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78.071.1Yekaterina Karelina<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup> Aldan-Maadyr Tyva National Museum (Kyzyl, Tyva, Russia)

## Tuvan Composer Ayana Oyun (Creative Portrait)

### Abstract

Among the contemporary composers of Tuva, the personality and creative work of Ayana Oyun are covered little in musicology. The main stages of the composer's creative biography are noted related to studying at Republican School of Arts and Kyzyl College of Arts, receiving a specialized education at Krasnoyarsk State Academy of Music and Theater, Mikhail Glinka Novosibirsk State Conservatory, as well as additional education at St. Petersburg Theatre Arts Academy. The composer's creative portfolio is surveyed, providing an analysis of one of the illustrative works – the Piano Quintet. The periodization of creativity works correlates with her education in different universities in Russia and with a change in genre preferences. Thus, during the years of study at Krasnoyarsk Academy of Music and Theater (2001–2007), works of chamber genres were predominated, including the above mentioned and analyzed Piano Quintet. The return to her native Tyva is marked by the formation of an original author's style. During these years, interest in theatrical music was shown, and a number of performances with music by Ayana Oyun were staged. During the years of study in St. Petersburg (2013–2018), several musical fairy tales were created and staged: *Don't Fly Away!*, *Mary Poppins and Her Friends*, *Khorloo (Wheel)*. Music appeared for a number of performances at the National Theatre as well. The composer's contribution to the development of musical theater in Tuva and the revival of the first national opera, *Chechen and Belekmaa*, by Rostislav Kendenbil are noted. Ayana Oyun is a rare case of a successful two-in-one combination of a composer and a theater director; her personality is distinguished by deep reverence and adherence to the traditions and Buddhist practices, striving for constant self-improvement, expansion of professional and spiritual horizons.

**Keywords:** Ayana Oyun, Tuva, composer, theater stage director.

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Among contemporary composers of Tuva, Ayana Oyun's (born 1982) (see Fig. 1) personality and work, which have not yet received wide coverage in musicological works [Karelina, *The History of Tuvan Music from the Fall of the Qing Dynasty to the Present Day: Research*; Karelina, *Creativity of Young Composers and Problems of Development of Musical Culture in Tuva ...*; Karelina, *Woman Composer in Modern Culture of Siberia*], are of particular interest. The younger generation of Tuvan authors are not discussed in the major work of the Novosibirsk Conservatory [Ossipenko], since the section on Tuva is chronologically limited to the period of the 1980s. In the monograph by Lada Pylneva, some works of Ayana Oyun are only mentioned in general reviews [Pylneva, p. 396–398], based on the material of the already mentioned monograph [Karelina, *The History of Tuvan Music from the Fall of the Qing Dynasty to the Present Day: Research*]. The proposed article is intended to fill this deficiency by presenting a brief biography and analysis of one of the composer's exemplary works.

Native of the village of Aryg-Bazhy Ulug-Khem district of Tuva, the youngest of four children in a working-class family (her mother is a livestock specialist, and her father is a mechanical engineer), Ayana began her musical studies as a flute student at Republican School of Arts. After graduating from school in 1997, she enrolled Kyzyl College of Arts to study music theory. There she began studying composition in the class of Yekaterina Karelina, composed songs and plays of small forms, and took an active part in the concerts of the composition class. One of the compositions of these years, a vocal duet-rondo on Tuvan folk themes *Kuda yry* (Wedding Song) was even performed in November 2001 in a chamber music concert of Tuvan composers in the capital at Alexander Pushkin Museum as part of the Days of Culture of the Republic of Tyva events in Moscow.

After graduating from college in 2001, she entered the Krasnoyarsk Academy of Music and Theater, where she has received a degree in Composition in the class of Vladimir Senegin. Ayana Oyun remembers his teacher as a strict but kind man with high principles who taught that composing music is everyday work and that composing is a craft that must be mastered. During the lessons with the teacher, they listened and analyzed the music of Bach, Debussy, Stockhausen, and Cage and found out how, in one case or another, the composer finds proper decisions, stopping in detail and understanding composition techniques. Vladimir Senegin often repeated the phrase "Music gives birth to music", so he recommended listening to a lot of music, explaining that it is better to go to a concert and listen to great music than to sit and try to compose when it doesn't work out. Thus, under the guidance of a teacher, the student mastered the basics of forms and genres and worked on works for different performers.

Among the works of the Krasnoyarsk period, the piano cycle *Shagaa*, consisting of five parts, stands out for its particularly poetic sound sketches: *Shagaa* (celebrating



Figure 1. Tuvan composer Ayana Oyun

the New Year according to the lunar calendar), *Kazhyk* (traditional game with animal bones), *Shyngyraash* (Ringing), *Kharzhygashtar* (Snowflakes), and *Kozhamyktar* (Choruses). After this cycle followed several successful works: duets for woodwinds, variations for piano on the theme of the Tuvan folk song *Dus-Dag* (Salt Mountain), romances based on poems by Tuvan poets, choruses acapella, arrangements of Tuvan folk songs for choir, string quartet in three movements, and the single-movement Piano quintet.

The score of the Quintet for two violins, viola, cello, and piano was created in 2006. In the history of the Tuvan school of composition, the appeal to this genre is the first and, so far, the only one of its kind. The Quintet also stands out in that, being an example of the so-called “absolute”, i.e., non-program instrumental music, it has no connections with Tuvan melos (not only are quotations from Tuvan folklore unused, but any associations with it are carefully avoided). This is due to the figurative content, which reflects the inner psychological world of a modern person, regardless of one’s nationality and place of residence, living in a complex and ambiguous era of world processes of globalization and reevaluation of spiritual values. The music of this Quintet is not designed for external effect; it is intellectual in nature and requires thoughtful listening. There are several sections in the structure of the form.

At the beginning of the quintet, against the background of the drone sound  $d^1$ , short tunes appear like fragmentary phrases. The central structure among them is a motif of the initial and adjacent sounds ( $d - dis - cis$ ). This motif can be considered as the thematic grain of the entire quintet (see example 1).

Example 1. Ayana Oyun. Quintet for two violins, viola, cello, and piano. Initial motif

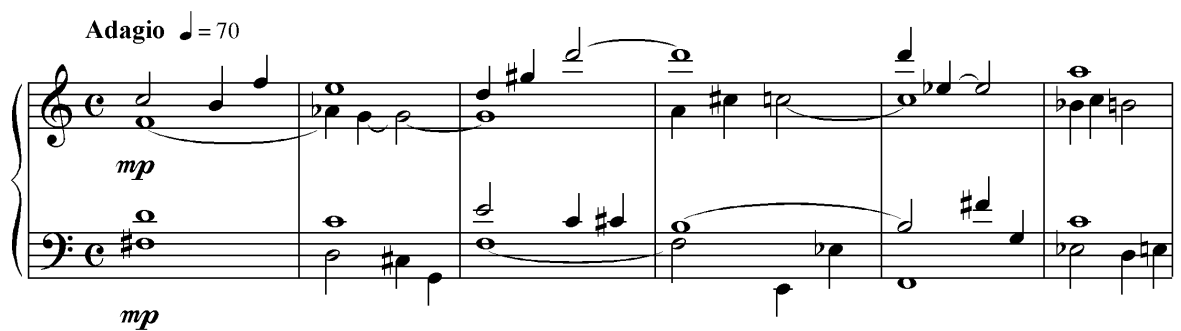
The intonation line is emphatically dissonant: tritone motifs and interval complexes based on the tritone or major seventh play an important role in the thematic structure of the quintet. The next section is characterized by rhythmic acceleration: a dialogue takes place between the piano and string parts, leading to the first climax (bars 49–50). Further development of musical thought is committed to the strings speak in a freely imitative manner (as if interrupting each other), and the piano leads its bass line (free ostinato in quarters). This fragment logically leads to the next one, where the ensemble members switch roles: the strings discuss one idea (the initial quartet chant develops in quarters), and the piano picks up their previous “ragged” phrases (with sixteenth notes), which leads to a new climax (bar 80).

An important section is the fugue (bars 94–134) – the key moment of the form, the most intense intellectual dialogue. The fugue's main intonation and rhythmic structures are centered in its theme. For example, the theme's main motif is based on the tritone, and minor-second intonations are used a lot in the development (see example 2).



Example 2. Ayana Oyun. Quintet for two violins, viola, cello, and piano. Fugue section. The subject

Adagio section (bars 135–170), in which melodious phrases from the strings (later carried out by the piano) are built on leading intonations (see example 3).



Example 3. Ayana Oyun. Quintet for two violins, viola, cello, and piano. Adagio section's main theme

In the Tempo I section (from 171 bar), the initial short chants return (at first, they sound pizzicato). The last culmination (bars 181–190) is a combination of toccata texture in the piano and melodious lines in the violins, the apogee of the tritone vertically and horizontally (see example 4).



Example 4. Ayana Oyun. Quintet for two violins, viola, cello, and piano. Recapitulation. Last culmination

The final phrases (from bar 191) sound like a reminder of the fugue theme and act as a coda. Thus, the single-movement form contains signs of internal cyclicality. At the same time, the development of the form follows a cross-cutting principle, as a result of which the main musical and expressive elements constantly vary, appearing in different guises and different combinations. All this creates a special artistic space for the Quintet, in which micro-intonation processes serve as a reflection of the intense intellectual life of modern man.

Three Miniatures for a small symphony orchestra based on Tuvan fairy tales (*Pastoral, Karaty-Khaan* and *Shaman*) were created by Ayana Oyun during her years of study. The graduation work was the cantata *Subedey (Subutay)*, inspired by the same named poem written by the Tuvan poet Eduard Mizhit. The tendency toward generally significant (civil, historical, and spiritual) themes inherent in cantata-oratorio genres was reflected in an attempt to musically embody the image of the medieval Uriankhay commander, a close ally of Genghis Khan. The composer was interested in the text by Eduard Mizhit, which expresses the feeling of bitter regret of a wise man about what he had done. *Subedey* appears in the poem already in his declining years, an old man who asks for forgiveness from his land and people. The cantata consists of six parts; three of them were performed in August 2012 in the capital of Kalmykia, Elista, as part of the IV International Festival of Contemporary Music of Mongolian-speaking Peoples, Pentatonic.

After graduating from the academy in 2007, Ayana decided to continue her professional education, so she devoted the years 2007–2009 to postgraduate studies at Mikhail Glinka Novosibirsk Conservatory, majoring in Composition in the class of Professor Yuriy Yukechev. During this period, a cycle for a cappella choir, *Sany-Mogeh*, was written. It is based on verses from the poem of the same name by the Tuvan classic Stepan Saryg-ool, three parts of which are variations on the “orphan theme” and are inspired by the artistic imagery of the traditional song genre *öskustun yry* (song of the orphan). As part of the composer’s graduate program, research work was also completed, including a graduation essay on the topic “The Use of Polyphonic Techniques in the Scores of Tuvan Composers in the 1970s.” So, Ayana Oyun became the first composer of Tuva, who received a post-graduate composition education.

Returning to her homeland, Tuva, from 2010 to 2013, she taught composition, musical theoretical subjects, and music computer science at Chyrgal-ool Kyzyl College of Arts. In 2011, Ayana Oyun was accepted as a member of the Union of Composers of Russia. New opuses have appeared, among them: arrangements of Tuvan folk songs, Ballad for cello and piano, and Vocalise for voice and piano. The music of the Ballad and Vocalise well demonstrates the features of Ayana Oyun’s personal style, characterized by a penchant for expressing dramatic, intense emotional states in concise, compact forms. Intended for soprano, Vocalise immediately entered the concert repertoire of the leading Tuvan singer, Elvira Dokulak.

It is important to note that during these years the composer’s creative portfolio was replenished with theatrical music for the play *Sen deerge men* (You are Me), the puppet show *Don’t Fly Away!*, the children’s play *Smart Mouse in Australia*, and several parts

for the children's ballet *Shyyaan am...* (an untranslatable fairytale beginning), among several co-authors.

Working with theatrical projects encouraged the composer to receive additional education. In 2013, Ayana Oyun entered the St. Petersburg State Academy of Theater Arts (now Russian State Institute of Performing Arts) at the Faculty of Acting and Directing with a degree in Musical Theater Direction, where she studied under the course of the People's Artist of Russia, Professor Andrey Petrov. The years of study in the northern capital were remembered by active immersion in the world of opera. In the children's musical theater *Through the Looking Glass*, there were sometimes three performances a day, and students literally lived there all day long, from one performance to another, watching the theater from the inside, sitting at rehearsals, and attending premieres.

Ayana Ayana Oyun successfully mastered the genre of musical fairy tales as a composer, writing music for a number of children's plays staged in Tuva (*Don't Fly Away!*, *Mary Poppins and Her Friends*, *Khorloo (Wheel)*). Also, her creative portfolio was replenished by the music for performances of National Theater (*Oshpeen ynakshyl* (Unfaded Love), *Modeh. Eldin egezi* (Modeh. The Beginning of an Empire), the music of Lamentation for the theatrical program of the State Song and Dance Ensemble *Sayany* (Golden Arrows of Dreams), and the music for the New Year's children's performance (Gift for the Princess).

In 2018, as a graduation work, Ayana Oyun successfully presented the musical fairy tale *Kamgalakchy kan-bolat kys* (Hero Girl), in which she performed not only as a composer but also as a stage director for the first time. The musical design of the performance is based on ethno-style, the melody is close to folk style. This is also facilitated by the choice of accompanying instruments (*igil*, *byzaanchy*, *chadagan*, *doshpuluur*, *kengirge*), to which the sound of a triangle is sometimes added. Thus, the heroes of the play not only sing, but also play Tuvan musical instruments, which helps the viewer feel the atmosphere of the heroic epic. The composer's position was as follows: "Music is a continuation of the action, not imposed. Simple. Well, the orchestra is quietly, imperceptibly playing along. The main thing was the action, not the music, emphasized separately, or the dance... I wanted unity."

The composer worked as the artistic director of Alexey Chyrgal-ool Kyzyl College of Arts. Thanks to Ayana's professionalism, who headed the opera studio in the vocal department, the Prologue from the opera *The Snow Maiden* by Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov was staged at the college for the first time in 2019, and in 2020–2021 the first Tuvan national opera *Chechen and Belekmaa* by Kendenbil was revived, which became an event in the cultural life of the republic. In 2023, the composer began working at the Tuva State Philharmonic.

Ayana Oyun is a rare case of a successful two-in-one combination of a composer and a theater director; her personality is distinguished by deep reverence and adherence to the traditions and Buddhist practices, striving for constant self-improvement, expansion of professional and spiritual horizons.

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## Екатерина Карелина

Алдан-Маадыр атындағы Ұлттық мұражайы (Қызыл, Тыва Республикасы, Ресей)

## Тывалық композитор Аяна Оюн (шығармашылық портреті)

### Аңдатпа

Тываның қазіргі композиторларының ішінде Аяна Оюнның тұлғасы мен шығармашылығы музыкатануда аз қамтылған. Мақала тарихи-тұлғалық және музыкалық-теориялық зерттеу әдістеріне негізделген. Композитордың Республикалық өнер мектебі мен Қызыл өнер училищесінде оқуымен, Краснояр мемлекеттік музыка және театр академиясында және М. И. Глинка атындағы Новосібір мемлекеттік консерваториясында арнайы білім алуымен, сонымен қатар Санкт-Петербург мемлекеттік театр өнері академиясында қосымша білім алуымен байланысты шығармашылық өмірбаянының негізгі кезеңдері белгіленеді. Композитордың шығармашылық портфеліндегі жанрларға шолу және айшықты шығармалардың бірі Фортепианолық квинтеттің талдауы берілген. Шығармашылықтың кезеңділігі оның Ресейдің әртүрлі университеттерінде оқуымен және жанрлық бейімділігінің өзгеруімен байланысты. Осылайша, Красноярск музыка және театр академиясында оқыған жылдары (2001–2007) камералық жанрдағы шығармалар, оның ішінде талданған Фортепианолық квинтет басым болды. Туған жері Тываға оралу өзіндік авторлық стильдің қалыптасуымен ерекшеленеді. Осы жылдары театр музыкасына деген қызығушылық артып, А. Оюнның музыкасымен бірқатар спектакльдер қойылды. Санкт-Петербуркте оқу жылдарында (2013–2018) бірнеше музыкалық ертегілер қойылды: «Ұшып кетпе!», «Мэри Поппинс және оның достары», «Хорлоо» («Дөңгелек»). Ұлттық театрдың бірқатар спектакльдері үшін де музыка пайда болды. Композитордың Тывадағы музыкалық театрдың дамуына және Р. Д. Кенденбильдің «Шешен және Белекмаа» атты тұңғыш ұлттық операсының қайта жаңдануына қосқан үлесі атап өтілді. Аяна Оюн – бір тұлғада композитор және театр режиссері сәтті үйлескен сирек кездесетін жағдай, оның тұлғасы будда ілімдерінің дәстүрлері мен тәжірибесін терең қастерлеумен және ұстануымен, үнемі өзін-өзі жетілдіруге, кәсіби және рухани көкжиектерін кеңейтуге ұмтылуымен ерекшеленеді.

**Тірек сөздер:** Аяна Оюн, Тыва, композитор, театр режиссері.

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## Екатерина Карелина

Национальный музей имени Алдан-Маадыр (Кызыл, Республика Тыва, Россия)

### Тувинский композитор Аяна Оюн (творческий портрет)

#### Аннотация

Среди современных композиторов Тывы личность и творчество Аяны Оюн мало освещены в музыкознании. Статья базируется на историко-персональном и музыкально-теоретическом методах исследования. Отмечаются основные этапы творческой биографии композитора, связанные с учебой в Республиканской школе искусств и Кызылском училище искусств, получение профильного образования в Красноярской государственной академии музыки и театра и Новосибирской государственной консерватории имени М. И. Глинки, а также дополнительного образования в Санкт-Петербургской государственной академии театрального искусства. Дается обзор жанров в творческом портфеле композитора и анализ одного из показательных сочинений – Фортепианного квинтета. Периодизация творчества соотносится с её обучением в разных вузах России и со сменой жанровых предпочтений. Так, в годы учёбы в Красноярской академии музыки и театра (2001–2007) преобладали сочинения камерных жанров, включая анализируемый Фортепианный квинтет. Возвращение в родную Тыву отмечено формированием самобытного авторского стиля. В эти годы проявляется интерес к театральной музыке, поставлен ряд спектаклей с музыкой А. Оюн. В годы учёбы в Санкт-Петербурге (2013–2018) созданы и поставлены несколько музыкальных сказок: «Не улетай!», «Мэри Поппинс и ее друзья», «Хорлоо» («Колесо»). Также появилась музыка к ряду спектаклей Национального театра. Отмечается вклад композитора в развитие музыкального театра в Тыве и возрождение первой национальной оперы «Чечен и Белекмаа» Р. Д. Кенденбиля. Аяна Оюн – редкий случай успешного сочетания в одном лице композитора и театрального режиссера, ее личность отличают глубокое почитание и следование традициям и практикам буддийского учения, стремление к постоянному самосовершенствованию, расширению профессиональных и духовных горизонтов.

**Ключевые слова:** Аяна Оюн, Тыва, композитор, театральный режиссер.

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**Автор  
туралы  
мәлімет:**

**Екатерина Константиновна Карелина** –  
өнертану докторы, доцент, Алдан-Маадыр атындағы  
Ұлттық мұражайының штаттан тыс профессор-кеңесшісі,  
Ресей Композиторлар одағының мүшесі (Қызыл, Тыва  
Республикасы, Ресей)  
*ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1927-2845*  
*email: ye\_karelina@mail.ru*

**Сведения  
об авторе:**

**Екатерина Константиновна Карелина** –  
доктор искусствоведения, доцент, внештатный профессор-  
консультант Национального музея имени Алдан-Маадыр,  
член Союза композиторов России (Кызыл, Республика  
Тыва, Россия)  
*ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1927-2845*  
*email: ye\_karelina@mail.ru*

**Author's bio:**

**Yekaterina K. Karelina** –  
Doctor of Sciences in Study of Art, Associate Professor,  
Non-Staff Contractual Consulting Professor, Aldan-Maadyr  
Tyva National Museum, the Union of Composers of Russia  
(Kyzyl, Republic of Tyva, Russia)  
*ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1927-2845*  
*email: ye\_karelina@mail.ru*