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The Interaction of Mugham and Polyphonic Thinking in The Works of Uzeyir Hajibeyli, Asaf Zeynally, and Gara Garayev

Üzeyir Hacıbeyli, Asef Zeynallı ve Gara Garayev'in Eserlerinde Muğam ve Polifonik Düşüncenin Etkileşimi

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the synthesis of mugham, a monophonic traditional musical form integral to Azerbaijani culture, with polyphonic thinking, a fundamental principle of Western classical music. It aims to explore the creative opportunities and challenges of merging these distinct musical systems and to evaluate the pioneering contributions of Azerbaijani composers. The integration of mugham and polyphony is significant, as it enriches Azerbaijan's musical heritage while facilitating its inclusion in the global music landscape. The research provides a scholarly and theoretical framework for preserving and advancing mugham within contemporary music and introduces innovative approaches to intercultural musical synthesis in musicology. Mugham is defined by its modal system, melodic richness, rhythmic flexibility, and emotional depth but lacks the multi-voiced texture inherent in Western polyphony. Despite this contrast, Azerbaijani composers have innovatively combined mugham's melodic and modal elements with polyphonic structures. The earliest efforts are credited to Uzeyir Hajibeyli, who established a new musical style by blending the monodic essence of Azerbaijani music with Western compositional techniques. This creative pursuit gave rise to a distinctive Azerbaijani compositional school that balances national identity with modern musical expression. The findings underscore that this synthesis has been pivotal in the evolution of Azerbaijani music and its global presentation. This approach preserves mugham's core while redefining it in a modern context, offering a valuable cultural and artistic strategy that bridges heritage and innovation.
Keywords: Azerbaijani music, mugham, musical synthesis, polyphonic thinking, Uzeyir Hajibeyli.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Azerbaycan kültüründe köklü bir monofonik geleneksel müzik formu olan mugam ile Batı klasik müziğinin temel bir prensibi olan polifonik düşünce yapısının sentezini incelemektedir. Araştırma, bu farklı müzik sistemlerinin birleştirilmesinde ortaya çıkan yaratıcı fırsatları ve zorlukları keşfetmeyi ve Azerbaycanlı bestecilerin öncü katkılarını değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Muğam ile polifoninin entegrasyonu, Azerbaycan'ın müzikal mirasını zenginleştirirken aynı zamanda küresel müzik sahnesine dahil olmasını kolaylaştırması açısından önemlidir. Bu çalışma, mugamın çağdaş müzikte korunması ve geliştirilmesi için bilimsel ve teorik bir çerçeve sunmakta ve müzikoloji alanında kültürler arası müzikal senteze yönelik yenilikçi yaklaşımlar ortaya koymaktadır. Muğam, modal sistemi, melodik zenginliği, ritmik esnekliği ve duygusal derinliği ile tanımlanırken, Batı polifonisinin çok sesli dokusundan yoksundur. Bu zıtlığa rağmen, Azerbaycanlı besteciler mugamın melodik ve modal unsurlarını polifonik yapılarla yenilikçi bir şekilde birleştirmiştir. Bu alandaki en erken çabalar, Azerbaycan müziğinin monodik özünü Batı besteleme teknikleriyle harmanlayarak yeni bir müzikal tarz oluşturan Üzeyir Hacıbeyli'ye atfedilmektedir. Bu yaratıcı çaba, ulusal kimliği modern müzikal ifadeyle dengeleyen özgün bir Azerbaycan bestecilik okulu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bulgular, bu sentezin Azerbaycan müziğinin evriminde ve küresel sunumunda kilit bir rol oynadığını vurgulamaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, mugamın özünü korurken onu modern bir bağlamda yeniden tanımlayarak, miras ile yeniliği köprüleyen değerli bir kültürel ve sanatsal strateji sunmaktadır.
Anahtar kelimeler: Azerbaycan müziği, muğam, polifonik düşünce, müzikal sentez, Üzeyir Hacıbeyli.

1.INTRODUCTION

Azerbaijani musical culture is distinguished by its deep historical roots, rich melodic characteristics, and original system of musical thought (Aneta, 2021: 228). One of the fundamental pillars of this musical tradition is *mugham (Baghirova, 2021: 85).* At the same time, *polyphony*- the system of multi-voiced texture in Western music-has gradually found a unique place in the creative practices of Azerbaijani composers over the years. The synthesis of these two distinct systems of musical thinking has marked a significant transition in the evolution of national musical thought. As a result of the creative explorations of national composers, the synthesis that emerged between mugham and polyphony-representing a union at a high level of artistic and intellectual thinking-has had a profound influence on the development of Azerbaijani music (Huseynova, 2016: 127).

The fusion of mugham with polyphonic thinking, which signaled the beginning of a new phase in national music, remains relevant today as a significant artistic achievement (Ganioglu, 2022: 34). This synthesis has contributed to the diversification of musical language, the enrichment of compositional techniques, and the reinterpretation of mugham within the framework of contemporary aesthetic values (Mammadova, 2025: 168). The core aim has been to preserve the natural fluidity and expressive depth of mugham while integrating it with the rational structure of polyphony.

Throughout the cultural evolution of humanity, musical thinking has undergone various stages. The organization of sounds in music, their interrelations, and temporal structures have reflected different forms of thought across historical periods (Rice, 2003: 46). In this context, polyphonic thinking represents a major turning point in the history of music (Kuzmuk, 2019: 294). It is not merely a technical aspect of multi-voiced texture but also a structural and logical principle of musical composition.

Polyphonic thinking has elevated music from a simple means of emotional expression to a form of intellectual construction. It manifests in compositional interpretation as a multi-layered and parallel development system, characterized by structured, analytical approaches, dialogic forms (Belichenko, 2018: 44), and interactive relationships (Ness, 2019: 168). In polyphonic thinking, several independent melodic lines coexist simultaneously. Each line's trajectory, its interaction with others, and the structural rules governing their relationships-such as *counterpoint, imitation,* and other techniques-must be meticulously considered. In professional music practice, polyphonic thinking is recognized as a core concept. It is often referred to as "a professional term frequently used in the teaching of composition and the theory of technical composition" (Chunhai, 2022: 8).

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the synthesis between mugham, a monophonic traditional Azerbaijani musical genre, and polyphony, the foundational principle of Western classical music characterized by multiple independent melodic lines (Kyazimova, 2020: 31). This research seeks to explore the creative attempts made by Azerbaijani composers to integrate these two distinct musical thought systems. Specifically, the study focuses on how the modal and intonational richness of mugham has been combined with polyphonic techniques to develop new modes of musical expression. Through a detailed examination of pioneering figures such as Uzeyir Hajibeyli (Kyazimova, 2020: 18), Asaf Zeynally (Kazimov, 2019: 61), and Gara Garayev (Mikayılova, 2020: 2391), the research aims to trace the historical and artistic evolution of this synthesis, highlighting its role in the formation of the Azerbaijani compositional school and its integration into the global music context (Mirzayeva, 2020: 9).

This study holds significant importance as it addresses a critical phase in the development of Azerbaijani national music, where traditional modal systems and Western polyphonic structures coalesce, leading to a rich diversification of musical language and compositional techniques. The synthesis of mugham and polyphonic thinking not only preserves the unique cultural heritage of Azerbaijani music but also fosters its modernization and internationalization. By documenting and analyzing this creative fusion, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the intercultural dialogue in music and enriches the discourse on national identity in contemporary composition. Furthermore, it underscores the strategic role of this synthesis in sustaining musical traditions while enabling their dynamic reinterpretation in modern artistic practices.

1.2. Purpose and Importance of the Research

The primary aim of this study is to examine the process of synthesis between mugham and polyphonic thinking in Azerbaijani music and to analyze how these two distinct musical systems have been integrated. The study particularly seeks to reveal the musical and theoretical dimensions of this synthesis through the works of pioneering composers such as Uzeyir Hajibeyli, Asaf Zeynally, and Gara Garayev.

In this context, the research explains the process through which Azerbaijani music, while preserving its traditional structure, integrates with the modern musical language, and provides a theoretical framework for the reinterpretation of mugham in contemporary music. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of this synthesis in preserving national musical identity and promoting the international recognition of Azerbaijani music, thereby contributing to the field of musicology.

2. METHOD

This study is conducted within a qualitative, descriptive, and analytical methodological framework, aiming to investigate the interaction between mugham and polyphonic thinking, as well as the early experiences of their synthesis in Azerbaijani national music. The research is based on the integration of historical-contextual and musicological approaches and is directed toward a systematic analysis of the interplay between national musical traditions and Western compositional techniques.

The primary material base of the study consists of works by Azerbaijani composers that reflect the synthesis of mugham and polyphony. In this context, particular attention is given to the творческий output of Uzeyir Hajibeyli, Asaf Zeynally, and Gara Garayev. The principal analytical materials include choral excerpts from Hajibeyli's operas Leyli and Majnun and Koroghlu, Zeynally's fugues, and Garayev's polyphonic works for piano. In addition, theoretical literature, musicological studies, scholarly articles, and archival sources relevant to the topic are employed as secondary materials.

Methodologically, the study employs comparative, structural, and analytical methods. Through comparative analysis, the differences and correspondences between the monodic and improvisational nature of mugham and the structured, multi-voiced principles of polyphony are identified. Structural analysis focuses on melodic development, modal (maqam) systems, voice leading, and the application of contrapuntal techniques such as imitation, canon, and fugue within the selected works.

Particular attention is paid to the transformation of mugham's intonational characteristics, melodic flexibility, and improvisational elements within a polyphonic texture. In this regard, the role of mugham modes (such as Rast, Shur, and Bayati-Shiraz) in compositional structure, their distribution across different voices, and their function in thematic development are examined in detail.

The theoretical framework of the research is grounded in modal (maqam) theory, contrapuntal analysis, and intercultural musicology. The modal approach enables an understanding of the internal structural principles and modal characteristics of mugham, while contrapuntal analysis provides the necessary tools for examining polyphonic writing techniques. The intercultural perspective allows the synthesis of mugham and polyphony to be interpreted not only as a technical process but also as an aesthetic and cultural integration.

Thus, the applied methodology makes it possible to comprehensively explore the interaction between mugham and polyphony, revealing both its historical development and the innovations it has introduced into the musical language.

3. RESULTS

3.1. The role and significance of polyphony in compositional creativity

Polyphony is one of the most complex yet richest tools in a composer's creative arsenal, enabling the creation of works with profound content and multifaceted sound structures. At the same time, it represents one of the most intricate methods of organizing musical texture and structure. Emerging in the mature stages of medieval music culture and growing increasingly sophisticated over time, polyphony gradually penetrated the depths of compositional creativity and reached its peak during the flourishing era of Baroque composers. Since then, it has retained its significance and has had a direct influence on the development of many national musical cultures.

As R. Huseynova writes about the influence of polyphony on artistic creation and its importance for composers: “Polyphony, possessing great expressive power, has consistently attracted the attention of composers working in various directions throughout all stages of music history, and they have never remained indifferent to it” (Huseynova, 2016: 214).

It is well understood that any musical interpretation possessing multi-voiced and multi-layered expression or composed in polyphonic forms and genres can be considered a polyphonic work. Such compositions are typically characterized by linearly logical melodic development. Every composer engaged in musical creativity possesses their distinctive polyphonic thinking, which emerges in the course of the creative process. When a composer seeks to reflect the ideological content of a particular work with their unique stylistic features, they rely not only on expressive means and elements of the musical language but also on polyphonic thinking. T. Tunc briefly defines the concept of a “polyphonic work” as follows: “Polyphonic compositions are formed through the combination of multiple melodies based on the rules of counterpoint. These works are predominantly governed by horizontal polyphony” (Tunc, 2016: 375).

Often, polyphonic elements serve as the most effective tools for expressing the conceptual content of musical interpretations. Polyphony renews and enriches the system of musical language. It does not impose complexity or diversity arbitrarily; rather, it generates deeper meaning and conditions the emergence of new ideas and approaches in musical expression.

3.2. The cultural-aesthetic essence of mugham and its manifestation in composer's creativity

Mugham is one of the principal elements of the cultural identity of the Azerbaijani people. R. Zohrabov describes the significance of mugham for the Azerbaijani nation as follows: “Mughams are valuable monuments of Azerbaijan’s material and spiritual culture, delicate voices of the people’s hearts composed over centuries” (Zohrabov, 1991: 162). Mugham reflects the history, emotions, lifestyle, taste, and spiritual worldview of the people. The form of thought embodied in mugham indicates the value that Azerbaijanis attribute to music, language, and expression. In this sense, mugham thinking is not merely a musical conception but also a form of national-cultural existence.

Mugham is a rich, creative heritage with ancient traditions and carries a socio-philosophical essence. The peculiar executions of a mugham hold the perspectives of its real existence and the power not only of its development and change but also of the change of the corresponding system of musical utterances (Elsner, 2024: 27). It is the greatest artistic document through which the philosophical perspectives of the Azerbaijani people are uniquely expressed. It is no coincidence that mugham is described as “the most precious treasure of the Azerbaijani people, the finest pearl of our national cultural treasury, and a prominent example of Eastern philosophy and universal sensibility” (Musazade, 2015: 23).

The thought structure of mugham is characterized by the gradual unfolding of melody over time, the progressive transformation of emotional states, and its potential to induce spiritual catharsis in the listener. This thinking is built less on formal boundaries and more on internal content and spiritual depth. Mugham thinking is a system of artistic, philosophical, and psychological values underlying this ancient musical genre. It transcends the notions of time and space, reflecting the metaphysical quests of the human soul and the harmony of emotion and thought.

Developed over centuries through oral traditions, mugham has held a unique role and significance in national music. The inevitable presence of mugham intonations in the rich melodic hues of any folk music piece primarily emphasizes the national identity of these works. Simultaneously, it highlights the magical nature of mugham art, its improvisational possibilities, and broad developmental mechanisms. In the early decades of the twentieth century, when professional composition was being established as an art form, mugham art permeated musical interpretations, and its intonations played a fundamental role in embodying deep expressiveness in these interpretations. The expression of mugham in composer creativity is connected with the use of national modes (mugham scales) as maqam foundations in their works. G. Akhundova, reflecting on this through the example of A. Zeynally and broadly applying it to the creativity of all Azerbaijani composers, notes: “The manifestation of mugham in composer creativity is primarily characterized by its reliance on the eponymous maqam as well as intonational sources specific to mugham” (Akhundova, 2020: 22).

4. THE SYNTHESIS OF MUGHAM IN THE WORKS OF UZEYIR HAJIBEYLI, ASAF ZEYNALLY, AND GARA GARAYEV

As is well known, Azerbaijani folk music is based on a monophonic (monodic) structure. One of the fundamental issues that has consistently preoccupied Azerbaijani composers and musicologists is the necessity of integrating mugham and polyphonic thinking to determine the principles for a multifaceted musical development. "There is an opinion that if harmony (consonance) is applied to Azerbaijani music, which is inherently monophonic, then all of its tonal characteristics might be lost. This idea is entirely true. Incompetently applying harmony to the Azerbaijani melody could change its nature, remove its brilliance in tonal characteristics, and even make it dull. However, this does not mean that Azerbaijani music must remain permanently monophonic.

The problem of polyphony in Azerbaijani music is still a matter of concern for composers and musicologists. The main issue is that polyphony should not be based on the principle of constructing harmonic cadences that require the correct succession of chords and changes in the tonal structure. Instead, it must be based on the logical combination of independent melodies that follow the laws of coherence" (Hajibeyli, 2019: 185).

Initially, one of the most critical challenges was the incorporation of mugham-based modes (maqams) into composed works in a distinctive and idiomatic way. In this regard, Uzeyir Hajibeyli made significant contributions through his creative efforts. He consistently emphasized the importance of utilizing mugham in artistic composition and insisted on preserving the autonomous character of mugham. It is no coincidence that the prominent composer wrote in his article *"Nationalism in Music"*: "When studying Azerbaijani music and using it, special attention should be given to the mugham system and the living mughams, which play a major role in our music. Care must be taken not to lose the independent value of these mughams" (Hajibeyli, 2005: 301).

In the 20th century, one of the most important tasks in professional composition was the synthesis of mugham intonations and structural features with the polyphonic language of Western music. It was Hajibeyli who took the first significant steps in this direction. The problem of reconciling the monodic structure of national music with polyphonic thinking always remained central to his artistic and theoretical work. In his monumental scholarly work *"The Principles of Azerbaijani Folk Music,"* Hajibeyli laid out the theoretical foundations of Azerbaijani music and defined the directions for its future development. "The founder of Azerbaijani professional music, U.H. Hajibeyli laid the foundation of the development of polyphony in Azerbaijani compositional art. In his creative work, polyphony and the essential regularities of traditional Azerbaijani music found their artistic embodiment in unity, and the future development path of national music was determined" (Mammadova, 2025: 173).

Throughout his career, he sought to solve the issue of integrating national music into the European art music tradition. Hajibeyli clearly understood that the inclusion of mugham elements in musical interpretation would broaden the creative possibilities. For this, synthesizing folk music and mugham with European elements-particularly polyphony of critical importance.

Musicologist I. Mammadli notes Hajibeyli's perspective on this process as follows: "Expressing his dissatisfaction with passive appropriation of folk music, Hajibeyli stated that the national character of musical works should be realized through a creative synthesis of European music techniques with the foundations of Azerbaijani folk music. Hajibeyli directed his efforts toward two main goals: to uncover the essence of national musical thinking and to shape his compositional style on this basis, utilizing European foundations" (Mammadli, 2005: 47).

In his opera "*Leyli and Majnun"*-staged in 1908 and recognized as the first opera in the Muslim East-Hajibeyli employed mugham intonations within a polyphonic framework for the first time (Turkmenoglu, 2021: 52). The opera's opening chorus "Shabi-Hijran," the entrance to Act V, and the polyphonic settings of episodes based on the rhythmic mugham "Arazbari" represent the earliest examples of integrating mugham into polyphonic textures in Azerbaijani music.

Musicologist F. Aliyeva, who considers the opera a significant milestone in Hajibeyli's creative search, writes: "In the opera, the issues, explorations, and stylistic advances that defined Hajibeyli's creative development were manifested across all parameters of his compositional work" (Aliyeva, 2003: 80).

The modal basis (maqam) of the chorus “Shabi-Hicran” from Uzeyir Hajibeyli’s opera “Leyli and Majnun” is Rast (Figure 1). From a harmonic perspective, the perfect fourth (quartal) relationship effectively highlights the functional roles of the tonic and subdominant. All the voices, aligned along a horizontal axis, interact in a way that reinforces and enriches the melodic development (Kyazimova, 2020: 62). Written in a ¾ time signature, the chorus consists of two stanzas, each constructed in a ternary form (ABA). The outer sections are based on the pitch E, while the middle section is built upon A, the upper fourth in the Rast mode. This modal approach to form construction underscores the significance of maqam logic in resolving structural and compositional challenges. The sections of the form follow a periodic structure. The first phrase is tonic-centered, while the second phrase descends by a perfect fourth, returning toward the tonic-thereby affirming the mode's internal coherence. The choral part is primarily carried by the soprano and alto voices. The melody, performed by these parts, is simultaneously repeated in parallel motion by the other voices, which remain more freely developed.

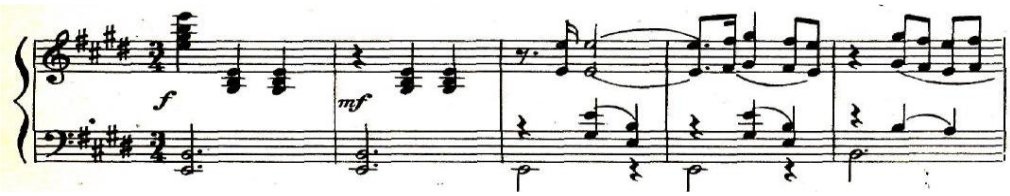

Figure 1. The chorus “Shabi-Hicran” from U. Hajibeyli’s opera “Leyli and Majnun” (Akhundova, 2015: 134).

The chorus “Shabi-Hicran”, widely regarded as the first polyphonic example in Azerbaijani national music, exhibits relatively simple manifestations of polyphonic thinking. There is virtually no sharp contrapuntal contrast between the vocal lines; rather, the voices tend to repeat each other's melodic material, creating a modest and cohesive texture. At the same time, the composer conducts a pioneering experiment by treating national modal structures as the foundation of polyphonic construction, particularly by applying the principle of tonal centers within this framework. This early experimentation serves as a significant step toward achieving compatibility between mugham and polyphonic thought, thus marking the first attempts to resolve the challenge of counterpoint in national music. In subsequent decades, this approach laid the groundwork for Azerbaijani composers to integrate mugham elements into a polyphonic context across diverse forms, genres, and large-scale compositions, reinforcing the centrality of mugham in their compositional mindset.

In the chorus “Majnun, Majnun, let us go” from “Leyli and Majnun”, Hajibeyli incorporates polyphonic technique through the use of canon, aligning the intonational properties of the Shushtar mode with Western structural devices. The maqam based on E permeates the melodic content of all vocal parts, effectively evoking a mood of sorrow and melancholia.

In another chorus, “This one who comes is like a beloved”, Hajibeyli utilizes latent (subtle) polyphony, once again drawing from the Bayati-Kurd mode based on E. This results in a compelling dialogue between the voices, demonstrating the expressive potential of native modes when combined with contrapuntal techniques.

Uzeyir Hajibeyli presents his most comprehensive attempt at synthesizing mugham with polyphonic thinking in the central chorus “Chanlibel” of the opera “Koroghlu” (Yilmaz, 2024: 12). This chorus, notable for its monumental scope within Azerbaijani opera, not only reflects the composer’s ongoing explorations in the domain of polyphonic music but also reveals his aspiration to reconcile mugham thinking with classical Western musical elements on a broader scale.

Set in 2/4 meter and marked *alla marcia*, “Chanlibel” embodies the intonational richness of the Shur mode, capturing its emotional and expressive depth with grandeur (Figure 2). The thematic material is first introduced in the bass voice, based on the Shur maqam with a F-sharp tonal center. This is subsequently developed by the tenor voices, now articulated through an E tonal center of the same mode.

As the tempo intensifies, all vocal lines actively contribute to the development, creating textural momentum and structural clarity. The chorus culminates in a powerful sonic unity through the principle of contrast among vocal parts, reinforcing the work’s dramatic and national character. Through this piece, Hajibeyli not only demonstrates his mastery of polyphonic construction but also underscores the transformative potential of mugham when integrated with European compositional forms.

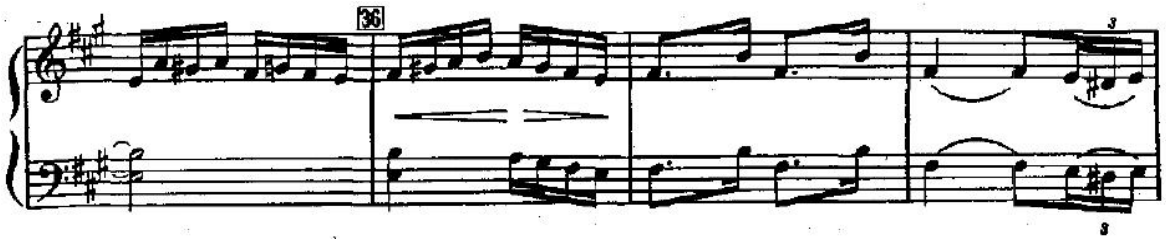

Figure 2. The chorus "Chanlibel" of the opera "Koroghlu (Akhundova, 2015: 138).

It should also be noted that the initial application of mugham elements within polyphonic thinking in Azerbaijani national music predominantly occurred in choral numbers from operas or works written for chorus. This was by no means coincidental. Given the inherent nature of choral art, it represented the most promising medium for fully comprehending and expressing polyphonic thought, and our national composers approached it precisely from this perspective. Uzeyir Hajibeyli was the first to combine mugham with polyphonic thinking in his operas and subsequently in other compositions, thereby significantly expanding the creative possibilities of both domains within a national framework. Initially, he transcended the developmental boundaries of national music, demonstrating to all that it constituted a fundamental historical achievement. Later, he confidently took the first steps toward securing a rightful place for national music within the sphere of world art.

Hajibeyli's early experiments in uniting mugham with polyphonic thinking in national music reveal the breadth of his creative imagination, his innovative tendencies, and define the contours of his compositional style. On this subject, G. Mahmudova remarks: "The correlation of polyphonic structures in Uzeyir Hajibeyli's music with the modal-intonational dramaturgy of Azerbaijani mugham, and his recourse to the possibilities of multi-voiced polyphonic expression, reflect the compositional design trends of the composer's works, thereby becoming an indicator of his musical-artistic style" (Mahmudova, 2005: 147).

The virtuosity of mugham artistry in the instrumental genre, one of the fundamental components of national music, directly influenced the formation of composer A. Zeynally's polyphonic conception. In each of the nine fugues he composed in this complex genre, he creates polyphonic textures based on the intonations of the "Rast" and "Bayati-Shiraz" modes. Only two of these fugues have been published to date. N. Qadimova, emphasizing the significance of the national modal foundation in these fugues, notes: "By composing these fugues, the composer was able to instill the rigorous compositional principles of fugue writing to the generation of composers that followed him. In this regard, the composer was the first to identify and demonstrate the modal basis of fugues developed in Azerbaijan" (Qadimova, 2005: 176).

In the collection, only one fugue is written in "Rast" mode, while the others are composed in the "Bayati-Shiraz" mode, through which the composer skillfully integrates national modal elements with polyphonic conception. Each theme, tonal and real answers, contrary motion, interludes or stretto passages, as well as the formal characteristics of the exposition, development, and recapitulation sections, bear formal traits reflecting the influence of J.S. Bach's polyphonic technique in European classical music. These represent significant achievements in the formation of the fugue genre within national music.

J.S. Bach, with his 48 preludes and fugues, demonstrated the equal status of all keys, profoundly transforming the major-minor system and opening new interpretative possibilities for performers (Rachel, 2013: 18). This pedagogically significant factor played an important role in the development of performance techniques. A. Zeynally's fugues not only stand as one of the earliest experiments in applying polyphonic conception to national modal systems but also opened paths for mugham-based improvisational possibilities within the art of performance (Kazimov, 2009: 86).

In A. Zeynally's collection, fugues I, II, III, and IX are three-voiced; IV and VI are two-voiced; V and VII are four-voiced; and VIII is five-voiced. Only the first fugue is composed in the "Rast" mode. In fugues II through VIII, the subject and its answer are based on the dominant (fifth), while the others rely on the perfect fourth interval. The last fugue is characterized as a double fugue. Fugue III, one of the two published fugues by the composer, is based on the intonations of the folk song "Goyunlar" (Figure 3). Thus, the composer employs not only national modes but also folk music motifs within a polyphonic framework.

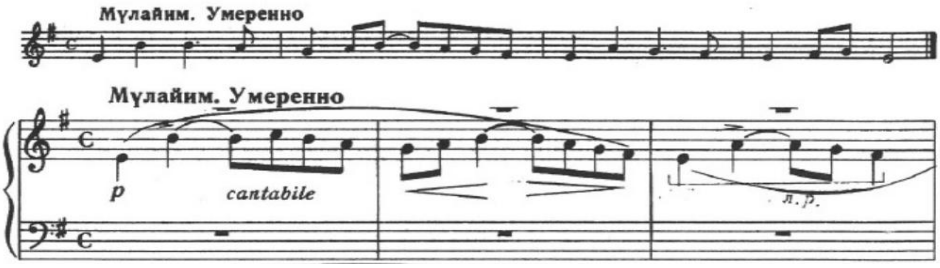

Figure 3. A. Zeynally Fugue III (Zeynally. 1951: 7).

In general, A. Zeynally's fugues represent a significant creative achievement by articulating the modal series of national modes within a polyphonic conception. The national tonal colors are uniquely reflected in the texture of these works. Interludes between themes, as well as the overlapping entrance of a subject in one voice before it concludes in another, along with stretto passages, contribute to a fluid overall development. These compositions not only demonstrate the composer's serious approach to the fugue genre but also bear traces of his creative explorations in integrating national musical elements with polyphonic possibilities. In this regard, A. Zeynally and his oeuvre represent a pioneering example and set a model for subsequent composers. This synthesis of two distinct system-seemingly contradictory at first glance-resolved the challenge of integrating different creative perspectives.

Gara Garayev is one of the prominent figures in the history of Azerbaijani music who delved deeply into polyphony and enriched it with national spirit. In many of his works, the polyphonic treatment of mugham modes is particularly notable. Here, melodies based on the modal structures of mugham are combined with thematic development and contrapuntal techniques. The composer also employs modal polyphony, presenting the melodic construction of mugham within a polyphonic texture. For Garayev, the fusion of mugham and polyphonic thinking serves as a vital means of expressing profound philosophical views (Eminova, 2023: 824). On one hand, as a successor to the creative traditions of U. Hacıbeyli, he intellectually incorporates national musical elements into the foundation of his music. He does not simply imitate the richness of mugham melodies or folk music intonations when developing his musical material. Rather, through an individual creative approach, he weaves subtle nuances of folk music and mugham elements with the laws of classical music, resulting in a richly colored melodic chain. On the other hand, referencing the polyphonic conception of the great German composer J.S. Bach, Garayev presents full bass lines, imitations, and canons in the texture of his compositions.

S. Mikayilova, emphasizing the importance of mugham and polyphony in Garayev's work, notes: "When G. Garayev turned to polyphonic genres and forms, he realized that the ostinato—a crucial constructive function—acted as a point where these genres and forms intersected with mugham. Utilizing this feature, he created works that observe all the rules of polyphony while simultaneously demonstrating the full compatibility of polyphony with the principles of national musical thinking and, primarily, mugham artistry" (Mikayılova, 2020: 2390).

In general, polyphonic music, especially fugues, shares a number of characteristic features with our national mugham traditions. It is well known that mugham is one of the most developed genres of folk art. Both in mugham and fugue, a small intonational motif at the beginning generates intonations that encompass the thematic material of the entire development. The free improvisational nature of thematic development is manifested. The initial motif gradually develops, losing its sketch-like character, and especially in the development section, the extensive possibilities of modulation create complex and often contradictory melodic lines. Although Azerbaijani national music is predominantly monophonic, this principle of development is widely encountered in mugham art. This aspect, which functions as an important factor in the integration of polyphonic and mugham thinking in national music, finds deep reflection in the creative work of composers.

G. Garayev skillfully combined polyphony and mugham thinking as early as in his first compositions written in the 1930s. His initial experiments in this area were realized in a fugue for solo piano composed in 1939. In this work, the national foundation first manifests itself in the metric structure. Specifically, the 6/8 meter is the most frequently encountered rhythmic unit in Azerbaijani national dances and is an essential means of expressing national character in 6/8 compositions.

Garayev's fugue is three-voiced. The subject and answer, expressed through thirds and octaves and ultimately passing to the bass voice, intensify the development. The subject initially begins on "C sharp," then "F," and finally on "G." Interludes are present between subject entries. In the development section, the meter suddenly changes to 3/8 for one measure and then returns to 6/8; this alternation occurs several times. The texture becomes increasingly complex with sequences expressed in octaves. The piece concludes with a gradually diminishing sound at pianissimo dynamics.

The fugue's modal basis is grounded in national elements and mugham thinking rather than the European major-minor tonal system (Figure 4). It is noted: "The national roots of the fugue's subject are of particular interest. In the exposition, the entry of voices does not follow the European tonic-dominant scheme, but rather begins with an ascending sequence of mugham sections' fundamental tones (C♯-F-G)" (Mirzayeva, 2020: 69).

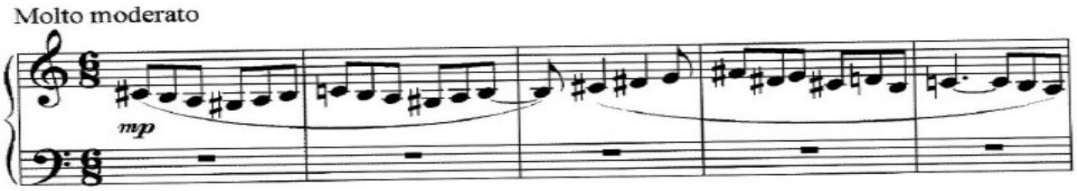

Figure 4. G.Garayev First fugue (Badalbeyli, 2013; Garayev, 2013: 26).

As seen, following A. Zeynalli, G. Garayev made significant advances in the national fugue genre by uniquely combining mugham and polyphonic thinking with the achievements of his creative style. The results of the creative searches, which were fully manifested in the 1930s, played a leading role in shaping the musical worldview and compositional style of other Azerbaijani composers, determining the originality and distinctiveness of national music. The synthesis of mugham and polyphony in the works of Azerbaijani composers has been characterized as a successful integration of national musical thinking and Western techniques. This process was not merely a technical innovation but also an aesthetic revolution. The polyphonic treatment of mugham enabled the Azerbaijani compositional school to secure a unique position within the global musical culture. The melodic flexibility of mugham and the naturalness of its modal structure created broad possibilities for polyphonic development. The internal drama of mugham, combined with the thematic developmental principles of polyphony, formed a multi-layered musical dramaturgy in national compositions.

5. CONCLUSION

Traditional mugham possesses distinctive intonational patterns and melodic turns. These features, when applied within polyphony, ensure that independent voices resonate in the spirit of mugham. The sequential or simultaneous presentation of different sections of the same mugham across separate voices intensifies the polyphonic effect in national compositions. Composers have transferred the freedom of mugham improvisation into polyphonic structures, thereby preserving the independence and individual development of each voice.

The polyphonic treatment of mugham in the works of Azerbaijani composers represents a successful synthesis of national and universal musical thought. This synthesis not only facilitated the transition of mugham from its classical forms to symphonic structures but also laid the foundation for the international recognition of Azerbaijani music.

Mugham has provided Azerbaijani composers with the opportunity to imbue polyphonic music with new colors, depth, and a distinctive national identity. Azerbaijani frets form a stable image in consciousness, and the pitch of the 12-step uniform temperament completely determines the individuality of the frets and their differentiation (Aliyeva, 2022: 17). Azerbaijani composers have masterfully integrated the modal systems of national maqams with polyphonic thinking, applied the improvisational characteristics of mugham within multi-voiced textures, and uniquely conveyed the rhythmic features of mugham performance. By developing thematic material derived from mugham through polyphonic techniques, they created musically rich and unique interpretations. These works represent a fundamental distinction that sets Azerbaijani music apart from the musical traditions of other nations.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the challenge of reconciling national musical elements manifested in Uzeyir Hajibeyli's compositions with the achievements of classical European music expanded the creative potential of every representative of the compositional school he founded. Composers such as Asaf Zeynally, Gara Garayev, and numerous others continued the path of their mentors, transforming initial experimental attempts into significant creative achievements.

The findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

➢The incorporation of mugham into polyphonic thinking laid the foundation for a new stage in the development of Azerbaijani music. First observed in the works of Uzeyir Hajibeyli, this synthesis marked the starting point of a consistent artistic pursuit by Azerbaijani composers to integrate mugham into polyphonic structures.

➢ Choral art provided a suitable platform for the application of polyphonic thinking in national music. Choral episodes such as "Shabi-Hicran" from the opera "Leyli and Majnun" served as early successful models of mugham–polyphony synthesis by integrating traditional modal systems with elementary polyphonic textures.

➢ The fugues of A. Zeynalli represents the earliest examples of synthesizing classical European polyphonic forms with Azerbaijani modal structures. Written in the modes of Rast and Bayati-Shiraz, these fugues reflect both a preservation of mugham intonational features and the adaptation of Western contrapuntal forms to the national musical idiom.

➢ The works of Gara Garayev can be regarded as a culmination of the mugham–polyphony synthesis. In his polyphonic compositions, especially fugues, melodic development based on mugham modes is combined with contrapuntal techniques inspired by J.S. Bach, reflecting a union of national musical logic with classical compositional methods.

➢ The synthesis of mugham and polyphony played a decisive role in shaping the compositional style of Azerbaijani composers. This integration enabled the development of individual creative languages by encompassing both the depth of national musical thinking and the structural sophistication of international compositional approaches.

➢ The application of mugham in polyphonic contexts expanded both the aesthetic and technical dimensions of national music. The melodic flexibility, rhythmic freedom, and organic modal structures of mugham created ample opportunities for complex polyphonic elaboration, enriching the expressive capacity of Azerbaijani music.

➢ The mugham–polyphony synthesis contributed significantly to the international recognition of Azerbaijani music. Through this synthesis, the national musical heritage was organically integrated with the universal language of music, enabling Azerbaijani composers to occupy a distinct place within the global music culture.

➢ The role of mugham in the polyphonic thinking of Azerbaijani composers goes beyond the mere multifaceted use of musical material. It embodies the organic integration of national musical heritage with international compositional techniques, facilitating the incorporation of national music into the universal musical language. This synthesis further attests to the richness and originality of Azerbaijani musical culture, securing its unique position in the global music landscape.

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