

# The Traditions of the Women's Art "Yalla" of Central Asia

Nasiba Turgunova

The Institute of Art Studies of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Lively oldest forms of women art in Central Asia came up to the present day through the traditions of "ustoz-shogird" (teacher-pupil). In particular, wall painting, sculptures, and evidence of women's work in Amir Temur, Ulugbek, and Zakhiriddin Muhammad government describe a variety of women's roles in art. The women's art of Yallachi was also developed in Bukhara, Khorezm, and Kokand khanates time as a unique way. As a result, the Uzbek Yalla genre was established in the art of music. The tradition of Yallachi art continues today. In this context this art is more effective in the light of forms of music.

*Keywords:* khanate, yalla, yallachi, sing, song, dance, ensemble, doira

## Introduction

Women's art existed from the ancient times in the area of Central Asia. Particularly, the creativeness of skillful musicians and woman singers of their times in the sphere of music are reflected in the pictures of walls and little sculptures, found at the result of some archeological finds. The description of a woman playing *ud* (musical instrument) relating to VI-VII centuries and playing musical instruments like *chitta* (musical instrument), *qo'shmay* (double flute) (musical instrument), and *noghora* (musical instrument) of musician women's sculptures relating to II-III centuries which were found around of Hanka town is the proof of the author's idea (see Figure 1).

It's clear that famous talented musician and woman singers created works and served at the spring holidays in the area of Central Asia. However, in the VII century after the invasion of the Arabians to Central, Asia dancing and singing songs of women with men among people at the ceremonies and spring holidays were found improper. That's why the activities of women and men in the area of art developed separately. At the result of it, women's specific art was formed and appeared the term of "inside art". They attended only at separate houses at the different events and ceremonies which were hold only among women.

## Tamerlane and Women's Art in Period of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand Khanates

At the result of this process, particularly music genres (song, long song, *lapar* (type of song, a vocal duet)) started appearing for women and men performance. Tamerlane paid great attention to the art at his ruling period. Musical experts and perfect experts of that period visited the palace of Temur and created works. As it was written on the historical scripts, more than hundreds of artists served at his palace. Tamerlane permitted women to attend and sing with men at the public spring holidays. Such kind of descriptions of them was expressed at

the miniature works relating to Tamerlane's period.



Figure 1. Woman playing lute. Vizgo, T. *Music instruments of the Central Asia*.

Musical expert, Zaynobiddin Husayniy who lived and created works at Tamerlane's palace defined *dutor* scientifically (two stringed musical instruments) for the first time and wrote about spreading it widely among women in his pamphlet *Science of Qonun* (musical instrument) and *practice of music*. It should be emphasized that specific show groups worked at the big pavilion of Tamerlane, Saroymulkihanim, Khonzodabegim, and princes' palace rooms. It gives an idea that artist women created works among common people and the members of palace. However, there is no obvious information about what kind of songs, *yalla* (songs by group of singers). As we told women's art developed and improved till our days by traditions of teacher and student.

In three khanates—Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand—women's art highly developed. As a result, the extraordinary types of women's art began to appear. For example, the art of "Bukhara sozanda" in Bukhara, "khalfachilik" in Khorezm, and "Yallachilik" in Kokand appeared. These three types of activities appeared as the result of working women in palace.

We should say that this ensemble "Yalla" vocal group served to have cultural rest to Khan's and Amir's wife's, having put into practice the traditions of teachers and students, and improved women's ensemble consisting of only women. For example, the art "Bukhara sozanda" appeared at the period of Amir Nasrullo. One of the reasons of developing songs, group's songs widely, Shoshmaqom was the first place of place music at that time, because the musician's song made it worth comparing with Shoahmaqom.

The art Khorazm "khalfachilik" developed in Khan's palace as the art "Sozanda". In Khiva khanate Shukurjon khalfa, Sharifa khalfa, Joni khalfa, Anash Mariyam, Bibijon khalfa Qosimova, and Durdona xalfa Qurbondazarova from Khonqa and Sharifa qogay Otasheva who were very famous in Khiva. Accordion is the most important in the art of "khalfachilik". That's why they should have learnt to play the accordion, because every "khalfa" sang a song accompanied by an accordion. Khalfas participated in the party like twins. They used people's sayings, romances, and works of poets. One of them played a musical instrument, the other danced and

another one sang a song. These facilities of Khalfa group were close the groups of "Yallachilik" and "Sozanda". In "Khalfa" group *accordion* was very important and in the groups of "Yallachilik" and "Sozand" it was *doira* (musical instrument) which was very important.

The facilities of the "Yallachi" women's art in Fergana Valley were dedicated its affection to Fergana-Tashkent classics. The artists worked on the influence of music to people in Ferghana Valley. They used to prefer small and simple music which devoted to simple people to large classic music. As a result, the small, light, and beautiful music appeared in Ferghana.

The group of art "Yalla" in Ferghana, "Sozanda" in Bukhara, and "Khalfa" in Khorezm demonstrated their art indoors.

In Kokand, the development of women's arts was given a lot of attention by Khan Amir Umarkhan. His wife Nadirabegim was brought to the palace poetesses and women singers who performed popular songs; she also arranged mushoira poetic contests and discourses. The Mehrobdan Chayon (Scorpio from the Altar) novel by Abdulla Kadirli has episodes describing lifestyle of the court women in the Kokand Khanate. One of the episodes tells about 40 girls, who, after the *hufton* (1.5-2 hours time after sunset), sat on a large *topchan* (earthen or wooden platform built in a garden or in a courtyard for reposing), sang yalla and danced. Performers were brought to the palace from different cities of the country as a gift to the khan.

### About Genre Yalla

You can see that the art "yallachilik" which developed in women's art had features classification. That's the reason why the art poems, music, and dance are interconnected. The mixture of tune, melody, rhythm, song, and dance made the group "Yalla". Their melody and the syllable of poetry appeared in the poems which consist of 7, 8, 9 and 11, 12, 13 syllables. There are three types of "Yalla". They are section, section-refrain, and its opposite is refrain-section. The most of the styles of "Yalla" are dancing style. That's why during the demonstration of "Yalla" there are more one *doira* and dancers.

It is appropriate to dwell on the term «yallachi» which root «yalla» is one of Aitim genres in Uzbek music. However, in the scientific aspect the etymology of the term was not fully established. In «The Uzbek Explanatory Dictionary»—«Yalla» (from Persian «Yalali»), "Yalla" means a light, funny song performed along with a dance "yallachi" during merriment. On this basis the word "yalla" in musicology is sometimes characterized as a "dance aitim" (by Fayzulla Karomatli). Usually, the term "yallachi" was used towards woman composing of performing folk songs and dances.

There are two forms of yalla performance—solo and group. Yalla is performed in accompaniment of *doira* and ensemble. Couplets and dance are performed by solo, and the refrain by a chorus. In this case, the soloist and the chorus sing alternately.

In the Ferghana schools of yalla, two trends can be distinguished: Folk art and professional yallachi found support in the usto-shoghird traditions, their skill is more refined, and rhythm much more complex and richer than those of the amateur folk ensembles. Although self-taught yallachi may copy the songs of professional singers, their voice range is not that big (third, fourth, fifth), and the performance is simple and straightforward. Professional yallachi though, besides simple tunes, can also perform larger pieces with intoning departures and wide vocal spans.

Sometimes a group of two-three yallachi takes part in celebrations and weddings. A wedding ceremony attended by a large number of people is usually set outdoors in a courtyard. Separate smaller scale celebrations are held indoors. At the beginning, larger forms are performed: Major yalla pieces with a measured pace at the beginning, which gradually gets faster; these are dancing yalla, such as «Uynain», «Uzi bilsa bilsun», «Omon yor», «Gozallar», «Ailanai», «Duqi, duqi, duq», and «Adolatkhon» the sound of which gets everyone dancing, sometimes for three-four hours. The art of "yalla" which was demonstrated by men is better than the one that by demonstrated by women. For example, you can see the songs "Deydi", "Zarpechak", and "O'yna". It is known that women's singing loudly and their participating in parties were forbidden in history. At that time women wear men's clothes and men wear women's clothes. Karomatli (1972) wrote about it as follow:

In some examples it seemed 4 lined poem damaged women's dialogues. From this we can say that women and men didn't perform their song together with their role play and different games. In this performance men played their role in women's clothe and women played in men's clothes. (p. 71)

You can see some facilities of using voice devoted to men in old Namangan music art group. In the author's opinion women's wearing clothes and moving like men are because some "yalla" songs which we told about before devoted to men's art.



*Figure 2. Executors: Dutar-Kambarkhon Valiyeva, doyra-unknown (1970).*

Women before they started singing and dancing to the sound of doira and dutar, put water in a porcelain vessel on the windowsill to block the sound (see Figure 2). According to long-livers, women-yallachi, dressed in men's clothes, performing for wealthy people, covering their hair under a hat, and putting on boots and caftans girdled with a sash belt. Yakutkhan Isakova, the grand-daughter of Gavharkhon Uzakova claimed that this was how her grandmother

performed during religious ceremonies, festivals, holidays, and weddings.

### Conclusion

The development of national pop music group was given a great attention in the period of Independence like other spheres. Therefore a few events were implemented differently, parties and festivals were organized in order to support the work of the young and skillful outstanding singers in future modern Uzbek pop music show are appeared.

### References

- Babur, M. (1997). *Baburname*. Tashkent: Gafur Gulyam Publishing House.
- Farmer, H. (1939). *Studies in oriental musical instruments*. Glasgow: The Civic Press.
- Ibragimov, O. (1994). *Creation of Uzbek folk music*. Tashkent: Uzbekistan Metodic Centre of Studies.
- Karomatli, F. (1972). *Uzbek instrumental music*. Tashkent: Gafur Gulyam Publishing House.
- Karomatli, F. (1978,1985). *The heritage of Uzbek folk music*. Tashkent: Gafur Gulyam Publishing House.
- Navoi A. Uzbek language dictionary. (2000). Tashkent: "Fan" Publishing House.
- Navoi, A. (1984). *Dictionary*. Tashkent: "Fan" Publishing House.
- Talk with Yakutkhan Isakova. (2011). Ferghana volley, Namangan.
- Temur, A. (1996). *World in history*. Tashkent: "Sharq" Publishing House.
- Vizgo, T. (1980). *Music instruments of the Central Asia*. Moscow: "Musica" Publishing House.