film was representing the country.

But Kia Rostami himself had already attracted the critics' attention in Locarno Festival of 1989 with his film 'Where is the Friend's House' (original title: 'Khaneh-ye Doust Kojast'). In fact, before attaining the peak of his international reputation in 1997 with his film 'The Taste of Cherry' (original title: 'Ta'meh Gilass'), he had earned his status as a notable, visionary filmmaker with brilliant films such as 'Under the Olive Trees' (original title: 'Zir-e Derakhtan-e Zeytoon'), 'Life and Nothing Else' (original title: 'Zendegi va Digar Hich') or 'The Wind Shall Take us Away' (original title: 'Baad Ma Ra Ba Khod Khahad Bord').

Therefore, the 1990s may be deemed as one of the most productive years of the Iranian cinema as for the number of international awards received.

Another talented filmmaker who also stood out in the international arena during this time was Majid Majidi. The year 1998, was an important



A scene from "About Eli" by Asghar Farhadi



A scene from the Oscar winning "A Separation" by Asghar Farhadi

era both in the professional life of Majidi and the international accomplishments of the Iranian cinema because his 'Children of Heaven' (original title: 'Bacheha-Ye Aseman') became an Oscar nomination for the Best Foreign Film Award, which the Iranian cinema received later on for Asghar Farhadi's 'The Separation' (original title: 'Jodae-ye Nader Az Simin').

Later, Majidi directed other critically acclaimed films such as 'The Color of Paradise' (2000) (original title: 'Rang-e Khoda'), 'The Rain' (2002) (original title: 'Baran'), 'The Weeping willow' (2005) (original title: 'Bid-e Majnoon') and 'The Song of the Sparrows' (2008) (original title: 'Avaz-e Gonjeshkha'), each of which earned more than ten international awards.

The trend continued by the accomplishments made by filmmakers such as Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Rasoul Sadr Ameli, Behrooz Afkhami, Reza Mir Karimi, Parviz Shahbazi and many more young filmmakers who obtained hundreds of awards from different festivals annually.

But right at the time these festivals were getting

used to the presence of the Iranian films on board, a new phenomenon named 'Asghar Farhadi' appears on the scene. This young filmmaker, aware values and anti-values of humanity of his country, fascinated films critics for the first time in Berlin Int'l Film Festival with his film 'About Eli' (2009) (original title: 'Darbareh-ye Eli').

His other film 'The Separation' won the Oscar Award for the Best Foreign Film in 2012. After the Oscar-winning triumph of 'A Separation', Farhadi was propelled to the forefront of global art cinema and as his most recent accomplishment, he scooped two awards at Cannes Festival 2016 for 'The Salesman' (original title: 'Foroushandeh').

The film took the Best Actor award for Shahab Hosseini and also landed Farhadi the best screenplay award, making it the only double winner of the night and one of the few movies to receive such a rare honor in the history of the festival.

Thus, Farhadi completed the most productive year of the Iranian cinema as for the number of international awards received (378 titles).

Such number of awards, most of which has been awarded to short films and documentaries, could perfectly reflect the production potential and quality of Iranian cinema as compared to other world countries and particularly the countries of

the region; a quality that is the product of several elements such environmental, native and cultural on one hand and, the ancient Iranian civilization with its young, educated population on the other; the latter requiring a separate, comprehensive study.



Shahab Hosseini (Left) and the Oscar-winning director, Asghar Farhadi (Right), winners of the Best Actor and Best Screenplay Awards respectively, at Cannes Festival 2016



Shahab Hosseini and Taraneh Alidoosti in 'The Salesman'

THE IRANIAN CINEMA A BRIEF SURVEY

**The article is the courtesy of the Iranian Film Industry Development of Cinema Organization, Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance, Islamic Republic of Iran*





The post-revolution Iranian Cinema, that raised from the Iranian culture and art more than 35 years ago, has always been the most inspiring and influential art in the world of cinema in representing Iranian rich culture and heritage.

The first public cinema in Iran opened in 1904. Imported films and newsreels, along with state sponsored documentaries, were screened in early cinemas.

The first Iranian feature film "Abi and Rabi" was made in 1930. Its director, Ovanes Ohanian, subsequently made "Haji, the Movie Star" in 1932 as cinema's defense against moral corruption. With the introduction of sound, the Persian language (Farsi) films became popular, starting with "The Lor Girl" in 1933, directed by Abdolhosein Sepanta. The popularity of "The Lor Girl" was the onset of further production of films.

With cinema becoming increasingly popular among the public in subsequent years, the prominent filmmakers emerged, great filmmakers like Ali Hatami, Masoud Kimiai, Dariush Mehrjui,

Abbas Kiarostami, Bahram Beyzai, Naser Taghvai, Majid Majidi, etc., who took fundamental steps for Iranian Cinema to experience a new atmosphere in future. These renowned filmmakers stepped in filmmaking field with different attitudes and played an important role in the evolution of Iranian cinema. The presence of female filmmakers such as Tahmineh Milani, Pooran Derakhshandeh, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad and few others is another major development in the Iranian cinema.

But the most important part of growth of the Iranian cinema was in its international appearances, especially after the Islamic revolution in 1978, where Iranian films started participating and winning awards in outstanding festivals while before the revolution, Iranian films hardly showed up in festivals or won few awards, such as "STILL LIFE" by Sohrab Shahid Sales which won the Silver Bear in Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) in 1974. Or films like "Marlik Hills" by Ebrahim Golestan, "The House is Black" by Forough Farukhzad, "Cow", "The Cycle" and "Postman" by Dariush Mehrjui, "Downpour" by Bahram Beizai and etc... But most of the productions which controlled the market before the revolution were low-budget films, unvalued love stories, comedies and dramas that appeared due to the widespread presence of American and European films on screen.

After the revolution, in the absence of American films, the modern Iranian cinema with the removal of superficial, immoral, handy and popular charms, grew rich in content and was inclined towards moral themes.

Foreign festivals suddenly faced with a new rising cinema full of curiosity by eliminating sex and violence, addressing the humanitarian and social issues, claims to offer different films to the world and focuses, regardless of the technique, on the theme. The festivals discovered a new cinema which wanted to show new ideas and moral issues.

Now most of festivals are held with the presence of Iranian films. Cinema is called as the most influential cultural ambassador and repeatedly called name of Iran in cultural communities of the world.

During the years, with annual production of 50 to 100 feature films, some of produced films found the way to festivals and achieved lots of precious international successes. Sure it is not easy to name them all, but to name a few, we can mention:



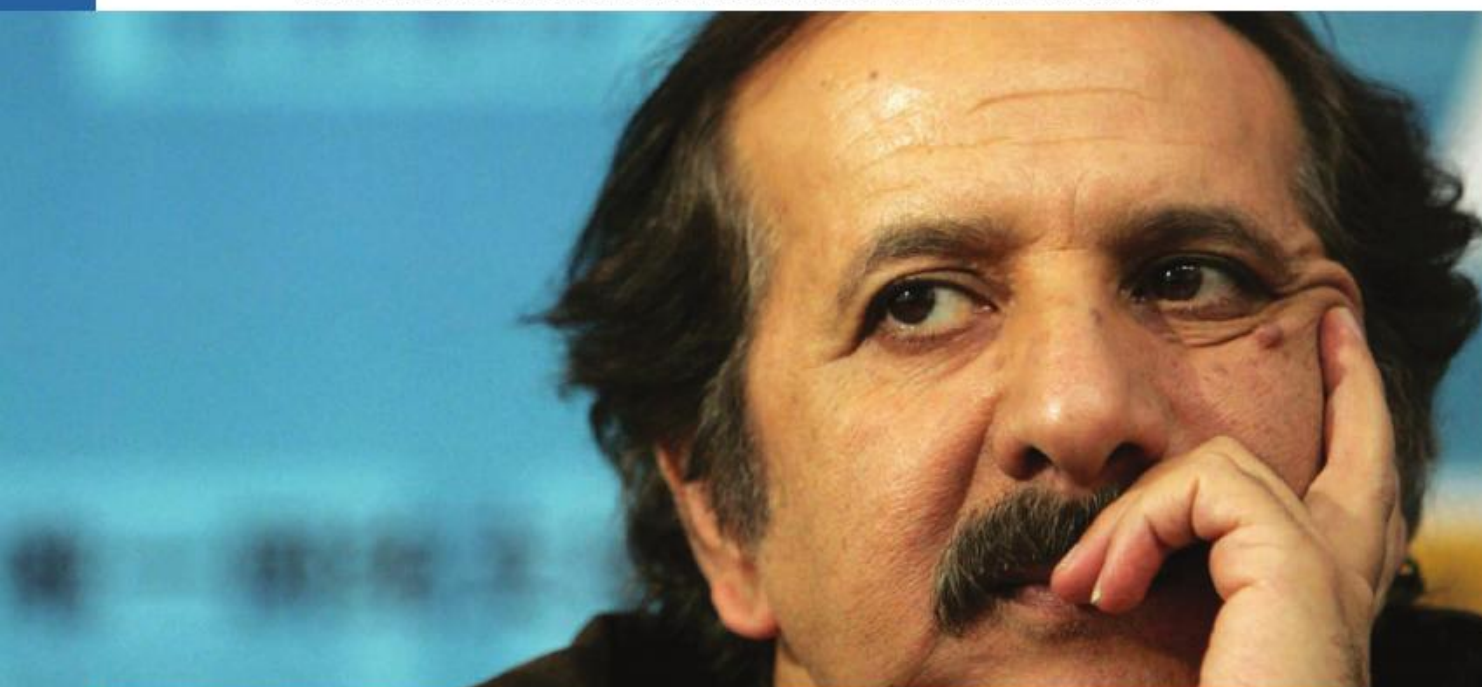
Abbas Kiarostami, the acclaimed Iranian film director, screenwriter, photographer and film producer



Jafar Panahi, the Iranian film director, screenwriter and film editor



Asghar Farhadi, the internationally, critically acclaimed Iranian film director and screenwriter



Majid Majidi, the Iranian film director, film producer, and screenwriter

Winning the Golden Bear in Berlinale paved the way for A SEPERATION to participate and win more than 30 awards in international festivals all around the world and it was undoubtedly the greatest honor of Iranian cinema when A SEPERATION received Golden Globe and subsequently the Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film in 2012.

Of course, before it in 1998, Majid Majidi had directed the film "Children of Heaven" which was nominated to receive the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Though it lost to the Italian film "Life is Beautiful" by Roberto Benigni, Majidi's film is the first Iranian film to have been nominated by the Academy.

MEDIA & BROADCASTING IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

The article is the courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Tehran

MEDIA OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

The media of Kazakhstan refers to mass media outlets based in the country that include a set of public information broadcasting agencies operating within the country's boundaries.

The Constitution of Kazakhstan guarantees freedom of press. All media, except websites, must be registered at the Ministry of Culture, Information and Sports.

Kazakhstan government supervises the printing presses and most radio and TV transmission facilities and operates Kazakhstan national radio and TV networks.

TELEVISION

The first national television channel in Kazakhstan was aired for the first time in 1958. At the time, broadcasting was limited to 5 hours a day. By 1987, Kazakhstan was ranked fourth among all Soviet republics by the amount of broadcast.

The country used to operate two national channels: 'Kazakhstan-1' and 'Kazakhstan-2'. Channel 'Kazakhstan-2' was later renamed 'Alatau' before being replaced by 'Khabar' in 1995. Since formation, the channel was broadcasting programs in both Kazakh and Russian languages; however, since September 2011, it has started broadcasting exclusively in Kazakh language and from 2012, broadcasts are available in HD.

The state-owned Kazakhstan Radio and Television Corporation is one of the largest media companies in Kazakhstan.

It runs three TV channels: Kazakhstan, KAZsport, Balapan; and four radio stations: Kazakh radiosy, Shalkar, Astana, and Classic plus 15 regional TV channels.

Renowned producer Arman Asenov developed a 20-episode series depicting the beginning of Kazakhstan (Courtesy- Kazakhfilm, Al Jazeera)



A scene from the Kazakh-made TV series "Kazakh Khanate"



Acclaimed Kazakh film director, Rustem Abdrashev (left) is making the 10-part historical epic "Kazakh Khanate"

KAZAKHSTAN

'Kazakhstan' is the country's first national TV channel with the first broadcast made on March 8, 1958. It is a part of the RTRC JSC Kazakhstan. The TV channel is broadcasted from Astana (since December 1, 2012, broadcasts have been moved into a new media center called 'Kazakhstan Media Center' in Astana) and Alma-Ata and has a regional network of branches in all regions of Kazakhstan.

Its program schedule consists of information, educational programs, films and TV series in the Kazakh language round the clock.

Today, 'Kazakhstan' is the largest media resource of the country, with broadcasts available for 98.63% of the population and neighboring countries (Russia, Mongolian, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan). Since 1 September 2011, Kazakhstan broadcast exclusively in Kazakh language.

In the regions, the channel has different names (Kazakhstan Taraz, Kazakhstan Pavlodar, etc.), as

local broadcast network affiliates controlled by RTRC JSC Kazakhstan.

KAZSPORT

KAZsport is the first sports channel in Kazakhstan. It has greatly improved the availability of sports broadcasts for Kazakhstani audiences. It was officially launched on 1 July 2013.

BALAPAN

Children's TV channel, 'Balapan', began broadcasting on 27 September 2010. It is the first children's television channel in Kazakhstan. Broadcasts are available in HD on cable networks and also online via the official website of Balapan channel.

Rustem Abdrashev, in black baseball cap, on location in Kazakhstan (Photograph: Kazakfilm)



Bayterek Tower, Astana

KAZAKH TV

The state-owned, Kazakh TV is the first national satellite TV channel of the Khabar Agency, the largest media company in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The channel's first programme was broadcasted on 25 October 2002 as part of the CaspioNet franchise. The principal mission of Kazakh TV is to present a complete picture of Kazakhstan and Central Asia to foreign viewers.

Kazakh TV broadcasts informative and educational programmes 24 hours a day in Kazakh, Russian, and English. In conjunction with the major satellite operators Eutelsat and Orange S.A., the channel transmits its signal to 93 countries throughout North America, Central America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and Transcaucasia. It has a potential audience of 253 million householders.

It provides relevant and objective information about Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The channel broadcasts the main local and international news

as well as information about major political, economic and sporting events. The schedules are completed by documentaries, classical and contemporary feature films, children's films, programmes of historical and ethnographic interest, and also views of the most interesting events in the cultural life of the country. These may include theatre performances and various exhibitions.

OTHER MAIN TV CHANNELS

- Khabar TV - operated by Khabar agency.
- Kazakh Commercial TV (KTK) - private, broadcasts in Kazakh and Russian.
- CaspioNet - satellite channel operated by Khabar agency.
- Eurasia TV - state-run, rebroadcasts of Russia's Channel One.

Today, there are 116 private channels, including Channel 31, KTK and Perviy Kanal Evraziya. Other country-wide television stations are Khabar and

Yel Arna.

RADIO

The first radio station in Kazakhstan was Kazakh radiosy, created in 1922, which along with the first national and several other TV channels and radio stations later become part of Kazakhstan Radio and Television Corporation.

The state-owned Kazakh Radio broadcasts in official and Russian languages. A wide number of private radio stations are also available including Europa Plus, Kazakh Radio, Russian Radio, Radio NS, Radio Retro and others.

KAZAKH RADIOSY

On 29 September 1921, the Soviet government decided to establish state broadcasting in Kazakhstan. In October 1921, broadcasts began from Orenburg (Kazakhstan's capital at that time) and on 23 March 1927, Kazakh language was aired on radio for the first time.

Today, Kazakh Radiosy is the largest broadcasting network of the country. Broadcasts are available in Kazakh, Russian, German, Korean, Uyghur, Azerbaijani, Turkish, and Tatar languages.

RADIO SHALKAR

Radio Shalkar is a structural unit of Kazakh Radio, which broadcasts only in Kazakh. Broadcasting time is 18 hours per day.

RADIO ASTANA

Radio Astana is an information-musical radio station. The station began broadcasting on 19 January 1999, on 101.4 FM.

RADIO CLASSIC

Radio Classic is the first classical music radio station in Kazakhstan. It is a joint media project of the corporation and the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory. The station started broadcasting on 102.8 FM, on 6 June 2011.



Joint Stock Company "Kaztelradio" - National operator in the field of television and radio broadcasting of the Republic of Kazakhstan, providing the population of the republic reception of television and radio programs on Terrestrial and Satellite networks.

OTHER MAIN RADIO STATIONS

- Kazakhstan radio
- Kazakh Radio - state-owned, broadcasts in Kazakh and Russian.
- Europa Plus - private, Almaty, Astana.
- Russkoye Radio-Asia - private, Almaty, Astana.

MEDIA WEBSITES

The country had 5.4 million internet users in 2011—up from 2010. The share of users of Twitter, Facebook and YouTube was less than 0.4% in 2012, according to BBC. The country had 5.4 million internet users and 362,000 Facebook users as of December 31, 2011.

PRESS MEDIA

A wide range of publications are available in Kazakhstan. The authorities operate national Kazakh language newspapers and the only regular national Russian (the international language of

Turkic peoples) language newspaper.

Main Press/Newspapers

- Kazakhstanskaya Pravda - government-backed, Russian-language.
- Yegemen Qazaqstan - government-backed, Kazakh-language.
- Ekspres-K - private, Russian-language. Liter - private, daily.
- Vremya - private, opposition weekly.
- Nachnem s ponedelnika - private, Russian-language opposition weekly.
- Karavan - private, weekly.

MAIN NEWS AGENCIES

- Kazakhstan news
- Kazinform - state-owned.
- Gazeta.kz - online news, English-language pages.
- Interfax Kazakhstan - service of Russian news agency Interfax.

ONLINE NEWS WEBSITES

- Aikyn
- Liter (newspaper)
- Kapital
- Tengri News (Kazakh news)
- «Young Alash»
- Bussines.kz
- «Kazakhstan Trust»

There are 990 privately owned newspapers and 418 privately owned magazines.



Almaty TV Tower

PERFORMING ARTS IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

A BRIEF OVERVIEW*



Kyrgyzstan may not spring to mind whenever there is discussion about the Cinema and the film industry. This is understandable as very few films made in Kyrgyzstan ever reach audiences in the West, and those that do are normally restricted to various specialist festivals. There is, however, a film industry and, even though they don't produce high-budget "blockbusters", the Kyrgyz Film Institute has long had a reputation in the countries of the former Soviet Union for producing interesting and challenging films. That reputation is being maintained by a new generation of producers in the newly independent country, despite facing many problems – such as the lack of finance.

Kyrgyzstan got its own film studio in 1942. It was the last of the Central Asian republics to do so. At first, the studio made just documentaries and news reels. It was only in 1955 that the first "feature" to be filmed in the country, "Saltanat", appeared. In fact, "Saltanat" was produced by a film company based in Moscow ("Mosfilm") and the first truly local production, called "My Mistake" appeared two years later, in 1957.

During WWII, the film studios in Central Asia were to become the center of Soviet film production: as with many other industries, the studios of Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev were evacuated from the path of the advancing German armies and were transplanted to the safety of the Soviet Union's vast interior. After the war, when the western Russian studios returned to their original bases, they left much of their equipment behind in their temporary homes, further-boosting Central Asian filmmaking in terms of facilities.

It was in the 1960's when cinema in Central Asia began to blossom. A change in attitudes in Moscow (sometimes called the "Soviet Thaw") initiated by Premier Nikita Khrushchev cleared away the restrictions imposed by the Stalinist regime. In the arts, this meant an end to the official monumental style and "freedom of expression" was encouraged. Although not all forms of control were abandoned, a more realistic, personal, kind of cinema was encouraged. A great deal of money was invested in the film industry and production grew – including the output of the studios in the Central Asian republics.

The Kyrgyz author, Chinghiz Aitmatov, was to play a pivotal role in the development of Kyrgyz Cinema. Apart from the fact that he was the head of the Kirghiz Filmmakers' Union for over twenty years, his novels and screenplays formed the basis for much of the country's film classics and also served as aesthetic examples – so that even if he wasn't directly involved in a film's production, he still exerted a strong and unmistakable artistic influence.

One of the major film producers of this period was Tolomush Okeev, who has been described as "one of the greatest outdoor filmmakers who ever lived", "a somewhat reclusive master of a discreet pantheistic cinema", "a born poet", and a "master of the smallest nuances, of the beauty of details". Landscapes were a vital element of his films; the storylines were usually minimal with few plot twists.

The 1970s and early 1980s were challenging but rather productive and many of the Kyrgyz film makers produced films to show the daily life of locals. It was during the period of Perestroika that several young filmmakers began to attract attention on the festivals.

However, just as such directors were beginning to obtain a reputation; the collapse of the Soviet system devastated the regional film industries. Suddenly, there were no more state subsidies available; they were deprived of the services of any agency in Moscow which would promote their work to Western festivals and distributors; and there were no film schools outside for any Central Asian director. Faced with serious social, economic, social and political problems, the arts were not a high priority for the government and the national film centers (throughout Central Asia) found themselves in severe difficulties. However, most filmmakers stayed in their home countries, although many of them worked in other businesses in order to earn a living and creative filmmakers started looking towards the West for finances and recognition. Some films were produced with financial support from Europe, notably from France and Germany. Films were submitted to several festivals around the world, achieved a certain level of success and earned recognition for several individuals such as:

- 'Beshkempir' by Aktan Abdykalykov, Best Film Graz

- 'Saratan' by Ernest Abdyzhapparov, Special Jury Prize, 2nd Eurasia International Film Festival, 2005;

- 'Unknown Route', by Temir Birnazarov, Special Feature Film Jury Award; 'Bridge' by Tina Ibragimov, and 'Debt', by Temir Birnazarov, the Special Short Film Jury Award; Bolotbek Zhamshiev won the An Outstanding Contribution to World Cinema Art development award, 5th Eurasia International Film Festival, 2008;

- 'The Light Thief' by Aktan Arym Kubat, Best Film Grand Prix, 5th Eurasia International Film Festival, 2010; Locarno International Film Festival - Piazza Grande; Toronto International Film Festival - Contemporary World Cinema; Cannes Film Festival - Directors' Fortnight; Eurasia International Film Festival - FIPRESCI Prize; Kyrgyzstan's submission for Best Foreign Language Film for the 83rd Academy Awards.

Kyrgyzstan has submitted seven films for consideration at the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film since gaining its independence from the USSR in 1991, but has thus far failed to make it to the final stage of the final 5 Oscar nominees. The first-ever Kyrgyz film to be submitted for Oscar consideration was *The Ferocious One*, a Kyrgyz production that was submitted by the USSR in late 1974 to compete for the 1975 Foreign Oscar.

Kyrgyz films tend not to be filled with action. They are more atmospheric and have an artistic flair which marks them out as different from their Western counterparts. In place of action, the directors, actors and film crews call upon their collective experiences. Some of the films have distinctly autobiographical elements. Many of the themes explored are expressed through everyday situations – the life and culture of the people. The films are filled with scenes of daily life. Animals and landscape also feature prominently.

THEATERS IN KYRGYZSTAN

Osh State Academic Uzbek Music and Drama Theater named after Babur is the oldest theater in Central Asia, after the Uzbek National Academic Drama Theatre named after Hamza in Tashkent. In 1914, the theater group was founded under the leadership of Rahmonberdi Madazimov in collaboration with Baltyhodzha Sultanov, a native

Russian school teacher in Osh.

In 1918, under the leadership of Rahmonberdi Madazimov with other prominent leaders and teachers of the Osh district Ibrohim Musaboev, Beknazar Nazarov, Zhurahon Zaynobiddinov, Nazirhan Kamolov, A.Saidov, A.Eshonhonov, Abdukodir Iskhokov, Isroiljon Ismoilov, Jalil Sobitov the first performance was staged by an amateur theater group.

Rahmonberdi Madazimov, the first art director of the theater group, was the founder and organizer of the first theater movement in Kyrgyzstan. In 1919, a circle was formed in the drama troupe that has not only contributed to the development of art of theatre, but also the development of professional musical art in southern Kyrgyzstan. In addition to theatrical productions, the repertoire of the troupe includes numerous concerts. They have also adjusted folk melodies for performances that have contributed to the formation of professional musicians. It was this troupe that formed the basis for the creation of the Osh State Academic Uzbek Music and Drama Theater named after Babur.

However, generally there were no professional theatres in Kyrgyzstan before the October Revolution of 1917. Popular entertainment was provided by the traditional manaschi, akyns and musicians such as komuzists.

In 1926, with the creation of the Kyrgyz Musical-Dramatic Studio, that professional

dramatic entertainment can be said to have been established.

On the basis of the Studio, in 1930, the Kyrgyz State Theater was established. In 1935, the company of the Russian Drama Theater was established and the following year that of the Kyrgyz Theater. The first performance was "Capital", a play about the contraction of the Moscow Metro, and it was followed by a premiere.

The companies often perform premieres of new plays, especially by local authors – such as Chinghiz Aitmatov, but they also include in the repertoires a wide range of classics, including Chekov and Shakespeare.

In 1938, a puppet theatre was opened in Bishkek. There is still a puppet theater in the capital and another in Osh. During the Second World War, the actors of the Kyrgyz Theaters performed for the troops at the front. Troupes have also performed in a number of festivals abroad.

Today, there are multiple drama theatres, musical theatres, puppet theatres, philharmonic concert halls throughout the Republic. There are also a number of other concert halls and staged areas (such as the Kojumkol Sports Palace in Bishkek).

*Compiled from relevant sources on the subject including: www.discovery-kyrgyzstan.com & <http://www.advantour.com>



PERFORMING ARTS IN PAKISTAN

PROF. DR. MURTAZA JAFRI

Principal, National College of Arts,
Lahore, Pakistan



Manto's Kamra #9 (Room No. 9) directed by Azeem Hamid at Alhamra Arts Council, Lahore, in 2014. Visible from left to right: Faizan Naveed as "Nasir", Namwar Ayaz as "Zamaan" and Zoya Uzair as "Shireen".

Pakistan is the hub of culture with a civilization that dates back to almost 5000 years. The roots of its culture can be traced back to the united India. Its rich arts reflect the diversity that is to be found in this ancient land. Performing arts are an integral feature of Pakistani culture. It is a flourishing phenomenon with its own unique colors, themes and style.

DRAMA & THEATRE

Urdu theatre was born out of the successful enactment of a play "Indrasabha." The play was written by Agha Hasan Amanat Ali in 1885. It was performed in the courtyard of the last Nawab of Oudh, Wahid Ali Shah. Lahore is a hub of theatre in Pakistan. Commercial theatre in Lahore arrived in the early 1980s.

Artists like Naheed Khanum, Amanullah, Mastana and Baboo Baral made a concentrated effort and ushered lively dialogues and innovative style in theatre which was like a breath of fresh air for theatre goers.

The Pakistani commercial theatre is now in decline. Even though the number of theatre goers is steadily increasing, the general complaint is that commercial theatre is lowbrow and thrives on obscene dialogue and dances. Independent producers and directors like Shah Sharabeel and Nida Butt have kept the more informed theatre audience enthralled with their productions.

Shah Sharabeel's plays include 'Tom, Dick and Harry', 'You only marry twice', 'Bombay Dreams', 'The Phantom of Opera', 'Moulin Rouge' etc. Nida Butt's successful musicals include 'Chicago', 'Grease', and 'Mamma Mia'. Kopy Kats Productions, under the patronage of Anwar Maqsood, has dominated the serious theatre landscape in the country for the past few years.

Plays like 'Haaf Playt', 'Main Aadakara Banoun Gi', 'Anwar Maqsood ka Dharna', 'Aanghan Tehra', and 'Pawney Chaudha August' attracted huge crowds of theatre lovers.

Various institutions in Pakistan like Punjab Lok Raahs, Rafi Peer, Ajoka, and Interactive Resource Centre are promoting theatre art. Their main focus in the plays is social issues and finding solution through art based development.

DANCE

Dance is an integral part of Pakistani films. Pakistan has a rich repertoire of folk dances from the various parts of the country. Amongst them are Balochi Dances, Baltistan-The flower Dance, The Bhangra, Dandia or Donka, The Dhamal, Cholistan Dance, The Gidda, Ho Jamalo, Sindhi Jhoomar, The Kikli, The Luddi, The Sammi, The Kafir Dances, Khattak Dance, Attan, Taxila Odyssey, Dhole Drummer, Moenjodaro Dance, Basant Bhangra Dance, Hunza Dance, Fisherfolk Dance, Thumry Dance, Kashmiri Dance.

Kathak and classical dance are also an important part of the Pakistani dance landscape. Kathak is a classical dance of the subcontinent. The famous maestro Maharaj Ghulam Hussain Kathak holds the distinction of singularly sustaining the tradition of classical dance in Pakistan. He was a classical

dancer and teacher for the art.

His students include some of the most famous Kathak dancers of Pakistan like Nahid Siddiqui, Fasih Ur Rehman, Nighat Chaudry, Amy Minwala and Panna among many others.

MUSIC

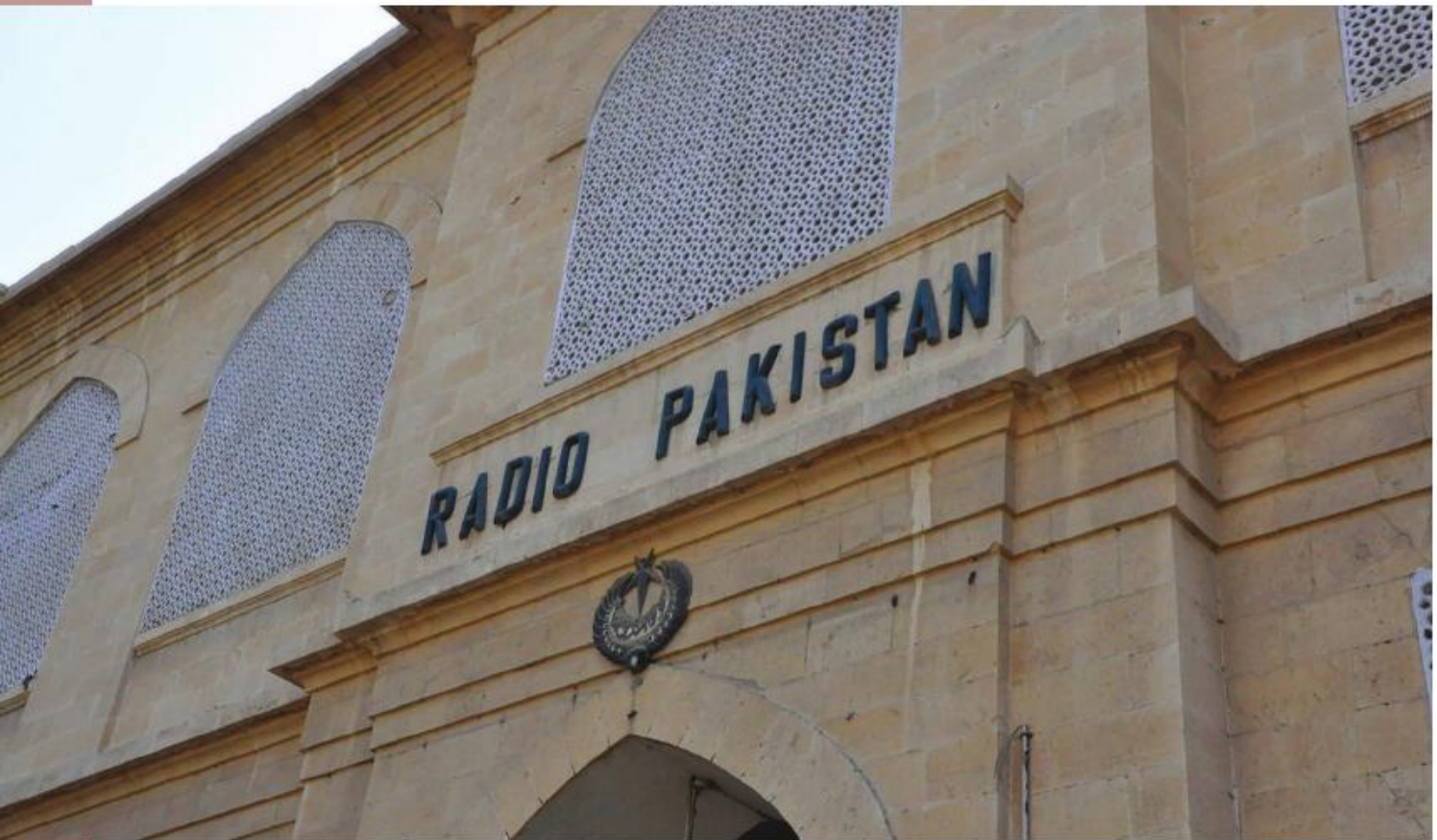
Music is a very important part of the socio cultural milieu in Pakistan. It has a distinct sound which is the result of multiple influences. There are various genres of music in Pakistan including classical music, folk music, pop/rock music, qawwalis and film music.

A wide variety of instruments are used in Pakistani music. Some of them are Algoza, Bansari, Been, Chimta, Dholak/Dholki, Dhol, Drums, Guitar, Harmonium, Rubab, Santoor, Sarangi, Sitar, Shenai, Tabla.

Pakistani pop music is immensely popular in the subcontinent. Nazia and Zohaib Hassan and more recent modern pop singers have made international waves. Singers like Ali Zafar, Hadiqa



Bhangra Dance, Punjab



Radio Pakistan

Kiani, and Atif Aslam are immensely popular in Pakistan and abroad as well.

Qawwali is also very popular in Pakistan. Famous Pakistani qawwals like Bakhshi Salamat, Aziz Mian, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Sabri brothers have brought home international fame because of their skillful performances.

CINEMA

Pakistani cinema is literally rising from its ashes. The industry once produced 80 films every year, but due to Zia ul-Haq's strict policies, it collapsed in the 80s and 90s.

After years of producing low budget C class films, it raised its head in around 2010. Now films are being produced regularly, some of which have earned huge returns on the box office. Some of the Pakistani New Wave films include Khuda Kay Liay, Bol, Zinda Bhaag, Waar, Karachi Se Lahore, Na Maloom Afraad, Shah, Main Hon Shahid Afridi, Manto, Teen Bahadur etc.

The documentarian Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy's second Oscar award win in 2016 has given a hope to aspiring filmmakers also. Though Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy is a documentarian, her Oscar winning streak has brought Pakistan and Pakistani filmmaking in the spot light.

All concerned parties are doing their best to support the Pakistani film industry. New cinemas, use of digital equipment for filmmaking and cheaper distribution with DCP compliant cinemas will help in the resurgence of the Pakistani cinema.

RADIO & TV

Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PCB) or Radio Pakistan is the state owned mass media corporation of Pakistan. It provides various radio services and news in different languages.

PCB's purpose is to educate people regarding Pakistani and its culture as well as spreading awareness about "health, education, environment, population welfare, agriculture, special persons,

rights of women, human rights, minorities and media freedom”.

Numerous FM radio channels are also providing various radio services to Pakistanis. Amongst them are FM 100, FM 101, City FM 89, FM 106.2, FM 101 Quetta, Smile FM 88.6 Haripur KPKetc

Pakistan Television Corporation or PTV is the state run TV channel. PTV started its broadcast in 1964 and for years it monopolized the television market. In 2000 this monopoly ended when there was a boom in electronic media in Pakistan. Many channels started their broadcasts and gained greater political influence in country's political spectrum.

Some have also captured the entertainment market in Pakistan and abroad. Pakistani dramas and programs have gained huge following all over the world. Some of the popular news and entertainment channels in Pakistan areARY News, Dawn News, Duniya News, Geo News, Samaa TV, ARY Digital, Express Entertainment, Geo Entertainment, Hum TV, Filmmazia Entertainment etc.

PERFORMING ARTS AT NATIONAL COLLEGE

National College of Arts has been playing a tremendous role in promotion of Performing Arts in the country. The NCA has formulated different societies to present and promote appreciation of Music, Drama, Theatre and Mime. NCA conducts workshops and performances by nationally and international acclaimed musicians and performers to provide an opportunity for performing art lovers to appreciate and admire different forms of artistic abilities.

These societies provide a perfect platform to their members to show their talent and interact with people having similar interests. But do keep in mind that the amount of hard work and time you'll have to put in would be immense.

We list some of the popular societies of the NCA.



Headquarters, National College of Arts, Lahore



Rashid Mehmood starred as 'Fakir' alongside Shafaq Yousuf as 'Munni' in Sammi Di Vaar staged in Lahore, 2015.

THE PUPPETEERS

The Puppeteers specialize in puppetry. Over the years, the society has used various forms of puppetry. The repertoire of puppetry techniques used by the puppeteers includes string puppets, Road puppets, shadow puppets and Muppets. The puppeteers specially design and fabricate their own puppets for every performance.

UNDRAAP NEXUS

Undraap Nexus specializes in mime and has been instrumental in popularizing the genre in the country. The members are trained in the discipline through rigorous exercises conducted during workshops.

Depending on the nature of the narrative, the society utilizes the various styles of the art from such as pantomime, street mime and sometimes cartoon caricatures to illustrate the story.

NOTANKEE

Notankee is a society that focuses primarily on slapstick comedy. They develop their exercises through improvisational theatre exercises. This experimental style of theatre mostly borders on the absurd.

THE SKITS SOCIETY

The Skits Society is responsible for the most awaited performance at the summer and winter festivals. The skit performers learn to keep a keen eye on College activities and individuals with caricature potential. The result is the equivalent of a facial gossip column reporting on the goings on in the college.

ALIF ADAB

Established as a serious Urdu drama society, Alif Adab has evolved into a vehicle for multiple theatrical techniques. Its performances vary

greatly in subject matter ranging from serious Urdu drama which is revisited from time to time to sarcastic comedies to murder mystery theatre.

Their plays are rendered using a wide array of theatrical techniques. The society is known for its remarkable production quality and attention on detail. Primary aim of Drama Society is to create a climate in which students are encouraged to act and improve their skills. By staging plays regularly, the NCA hopes not only to develop a theatre-going habit among the students but also to motivate them to turn their attention to writing exclusively for the stage.

N.T MIME

N.T Mime has diversified repertoire of theatrical styles. The society develops its performances using various techniques such as dance, shadow puppetry and performance art blended with mime.

DRAMA SOCIETY

The society uses dance as a medium of artistic expression. A variety of dance styles such as

Kathak, Modern Dance and Flamenco are used by the society. Their performances are synchronized and entertaining. Luddi,

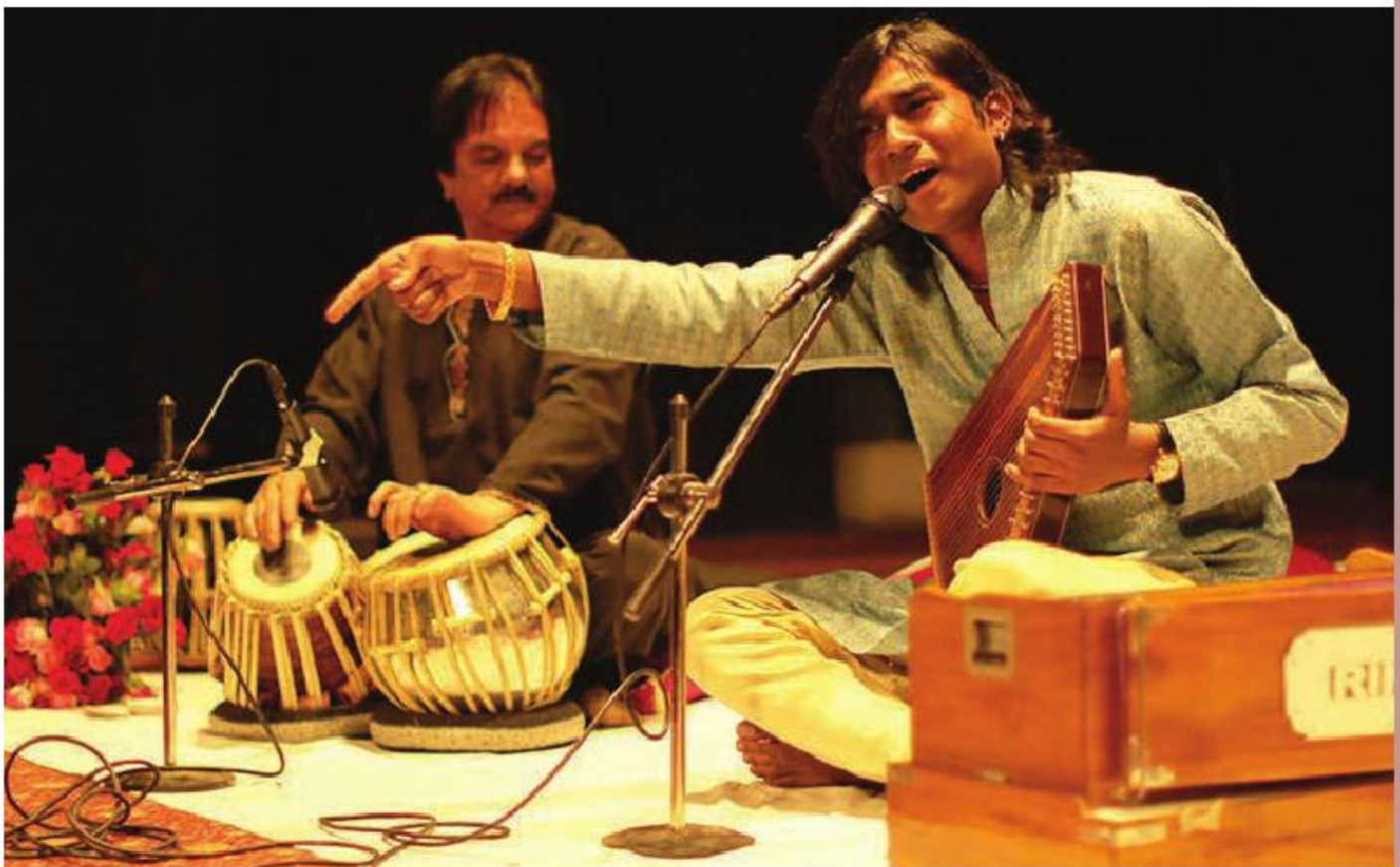
EASTERN MUSIC SOCIETY

Members of the Eastern Music Society play Eastern classical and folk instruments as well as

Western instruments used in contemporary Eastern Music. The performance range from Eastern classical and Folk Music from various parts of the country to Film and Pakistan pop.

WESTERN MUSIC SOCIETY

Members of the western Music Society sing and play instruments in the Western Music tradition such as drums, keyboard and guitars. The genres mainly focused on are Pop, Rock and World Music. The society is formed of a core team of musicians, students join them as vocalists and guest musicians on the College festival.



Prominent eastern classical vocalist, Shafqat Ali Khan, at a musical event in Pakistan National College of Arts, Lahore, March 2016



13th Youth Performing Arts Festival at Alhamra Cultural Complex, 2014



Minar-e-Pakistan with waving national flags

THE END

The end is the filmmaking society. Often employing nothing more than handy-cams and a

computer, the society uses old fashioned camera tricks and digital editing tools to produce their films.

CINE CIRCLE

Cine Circle is a film club that organizes regular screenings of documentaries, indigenous

and foreign films, with the aim of critically analyzing and studying the techniques of filmmaking. Film screenings are followed by discussions. The society has a large and growing film collection, accessible to its members.



PTV **A WAY OF LIFE**

JAFFER BILGRAMI



Azhar Aslam, PTV Managing Director

Pakistan Television popularly known as "PTV" is the biggest media organization of Pakistan. The journey of PTV, which spans over six decades, has been full of excitement as well as challenges. Exciting for those who viewed the programs and challenging for those who ran the network.

There is no doubt that PTV has been a trend setter in the annals of electronic media of Pakistan. The network created numerous milestones by fulfilling the aspirations of the nation in the moments of trials and tribulations. The network played an important role in projecting and highlighting the country's ideology, history, culture, traditions, civilization and heritage in a most befitting manner. No other medium of mass communication gained as much popularity and so rapidly in Pakistan as television did.

PTV emerged on the media landscape of the country on the 26 November 1964 in the historic city of Lahore when an experimental transmission from a small pilot television station beamed black and white signals. To follow the suit a similar project was initiated in Dhaka (former East Pakistan and

now Bangladesh) as a part of expanding network.

Three years later in 1967 Pakistan Television was instituted confirming that television has come to stay in the country for all times to come. Over the next decade leading up to 1974 PTV kept on gaining strength to strength. With each passing year the network consolidated its stellar position on air waves. Experimental pilot units were converted and upgraded into full-fledged modern television stations while new television stations were put on the map across the country. The new centers were located in Rawalpindi/Islamabad, Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar. This period of development and progress is often described as the golden era of PTV. The decade brought new technology, modern equipment, high tech studios and above all higher benchmarks of professionalism.

As it progressed all the centers were synchronized through microwave link rendering PTV status of the first terrestrial channel in the country enlarging the reach of the viewers to the 90 per cent of country's population. Growing out of its formative mold PTV entered into the decade of eighties

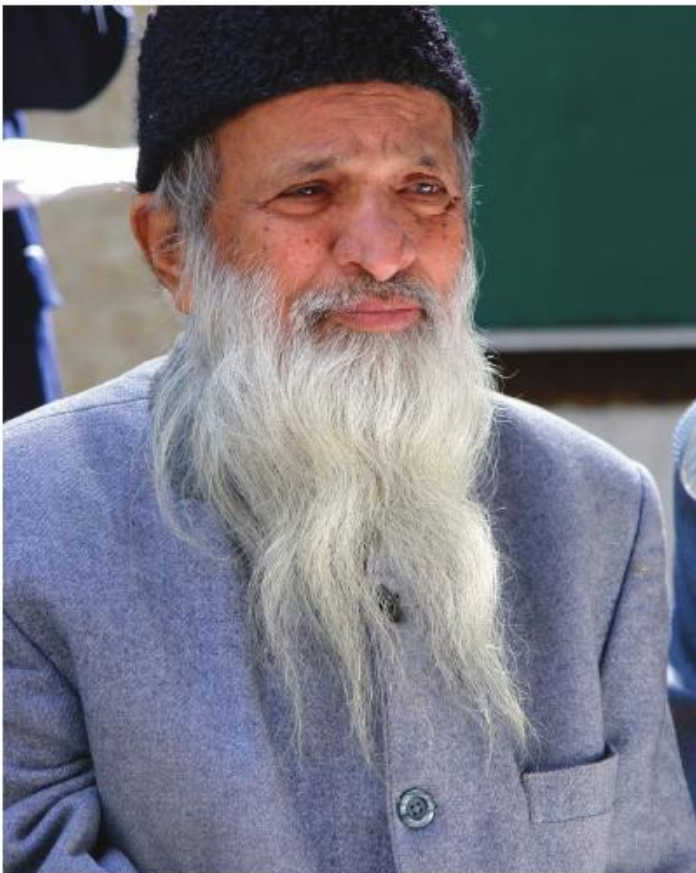
with poise and confidence. Color transmission was introduced in this decade adding more gloss, glamour and vibrancy on the screen.

Given the status of an autonomous public sector broadcaster with a responsibility to provide public service broadcasting, the professionals at PTV pursued and implemented the given mandate with great motivation, zeal and enthusiasm. Programming of the network was carried out keeping in view the basic ingredients of policy ensuring information, education enrichment of knowledge, and purposeful entertainment and above all promotion of national outlook and integration. The policies of PTV remained consistent.

However PTV's policy on its journalistic segments comprising of News and Current Affairs programming faced the onslaught of criticism from media as well as other public forums on the ground that their programs were not objective and instead it was more of mouth piece of the government propaganda machinery.

It is the entertainment side of programming particularly the in the genres of Urdu drama which excelled and brought great amount of glory and incredible popularity to PTV. Urdu plays created milestones in the social and cultural life of the society. They promoted artistic and literary activities and gave an outlet for intellectual pursuits to writers, poets and other creative professionals. There is an enormous list of block buster Pakistani dramas which not only captured the attention of domestic viewers but also earn accolades from other countries. Riding on a wave of glory PTV's plays and sitcoms captured mass viewership and a huge following again not only within the country but abroad particularly among diaspora. Equal excellence was witnessed in other programs like music, quiz shows, audience participated shows, documentaries, religious talks and comedy shows.

Another best thing which can happen to any upcoming television network was the presence of some very talented and creative professionals. PTV in that sense was extremely lucky to have the services of some outstanding producers, writers, designers, cameramen and other supporting staff.



Abdul Sattar Edhi



Abida Parveen

They were energetic and dedicated. A good working atmosphere prevailed in PTV from the day one with a burning desire on the part of all producers to churn out best programs. The pioneering team made another vital contribution when they established a chain of command by bringing group of dynamic producers and creative persons to join their fold. Television was declared as a way of life for them. If any one who can earn laurels for infusing such a culture in a media organization was no one other than Cambridge educated Aslam Azhar. As a member of the pioneering team Azhar along with his fellow colleagues steered PTV on the path of a very progressive and vibrant channel. Aslam Azhar who passed away in recent month was an iconic personality with irrepressible dynamism. He spearheaded PTV for a good number of years and took PTV to new soaring heights of fame.

As a national broadcasting institution was always mindful to cater to the needs of all strata of society hence while conceiving program planning various factors were taken into account ranging from language, ethnicity, rural and urban population and notwithstanding gender groupings. Though difficult, PTV always maintained a balance in meeting the taste and requirements of its viewers that represented a cross section of the society.

Anywhere in the world, sport is a fascinating subject for telecasting and therefore PTV was never an exception. The Pakistani nations love towards sports particularly the game of cricket needs no further elaboration. PTV sports department with linkage on satellite covered international

sports events and cricket fixtures from remote destinations.

Television industry of Pakistan transformed in the year 2004 when the monopoly of PTV started to fade with the emergence of private media houses that came on the landscape following the government decision to liberalize the electronic media industry. PTV as a robust organization with a rich and glorious past accepted the challenge.

As a mother institution PTV is guarding its charter in a changed atmosphere by engaging itself in the sphere of education, information and wholesome entertainment. True to its traditions the channel continues to inculcate the nation about greater awareness of history, heritage and global issues.

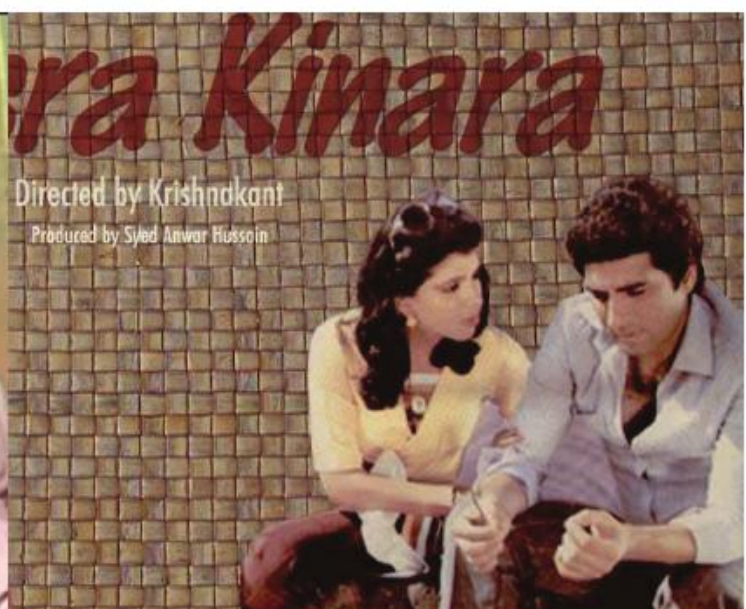
The list of accomplishment of PTV is ever increasing with many new milestones. Centers at Karachi, Lahore, Quetta and Peshawar, are prized possession while PTV Training Academy, dedicated news channel of PTV News is there that works round the clock and offer English and Urdu news to worldwide Pakistani community. Bulletin of regional languages are also the responsibility of this channel. It also produces news in Arabic.

PTV National caters local needs while PTV Home is aimed for family entertainment.

Foot prints of PTV Global can be seen in fifty countries of different continents PTV Sports a dedicated sports channel is the most popular channel.



Quraish Pur, a distinguished intellectual and host of the popular Pakistani quiz show 'Kashti'



Poster of the Pakistani film 'Teesra Kinara'

**PAKISTAN
NATIONAL
ACADEMY OF
PERFORMING ARTS**



NAPA headquarters

The vitality of a nation and the mark it makes on its people's consciousness and the rest of the world can only be gauged when its artistic and cultural expression comes to the fore.

These were the prime objectives before the founders who established National Academy of Arts in the city of Karachi in 2005.

According to founders, the ambition was to train the students imbued with sense of culture so that their creative talents could be directed towards discovering the expressions worthy of Pakistani culture and heritage.

Today, the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) is the only conservatoire in the country teaching performing arts. The Academy is managed by a Board of Directors of prominent personalities belonging to a wide range of fields which include finance, public administration, management, marketing and visual arts.

Located in a historical building in the heart of Karachi, NAPA building itself is a landmark. NAPA

faculty members are some leading artists hailed by the world of performing arts who have performed within Pakistan and abroad. The presence of such personalities in the campus marks an endless passion and commitment to the performing arts.

At the time of inception, the core objective was to provide the highest caliber of artistic education to the youth across the country in the field of music and theater arts.

It was the wish and desire of those who established the Academy that young men and women should enroll at the academy in their chosen discipline and obtain training in such a manner that they achieve their fullest potential as artists, leaders and citizens.

By doing so, NAPA aspired to restore the sanctity of the professions related to performing arts.

Two separate core teams of practicing experts got down to devise a curriculum for theater, arts and music.

Keeping in mind the intellectual level of the entrants, efforts ensured a course which could prepare the students to embark on successful careers. The programs were designed to inculcate, amongst students, a sense of culture, worthy of their heritage.

After three years of rigorous training at NAPA, most of the graduates will be employed to pursue their respective careers in the field with requisite professionalism and confidence.

The contribution made by NAPA in the promotion of performing arts is acknowledged by the civil society. Many daily newspapers have, on different occasions, appreciated the efforts being made by NAPA. The dramatic and musical presentations of NAPA have also been widely recognized. The performing arts activities at NAPA have generated a fair amount of interest amongst the foreign diplomatic missions.

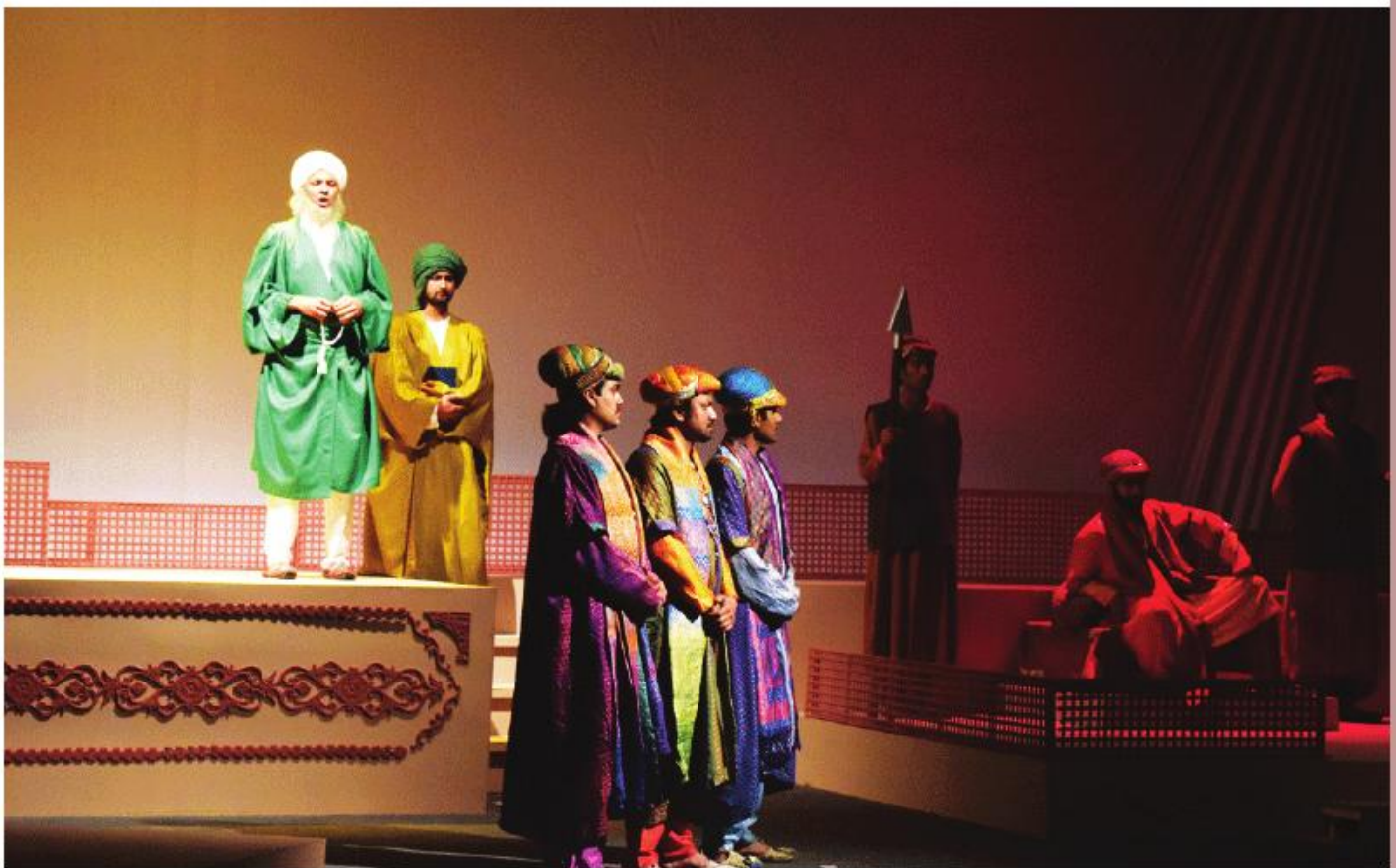
Several performing artists of Karachi have performed at the in house theatre of NAPA. The visiting artists also held workshops on

drama, dance and music providing necessary international exposure and broadening horizons. The collaborative concerts and performances with the overseas artists have also gained momentum with every passing year.

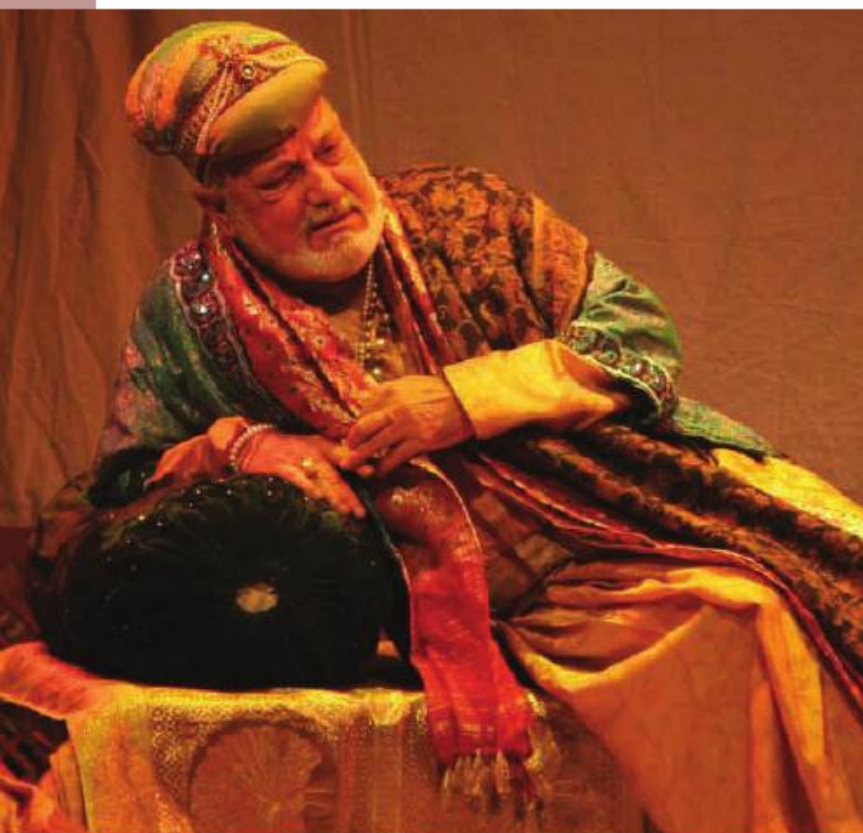
The ongoing partnership program with Butler School of Music of University of Texas, Austin funded by the US State Department has started showing results benefiting NAPA students and faculty members both. The relationship between UT Austin and NAPA was grounded in mutual intellectual respect and sensitivity to the relative strengths of each institution.

This interaction has enabled NAPA to further improve its teaching programs and courses. It is strongly felt that the job at NAPA is being carried out well.

Directors on the Board of NAPA are always mindful of the significant work which NAPA is doing to bring peace and harmony in the society at large, besides providing training in the field which had been neglected in the past. The approach and



4th NAPA International Theatre Festival, photo by Zoya Anwer



guidance of NAPA Board of Directors is a source of strength. With the help of Board, NAPA is actively pursuing the following goals for the future and these goals are based sustainability and self-reliance:

- To continue to elevate educational and artistic standards and also to remain responsive to changing conditions in the global community of performing arts
- Continue to attract and retain renowned faculty members in all disciplines of performing arts and give them the environment ideal for artistic activity
- To make all out efforts in shaping the future of performing arts by providing exemplary arts education so that graduate students serve the society as a true representatives of artistic community



**TAJIK CINEMA &
THEATER***



Lahuti Drama Theatre, Dushanbe

November 7 is the Day of the Tajik theatre. The archaeological findings confirm the existence of centuries-old traditions in the national arts dating back to the antiquity and Middle Ages.

Tragic and comical theatrical masks, statuette of maskharaboz (national actor - comic) were found in medieval settlements of Sughd and Bactria. The performance skill of the story-tellers of sacred histories (maddoh) was highly appreciated at the court of the governors.

By the twelfth century, Omar Khayyam reported on the existence of a popular puppet theatre, *zochabozi*. Certain theatrical elements can be found in peasant songs connected with popular customs and traditions, such as the spring festivals of flowers, and in pantomimes.

Maskharabozes (buffoons) performed oral traditional theatre on various holidays in remote settlements and large cities utilizing music, dance and storytelling which were very popular for their comic and sharply satiric art. Welcomed at weddings and Muslim holidays such as Ramadan

and Qorban, their art reached its developmental peak in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The grotesque, exaggeration and buffoonery were major components of the Maskharabozes' acting.

Other indigenous forms included comic sketches, humorous stories, fairytales, fantasies and songs as well as works of classic poets. In addition, actors would also play musical instruments, dance, perform acrobatics and improvise pantomimes for audiences of several hundred at a time. Musical theatre (mainly singing-dancing groups of the Pamirs) and choreographic theatre have also survived to date.

The evolution of theatre and drama in Tajik culture also has much in common with Uzbek tradition and, during the twentieth century, with Russian theatrical art.

During the first decade of XX century, amateur theatres appeared in Central Asia, and in 1919 professional theatres of European schools were founded in Kanibadam, Istravshan, Khujand and

Isfara.

The first modern amateur groups appeared in Dushanbe in 1927. Their repertoires consisted of propagandistic plays about life after the 1917 Russian Revolution.

In 1929, first Tajik State Drama Theatre (now Tajik Academic Theatre named after A.Lahuti) was opened in Dushanbe.

In the beginning, the state theatre staged mainly Russian plays in translation. The first play by a Tajik dramatist to be performed was 'Struggle', a drama about the Red Army. Written by the actor A. Usmanov, it was produced in 1933. The première of Schiller's 'Perfidy and Love' (1937) was the first attempt to stage a world classic. Other early landmark productions included 'Men With Red Batons' by Satim Ulugzade, 'Rustam and Sukhrob' by Abdushukur Pirmuhammadzoda and Shakespeare's 'Othello', staged during the ten-day Festival of Tajik Arts and Literature held in Moscow in 1941.

Realistic acting, based on the Stanislavskian identification of each actor with the dramatic

character played and the creation of true-to-life images came to predominate in the theatre by the late 1930s.

In 1940 on the basis of the Tajik musical theatre, the Theatre of Opera and Ballet named after S.Ayni was set up and the world fame was brought by a star of international ballet, the great Tajik ballerina, Maiika Sabirova (1942-1987).

The years of the Great Patriotic War (1941-5) saw a number of modern national plays infused with a fervent patriotic feeling. 'Nadir's House' (1943) by Jalal Ikrami and Alexei Faiko, 'Mother's Heart' (1942) by Ikrami and 'In the Flames' (1944) by Ulugzade exemplified the hard work and mass heroism of the battlefields and reflected the image of a multinational Soviet people.

Tajikistan, as in other Soviet Asian republics during the war, became a home for theatres from other parts of the USSR. Leningrad Theatre of Comedy, headed by Russian director Nikolai Akimov, worked in Dushanbe throughout this period of occupation. A more heroic style of work was seen in productions such as 'Fuente Ovejuna' by Lope de Vega, mounted by Leningrad director



A play at Tajik Opera and Ballet Theatre named after Aini

V.Kantsel with Sofiya Tuiboieva in the main role and Shamsi Qiyomov as Frondoso.

However, comedy, rooted in 'maskharoboz', remained closer to the Tajik nature than realism or heroic-romantic pathos. Such comedies as 'Maisara' by Khamza and the lyric-satire 'The Five Ruble Bride' by Mamed Ordubady were major successes.

Tajik theatre also continued to develop in the area of musical drama using domestic characters and a lively sense of humour, and such plays remained in the repertoire of many companies during the war years. Meanwhile, Molière's 'Imaginary Invalid' (1944) shaped the national taste for more classical comedy. The State Theatre production socialized the story with Argan becoming an egoistic and careless bourgeois.

In the post-war years, the State Theatre—now known as the Lahuti Theatre—turned to foreign and Russian classics, staging such plays as Schiller's 'The Robbers', Shakespeare's 'Hamlet', 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'Othello', with Mohammadjon Qasymov in the title role, and Revizor (The Government

Inspector) by Gogol.

Also seen were plays rooted in folklore and historical productions such as Alisher Navoi (1949) by Uzbek playwrights A.Uighun and I.Sultanov.

In the early 1950s, national playwrights attempted to reflect contemporary life in plays such as 'Iskateli' (Searchers) by Ulugzade about geologists but most such works met with the disapproval of critics. Since that time, most Tajik playwrights have rejected plays whose conflicts are too clear or sharp. The result has been many conflictless plays about farmers and the intelligentsia, all without action or interesting characters. One of the few new themes had to do with the fight of Tajik women for equal rights and the prosperity of collective farms, both seen in 'Woman's Will' (1962) by A'zam Sidqi.

In the 1960s, dramatists began to reflect a more private life and to focus on the individual within the larger social unit. Domestic comedies proved popular and included Cost: '30 Kopeks' (1961) by Qiyomov and Muhyiddin Farhat and the extremely optimistic 'Sparkling Pearls' (1962) by Ulugzade



A play at Tajik State Theatre of Musical Comedy named Kamal Khujandi (Khujand, Tajikistan).

which used young people as main characters. Plays about the Revolution and the Great Patriotic War with their larger-than-life heroes and stereotypical images of enemies were also in the repertoire.

The documentary play 'Storm' (1967) by Ghani Abdullo and Qiyomov dealt with opposition to the Red Army by the basmachi bands during the 1922 civil war in central Asia. The isolated Tajik theatre, after 1956 and into the 1960s, could barely keep pace with contemporary tendencies in political, social and artistic life taking place in the Soviet Union, the years of Khrushchev's thaw. The cult of Stalin's personality was unmasked at this time, condemned and soon became part of the country's tragic history.

More democratic tendencies, however, encouraged all Soviet nations in the 1960s and gave them the hope of long expected societal changes for the better. No noticeable achievements in artistic life reached or directly impacted the Tajik theatre, however.

None the less, the period saw the restoration of many national names which had been wiped out by Stalinism during the 1930s and 1940s. Tajik scholarship also corrected and rehabilitated falsified biographies of older poets, philosophers, humanists and thinkers charged with being Tajik nationalists. New, more objective research by orientalists also became very important in the new evolution of a strong national identity.

This in turn led to a number of biographical plays devoted to prominent people. 'Rudaki' (1958) by Ulugzade, devoted to the 1,100th anniversary of Abu Abdullo Rudaki, founder of Tajik-Persian classic literature, was the first in this genre. Mounted at the Lahuti Theatre by Mitelman with a spectacular set design, the play, with Asli Burkhanow in the title role, focused in poetic language on the social and religious conflicts of the time revealing the tragic history of Rudaki as poet and humanist.

Even Shakespeare's 'King Lear' (1957) with Qasymov in the title role, was produced by the Lahuti Theatre as a poetic Tajik fairytale about a father whose madness and hard heartedness led to his tragic fall. The production was successful despite its old-fashioned, declamatory performing style and its attempt to reflect socialist realism as demanded by the Communist Party in 1946.

In 1959, the Lahuti Theatre company was

reinvigorated by a new group of graduates from the Tajik Studio of GITIS (State Institute of Theatre Arts, now the Russian Academy of Theatrical Arts in Moscow) led by Olga Pyzhova and Boris Bibikov. In 1958, a Youth Theatre was established by a group of Tajik students graduating from the Shchepkin School in Moscow. Within a short time, however, this group merged with the Lahuti company. This new generation of actors and their more restrained acting style demanded a new repertoire that was more poetic, psychological and intellectual. One of their first successes was the exotic, Italian theatrical fairytale 'The Stag King' by Carlo Gozzi, a production influenced by Evgeni Vakhtangov's famous production of 'Princess Turandot'. For the audience it was a meeting with an unknown, spectacular world full of love, envy and brave fantasy. The young actors were skilled in mime, rhythm and gesture and to some it was a reincarnation of the ancient Tajik 'maskharoboze' tradition.

The production 'Rustam and Sukhrob' (1967) by Abdullo, mounted by F.Alexandrin and Kh. Abdurazzakov, became a sample of the possible fruitful cooperation of different generations.





A play at Parastu Theater Festival, Dushanbe

This was not a remount of the theatre's 1941 production but rather a new interpretation of the heroic-tragic stories from Ferdowsi's 'Shahnameh' epic, emphasizing anti-war themes.

Tajik theatre at this time also tended toward the poetic as in 'Goranka (A Mountain Girl)', (1961), a translated drama by Dagestan poet Rasul Gamzatov. Director Mitelman combined romanticism with realism, comedy and tragic tension.

The 1960s marked a period of interest in Indian dramaturgy; 'Oblation' (1959) by Rabindranath Tagore set the tone. Later 'Woman from Punjab', 'Sonni' and 'Makhival' by B. Garga were all staged, as were translated plays from the other Soviet republics. By the early 1980s, there were eleven theatre companies in the republic staging dramas, musical comedies, opera, ballet (Aini Opera and Ballet Theatre in Dushanbe) and a theatre for young audiences. 'Perestroika', however, barely reached Tajikistan even by the early 1990s. With the dissolution of the USSR, state-supported theatres suddenly had to look for sponsorship. Some succeeded; some did not.

Since 1988, the annual theatre festival 'Parastu' (Swallow) has helped energize theatre life in the republic. The festival has also encouraged new groups to be formed and has led to the decentralization of theatre life, earlier concentrated in the capital.

Economic and political problems of the first year of independence (1991) did not prevent a cultural revival in Tajikistan. In 1989, Malika Djurabekova opened an experimental folk-ethnographic theatre-studio. Shortly after, 'Nowruz', a central Asian theatre festival, became an annual event. By the mid-1990s, a new direction was clear. For decades, the official position was that the smaller republics received their theatrical cultures from 'elder sister' Russia. This influence was obvious and the best national artists were graduates of Moscow theatre schools.

By 1995—with a rise in national self-consciousness—the most interesting productions were turning back to indigenous traditions and were opening up newer aspects of national culture. This process was occurring in all the former Asian

Soviet republics. A production by Tajik director Farukh Qasymov of 'Yusuf the Lost Will Return to Kanaan Again' was awarded the Grand Prize at 'Nowruz-90', and was probably the starting point for this widespread trend.

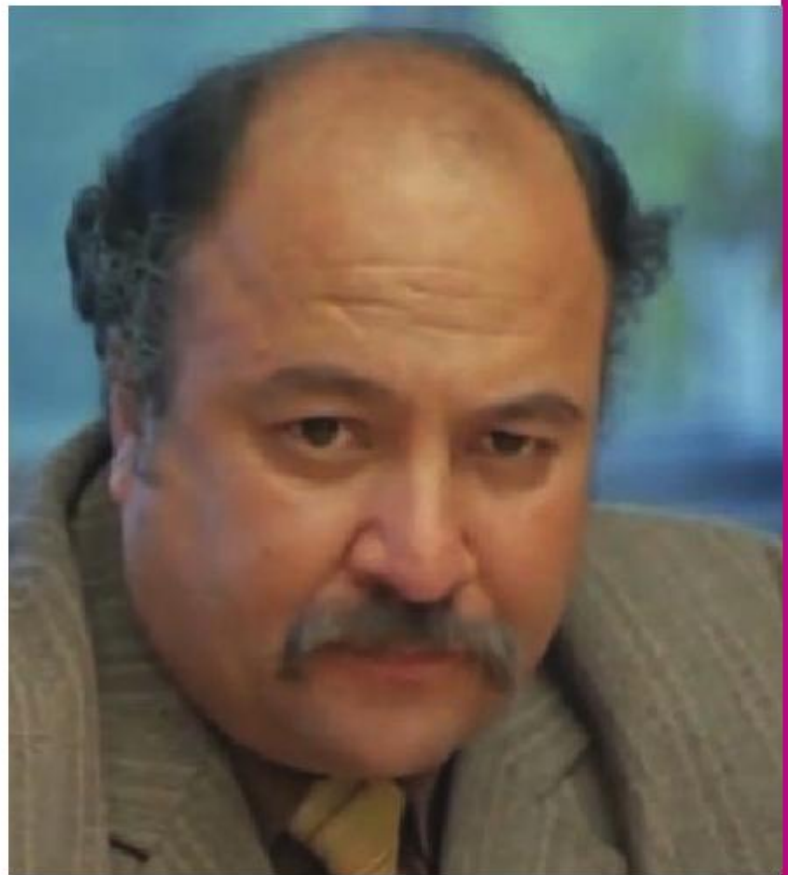
It is impossible to overestimate the significance of this event. It assimilated earlier pre-theatrical forms, rituals, folklore, poetry and other elements of national art and culture. The metaphoric language of these forms was transformed into modern theatre language and became part of a reconstruction of the national spirit. Rich in Tajik-Persian poetry, this performance told of the loss of spirituality and beauty. It encompassed not only art, but also real life.

The Rudaki Khorogh Theatre in the mountain town of Khorogh was ruined in 1991 after an earthquake but the company continued to work under extreme conditions without theatre premises. Despite this misfortune, the group took part in 'Parastu-91' in Kulob with a new production, 'Zir O Bam' (Sound and Rhythm). Director M. Mazabshoyev—utilizing primitivism as well as theatrical minimalism—created a musical-dramatic poem celebrating a culture born through an unbreakable connection between humanity and nature.

At the touch-point between indigenous music-dance traditions and later styles of national dramaturgy came a new type of performance tending towards the recognition of problems utilizing parable or a pointed grotesque. 'Fishor' (1989) by S. Ayubi, staged by Mirzovattan Mirov at the Valizade Kuliab Theatre of Musical Comedy is a good example. Its aesthetics were innovative in the country as well as fruitful as later productions proved.

A sharply dramatic play, 'I Am a Murderer' (1991) by Nurullo Abduloyev, revealed a range of national characters and relationships in both their domestic and ethical aspects. The director and main performer, Ato Mukhamedjanov, effectively mined this rich psychological material and successfully mounted it at the Lahuti Theatre.

In the 1990s, theatres suffered a great number of problems. Unfortunately, the civil war terminated what promised to be the beginning of a real theatrical revival. Lost were theatres such as the Akhorun—headed by Farukh Qasymov, famous for his production of 'The Firebugs' (1989) by Max Frisch—a theatre that fought to save national



Ato Mukhamedjanov

traditions and freedom of consciousness. Also lost was the Theatre Studio Poluostrov (Peninsula) of director Borzu Abdurazzakov, who had been praised by critics for his productions of 'Glass Menagerie' (1989) at the Lahuti Theatre and 'Antigone' (1990) by Jean Anouilh.

He was a winner of 'Parastu-90'. A graduate of GITIS and a student of outstanding theatre masters such as Maria Knebel and Anatoly Efros, he developed the tradition of highly psychological theatre. His work examined personality through conflicts and the realities of the time, while resisting spirituality. In his extremely theatrical production of 'Sultan Is Sultan' (1991) by Syrian playwright S. Vannus, at the Valizade Kuliab Theatre of Musical Comedy in the city of Kuliab, he utilized the method of 'theatre in theatre' wherein the actors played a comedy about the impersonality of power and highlighted the joyful absurdity of collisions emphasized by carnival elements in the performance—the theatre's way of laughing and speaking ironically about the people and their rulers.

This director's style produced various results



A scene from Tajik film 'Kosh ba Kosh'

in family stories. In 'Small Apartment with a Big Balcony' by Georgian author Sh. Shamanadze staged in the Poluostrov, the director sympathized with the exhausted people in the play who, forced by circumstance to live together and share their hard routine, were too familiar to millions of families. These productions were events of social significance.

The outstanding Tajik figures of theatre H.Gadoev, A.Burkhanov, M.Kasimov, M.Vakhidov, F.Kasimov, T.Fazilova, A.Muhamadjanov, A.Bobokulov, H.Mavlanova, O.Sabzalieva, L.Zahidova, B.Abdurazzakov and many others have won broad popularity in the country and abroad. Youth Theatre named after M.Vakhidov and puppet-show "Lukhtak" continue to bring up new generation for substitution.

Many well-known dramatic masterpieces of A.Pushkin, M.Bulgakov, G.Anuya, Dramatization Durrenmat, M.Frishi, I.Babei, and also Tajik plays are staged in the Russian Drama Theatre named after V. Mayakovsky.

TAJIK CINEMA

The history of the Tajik motion picture industry began during the concluding years of the 20th century. The first film was shot in 1929 and the first full-length silent films such as 'Honorary Right' and 'Emigrant' by K. Yarmatov, 'The Alive God' by M.Werner etc. appeared at the beginning of 1930s:

In 1935, the technology of sound cinema was mastered and some significant works such as 'Garden' by N.Dostal or 'The Friends Meet Again' by K.Yarmatov were created.

The epic 'Destiny of the Poet', a classic of Tajik cinema by Benjamin Kimyagarov, received the 'Golden Eagle' of the Cairo Film Festival. 'Banner of the Smith' (50-60s of XX century), 'Legend of Rustam', 'Rustam and Suhrob', 'Legend of Siyavush' (in 70s), have also won many prestigious premiums.

Late in 70s and early in 80s, the Tajikfilm studio considerably extended to host more talented

artists. A film-studio alongside with the association 'The Game cinema', 'Cinema periodicals', the association of 'Nonfiction film', was set up which have enrolled well-known cinema producers.

During the 80s, the Tajik film produced lots of interesting, experimental films, which have won prizes at international festivals" 'Adonis XIV', 'Clay Birds', 'Tornado' and 'Imam al-Bukhari' by B.Sadykov. Along with it, the new short films successfully were screened on the international stages such as 'Waking Dream' by S.Hakdodov, 'Well' by J. Usmanov.

However, the magic of Tajik filmmaking comes not just from the films themselves, but in the obstacles they have to overcome.

Tajik cinema since the civil war is a unique phenomenon. During the four years of war, the film industry ceased to exist in Tajikistan. Today, practically most Tajik films are made outside the country.

Every director of documentary or feature films creates this thin ephemeral substance called "nation." Every film, like a piece in a mosaic,

contributes to forming one complete view of a country and its people.

Very few films were shot in Tajikistan during the 1990s, but every one of them has its special place. 'Kosh Ba Kosh', directed by Bakhtiyar Khudoinazarov, received the Silver Lion Award at the 1993 Venice Film Festival, Distribution Help Award AT Fribourg International Film Festival (1994) and was nominated for the Young European Film of the Year the same year and put Dushanbe on the map.

A Dushanbe of romantic lovers and random gunshots during the hours of curfew, of funiculars-lovers' hiding places--and corpses floating in a city canal. Most important, there are real passions and deep feelings. It turns out that war and love can coexist.

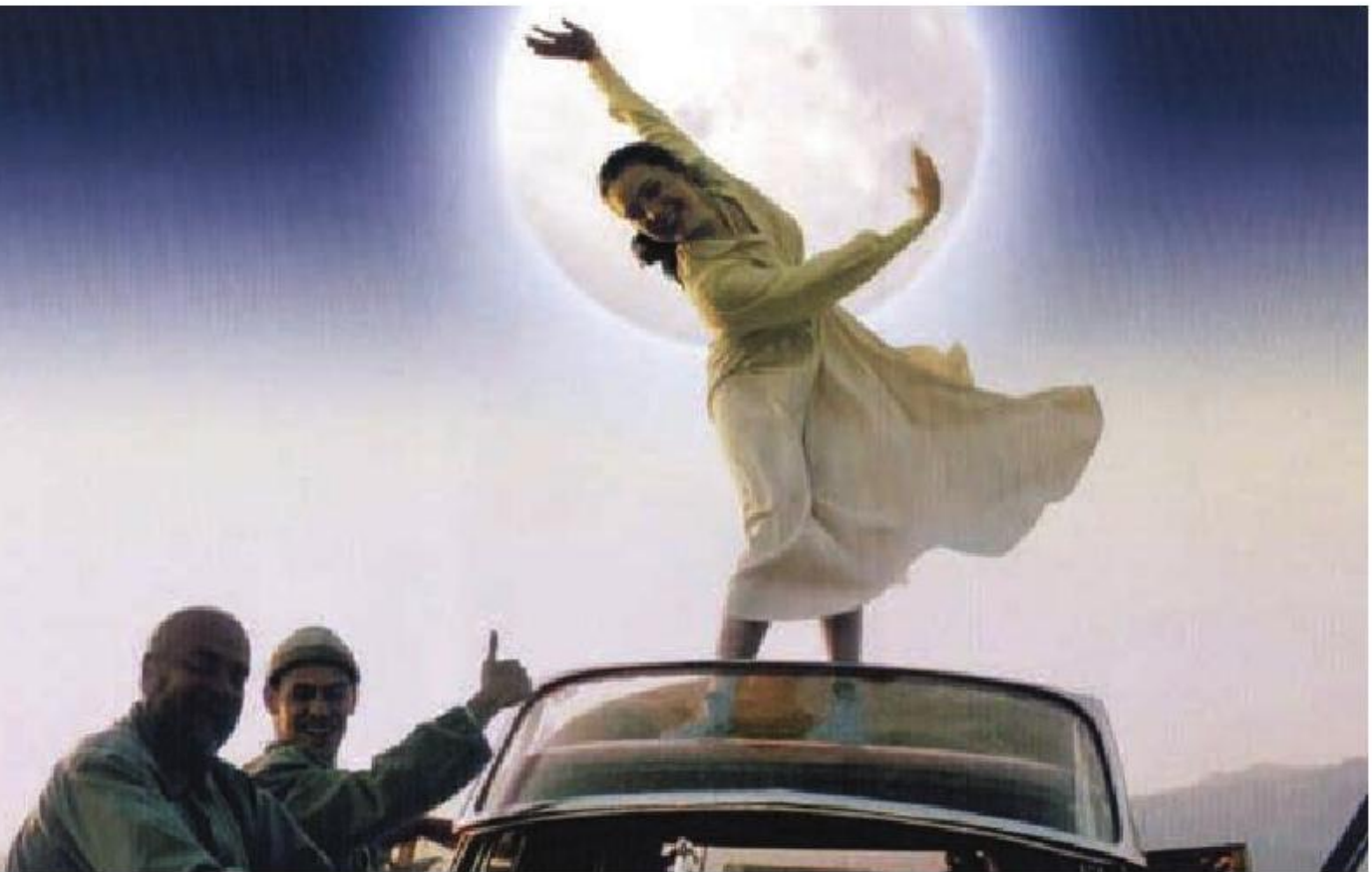
Tolib Khamidov's film 'The Presence' (1995) was shown in the Forum section of the Berlin Film Festival. It communicates the same complex atmosphere of desperation and hope in the lives of people living under the conditions of civil war. The protagonist, an intellectual young man, frequently



Bakhtiyar Khudoinazarov in 2015



Tolib Khamidov



Khudoinazarov's 'Luna Papa' movie poster

looks through an album of famous French photographs. The images convey lightness and harmony, and represent for him a desired paradise.

Both these films could be said to express a pro-Western mentality. This is not necessarily true of all Tajik cinema: Jamshed Usmonov's 'Flight of the Bumblebee' (1998), for example, is geared towards the ethnic and traditional planes.

Documentaries, too, may reveal their author's mindset. 'The Business Trip' (1998), by Mairam Yusupova, was shot in the manner of Russian documentaries--minimal production values and precisely detailed observations--and as a result, a post-Soviet city rises before our eyes. 'The Return' by Farkhad Abdullayev (1999) looks more like a television report: Asian male faces in Afghan scarves, life in refugee camps, traditional long robes for men, colorful kerchiefs for women, and their return--not to their city apartments, but to huts in remote mountain villages. Orzy Sharipov's 'Sweet Motherland' (2000) idealizes the traditional Tajik lifestyle and creates nostalgia for the lost

harmony in life.

Tajik cinema of the first decade of the country's independence is a direct reflection of the situation in a country torn by war and its consequences. Besides reflecting various levels of reality, this cinema surveys moral coordinates and ethical values by asking the eternal question: "What is Motherland?" Then, at the end of the '90s, Khudoinazarov's *Luna Papa* came to the screen and displayed its eclectic image--like life itself.

Today, the Tajik cinema is known all over the world. For the last decade, cinema producers of the country have won numerous awards abroad (Venetian, Moscow, Berlin and other film-festivals).

*Compiled from relevant sources on the subject including:

- The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre", Volume 5, Asia/Pacific, Ed. Don Rubin, Routledge, 2005;
- Tajik Cinema: A View from Outside" by Gulnara Abikeyeva, a film critic from Kazakhstan. She earned a doctorate from the VGIK film school in Moscow, and has worked in Kazakh film and television. 'The Heart of the World: Films from Central Asia' is her third book.

REFLECTION OF TURKISH CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THEATERS

PROF. DR. SEVDA SHENER

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The article is the courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey, Tehran.

TRADITIONAL SOURCES

There are three different performance traditions in the history of our theater: Theatrical peasant plays, traditional folk theater, western theater. Peasant acts, such as cantabile, dance rituals of civilizations which date back tens of thousands years and animations in seasonal rituals which were organized in order to affect natural events, diversify its root motif of "Death and Revive" and add current issues of time, has survived but didn't evolved. In spite of drama which derived from rituals in the western world, constituted theater art of modern world by progressing in time, ritual extension peasant acts were played for having fun colloquially and sometimes for referring to abundance bringing functionality.

These acts brought to light by researchers were examined in their roots, issues, characteristics and

purpose of acting under the name of "Theatrical peasant plays" and shows that there was a rise in performance culture in Anatolia and that could be evaluated as convenient environment for theater art progress. We know, ones who try to solve problems of today's theater scrutinize the source of this art and remark supplement, vitalize characteristic of that art at the beginning.

When consider the fascination effect of theater which includes dream and reality, prudence and excitement, rationalist explanation and mysterious intuition together, today the belief of its ability to direct society by real functionality which includes in its roots become widespread.

For that reason, theatrical village plays which were performed in special days for fun and were gradually forgotten in our day but are still important as a research and examination fields and studies are being carried out in our country as well as in the world for these sources.



A page from '1582, Surname-I Humayun, An imperial celebration' (1997, page 31) by Nurhan Atasoy & Robert Bragner, depicting a performance at an Ottoman festive ritual



Karagoz and Hacivat Shadow Theatre



Play types came from different sources and developed by acclaim of the majority in Istanbul such as encomiastic, Karagoz shadow, low comedy are examined under the name of "Public Theater". Traditional folk theater types which have 300 years of history couldn't develop after the mid-19th century due to adopting new theater approaches and became a droning fun which repeats itself and gradually fade from the scene.

Looking to the last samples we received, we notice in these type of plays following methods are used; play on words such as misunderstanding, repeating, using villagism, misleading, entailing as situation comedy, dropping oneself, beating, as move comedy, incompatible, strict, defective, awkward, obsessional, decadent and different ones are punished, so undertake to keep theater organization, have the laugh on strong ones especially administrators as a joke and create a free environment.

Either theatrical village plays or traditional folk theater products are historical matters with the realities reflected in scene and value judgment which they represent. Also form characteristics

of public theater types which are still important as research matter still functionalize as source of inspiration for our actors, some of our directors, our authors by word skills.

Our dramatists who process our realities with methods of world theater forming methods and performing artist utilize sometimes from traditional folk theater writing, presentation and acting methods. It could be said, there is a continuousness which extends up to our day in sense of humor of traditional public theater.

MODERN TURKISH THEATER

Turkish theater developed in the direction of Western theater since 19th century. This theater approach which become known with the performances in Istanbul by famous communities from Europe, resulted in the first productions of Armenian communities, participation of local actors, establishment of new communities, foundation of theater buildings and the most important with the contribution of our authors who are conscious of social responsibilities became stronger.

In spite of existing only comedy type acts in our public theater culture, it was observed that modern theaters give place to serious issues and constitute a widespread theater literature from tragedy to melodrama, morals up to character comedy. The most significant feature of Tanzimat and constitutionalism period theaters are usage of authors this art as an effective education tool and uttering hopes and disappointments of societies in their plays.

By the foundation of the Republic of Turkey it was evaluated as a part of cultural movement by protecting the national independence principle developed as reaching modern level and as their own cultural, political, social condition sources in European communities.

Adopting cultural innovation in foundation years of Republic as a government policy and protection of theater art by the government as a superstructure, played an important role of our theater.

It is known that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk attached great importance to theater and approached

theater actors with affection and respect. Enlightening and civilization causer theater ideal which was adopted by Republic made actual by the strives of Muhsin Ertugrul who managed Istanbul City Theater and State Theatres for long years and ones who set hearth on this art.

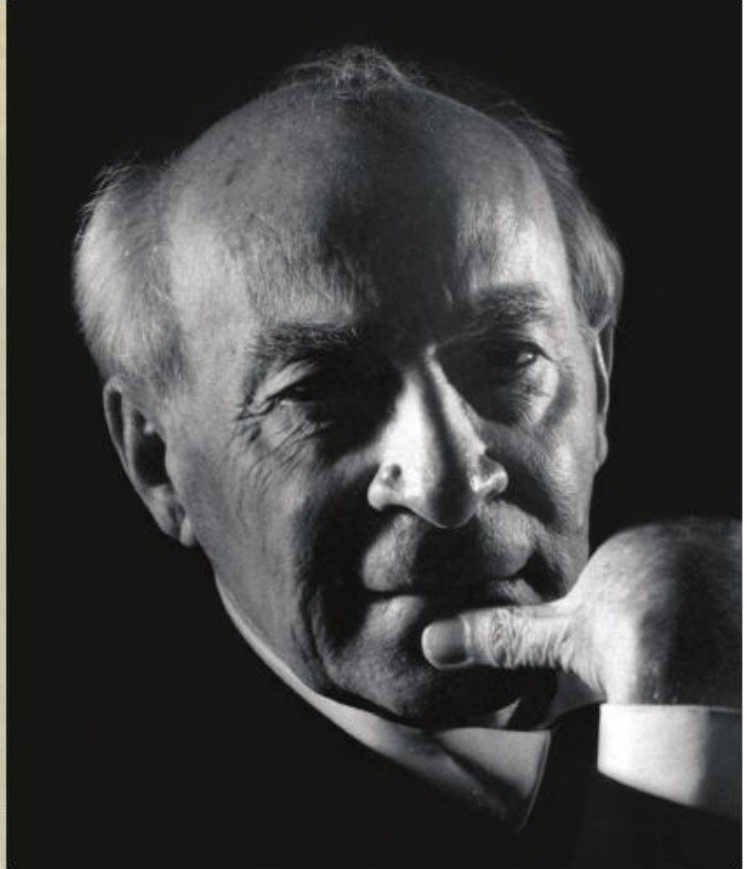
After prevention of the appearance of young actor Afife Jale "because a Muslim woman cannot perform", firstly Bedia Muvahhit (31 July 1923), appeared encouraged by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Izmir and realized one of the most important developments in our theater.

After Daruibeşdayi which was designed as a theater school in 1914, than transformed into theater company with municipality allowance, state conservatory connected with National Education Ministry was established in 1936, first time in order to provide acting training systematic and German Carl Ebert was assigned as manager.

After State Conservatory's first students graduated and go public between the dates 1941 and 1947 on state conservatory praxis scene, by entering into force of State theater and opera



Bedia Muvahhit



Muhsin Ertugrul



Ankara Opera House (Opera Sahnesi) is the first among three opera and ballet venues in Ankara

law, we saw state conservatory was established, Muhsin Ertugrul was assigned as general manager instead of Carl Ebert who returned to his country in 1947 and performances were given starting from 1949.

One of the important developments on behalf of theater art in the Republic was materializing "community centers project". The number of "community centers" which were established in 14 provinces, first in Ankara in 19 February 1932, increased by time and spread around the country for all provinces and some districts.

Knowing public culture closely, providing information exchange, eliciting national values, modernizing national culture and art in the light of western world accumulation of knowledge was being targeted with the community public project.

Theater works had an important place among the applications of these institutions, theater stages were opened in several provinces and presentation branches were founded. Stopping this common

culture movement during the Democratic Party period affected the development of theater the country.

Our first locally supported theater Daruibedayi, after the unsteady period which was lived at the beginning started to recuperated, developed and provided satisfactory presentations at the end of thirties. Name of Daruibedayi which was collecting regularly allowance from Istanbul Municipality was changed as City Theater in 1931.

It was observed some plays such as; light comedies, musical plays besides classic, romantic, plays and Shakespeare tragedies of western theater and works of local authors were played in the stages established connected to City Theater.

One of the important stages in the development period of our theater was works of Children's Theater which started in 1935 with the attempts of Muhsin Ertugrul.

On the other hand, private theater communities

established in the foundation period, performed on stages which were transformed from cinema halls, moved from one building to other one, trying to survive with tours organized in Anatolia started to solve the problems sourcing from the economic conditions of war period at the end of thirties. These communities presented generally light plays, musical comedies, operettas.

Second half of twentieth century was the spurt year of our theater. Mobility was observed in stage applications and playwriting, from fifties up to seventies. Grand Theater (Buyuk Tiyatro) came into service in Ankara in 1948 after Small Theater (Kuchuk Tiyatro) and Third Theater (Uchuncu Tiyatro) and Chamber Theater (Oda Tiyatrosu) in 1956.

Management of Ankara and Izmir Municipality Theaters assigned to State Theaters, Ahmet Vefik Pasha Theater connected to State Theaters was established in Bursa and after the second year of establishment of Bursa and Izmir State Theaters, children's theater started. After opening of Istanbul Kultur Sarayı, the construction took twenty three years but in 12 April 1969 completely burned in a

fire, reopened for service in 1977 under the name of Ataturk Kultur Merkezi by reconstruction. From that day to this, a fine cultivated play selection consisting of local authors and western classical plays were applied in State Theaters.

Istanbul City Theater was living its days of glory during these years. Eminonu Theater and Yeni Theaters which are connected to Istanbul City Theater were established in the fifties. Muhsin Ertugrul who was assigned again as the general director after a while he quit from it, attached importance to open city theaters, so, Kadikoy Theater was opened in 1960, Uskudar and Fatih Theater were opened in 1962, Rumelihisari Summer Theater was opened in 1962, Zeytinburnu City Theater was opened in 1965.

In these theaters plays of young authors of period were performed, Shakespearian tragedy and comedy works were seen too. The 400th birth anniversary of Shakespeare was celebrated by 5 plays of the author in the same season.

It was seen that political unsteady situations, conflicts sourcing from ideological differences



Opening of the Int'l Aspandos Opera & Ballet Festival at Izmir State Opera & Ballet



Adana Metropolitan Theatre (Turkish: Buyukshehir Tiyatro Salonu) in Reshatbey neighborhood of the city of Adana.

and military coups affected allowance theaters and suppressed private theaters, caused discontinuance for playwriting. This fruitless period passed gradually and striving to generate theater plays for the necessities of public and modern theaters and especially State Theaters played an important role in spreading theater country-wide.

State Theaters founded in Adana in 1985, Trabzon in 1986, Diyarbakir in 1988, Antalya in 1993, Sivas, Erzurum, Van, Konya in 1997. Ankara, Bursa, Izmir and Istanbul also these State Theaters lengthen to their environment and enlarged.

The enlargement of this state subventioned institutions caused problems in generating quality productions, and the necessity of a new theater law reached a consensus, even reconstruction demand was born. In spite of many problems, the State Theaters keeps its characteristic to contribute our culture and art life countrywide.

Unsteady fluctuations in politic area affected Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality city theaters too. It was seen that the administration which is

connected to Municipality was affected from part policies, even personal preferences of managers; some changes which affected functionality of the theater were made, the change of managers in short times became a routine.

With a new legislation prepared in the seventies, even Tepebashi, Harbiye, Fatih, Uskudar, Kadikoy City theaters started to work as separate units in the administration of young artists, but this experience was not succeeded due to internal conflicts and Muhsin Ertugrul who aimed to spread theater by moving to coffeehouses, sport halls was obliged to resign.

After the fluctuations in the level of management, the assignation of Gencay Gurun as General Art director, this organization made a new break through. Even today, this oldest subventioned organization is seen to be solving the problems besides trying to increase audience number by applying a better play selection.

In order to provide economical support to private theaters which constitute an opposite option

for subventioned theaters with regular studies, subventions were provided for these organizations by Ministry of Culture starting from eighties, it was seen these communities had difficulties to solve economic problems, avoid expensive investments and obliged to play with few number of actors. In contrary, numbers of special communities which seek for new way outs and perform specific experimental works are increasing.

Important development which was observed in recent years was protection of theaters by local administrations. It was observed that they attempted to establish their own theaters, since the forties. Numbers of these attempts which were long term or short term increased gradually. Successful works in theaters connected to municipalities of Izmit, Eskişehir, Samsun, Ordu, Diyarbakir, shows new horizons are opened for theater art.

PLAYWRITING

It was seen our dramatists are in tendency of attracting the interests of audience to social problems in the Republic as in the past periods.

Moral corruption observed in the society, conflicts between different social or political views, negative effects of change of live style in families constituted the major themes of plays written in thirties and forties.

While this was explained with the opportunist approach created by capitalism and war economy by the socialist authors such as Vedat Nedim Tor, Cevdet Kudret, Nazim Hikmet, conservative authors such as Necip Fazıl Kısakurek explained the problem in the corruptive approach of "westernization".

In these plays, story was fictionalized as emphasizing the main theme, effective events such as homicide, death, suicide was used and persons of play were grouped as good and bad. The prime samples in comedy were by Musahipzade Celal and in drama by Reshat Nuri Guntekin.

Playwriting showed breakthrough in the fifties and sixties. As in the previous periods, moral breakdown, illegalities in convenient environment, imitating European life style without adopting essential humanistic values of Europe, negative effects of chaos in family relations constituted the main theme but new problems were brought forward too.

As in the plays of Cevat Fehmi Başkut, some plays handled the situation of middle class, brave civil servants, small artisan, workman, women, and children, realities in rural areas, injustice and inviting audience to consider vain struggle of wealth and passion; plays which took their subjects from history, legends, tales, and rural areas.

Plays which affected audience with exiting conflicts substituted by plain fiction which resembles daily life. Our dramatists who adopted socialist world-view, socialist realist art approach, applied epic writing method instead of classical method in plays with political messages.

Great authors such as Haldun Taner, Turgut Ozakman, Gungor Oilmen adopted open and exhibitionist model, known from Public theater.

Melih Cevdet Anday, Oktay Rifat Horozcu, Adalet Agaoglu, Sabahattin Kudret Aksal, Orhan Asena, Turan Oflazoglu, Necati Cumali produced successful plays by using classic fictionalizing method. They have been followed by new generation dramatists



Reshat Nuri Guntekin

such as Oktay Arayici, Vasif Ongoren, Bilgesu Erenus, Ulker Koksai, Tuncer Cucenoglu, Dincher Sumer.

There has been discontinuance in playwriting starting from eighties when the political pressures were intensified. Some successful dramatists of sixties and seventies verged to other literary branches or confined themselves with a few new play types.

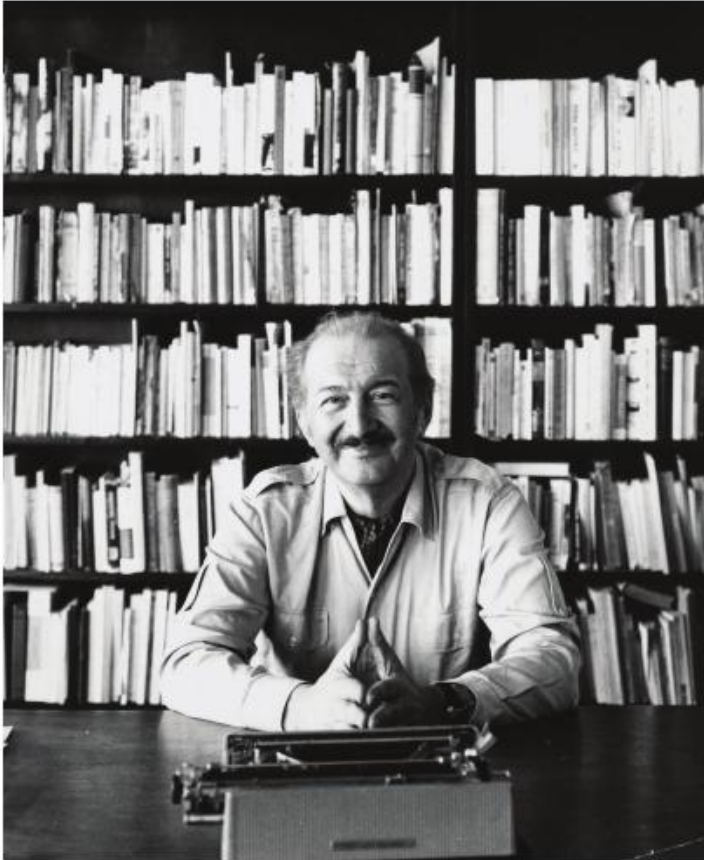
In contrary we saw some of our authors wrote pioneering pieces or absurd samples, they wanted to look behind the seen, in addition to our authors who like to continue their realist line. Murathan Mungan and Mehmet Baydur have been the authors in that period.

Instantly new generation authors such as Behich Ak, Ozen Yula, Civan Canova shined. In the recent plays, investigation of the inner of the individual, mental problems, seeking for the common reality of human in the track of past were seen. More than focusing a determined message, plays where problems are versatile discussed are being produced.

Tendencies which shines out in directing was seeking for new expression possibilities instead of word or sound plus word, movement, images and utilizing new possibilities such as light, set design, physicality of the actor.

In this field, our directors such as Yucel Erten, Bashar Sabuncu, Mehmet Ulusoy, Mustafa Avkiran, Ayshegul Shamiloglu, Ishil Kasapoglu, Shakir Gurzumar, Mahir Gunshiray, SHahika Tekand remarks specific interpretation and remarkable stage applications.

When we consider this development process which I have summarized the important stages, we saw our theater was affected strongly from western theater movement, our dramatists followed some notable examples of western plays, but our own realities were reflected gradually too; in the selection of subject and the conflict of relations, in the structure of dramatic situations specific to us by using traditional figural characteristics and the driving power of traditional folk theatre are more considered.



Haldun Taner



Ozen Yula



Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, statesman, diplomat, playwright and translator, Ahmed Vefik Pasha



A scene from Feraizade Mehmet Shakir's play

REFLECTION OF OUR CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THEATERS

When we approach the subject besides handling our theater with reality of our people and social problems or effect of traditional play types to our modern theater with the our perspective towards the life, our life type habits, values judgment representing in theater some samples which could be characterized as reflection of our cultural identity confront us.

These samples don't observe our own realities and problems, our watching habits, our sensitiveness but also we comprehend the cultural accumulation specific for us. Several samples exemplified for "cultural identity" reflection in theater. I would like to handles those which would be beneficial to discourse.

Works where our value judgments are placed

in to the plays which were adopted our language directly or imitated in Tanzimat reform era, constituted interesting examples of intersection of western culture and local culture in the same play. Adaptations of Ahmet Vefik Pasha, Ali Bey, Teodor Kasap from Moliere, types of characters of play, their attitudes are placed as making felt our people at their home, while some emotions were adopted as proper as our lives, we saw the events are interpreted accordingly our value judgments and their family relations were modified according to our family relations.

For example, while dramatic nodes were solved according to intelligence and logic in Moliere plays which are the perfect samples of western culture comedy, on the adaptation of these plays to our language, we observe the inevitableness of destiny was emphasized. While especially the solecism of (city) middle class was object of derision in the plays of Moliere, in local adaptations, frailties and mistakes of commoners are discoursed. In this sense, Moliere adaptations of 19th century are

interesting samples where intersection of two different cultures is shown.

Important comedy author period, Feraizcizade Mehmet Shakir, in spite of using fictionalize technique of western theater in his plays which effect of Moliere comedies are clearly seen, selected the characters of play from the local people and care not to be contrary to our family relationships.

Play of author was named Evhami and it resembles to Le Malade Imaginaire valetudinarian play of Moliere and carries the effects of Tartuffe, Skapen's Cupboards (Les Fourberies de Scapin) plays of Moliere.

But while a smart servant girl knock the bottom out of plans of Doctor who exploit the patient of Moliere who defeated to fear of death in the play of Feraizcizade, the duty of make the things right was given to the young officer fiancé of girl of house.

A shy servant who can't afford to change the course of events substituted with smart servant

girl. Bringing a hetaera stronger than the master of house whatsoever a smart girl she was will not be proper in the Ottoman culture should have been considered.

A woodenheaded butler is substituted the smart butler of Moliere. Even the butler from Kastamonu notice the trick of fake doctor, he can't afford to tell this situation to his master. Unique appreciation what author provided for him was, rescue of punishment and marriage with the girl at the end of the play.

On the other hand, Cleante who was the smart guy of home in the play of Moliere transformed in to jester who was the popular character of Evhami. One of the functionality of that idiot guy in the play was incurring responsibility of his father who paid the heavy price for the bullshits of his son.

Author added to the play a first wife who was dismissed with insults from the home and tried to protect the authority of master of house by this way. Another new character who was added to the play was, mistress of fake doctor who was the source of his regret at the end of the game.



Feraizcizade Mehmet Şakir Theater



A scene from Feraizcizade Mehmet Shakir's play

ŞAIR EVLENMESİ ŞİNASİ



Ibrahim Shinasi's 'Poet's Marriage'

Showing remorse of sinner woman and selecting the right way was a situation which is used in our theater either it create a dramatic affect or liked.

Another interesting sample where the different cultures intersect in our theater was the popular stage implementations known as "Improvisational Theatre" in constitutionalism period. In improvisational theatre serious matters which were transferred from western theater are placed with improvisations in light comedy; events such as betraying, murderer and exiting such as love, regret passion are warped and caricatured, play was being enlivened with songs and dances.

Even Improvisational theatre type was already fading from the scenes other samples could be exemplified from those days up today for traditional entertainment culture.

We saw, laughing situations in western culture were exaggerated with improvisation existing in our sense of humor in popular plays of our day. Even Namık Kemal who considers traditional types

primitive and rude and against to playwriting in light comedy type placed a supporting character which was named Abdullah Chavush and represents public culture in "Vatan Yahut Silistre" named romantic drama and hic repetitive cues such as "Does Break Lose" symbolized our sense of humor and softer dramatic thrill.

We remember mixture of sense of humor specific to us and irony art masterfully and it is useful to evaluate this as a part of entertainment culture which was developed in cities. So we have had been protected a durable option against the thick and rude humor sense which was started to become spread in our day.

The earliest sample in plays of modern Turkish theaters about the living conditions of public or culture of public was "Poet's Marriage" of Shinasi which was written in western style for the first time in our history. In this play, neighborhood was fictionalized parallel to 'Hard Marriage' of Moliere in form and substance but also evoked the subject of marriage but Karagoz play hardly reflected our

neighborhood life.

Play characters that constitutes public of neighborhood, either smack of tracks of light comedy with typical features and manners and shows us neighborhood living style was an important and strong structure which could interfere to the life of individual in Ottoman period. Raid of a home where there are amoral activities are thought to be actualized in by the youths of neighborhood is handled one of the rude applications of that neighborhood power mentioned above.

Author approaches to the young people who constitute choir of play with criticizing and represents the intellectual culture which he was also included in and conflict with the traditional culture of period.

In late periods as in Poet's Marriage, some plays were written where different types of society were gathered together in the same place and reflecting colorfulness of society.

In these plays where people have closer

relationships in common living areas such as streets, neighborhoods, squares, traditional Neighborhood Culture transformed into entertaining and dry humor type.

So the watching approach within traditional public theater line with collective image constituted by different groups in respect to age, gender, social position, occupation, ethnical origin and missing emotion have been uttered by living together with differences in public.

Vicinage, friendship and amity relationships which gathers together neighborhood people in plays constitutes an opposite option for the emphasizing in western theaters where individuals are shown as alone, communication difficulties and derealization.

Musahipzade Celal, gathered the specific ottoman society people from different sections of society with specific clothes, attitudes, in common gathering areas such as street, neighborhood, bazaar, resort area, garden etc. and created colorful moving tables in plays named: Macun Holkasi, Kashikchilar, Kafes Arkasinda, Bir Kavuk



A scene from 'Istanbul Efendisi' play



Nazim Hikmet

Devrildi, Balaban Aga plays.

These plays which witnessed our old society living culture were fictionalized as to reflect our sense of humor approach. In the stage applications of these plays, producers, decoration, costume, light, artists should collaborate with author in order to create neighborhood, bazaar, street views in the stage. Today some creative directors transformed these new specific models to stage and they catch the success.

On the other hand in the plays which were written by Nazim Hikmet in thirties, he criticizes these kinds of social sections. Author collected some characters which were criticized by him in the play 'Bir Olu Evi' (A Funeral Home) which was staged in Darulbedayi and tried to remark moral corruption in the society with their behaviors contradicts by the funeral home situation and seriousness. Author also collected another criticized group in a ball room in Kafatasi (Skull) play.

These spoiled people who collected their wealth with illegal ways cause the death of daughter of doctor Dalbanezo protagonist of play by teasing her.

Purposes in these plays are not entertaining the audience with colorful images and humorous speech and crowded stages but to reveal the covered double-dealing which is common in social relationships.

Reshat Nuri Guntekin, also broken narrow frame family drama fictionalizing, as in the stage where daily life of shore town in Eski ark1 (Old Song Play), attracted the attention for collective living. In the stage of Retirees Coffeehouse in the play of Yaprak Dokumu (Fall, Loneliness and Desperation) of customers are driven forward on the contrary pleased friendships stages which were seen on the plays of Gul and Gonul (Rose and Heart) of Musahipzade in Semai coffeehouse.

We encounter the best samples of social relations plays where neighborhood, district, bazaar, street places in the acts which were written after fifties. These stages will utter the missing that society seeks for traditional living culture and they have been fictionalized as conflicts that occurred due to that kind of living type causes. Living spaces such as ferry quay, neighborhood coffeehouse, district pharmacy, charcoal, where several people stop



A scene from 'Ashkımız Akşaray'ın En Büyük Yangını' play



A scene from 'Yedi Kocalı Hurmuz' comedy play

by and have friendships together were animated in the plays of; Ahmet Kutsi Tecer-Koshebashı, Oktay Rufat Horozcu-Bir Takim İnsanlar, Haldun Taner Fazilet Eczanesi-Keshanlı Ali Destani, Turgut Ozakman-Fehim Pasha Konagi and Bir Shehnaz Oyun, Refik Erduran-Ayi Masalı, Orhan Kemal-Ispinozlar, Oktay Arayıcı-Seferi Ramazan Beyin Nafile Dunyasi, Gungor Dilmene-Ashkimiz Aksaray'ın En Buyuk Yangini, Meymet Baydur-Yangm Yerinde Orkideler.

These stages of our authors will include well-adjusted people in some plays and dramatic conflicts in some other plays and they will be fictionalized as involving entertaining patterns. Koshebashı, Bir Takim İnsanlar, Fazilet Eczanesi, mirrors the solidarity living condition of Istanbul society.

Events were moved to slum district and instability of people who moved from rural area to city but did not adopted city living conditions in Keshanlı Ali Destani.

In the plays which reflect social life such as

Fehmi Pasha Konagi, Gozlerimi Kaparım Vazifemi Yaparım, Ashkimiz Aksaray'ın En Buyuk Yangini it is senautohors approached to living type of ottoman by criticizing as well as affectionate. Plays where different type people from different social sections show value complexity and moral corruption in Ayi Masalı, Yangin Yerinde Orkideler, Nafile Dunya plays.

In our modern day theater when we consider alienation of individuals are shine out as a problematic of modern western theater we can evaluate our plays are the private products of our people common living spaces.

Another sample of reflection of our cultural identity in theaters could be given from the play characters. These typecasting shows how we assess and label people according to their gender, age, occupation.

Reflecting woman typecasting in our theaters as threatening the moral substructure of society, also reflects our opinion substructure in this subject. For example in the plays which were written in the

first periods of Republic, wanton, guilty, sinner woman have been the common material of these plays.

While higher officers are shown as betraying their country and obtain wealth by illegal ways in the plays which were written after Independence War women of this section were criticized due to emulating western world living style, having bad habits, can't prevent sexual passions and damage to his man under the name of Europeanism.

Common woman character of these period, addicted to entertainment, gambling, drinking, dying hairs, applying make-up, bad mother, bad wife, and extensionally selfish, lazy, young girls. In these plays concern about the women if they couldn't use the rights properly given them were reflected in those periods.

We saw the similar negative approach in some plays which were written in forties and after forties. But this time emphasized middle class woman's bad habits were, cupidity, avarice, passion of climbing social ladder, insensitivity towards social problems, self-seeking, trickery, drabness. Intriguer women

of plays which taken their subject from history are included to this group.

Even suffering, exploited and sacrifice position women types were included in our plays or some brave, intellectual women characters were seen especially by our women authors, they are not as much as balancing the negative approach towards the women.

Also animating the women as lovely in plays of Yedi Kocali Hurmuz, Kanli Nigar which Sadik Shendil was inspired from light comedy and Zilli Zarife of Haldun Taner and Direkderarasi of Refik Erduran, reflects hesitant approach of our society regarding the expectations from the women.

We encounter some occupation characters which will be a model for some occupations in our theater. Generally characters included in state servicing group such as soldier, teacher are reflected positively but tradesman such as grocer who are thought to convince the folks was reflected negatively, engineering occupation was reflected positive and advocacy occupation was reflected negatively in our plays.



A scene from 'Kanli Nigar' comedy play

From the beginning in several plays, while modesty, tolerant, satiated people, knowledge, art affection and respect were canonizing, emulating western living type without adopting modern civilization values, so-called intellectuals were criticized.

Our traditional upbringing methods of child characters in thirties, forties, fifties even in sixties are seen in our plays. While well behaved children were being praised, the ones who did not obey the rules were punished.

As mostly in western tales and our legendary, orphan, unhappy, suffering children were discoursed. Starting from the end of seventies exist of child characters in child plays such as character-wise, smart, happy, joyful even guide for elders shows that our value judgment was changing gradually.

Another remarkable point was, in the plays which were written to educate the child, while virtuous child characters were placing, in the plays which were written in order to entertain the children, vigilant, crafty, trickster, child character numbers were observed to be major.

Keloglan and his extension safoglan (poor man), soytari (skomorokh), palyacho (clown), saman altindan su yurutur (the person who does something secretly always). In spite of underestimated at the beginning, than overcomes their opponents by their quick-wit.

This situation shows the discrepancy in society between the ideal values which like to be encouraged and values looked for application.

Several samples could be exemplified for the reflection of cultural features in theater. Important one, while determining those facts, we should discourse our cultural conditioning for reality but not for resemblance to reality.

Even the material of play was taken from reality or it was a fiction, either it was taken from foreigner source, when we mix this material according to our value judgment and habits we have been reflected our cultural substructure and uttered our cultural conditioning.

While adapting foreign plays to our life, adapting human relations according to our measures, reflecting multi relations complex human pattern

of our society and selecting crowded places, to be affected from the value judgments in characters have been handled as such examples of that.

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The historic Evkaf Apartment (1929) is the headquarters of the Turkish State Theatres

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TURKISH STATE THEATERS

As it is expressed in the article of Prof. Sevdâ Shener; the Turkish State Theatre operates as the most prestigious and country wide theatre in Turkey.

The idea of State Theatres, Opera and Ballet goes back to the evening of April 11, 1930 when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk summoned Muhsin Ertugrul and friends to the Marmara Mansion in Istanbul. The founder of the Turkish Republic asked them what support the government could provide for their selfless endeavour in art.

Muhsin Ertugrul, although struggling with many problems in his company, said that his concern is the future and that the foundation of a theatre school is essential.

The following years witnessed the evolution of the infrastructure needed for the foundation of the Turkish State Theatres, Opera and Ballet.

With the instruction of Atatürk himself, a music school according to the norms of the French Ecole Normale de Musique had already begun to educate teachers in 1924. In 1934, the school became an academy, and the German Paul Hindemith was invited to Ankara.

He worked for the foundation of Ankara State Conservatory Department of Music.

In 1936, upon his advice, the German Carl Ebert came and established the Department of Theatre.

In 16 May 1940, with a new law accepted at the National Assembly of Turkey; the school including the departments of theatre, opera, ballet and music become The State Conservatory.

The Theatre Department's first official performance was air Evlenmesi [The Poet's Wedding] in 1939 and the first students graduated in 1941. Since then many theatre, opera and ballet

performances, including world premieres, met the audience.

The most important turning point was in 10 June 1949, when the law passed concerning the foundation of Turkish State Theatres, Opera and Ballet as the cultural institution of the republic.

The principles of the law are as following:

- To contribute to and improve language and culture,
- To enhance love for beauty and country,
- To advance common knowledge of the Turkish society through national and international plays,
- To develop and to explore Turkish Theatre in the country,
- To present Turkish theatre in the world,
- To present the Turkish language in its aesthetic realm,
- To support Turkish culture for reaching judgment abilities based on universal values,
- To improve artistic and aesthetic sense.

In 14 July 1970, with a new regulation in the law, the institution was divided into two new general directories: The Turkish State Theatres and The



A play at Konya State Theater

Turkish State Opera and Ballet.

The Turkish State Theatres adventure is now in its 671 year. Beginning with one stage in Ankara, it evolved into a huge cultural organisation. The general directorate is based in Ankara and consist now of sub-directorates in 12 cities.

- Ankara State Theatre
- Istanbul State Theatre
- Izmir State Theatre
- Bursa State Theatre
- Adana State Theatre
- Diyarbakır State Theatre
- Trabzon State Theatre
- Antalya State Theatre
- Erzurum State Theatre
- Konya State Theatre
- Sivas State Theatre
- Van State Theatre

Except these there are State Theatres in 11 other cities; Gaziantep, Elazığ, Malatya, Samsun, Kahramanmaraş, Çorum, Zonguldak, Denizli, Ordu, Rize, Aydın, for regular touring programmes. Besides regular, regional and international touring

programmes, the Turkish State Theatres provides theatre to literally every corner of the country.

The Turkish State Theatres central organisation consist of three main divisions which are directly bound to the General and Art Director.

- Head of Stage Directors
- Directorate of Art and Technic
- Head of Dramaturgy

To create new repertory and policy with the cooperation of the sub-directorates and to organize the cast and creative team of the performances, the touring programmes, and festivals are the main focus. Each new theatre season, the Turkish State Theatres presents over 100 new plays on 64 venues and with continuing plays this number reaches to 200. Each season, the curtains are raised up 6000 times. The approximate audience number is 2.000.000. The Turkish State Theatres is also organising two national and six international festivals. A national and an international festival is for children and youth theatre.

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS

- State Theatres BURSA, International Balkan Countries Theatre Festival State Theatres-Sabancı International ADANA Theatre Festival
- State Theatres KONYA, "Thousand Breath in One Voice" International Theatre Festival
- State Theatres ANKARA, "Little Ladies, Little Gentlemen" International Children's Theatre Festival
- State Theatres TRABZON, International Black Sea Theatre Festival
- State Theatres ANTALYA, International Theatre Festival

NATIONAL FESTIVALS

- State Theatres VAN AKDAMAR Children's and Youth Theatre Festival
 - State Theatres DIYARBAKIR ORHAN ASENA Turkish Playwrights Theatre Festival
- The Turkish State Theatres is member of the European Theatre Convention (ETC) since 2007.

The website of the Turkish State Theatres provides artistic and technical information. For more information please visit: www.devdiyatro.gov.tr.



**SUFI WHIRLING DANCING OR
THE SAMÂ
PERFORMANCE**

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"Whirling Dervishes: Boy with Bamboo Flute; Sacred Body on Cushion," 1867, by Felix Bofils (National Anthropological Archives)

INTRODUCTION

The origin of Turkish theatre dates back thousands of years to ancient rituals. The dances, music and songs performed during the rituals of the inhabitants of Anatolia millennia ago are the elements from which the first shows originated. These rituals later became theatrical shows.

The whirling dance or Sufi whirling that is proverbially associated with dervishes is best known in the West by the practices (performances) of the Mevlevi order in Turkey, and is part of a formal ceremony known as the Samâ. It is, however, also practiced by other orders. The Samâ is only one of the many Sufi ceremonies performed to try to reach religious ecstasy. The name Mevlevi comes from the name of the Persian Sufi poet Mevlâna Jalâl-ud-Dîn Muhammad (Balkh 1207-Konya, 1273).

The new born Sufi brotherhood called mevlaviye became peculiar in the Sufi world for the importance

that had in its path the practice of music and of various arts, so that scholars defined mevlavi centres (mevlevihâneler) as 'the Conservatories of the Ottoman empire' (De Zorzi, 2009, 145).

A ritual dance was instituted in the Sufi mystical order of the Mawlawiyyah (Mevleviyah) in Turkey; performed by dervishes (members of the mystical order), it is considered to be a manifestation of mystical ecstasy rather than an entertainment or an expression of aesthetic urges (Schimmel, *Britanica s.v. Dance and theatre*). This practice, though not intended as entertainment, has become a tourist attraction in Turkey.

1. The Seldjukids were Turkish people who came into Anatolia from Iran, conquering the Byzantines in 1071 and, in a couple of years, moving all the way to the Aegean coast. Konya, presently a Turkish city, became the Seldjukid capital, where Celaladdin Rumi taught in a madrasa (religious college) under the protection of the Seldjukid Sultan.

ORIGIN OF SUFI WHIRLING THE SAMÂ

The Mevlevi Order (The Mevlevi Tariqa), was founded by the disciples of Jalâl-ud-Dîn Muhammad, in the onetime Seldjukid capital of Konya¹ after his death in 1274. The melevî community recognized Hüsameddin Çelebi as the guide of the brotherhood (tarikâtçı dede). He was followed by the first son of Rûmî, poet Sultân Bahâ-od-Dîn Walâd (1226-1312), who was elected as the successor his own first son, Ulu Arif Çelebi: to him is attributed the codification of samâ that soon was called âyin, âyin-işerif (later mukabele) intended as a remembrance of Mevlâna's first ecstasies. Anâyin became at least a weekly event: the necessity for trained musicians, singers, and semazen is evident and this is the main reason for the above definition of the melevî centres as 'the Conservatories of the Ottoman empire'(De Zorzi, 2009, 151).

THE MEVLEVI TARIQA

In the 12th century, Sufi fraternities (tariqa) were first organized as an established leadership in which a member should have followed a prescribed discipline in service to a sheikh or master in order to establish rapport with him. A member of such a fraternity is referred to as a **dervish**² in Persian. These turuk (plural of tariqa) were responsible for organizing an Islamic expression of religious life, often founded by independent saints or resulted from the division of existing orders. «Each Sufi tariqa stems from a unique silsila, or "chain of order" in which a member must learn, as the silsila binds each member to Allah through one's chain of order. One's silsila extends through the member's individual teacher, to their teacher and so on, through time, until one is connected to the Prophet and thus Allah» (MacDonald, 2009, Sufism).

2. A dervish or darvesh is someone guiding a Sufi Muslim ascetic down a path or "Tariqah", known for their extreme poverty and austerity. His focus is on the universal values of love and service, deserting the illusions of ego to reach God. In most Sufi orders, a dervish is known to practice Dhikr through physical exertions or religious practices to attain the ecstatic trance to reach Allah. Their most common practice is Samâ which is associated with Rumi.

3. In 2008, UNESCO confirmed the "The Mevlevi Samâ Ceremony" of Turkey as one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Samâ³ is the particular ceremony which is a combination of music, movements, poetry and prayers, wearing symbolic attire, as well as other rituals which can be intended as the very particular development of the ancient Sufi concept and practice of samâ'. The Arab verbal noun samâ' can be translated to 'listening, audition' and, in a more historical perspective, to 'spiritual concert'. In dead Samâ is a Sufi ceremony performed as dhikr.

«According to the Sufis, the first samâ'took place before the beginning of Time, when all the souls that would ever live were together, in Union, before Separation. The Creator asked them: 'Am I not Your Lord?' (Alast'o bi Rabbi kumm?) and all the souls answered 'Yes, we testify'(Bâli shahîdna)¹. Such an answer provoked in them an inner state of sweetness and ecstasy, they began to took life and Time began (De Zorzi, 2009, 146)».

"The Samâ means to die in this world and be revived in the eternal dance of the free spirits around a sun that neither rises nor sets. Fana and baka, annihilation and eternal life in God, can thus be represented in the movement of the mystical dance as understood by Rumi and his followers" (Erzen, 2008).

SUFI WHIRLING DANCING

There is one outstanding example of pure dance: that of the whirling dervishes, an art that has been practiced since the 13th century. The procedure is part of a ceremony called the dhikr, the purpose of which is to glorify God and seek spiritual perfection. Not all dervish orders dance; some simply stand on one foot and move the other foot to music. Those who dance, or, rather, whirl, are the Mawlawî dervishes, an order that was founded by the Persian poet and mystic Jalâl al-Dîn al-Rûmî in the 13th century. The performance takes place in a large hall in the tekke, the building in which the dervishes live. In the interior of the Tekke (convent) reigns a shady atmosphere and the soft music of the Turkish flute, Ney, and tambourines. In the center of a circular hall, men clad in black and with long cylindrical hats are bowing towards an elderly man (shaykh) with a white beard, seated with his back erect and his arms crossed. They keep their individual places with respect to one another and begin to revolve rhythmically. They

throw back their heads and raise the palms of their hands, a symbol of giving and taking. The rhythm accelerates, and they whirl faster and faster. In this way they enter a trance in an attempt to lose their personal identities and to attain union with the Almighty. Later they may sit, pray, and begin all over again (Schimmel, Britanica).

Rene Rebetez has a book on Sufism *La Odissea de la Luz* claiming that the rotation of the dance is related to three different movements within the body: One is the movement of the electrons, the other the movement of molecules and the third the movement of the cells. In their electronic structure, humans partake of the sun and of light; in their molecular structure humans are like the planets and thus relate to them while in their cellular structure, humans are like the earth and so relate to the earth. Thus in the way, all these moves with different speeds are harmonized and synchronized in the sacred ritual dance; humans extend themselves from the earth to the cosmos. By moving in space from the center out, they also unite in their consciousness above the space and time and in a way, join the eternal unity of existence (Erzen, 2008).

Three different movements	Relation	Human partaking
The electrons	Emotions	Sun and of light
The molecules	Intelligence or The Mind	The Plants
The cells	Physical	The Earth

SYMBOLIC FEATURES IN SAMÂ OR DERVISH WHIRLING

THE SYMBOLIC GARMENT

First, each Sufi wears a black attire to be removed one by one later on during the whirling in order to symbolize the separation from the ego (Rebetez, 1997, 434). The tunic being exposed is called the *hirka* and is a very symbolic garment, sewn by the dervishes themselves or passed on. This white garment has a long sleeveless robe, on top of which is worn a short jacket that is tied at the waist. One of them, the Chief Sema dancer, (*Semazenbasi*) "stands at the most honored corner of the dancing space, and the dervishes pass him three times,

each time exchanging greetings until the circling movement starts. This is to be performed on the right foot with accelerating speed. If one of the dervishes becomes too enraptured, another Sufi would touch his frock gently in order to curb his movement." Slowly, raising the right arm towards the sky while the left arm points to the earth, the dervishes begin to move very slowly around themselves and around the center (Erzen, 2008).

THE NEY

«The Ney, or reed flute, is considered similar to the *kalâm* (Latin *calamus*), the tool for the scripture that for centuries preceded the pencil. Symbolically, such a proximity evoked at the same time: the Divine pen that according to Qur'an writes on the eternal Table the world's destiny; the pen of the Poet; the tool of the calligraphy. The Ney can be somehow intended as another (more abstract) Mevlevî aesthetical bridge between music and poetry and under such a light, calligraphy can be intended as a silent music...» (De Zorzi, 2009, 142).

CIRCLES & CLOUDS

This tradition of Sufis movement can be compared with that of the ancient Islamic musical theory which was illustrated on the circle⁴, meaning the understanding of the cyclic nature of life as part of the general Eastern thought often accommodating to the idea of each cycle extracting itself from the precedent (Ibid, 159). Moreover, in the Islamic world, humans' movement, the way they understand the process of time and space, depends on nature and parallels the cosmic order and the basic underlying forms that are found in nature. They are not only circular, which means they revolve and repeat, but rather spiral. Many forms of city order, architectural arrangement and movement patterns, including the basic orders of music and the representation of space in miniatures, comply with such an understanding of space and time. The Sufi Dance is in complete harmony with this understanding and with the cosmic movement (Jale Erzen, 2008).

A fine art made by the use of circles was very appreciated in Ottoman times, the circle was modulated to the *ebrû* (from Persian *abr*, 'cloud') better known in the West as 'marbled paper':

4. A perfect example of this is the ancient *Kitâb el-Edvâr* ('Book of Circles') by Safi al-Din al-Urmawî (1230- 94)



Mevlevi dervishes whirling in Pera by Jean-Baptiste van Mour

Konya Whirling Dervishes Ritual, 16th Century, Ottoman Miniature of the Anatolian School Giclee

according to ebrû makers, the circles made by the free dripping of ink on paper are 'designs of God'. Maybe due to this, ebrû fine art was highly revered and practiced by Sufies (De Zorzi, 2009, 160).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Samâ, the Sufi whirling ceremony, held inside the Ottoman-style lodge, was first founded in 1491. The whirling dance is in complete harmony with this understanding of the cosmic movement. The body is the perfect instrument. Only in this way, only through the observation of strict disciplines of the body, can the mind be freed.

Moreover, through such training, providing service to others is also important. It teaches modesty and the strict limitations of the ego. The kind of ecstasy that is attained in the ritual dance is called 'vejd', which means 'finding' in Arabic. Thus in the ecstasy of love and of the ritual, the Sufi finds God and peace.

In the ritual dance where consciousness penetrates the essence, the lover joins with the beloved, the dance is a ritual of divine love.

As it was mentioned, many Sufis of the Mevlevi Order were great artists, either in music, in calligraphy or in miniature painting. In fact, in the Ottoman court where the Mevlevi Order was highly venerated, artists were often Sufis.

Although the center of the Mevlevi Order was in Konya, there were many Sufis in Istanbul and Edirne and they were very famous for their different, out-of-this-world characteristics.

The dance is a special way of training the dervish's perception and awareness; it is a kind of meditation where consciousness can penetrate the metaphysical world. This creates a relation between human and the divine.

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**BACK ON THE STAGE,
PERFORMING
ARTS IN
TURKMENISTAN***



Turkmenabat Theater

While looking for the sources of the national traditions, one can find out hardly perceptible signs of their traces at the earliest stages of birth of civilizations. The ancient ancestors of Turkmen nation used to perform ritual scenes, the testimonials of which are petro-glyphs – monuments of archaic iso-art (from Greek: isos “equal”) that had portrayed people reproducing the key episodes of forthcoming hunting.

One group of fellow tribesmen played the role of “hunters”, and the other one imitated animals” (it becomes clear from the fact that “actors” put on beast-like masks). Perhaps, these plots made by primitive humans represented initial attempts of Turkmen’s forefathers reembody other images.

In later historical epochs (for instance, the Bronze Age) the established elements of stage adaptation in the form of cult rites were observed in the country of Margush (or Margiana, as it was called in the Greek-Roman historical documents).

Russian archaeologist Viktor Ivanovich Sarianidi found the capital of this ancient civilization during the excavations in the Central Karakum desert. Relying on the documentary evidence that has reached our days, it can be assumed that ritual ceremonies of followers of the Zoroastrian religion

that had inhabited these areas in the ancient past represented performances that included in its program the recitation of religious poems, psalms to the glory of God and rhythmic dances accompanied them.

To support such multi-hour theatrical and religious actions the performing priests, certainly, underwent a special training that presupposed the existence of a more or less established school. Thousands of years later, not far from the present capital of Turkmenistan, there prospered a city of Nissa, the capital of the Parthian State, one of the main rivals of the Ancient Rome in the struggle for the world rule.

By this time, the stage art more reminding of modern theater than in previous years had already been developed here. Actors in masks playing comic, tragic, sad or happy characters performed plays on the open stages. One can judge about it by the material evidence found by archaeologists, or references in Chinese chronicles and works by Greek and Roman authors.

In the later period, during the developed mediaeval ages, migrating companies of actors became wide-spread in Turkmenistan. They composed, staged and performed plays with a critical satirical

content. Wandering theaters with the repertoire representing a funny mixture of circus tricks and unpretentious miniatures performed at bazaars and city squares gathering crowds of idlers. Such theaters with no borders between a conventional "stage" and "hall" were popular among common people, whose reaction to the performances was open and sincere, which was not hidden behind the guise of external decency.

There is no need to possess exuberant imagination to see what atmosphere ruled during the performances in the open air: the spectators' Homeric laughter spread all over the neighborhood, people's approving shouts and comments were addressed to actors almost after each remark.

In turn, the actors, feeling the "feedback from the audience", entertained the gods with more passion. Speaking about the second line that formed the Turkmen theatrical school, it should be noted that the European art started to influence the formation of the national theater in the end of the XIX century when Russian Theater Company began touring with performances in the East Caspian region of the Tsarist Russia. In 1920-s, the first Turkmen drama theater group with only male actors began to operate. They performed both men's and women's parts as the eastern women did not dare to learn the art of acting in that period.

In 1926, the Russian Drama Theater opened its first season with the first night play "Windfall Money" by A.N.Ostrovskiy, and in the spring 1929 the first night of the first Turkmen theater took place. After removing the ban on certain types of performing arts like Opera, ballet and circus in Turkmenistan, a new perspective in this category of art has emerged that could bear seeds of new hopes for performing arts to play a more active role in the cultural stage of Turkmen society.

For many years the Central Asian states of former Soviet Union were strongly influenced by Russian theater. Therefore the people who had experienced the Russian school of drama and theater had the chance to access to one of the richest treasures of theater and performing arts in world's literature but one could deduce that less emphasis were put on traditional and folk plays which had deep roots in the oral heritage of Turkmen society.

But after the country's independence, much attention was given to Turkmen folklore oriented

theater which could be understandable due to the fact that the country needed to revive the old traditions of the nation that could reflect national identity of Turkmen.

In between the one missing ingredient in the artistic environment (here from the performing arts' perspective) was the experimental context that is necessary for the growth of performing arts and the related fields. Turkmenistan has surely nurtured many talented actors/directors who can contribute to the progress and development of theater and now with President Berdymukhammedov's announcement that foreign culture is welcomed again in Turkmenistan, one can hope that president's decision will bring performing artists back to Turkmenistan.

BACK ON TODAY'S STAGE

Recently, the head of state, president Berdymukhammedov lifted the ban on foreign opera and ballet, announcing that, "I propose to breathe life back into the lyrical arts in this country." The announcement of the return of the performing arts was good news to many artists such as Akmukhammet Saparov, a well-known singer and composer, who stayed in Turkmenistan despite the fact he was unable to perform.

"Like other artistic workers, I continued my work as a singer and composer" Saparov says. "I have been giving concerts to the people, creating songs, and composing music; helping the (young) singers and musicians who need my assistance."

In between some of the theater performers left the country but many stayed and somehow survived the tragic event. Though traditional Turkmen theater and folklore theatrical performances continued to be staged but as mentioned before actors who tended to work in other fields rather than traditional Turkmen theater had fewer opportunities to perform.

The return of circus also should showcase a source of Turkmen national pride. President Berdymukhammedov noted that bringing back the circus will include "national equestrian shows" because -- as for many Central Asians -- the horse enjoys a prominent place in Turkmen history and culture.

Much work still needs to be done to prepare for the return of the performing arts to Turkmenistan.

The state opera house was torn down after opera was banned and in its place stands a shopping center. Berdymuhammedov acknowledged this by saying that it is "time to rebuild and reopen."

In Ashgabat there are several structures where it is possible to watch a theatrical performance. One of them is the National Theatre Magtumguly, in the centre of the city. Here interesting performances inspired by the rich Turkmen musical tradition are staged.

If instead you prefer prose, you can choose the Theatre Mollapenes, where prose works are staged in Turkmen, and the Russian Dramatic Theatre, where instead the repertory concerns the rich Russian theatrical tradition and the prose is staged in Russian. Due to the good knowledge of Russian by the capital citizens the audience of the theater is still quite multinational in composition.

Perhaps the most famous theater in Ashgabat is the Ashgabat State Russian Drama Theater named after A.S. Pushkin which has a history of eighty years for being a center of professional theatrical performances.

Several years ago the theater moved to a new place. In connection with the reconstruction of the historical city center, a new theater building

was constructed soon after the destructive 1948 Ashgabat earthquake. The Ashgabat theatergoers were anxious about this news. The theater was experiencing tough times with the honored veterans leaving the stage and limited inflow of new and young actors.

Add to it the fact that the company was losing the theater's walls which have absorbed, in the direct sense of this word, the sounds of tremendous ovation and warmth of audience's recognition over many years. Recently the first night of the play based on N.Gogol's «Marriage» which received much attention, was held in the State Russian Drama Theater.

The new building allocated to the theater by the decree of the Turkmen President turned out no less comfortable and cozy than former one. Moreover, the new building underwent serious reconstruction. The Pushkin Theater has lost nothing in terms of its attractiveness to the audience. And as before, the "sold out" notice is an ordinary thing for this theater.

At the same time in the other end of the city in Alp Arslan Theater, thoughtful and very flexible director Khandurdy Berdiev works on the play Ecumenical Love written by motives of eastern legends. This shows another side of the Turkmen theatrical activity, a more traditional trend which manifests the values, beliefs and folkloric tradition of performing art in Turkmenistan. The main idea of the staged parable is that God's love is bestowed on the one who despite the hardest tests fallen on his fate preserves Purity, Faith and Inspiration in his sole.

In addition to that, the actors of this theater are working on perfecting Nisaian Love play they will take to Kazakhstan, where the Days of Turkmen Culture will be held. As is known, this play was a great success at the Istanbul International Festival of theatrical groups in 2005. It seems that tradition and modernism seek ways and solutions to conform to each other. Surely an intellectual interpretation of both would escalate the pace of cultural developments in a modern context fit to the traditional values of Turkmen people and that is what most artists in every country are trying to accomplish: to show a thorough cultural image of their society.

*The article has been compiled from relevant sources on the subject. Sections of the material have been reproduced from "The world encyclopedia of contemporary theater".



Turkmen Puppet Theater Tower

THEATRICAL TRADITIONS OF UZBEKISTAN*





A performance of 'The past days' based on the play A. Kadiri directed by Marat Asimov at Uzbek National Academic Drama Theater

The history of one of the oldest and most famous theaters of the country - the State Academic opera and ballet Theatre named after Alisher Navoy- is connected with the creation, in 1926, of the first national-ethnographical ensemble under the leadership of Mukhiddin Kari-Yakubov.

After such musical plays as "Arshin Mal Alan" by U.Gadjibekov, "Rizavarchi" by A.Karmelinsky, "Halima" by G.Zafary were successfully staged, the troupe was awarded the status of Uzbek state theatre. Many actors with professional vocal technique and acting skills joined the troupe and spectators saw new musical plays on the basis of national melodies and dances.

The year 1939 can be considered the birth of opera theatre when there was launched the first national opera "Storm" composed by the famous Uzbek composers M.Ashrafi and S.Vasilenko.

Since 1947, the State Academic opera and ballet Theatre has been housed in a magnificent building designed by prominent Russian architect

- academician A.Shusev and built in the center of the city. The interior of the theatre is decorated by Uzbek folk artisans under the leadership of famous Bukhara gunch carver Usto Shirin Muradov.

On the stage of the theatre, there performed such brilliant ballerinas as Galia Izmailova and Bernara Kariyeva, the rear soprano Saodad Kabulova. Since establishment, the theatre has staged hundreds of performances. The high performing level of singers and ballet dancers allows staging of such creations of world musical classics as "Aida" and "Rigoletto" by D.Verdi, "Karmen" by J.Bize, "Jizelle" by A.Adan, "Queen of Spades" and "Swan Lake" by Peter Chaikovsky. At the same time the theatre stages operas and ballets by Uzbek composers. The opera "Dilorom" by M.Ashrafi and ballet "Tamiris" by M.Musaiev have earned the biggest popularity among spectators.

The new season of the State Academic opera and Ballet Theater was opened by the premiere of opera "Eugene Onegin" by Peter Chaikovsky. For this performance, a new scenography solution was

worked out and the famous designer K.Yakubova created the costumes.

The Uzbek national academic drama theatre can be rightfully called the eldest among the theatre troupes in the republic. The troupe was founded and headed by Manon Uygur who performed as actor, director and playwright. On the stage of the theatre, there performed such coryphaeuses of dramatic art as Abror Khidoyatov, Olim Khodjaiev, Shukhur Burkhanov, Sara Ishantruraieva, Lutfikhanum Sarimsakova, Mariam Yakubova, Nabi Rakhimov, and Abid Djalilov.

The theatre has enjoyed high popularity among the spectators after staging such plays as "Bay and batrak" (A Landlord and A farmer) by Hamza and "Maisara tricks" by G.Guliam, historical plays "Alisher Navoiy" by I.Sultanov and "Sohibkiron Temur" by A.Aripov. Invariably successful is the scintillating with play "Shum bola" (Mischievous boy) by G.Gulam and play by H.Rasul "Muhabbat sultoni" (Sultan of love).

Uzbek spectators are also acquainted with the classics of the world dramatic art. Staged

in different years, "Antigone" by Sophocles, "Othello" by W.Shakespeare, "Treachery and Love" by F.Schiller, "Marriage" by N.Gogol, "The Living Corpse" by Leo Tolstoy, "Before the sunset" by G.Hauptman were distinguished by the depth of stage interpretation, mastery of acting and original scenography approach.

Today in the Uzbek drama theatre repertoire, there are "Hamlet" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by Shakespeare, "King-Deer" by C.Gozzi, "Natan the Wise" by G.Lessing. New plays directed by V.Umarov: the musical fantasy "Oh, Woman" based on the stories of Uzbek folklore, and lyric comedy "A Parable about Red Apple" are a big success among the spectators.

For centuries Uzbekistan repeatedly experienced the influence of cultural traditions of different countries of the Great Silk Road region. Within the last 150 years, the Uzbek stage culture was considerably influenced by the Russian school of acting technique, which contributed much to the formation of professional theatres in many countries of the world.



A scene from the play 'Sobeide' by Carlo Gozzi, staged in the tradition of the Italian commedia 'dell'arte' and Uzbek folk theater 'masl'harabozov'



Alisher Navoi Theater, Tashkent

The Academic Russian drama theatre of Uzbekistan was founded in 1934. The very first play to be staged, "Intervention" by L.Slavin, was in the spirit of those times. After a number of years in the repertoire of the theatre, there appeared plays by A.Arbutov, M.Shatrov, M.Bulgakov, F.Schiller, V.Hugo, V.Shakespeare, J-B.Moliere, A.Chekhov, A.Tolstoy, Hamza, A.Kahar, E.Albee, A.Camus. The stage of the theatre gave start to the artistic activity of such famous actors as Roman Tkachuk, Igor Ledogorov, and Vladimir Recepter.

Questing for new artistic interpretations, for revealing by means of dramatic art of different aspects of human spirit, the theatre staged such plays as "Mandragora" by Machiavelli, "Inn Hostess" by C.Goldoni and "Mystery of a Chinese Woman" - a play based on the literary works by Alisher Navoiy.

The Academic Russian Drama Theatre of Uzbekistan opened its 71st season with the play "Cherry Garden" by A.Chekhov, which according to the opinion of the theatre chief director V.Shapiro

was the most mysterious and complicated among the author's works.

The repertoire of one of the most interesting theatres - the Youth Theatre of Uzbekistan is addressed to the spectators of different ages. Openness, confidence, sincerity and truthfulness made the theatre productions a success. Among them the plays directed by Nabi Abdurakhmanov: "Constellation of Omar Khaiam" and "Permanent Dancer Sharora" by T.Zulfikarov, "The Canvas Measurer" by L.Tolstoy, "Violinist on the Roof" by Shalom Aleykhum, "Devil Woman" by P.Merime, "Princess Turandot" by C.Gozzi.

The troupe of the Youth Theatre of Uzbekistan participated in many international festivals in Russia, France, Egypt, and Israel. The theatre organized and held several editions of the "Khumo" International festival of youth theatres, dance and music troupes, in which various theatre companies from Austria, France, Germany, Japan, Israel, Russia, Georgia, Uzbekistan and other countries took part.

The theatre started its seventy-eighth season with the play based on the fairytale by Anderson "The Girl with Matches" and the premiere performance of "Tartuff" by J-B.Moliere. In 1976, theatre director Mark Vail founded in Tashkent one of the first professional private theater-studio "Ilkhom". The experimental staging of plays by playwrights of "the new wave" A.Vampilov, S.Zlotnikov, S.Bashbekov, C.Guseinov, L.Razumovskiy boosted the popularity of the theatre as really independent creative collective.

One of the boldest stage innovations was the poetic fantasy about Samarkand based on the comedy by C.Gozzi "Happy Beggars", where actors brought together traditions of Italian "commedia dell'arte" with tricks of Uzbek maskarabozes. In spite of the fact that during many seasons the play was on, it was very popular among the spectators alongside with such performances as "Philistine Wedding" by B.Brecht and "Tortilia Flat" by J.Steinbeck.

The performances by "Ilkhom" theatre were presented at many international festivals in various countries of the world. Among the plays staged, we can name the tragedy "Blood Wedding" by G.Lorka, comedy "Love's Labour's Lost" by W.Shakespeare, the poetic version of unpublished works by A.Kadiri "White-black stork". The next season was opened by the studio diploma performances and plays such as "The Death of Ilia Ilich" by M.Ugarov and diptych "Zoo Story" and "Three Tall Women" by E.Albee.

The experimental stage in the Cultural-creative center "Aladdin" become the entrepreneurial theatre, the only one of such kind in Uzbekistan. Actors of almost all theatre troupes of the Uzbek capital perform in its theatrical productions. On its stage young directors, actors, dramatists, and ballet masters are given the opportunity to realize their brave creative projects. The theatre "Aladdin" can boast of many successful plays: "A Streetcar Named Desire" by T. Williams, "The Only Heir" by the classic of French comic drama art Jean Francois Regnard, the premier performance "The Dinner Game" (Le Diner Des Cons) by Francis Veber. The play about old Tashkent is being prepared now.

In Tashkent State Theatre of Musical Comedy, a lover of operetta or musical could watch classical operettas such as "Silva" by I.Kalman or "La belle Helene" by J.Offenbach. Very popular among

spectators are original comedies by Uzbek authors - "A Crumb" by A.Ergashev and "Aunt, I'm Going to Get Married" by A.Ikramov, musicals by famous Georgian composer G.Kanchely "The kidnapped bride" and "Penelope" by Russian playwright A.Jurbin.

The performances by the Tashkent Young People's Theatre named after I.Akhunbabaiev are addressed to teenagers, whereas the youngest spectators are welcomed in the Republican Puppet Theatre where they can watch interesting plays as well as visit the unique museum of marionettes.

In Tashkent there are several theatres offering their spectators the performances of various genres, and for any age group.

* The article has been compiled from relevant sources on the subject including <http://asiatravel-discoveries.com/>



The play 'Love Peri' according to T. Mahmadrizo of State Russian Drama Theater of Tajikistan and directed by Bodurbek Miralibekov staged at Tashkent State Musical Comedy Theatre

BRIGHT PROSPECTS FOR CINEMA OF UZBEKISTAN*

Specialists and connoisseurs of the art of cinema have highly praised Uzbek cinema for its professionalism, national uniqueness, and originality. It is indicative that films began being produced here almost as soon as cinematography was invented. The history of Uzbek cinema dates back to the spring of 1900 when the pioneer of Uzbek cinema, Khudoibergan Devanov, made the first documentary film in Khorezm. During 1920s, the film-factory "Shark Yulduzy" was launched, which later in 1958 was renamed as "Uzbekfilm". Preparation of the national staff for the industry has later been launched. A number of documentaries, popular scientific and motion pictures such as "Pakhta-Aral" and "Tang oldidan" ("Before the dawn") were shot at that time. As for feature films, the first ones were made in Uzbekistan during the second half of the 1920s almost immediately after the formation of the Uzbek S.S.R., with the help of Russian masters. The "Klich" is said to have been the first film for children. Young generation of movie makers came on the scene: K. Yormatov, M. Qayumov, S. Khojaev, Z. Khamroev, I. Agzamov, A. Saidov, and others. In 1937 director A. Usoltsev shot the first Uzbek sound movie "The oath", its cast included actors such as E. Bobojonov, A. Ismatov, L. Sarimsokova, and R. Pirmukhammedov.

In the 40s, directors and actors from Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev worked alongside Uzbek moviemakers in the country. Jointly they shot several films, including "Nasriddin in Bukhara" and "Two fighters" directed by L. Lukov, which are still highly appreciated and loved by audiences. "Tokhir and Zuhra" (directed by N. Ganiev) and "Alisher Navoi" (directed by K. Yormatov) are other famous movies of that period. The 60s saw the arrival of a number of talented youth in the field, including directors - Sh. Abbosov, E. Eshmukhamedov, A. Khamroev, D. Salimov, T. Kamolova, A. Kobulov, cameramen - Kh. Faiziev, Davron Salimov, D. Fatkhullin, the writer - O. Aghishev, artists - E. Kalantarov, E. Pushin, B. Nazarov, A. Shibaev, S. Ziyomukhamedov, as well as composers such as R. Vildanov, E. Salikhov, F. Yanovsky, and others. During the next decade, local teams of directors, cameramen, scriptwriters, and other creative specialists appeared and began their professional activity. The quality of films gradually improved and their number increased. Whereas at the beginning of the 1950s, three feature films were made every year at the Uzbekfilm studio, by the

mid-1980s, during the heyday of local cinematography, this number had leaped to twelve. During this period, nearly every year, one of them received a prize at prestigious international film festivals. The documentary film industry was also highly praised in those years, in which well-known director Malik Kaumov, who won prizes at many festivals, worked. In the mid-1980s, a documentary film by Tashkent documentary film director S. Papazian was awarded the Silver Dove prize at the International Film Festival in Leipzig. Vibrant masters of Uzbek Soviet cinema, such as Sh. Abbasov, A. Khamraev, E. Ishmukhamedov, and M. Abzalov, are well known in the world of cinematography. A prestigious school for cameramen was also created in the republic, represented by such names as D. Fatkhullin, Kh. Faiziev, A. Pann, M. Krasnianskiy, L. Travitskiy, and M. Penson. The Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 not only had an impact on the sociopolitical situation in the former Soviet republics, but also on the state of affairs in science and art, including cinematography. Marked by many common or similar traits, Soviet cinema, as the unity and synthesis of its national components, disintegrated into purely national parts, finally breaking free from Moscow's ideological grasp. This also led to the cinema art (and its parts) of the newly independent states breaking its decades-long ties with the cinematography of other former union republics, primarily Russia. The difficulties experienced by all these countries during the transition to a market economy also took their toll on the national film industry, including in Uzbekistan, the only post-Soviet republic in which local cinematography has centralized financial support. Given complexities of transition period to the market economy in 90s, the movie industry too has had some problems with regard to adjusting to new realities of doing business. Hence, the "Uzbekkino" Concern launched a massive program of adjustment and learned to navigate the waters of market competition. During the ten post-Soviet years from 1991 to 2001, more than 50 feature films were made in the country. A decree by President Islam Karimov of 9 March, 1992 became the organizational base for developing the local film industry, and on 29 April, 1996, the Uzbekkino State Joint-Stock Company was created and a program for reforming national cinematography drawn up. Uzbek films have been actively participating in international film reviews and have even been awarded high prizes. For example, The Orator, a film by director Iusuf Razykov, received first prize at the Kinoshock Moscow Film Festival of CIS and Baltic Countries in 1999. It was also shown successfully at the International Film Festival

in Berlin in 2000 and at a special review organized in Brussels by the Cinema-NOVA film association.

A film by the same director, *A Woman's World*, created on the basis of a novel of the same name by writer O. Mukhtar, participated in the contest review of the 22nd Moscow International Film Festival in 2000. At that time Uzbekistan was the only CIS state, apart from Russia, allowed to take part in the contest program of this film review. *Fellini*, a film by director N. Abbasov, participated in several festivals, in Warsaw, Calcutta, and Innsbruck (Austria). Whereby in Innsbruck, this film won the Grand Prix, and then it was shown on the screens of more than 15 countries of the world. At the International Teleforum of 2000 in Moscow, a documentary film by director V. Iskhakov, based on a book by the republic's president, Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan at the Turn of the 21st Century: Threats to Security, Conditions and Guarantees of Progress*, was awarded two prizes at once. Current processes speak about change of generations, who constantly search for new approaches in the field vis-a-vis new market realities, creation of such films, which combine qualities of art and attributes that in their turn, would secure the constant interest of audiences. Today, with the increasing interest on the part of the public in the national history and literature, the filmmakers of Uzbekistan cover more topics, and employ various genre and styles. A wide spectrum of problems is highlighted in different movies.

The most prominent contemporary name in the film Uzbek industry are Iusuf Razykov, a former script-writer who later became a director, as well as Zulfikar Musakov, who also took higher courses in film directing in Moscow as well as director Shukhrat Abbasov, renowned master (of worldwide fame) who celebrated his 70th birthday in 2003. New products of "Uzbekfilm" are appreciated not only by local audiences, but also by foreign moviegoers. The *"Amir Temur"*, *"Otgan kunlar"* ("The gone-away days"), *"Bomba"* ("The bomb"), *"Margbiyona"*, *"Mpotnysh"*, *"Sagf"* ("The love"), *"Otamdan qolgan dalar"* ("Lands of my father") are a few of movies that achieved popularity. Today, money is allotted from the state budget for making films. What is more, the budget envisaged funds for dubbing foreign films in the Uzbek language. A separate program has been drawn up for developing video film production, which is also financially supported by the state. It is obvious that the main goal of the Uzbek film maker today is to interpret, reveal, and relate in cinema art images the events that have been going on in the country since it gained its independence. There have been many changes, and the main one is that the people have been given a historical opportunity to create their own national state. Under present conditions, the appeal of domestic film makers to the nation's spiritual heritage, to the key aspects of its distant and near history is but natural.

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*Compiled from relevant sources on the subject



Zulfikar Musakov



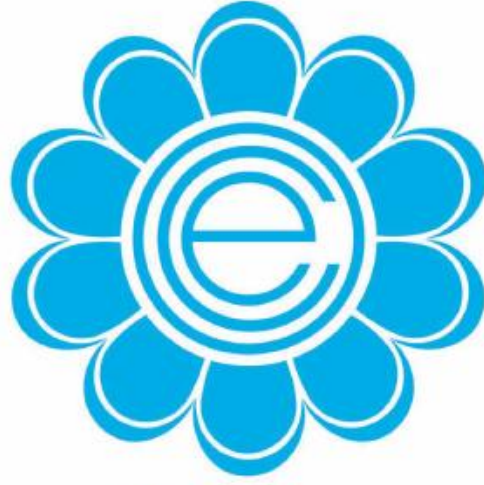
Shukhrat Abbasov



Iusuf Razykov

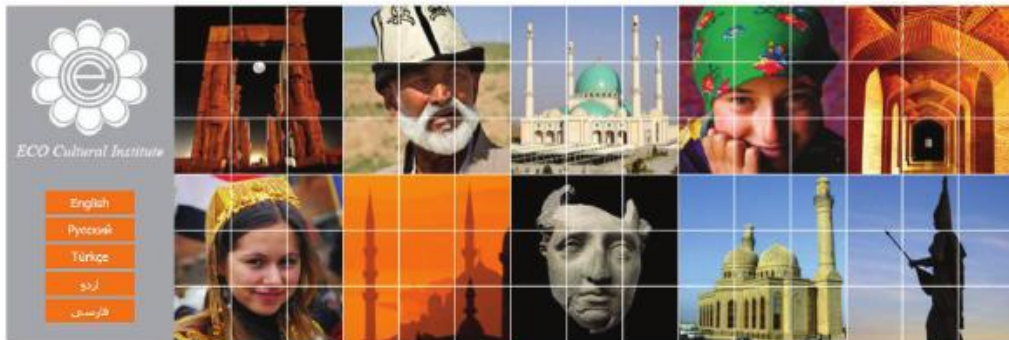


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