

The Concept of Variant-Invariant Match in Uzbek Folk Music

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The aim of this paper is to determine the meaning of “*Nazira*”—the Uzbek musical traditional practice and retrace its relation to the issue of pair of invariant-variant representation in folklore music. The match of invariant-variant has been examined on the examples of such sample of Uzbek folk music as “*Yor-Yor*”. The findings of the research have been derived from special musical literature.

Keywords: *nazira*, traditions, invariant, canon, option, folklore, creativity, *usul*

Introduction

It is very well known from the history that all aspects of life have evolved resting on traditions. These traditions are the standards for others to follow of what have been achieved from generation to generation; hence it connects past and present, ancient and contemporary embodiments. For centuries national music was the ground on which the considerable values of our traditions manifested and hitherto it serves to derive fruitful results especially in the creativity of bastakors’ (“bastakorlik” in Uzbek, professional monodic creativity)¹ and performing art.

One of these traditions appears to be “*Nazira*” (translated from Arabic as “resemble”, “look like”, “be similar to”). It has its roots in Muslim Oriental musical art, and in a broader sense, it constitutes the foundation of common culture. During the Middle Ages Oriental music evolved resting on the ground of regulative canons-rules and it was with them in mind that artistic works had been created.

Experts emphasize that tradition “*Nazira*” manifested itself by means of such representations as “canon-improvisation” (unalterable-flexible), “model-improvisation”, “invariant-variant”, reflecting in the common art. According to different sources, data and records the tradition “*Nazira*” as musical art was divided into three domains—musical science, creativity, and performance, and thus they should be analysed individually. Their most simple and easily recognizable forms are traced in folk music. Therefore it is note worthy to examine this issue in detail.

Main Part

It is well known that creative folk music adheres to the rules of unalterable, flexible, permanent, impermanent, invariant-variant dialectical units. In the circle of its multifaceted meanings one needs to understand the relationship between the combination of originality imitation. For example, in musicology the term “invariant” signifies steady traditions, melodic patterns, scales of rhythm and tunes formulas, forms and stereotypes, permanent and variable elements. The term “variant” denotes changes of the certain melody types

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¹ It is translated from Uzbek as “basta”—ligament, “kor”—work.

that serve as the basic forms. It is necessary to emphasize that the concept “invariant” vividly manifested itself in the folk musical creative works in the form of established melodic patterns (formulas, stereotypes). The fact that Uzbek famous musicologist Abdumannon Nazarov translated the word “variant” into Uzbek as “*Nazira*” gives us grounds to accept the above statement. Consequently, it can be argued that so widely used in folk music unity “invariant-variant” exactly matches the pair “pattern-‘*Nazira*’”. Thus the sample of folk creativity, which will be considered below, is exactly consistent with the analysis of “invariant-variant” match.

It is necessary to emphasize that the concept “invariant” vividly manifested itself in folk music in the form of established melodic patterns (formulas, stereotypes). Russian musicologist B. Asafyev argued that in the samples associated with the oral tradition the “tune-model” combinations were necessarily formed, and later on they served as the basis for the emergence of newer creative works. According to the scientist, the melodic constructions that were accumulated in the social consciousness turned into the richness of the music dictionary with the help of “oral traditions”. Consequently, the meaning of the combination “pattern-‘*nazira*’” is widely known and extensively used in folk music as “invariant-variant” match.

Uzbek musicologist O. N. Azimova highlights the concept “formula” as one of the foundations of folklore and sees it as a triple system of “tradition-formula-text”. The incomparable and essential patterns of melodies became the foundation and pillars of the rhythmic formulas, though they manifested themselves in various events of the national spiritual life differently.

Intonation, in folk music and in entire musical creativity, presents itself as an important melodic source. Thus “many unique properties of Uzbek melodies are directly bound to the intonational stem, as well as with the development of options outgoing of this stem”. Even up to now, “...the Uzbek melodies’ inherent characters of the songs directly enrich the development of its variant” (Karamatov, 1961, p. 71). According to many experts, the appearance of the original melodic formulas models has been related to the “ritual consciousness”. Thus the obvious example to this is the stable intonation construction that is directly connected to domestic, labour, and seasonal rituals.

This theme can be analyzed on the examples of wedding ritual songs. It is well known that melodic invariant which is called “*Yor-Yor*” (“sing, cheer” in Uzbek) serves as a basis for the songs associated with the wedding ceremonies. Traditionally the songs “*Yor-Yor*” are performed during the ceremony of sending off the bride to the groom’s house. The songs and tunes are performed by women. There are several variants of the “*Yo-Yor*” tunes in Uzbekistan. “*Yor-Yor*” is a short motif in the descending depression, which covers the diapason of three tones (III-II-I) of the “invariant” pattern (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Invariant.

The above mentioned invariant replicates many “*Nazira*” (i.e. varies) in such songs like “*Yor-yor*” and “*Kelin Salom*” (i.e. the first time the groom’s family welcomes the bride). Then it continues and takes other forms—each and every “national singer” amplifies the original invariant by adding his own variations based on his capabilities and talent. The main melodic line of the “bride’s farewell ceremony” is a stable tradition. Thus the melodic linear constriction of the song is a formula and the version of the song, which is called “*Nazira*”, evolves and progresses resting on this formula .

Usul—rhythmic formula, intonation and melody are the unifying factors of the songs “*Yor-Yor*”. Here, a steady and supportive sound may appear in different pitches. It depends on and relates to the performing artist’s qualities. In order to better understand it let us turn to music examples (see Figure 2 and Figure 3).

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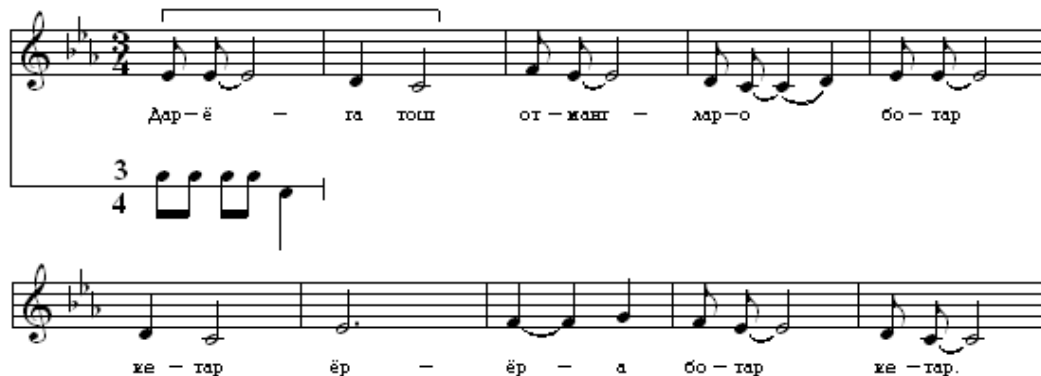


Figure 2. “Yor-Yor” (Transposition by Ch. Ergasheva).



Figure 3. “Kelin Salom” (Transposition by Ch. Ergasheva).

The above examples of intonation invariants begin in the initial cycles, and continue progressing throughout the song. Changes can also be traced in rhythmic formulas—*usuls*. The “*Yor-Yor*” songs or tunes in the form of variants can be encountered in many areas, regions, districts and villages of Uzbekistan. And each of them has its own distinctive features, which are shown in the intonation, rhythm-formulas, as well as in the lyrics of the song.

Intonation pattern (formula) which is the one of the main characteristic of feminine’s musical creativity, manifestes in the tradition “*Kelin salom*”, which is considered as an integral part of the wedding. It is also sung as mother’s “*alla*” (i.e., lullaby), as well as in chants and in songs during the working process. As it also has been traced in such mature and voluminous form as in musical piece “*Tanovar*” (*Qora Sochim*).

Conclusion

It turns out that a tradition of folk music in “*Nazira*” manifests itself in a peculiar way. Continuity of folk music is based on the dialectical unity of verbal- nonverbal, invariant- variant version.

Summing up the conclusions of the mentioned above examples we can say that in folk art the method “*Nazira*” manifests itself in the unique form (sample-imitation), and virtually it can be heard in different fluctuating versions of unchangeable intonation formulas.

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