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Article

The Art of Interpretation by Roza Baglanova: at the Intersection of Folk, Pop and Academic Styles in Kazakh Singing



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Keywords: Roza Baglanova, Kazakh music of the 20th century, folk song, pop song, "Tan Samaly", overlap of styles, intra-genre style trends, academic vocals, pop vocals, traditional song-making.

Abstract. This article aims to explore the unity of song and the stylistic interaction between pop and academic art songwriting and performing practice in Kazakhstan. Using the performing art of Roza Baglanova as an example, the study examines the role of song in the works of composers and performers of Kazakhstan, analyzes the general features of R. Baglanova's vocal art in the context of the development of Kazakh singing during the Soviet period. It also identifies stylistic directions in her repertoire and individual originality in sound production and intonation.

To overlap the pop and academic song styles are one of the trends in the works of composers in Kazakhstan. They create songs along with operas and ballets, large-scale and academic vocals and orchestral productions. One of the songs, "Tan Samaly" by Yerkegali Rakhmadiyev, carries the expressive features. Its uniqueness lies in the organic plexus of Kazakh folk song-making, the academic vocals style and romance lyrics. It got the features of a complex form in structure: a steady melodic growth based on the tonic triad singing. The "Tan Samaly" song can be performed by both the "traditional-singing-style" pop artists and the academic singers. R. Baglanova has created an unsurpassed example of interpretation of this masterpiece of Kazakh music of the 20th century. She contributed to song culture, that is oriented to a broad audience.

The cross-influences of intra-genre stylistic trends in the song "Tan Samaly" and in the art of its interpretation by R. Baglanova outline two mutually directed processes between the creativity of composers and performers. Therefore, along with the established separate study of the varieties of songs (folklore, academic, and pop), the unity of the national song culture is methodologically important.

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Роза Бағланованың интерпретация өнері: Қазақ әніндегі халық, эстрадалық және камералық стильдердің қиылысында

Тірек сөздер: Роза Бағланова, XX ғасырдағы қазақ музыкасы, халық әні, эстрадалық ән, «Таң Самалы», стильдерінің қиылысы, жанрішілік стильдік бағыттар, академиялық вокал, эстрадалық вокал, дәстүрлі ән шығармашылығы.

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақаланың мақсаты – әннің бірлігін және қазақстандық ән-орындаушылық практикадағы эстрадалық және академиялық өнердің стилистикалық өзара іс-қимылын зерттеу. Роза Бағланованың орындаушылық өнерінің мысалында қазақстандық композиторлар мен орындаушылардың шығармашылығындағы әннің рөлі қарастырылып, Р. Бағланованың вокалдық өнерінің жалпы ерекшеліктері Кеңес өкіметі жылдарындағы қазақ әнінің дамуы тұрғысынан талданды, оның репертуарындағы стилистикалық бағыттар және дыбыс режиссурасы мен интонациясындағы жеке ерекшелігі анықталды.

Эстрадалық және академиялық ән стильдерінің қиылысы – опералар мен балеттермен, симфониялық және камералық вокалдық және оркестрлік шығармалармен қатар әндер жазатын Қазақстан композиторларының шығармашылық бағыттарының бірі. Еркеғали Рахмадиевтің «Таң Самалы» әнінің мәнерлі ерекшеліктері анықталды. Оның бірегейлігі қазақ халық ән шығармашылығы дәстүрлерінің, камералық әннің вокалдық стилистикасының және романтикалық лириканың органикалық үйлесімінде жатыр. Оның құрылымында күрделі форманың ерекшеліктері атап өтіледі: тоникалық триаданың тондарын айтуға негізделген үздіксіз әуезді өну. «Таң Самалы» әнін дәстүрлі ән айту мәнері бар эстрада әртістері де, классикалық академиялық әншілер де орындайды. Роза Бағланова XX ғасырдағы қазақ музыкасының осы жауһарын интерпретациялаудың теңдессіз үлгісін жасады. Ол кең аудиторияға бағытталған ән мәдениетін байытты.

«Таң Самалы» әніндегі және оны Р. Бағлановамен интерпретациялаудағы жанрішілік стилистикалық тенденциялардың өзара әсері композиторлар мен орындаушылардың шығармашылығы арасындағы өзара бағытталған екі үдерісті белгілейді. Сондықтан әннің түрлерін (фольклорлық, академиялық, эстрадалық) бөлек зерттеумен қатар ұлттық ән мәдениетінің бірлігі әдіснамалық тұрғыдан маңызды болып табылады.

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Статья

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Искусство интерпретации Розы Баглановой: на пересечении народного, эстрадного и камерного стилей в казахской песне

Ключевые слова: Роза Багланова, казахская музыка XX века, народная песня, эстрадная песня, «Тан самалы», пересечение стилей, внутрижанровые стилевые направления, академический вокал, эстрадный вокал, традиционное песенное творчество.

Аннотация. Целью данной статьи является исследование единства песни и стилистического взаимодействия эстрадного и академического искусства в казахстанской песенно-исполнительской практике. На примере исполнительского искусства Розы Баглановой рассмотрена роль песни в творчестве казахстанских композиторов и исполнителей, проанализированы общие особенности вокального искусства Р. Баглановой в контексте развития казахской песни в годы советской власти, выявлены стилистические направления в ее репертуаре и индивидуальное своеобразие в звукорежиссуре и интонации.

Пересечение эстрадного и академического песенных стилей – одно из направлений творчества композиторов Казахстана, сочиняющих песни наряду с операми и балетами, симфоническими и камерными вокальными и оркестровыми произведениями. Определены выразительные особенности песни Еркегали Рахмадиева «Тан самалы». Её уникальность заключается в органичном сочетании традиций казахского народного песенного творчества, вокальной стилистики камерной песни и романтической лирики. В её структуре отмечаются черты сложной формы: непрерывное мелодическое прорастание, основанное на пении тонов тонического трезвучия. Песню «Тан самалы» исполняют как эстрадные артисты с традиционной манерой пения, так и классические академические певцы. Роза Багланова создала непревзойденный образец интерпретации этого шедевра казахской музыки XX века. Она обогатила песенную культуру, ориентированную на широкую аудиторию.

Перекрестное влияние внутрижанровых стилистических тенденций в песне «Тан самалы» и в искусстве ее интерпретации Р. Баглановой намечает два взаимонаправленных процесса между творчеством композиторов и исполнителей. Поэтому наряду с установившимся раздельным изучением разновидностей песни (фольклорной, академической, эстрадной) методологически важным является единство национальной песенной культуры.

Introduction

In musicology, it is customary to investigate questions concerning the song in the aspect of the genre and its specific samples related to any space of creativity (composer, style direction, tradition, or culture), focusing on its differences in the field of folklore and professional art. At the same time, a song that characterizes the properties and patterns of mass culture, which historically represents an independent, "third" layer (along with folklore and academic music), is much less often included in the sphere of attention of musicologists (Konen 4). At the same time, intersecting paths are formed in practice between theoretically differentiated types of creativity. Those intersections formed in the 20th century numerous trends, indicated in combinations of compositional and performance techniques and principals of more or less universal global genres originated in Western classical music, locally and ethnically specific traditions of music and so-called mass culture embodied in such styles as jazz, rock, pop-music and others of the same genetics. Such cross-cultural and cross-traditional phenomena in music are often referred as *fusion*.

Within the national cultures of many Asian countries such fusion undergone very specific processes that require to re-define such common musicological concepts as "classic", "popular" and "folk" music within the contexts of ethnic traditions in the condition of globalization. Discussing fusion as a broad tendency in contemporary music, Ang Li offers some definitions. After Hauser, Chomsky, and Fitch, the researcher notices: "In a broad sense, classical music refers to Western classical music under the European cultural background that has been passed down from the Western Middle Ages to the present" (Li 114). In national cultures, as Yiwen Ouyang notes in her thesis, such kind of music is often defined like westernized following the idea of *westernization* ("Westernization, Ideology and National Identity in 20th-Century Chinese Music" 60). In Kazakh musicology the term seems inappropriate and colonial since mostly the adaptation of classical compositional principles was initiated "from the inside" by prominent Kazakh musicians and have always followed the cross-cultural patterns. Here we'll rely on the term *academic music*, more common within musicological discourse in Kazakhstan, to underline its origins without political or colonial connotations.

The folk or, as it is more appropriate to label, traditional music has many definitions. Alan Lomax, a prominent ethnomusicologist, defined folk music as "the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission" (7). It is the narrow sense. Other definitions illustrate various aspects of folk or traditional music, including its oral transmission, cultural context, communal nature, and role in expressing cultural identity and heritage. In a broader sense traditional music shares some functions (especially, cultural identity and heritage) with other layers.

Observing musicological literature, it is obvious, that there is no clear definition for the "pop music". Ang Li focuses on such characteristics of pop-music as simplicity, popularity, comprehensibility, and easy acceptance (115). For not to be confused with pop-songs, in post-Soviet musicology all such genres as jazz, rock, pop and their variations together with so-called *Estrada* (or variety) are united under the umbrella term "mass music" synonymic to "mass genres".

So, we have academic, traditional and mass music – the three layers which social functions were well-described by Valentina Konen (1). The song, as a genre included in all three layers, convincingly shows their interrelation and unity, despite the fact that it reveals a number of specific manifestations in accordance with the stylistic properties and internal principles of their development. This universal status of the song explains the intersection of the norms of pop and academic art, characteristic of the songwriting of composers and for performing practice. Based on this position, the purpose of this work is to use the example of the performing art of Roza Baglanova to show the unifying role of song in the work of composers and performers of mass and academic trends. We'll examine how composition and performance reflected the complex relations of constant and mobile identities, changing and, in the same time, preserving the "kazakhness" of music through the language and musical intonations. The fusion of Kazakh traditions with globally accepted academic and mass genres reflected the changing (contemporary) aspects of identities. As Razia Sultanova noted, "The looming question 'Who are we?' inspired new developments in art and music, which accompanied changes in language and people's mentality, bringing to life a new set of values and refashioning ethnic identities across the region" (133). Roza Baglanova's art of performance and repertoire reflect these complex changes.

Roza Baglanova: a Singer in the Changing Cultural Context

A whole epoch in the development of the song art of Kazakhstan is connected with the work of R. Baglanova (see Fig. 1). She is called a legend, the queen of the Kazakh pop of the 20th century. The 100th anniversary of her birth had been celebrated in 2022. She lived a long and eventful life (1922–2011), covering the main events of the history of Kazakhstan in the twentieth century: the formation of a new national culture, the Great Patriotic War, the post-war reconstruction of the country, the "thaw" and flourishing in the 1960s and 1970s, the years of stagnation and the December events in Alma-Ata in 1986, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the formation of independent Kazakhstan in the 1990s. Over the years, her creative biography has included numerous tours to the cities and villages of Kazakhstan, to all republics of the Union, and to foreign countries, where she built "bridges" through songs. R. Baglanova was an official of the Soviet multinational art by status; she performed in front of prominent people of the world and statesmen. With the full protection of the authorities and the obvious dependence of the singer on official recognition, her sincere civic position found expression in the most fateful moments of history. One of them was a poignantly tremulous speech at the Congress of Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1980s) criticizing the leaders who allowed the tragedy of the Aral Lake as well as the extinction of nature and people to happen.



Figure 1. The singer Roza Baglanova. 11.09.1958. Photo by Stanovov. Credit: RIA Novosti.

Together with the history of the country, R. Baglanova went through all the stages of the development of Kazakh singing in the Soviet period. The art of Baglanova's pop singing, addressed to a mass audience, has always been in demand and admired. The songs she performed are still considered the epitome of excellence in their interpretation over the past two decades of the 21st century, although during this time, there have been significant changes in the parameters of pop art, the technical capabilities of communication between the performer and the listener, as well as the artistic and aesthetic concept of the singer and voice.

Despite the fact that she has dedicated more than half a century to the service of the musical art of Kazakhstan (since 1941), today the most general, informational literature prevails about her life and work. R. Baglanova's own memories of her life in the book "Ainalaiyn khalkymnan yerkeletken" [*Kazakh: Pampered by the Beloved Peoples*] are documentary in essence and indirectly relate to the actual scientific issues of the singing art. The autobiographical statements form a kind of typological portrait of the relationship between the artist and the authorities. The singer presents her life through communication with famous cultural figures and with official, state-scale people. In research of a scientific nature, her work and the songs performed by her have not been comprehended in the context of the cultural history of Kazakhstan or from the point of view of performing arts. The scientific systematization of her sound heritage would be the first step in the study of interpretation issues.

It is symptomatic that in textbooks on Kazakh music, which reflect scientific research, her surname is mentioned, but her work is not specifically considered (Kuzembayeva and Yeginbayeva 92). This is due to the established priorities in musicology. Studying mainly the issues of folklore and compositional creativity, it did not form a sufficiently complete knowledge of no less developed mass musical culture. And in the characteristic of the composers' creativity, relying mainly on major achievements, on works in genres that are indicative from the point of view of innovations in academic art (opera, symphony, etc.), the song that most composers of Kazakhstan of different generations addressed disappeared or was lost from sight line of musicological studies. There are unique and inimitable examples among these songs. And unreasonably little, in comparison with the huge role in musical practice, attention is paid to the work of songwriters (Shamshi Kaldayakov, Ablakhat Yespayev, Asset Beiseuov, etc.), most often in connection with some theoretical problem.

This article characterizes the features of R. Baglanova's performing style and defines the features of vocal style in the interpretation of the song "Tan Samaly" by Ye. Rakhmadiyev. To solve the tasks set on the basis of the biographical method, the main directions in the repertoire are established. A comparative approach to sound recordings of songs is used to determine individual originality in sound production and intonation. In order to identify differences in the interpretation of the genre by composers of academic and mass trends, songs for one text are compared. The method of holistic analysis is projected onto the performance version of the "Tan Samaly" song.

R. Baglanova was a dedicated and passionate singer. She possessed the magic of stage transformation and had an impact on a mass audience. At the same time, she sang simply, without effort or tension, soulfully and sincerely, which is characteristic of chamber,

lyrically individual singing. Her voice was not strong, not loud and small in range, but sonorous and clear, especially in the upper register. Whoever listens to R. Baglanova for the first time, regardless of auditory experience, will certainly pay attention to her timbre. It is recognizable without any effort due to its specific colors. In the virtuoso mastery of the voice, both conscious work and a natural sense of proportion and beauty are felt. In conveying the emotions of words and music, R. Baglanova elegantly used slowdowns and fermatas, an open and muffled sound. Her singing with a clear diction of words came from a sincere conversation and a subtle understanding of the unity of poetry and music. Her speech-kind intonation in singing directed the listener to the meaning of the words.

On stage, R. Baglanova attracted attention with an emphatically exotic beauty; she preferred national attire and ethnic elements of grace, brilliance, and wealth. She was not characterized by excessively active movement or dancing (see Fig. 2). But at the same time, artistry was manifested in facial expressions and vivacity in body movements, which enriched the image of the song and the colors of the voice. She could sing accompanied by piano, accordion, and small instrumental ensembles, but her performances were especially colorful when accompanied by an orchestra of folk instruments.

In the choice of songs, R. Baglanova had an amazing ability to predict their artistic value. In her repertoire, it seems, there were no insignificant songs, all with meaning, a deeply sincere feeling, and a beautiful melody. There are several stylistic *directions of interpretation* in the variety of songs. She was very interested in the songs of different nations and sang in different languages (for example, in Russian "Ah, Samara gorodok!" – *Ah, Samara-Town!*). The national-style intonation was especially evident in the performance of Kazakh traditional songs ("Yeki zhiren" and "Ainamkoz"). *Patriotic songs of Soviet composers*, praising the party, the country and its heroes, she sang quite sincerely, without false pathos, with great feeling, and brought vitality to the politicized art ("Menin Kazakstanym" – *My Kazakhstan*).

The pop-style trend was most clearly manifested in love songs ("Ademi-au" and "Asyl Arman"). She loved life and enthusiastically sang about everything that inspires love. Even in her external appearance and in the expression of her face, the world of song inherent in her inner nature is reflected. She seemed to soar above life, trying to embrace the most beautiful, joyful, and bright. Happy, upbeat, and lively songs essentially make up the majority of her repertoire in terms of content. Instead of sadness and sorrow, R. Baglanova chose songs that were playful, light, carried positive emotions to the listener, and were uplifting. In the days of the harsh war, when there was death, fear, and devastation around, with her art she carried a special light of the soul, the joy of life ("Na solnechnoi polyanochke" – *On a Sunny Glade*).

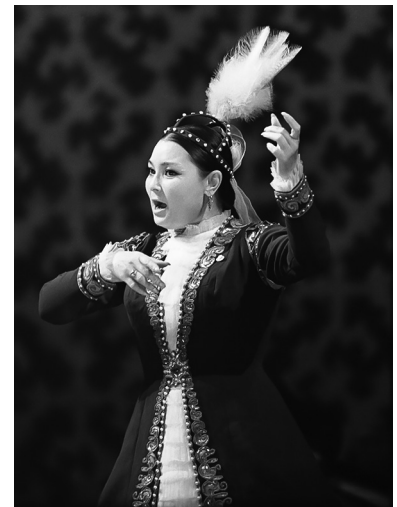


Figure 2. Roza Baglanova on the stage of the State Academic Bolshoi Theater of USSR, 1967. Photo by Alexander Nevezhin. Credit: RIA Novosti.

R. Baglanova perceived the songs of songwriters (Sh. Kaldayakov, A. Yespayev, etc.) in their direct continuity with the traditional Kazakh song. As a rule, the word is primary, and it is organized into simple musical forms where the melody is based on traditional music. Therefore, the peculiar, pop-style manner of R. Baglanova's performance reveals their characteristic orientation to a wide amateur audience, regardless of the place of performance.

Many composers of Kazakhstan, whose genre range of creativity included operas, orchestral, vocal-choral, ensemble, and solo instrumental music, also turned to composing songs of the pop-music direction. In some samples of the song, the influence of the academic manner is noticeable in the expanded and complex forms of the internal structure, in the vocal technical capabilities, and, most importantly, in the sublime figurative structure. The pop song approaches the song-romance lyrics, intended for performance by professional singers and on the concert stage.

Such *overlap between pop and academic song styles* are clearly visible when composers refer to one poetic text, but they are interpreted differently in terms of genre style, which determines the resonance space of the song. So, there are two songs of the same name for the heartfelt lyrical poem "Yesine meni algaisyn" – *Remember Me* by Mukagali Makatayev (1931–1976). One belongs to the poet and songwriter Yelena Abdykhalykova, known for her songs. This song performed by Madina Yeraliyeva (1954–2000), became popular in the 1990s.

Immediately after the poet's passing, the composer Nurgisa Tlendiyev wrote a song for the same text. M. Makatayev was his friend, and he painfully perceived the loss. This is a song about farewell and about memory; it is distinguished by restraint and rigor. It is sung, as a rule, in an academic manner by professional singers accompanied by a folk orchestra.

Fusion in Performance Manner on Example of "Tan Samaly" song

The two stylistic directions of the song shown above are organically combined in the performance of R. Baglanova and manifest themselves depending on the characteristics of the song material itself. She is sensitive to these differences and uses her individual vocal and interpretive capabilities. Such a stylistic crossing of the properties of popular and academic art in the repertoire of the singer stands out in the song "Tan Samaly" – *A Morning Breeze* by Ye. Rakhmadiyev (1932–2013), which is one of the best songs of the composer, known for his works in academic genres ("Alpamys" opera, "Dairabai" symphonic kyui, etc.). It was written in moments of real happiness, manifestations of ardent feelings, and was dedicated to the composer's wife (Bodaubai 100). This song is about love, about the beauty of a woman, comparable to the morning dawn, with the freshness of the wind that has burst into the soul, and about the all-consuming rapture of the awakening day (see Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Roza Baglanova, "Tan Samaly". Archived video record. Source: www.instagram.com/roza_baglanova_resmi/reel/CVUFBc9objR/

The uniqueness of the "Tan Samaly" song is that it organically combines the traditions of Kazakh folk song with the style of academic vocal singing. It is not simple.

Because the verse and chorus are so intertwined and share a single emotional flight, the structural elements are not distinct melodically. There are no repetitions in the “weaving” of the melody. The extended chords of the stable steps of the major scale form one line of ascent and descent in the verse. The melody, starting with the tonic, the lowest sound, on the verge of verse and chorus, reaches the highest and most unstable sound at the culmination (IV stage through an octave) and returns to the foundation. The analysis of the tonal relations at the end and beginning of phrases showed that the stable steps of major (D major) have an expressive and formative meaning: they prevail over the unstable ones and are at the end and beginning of the verse of the song. From the point of view of an ordinary mass song, this is a very complex structure. Everything flows smoothly, calmly, and at the same time internally very eventful: the mystery of feelings is replaced by an ardent revelation, and then pacification.

R. Baglanova managed convey, through the sound of her voice and only her inherent intonation, the figurative palette of an intimately lyrical song-romance. She sang with a thick, rich, then dark, transparent sound, then meekly, then openly. Her singing reflected the shades of feeling described in the lyrics – thoughtfulness, fervor, determination, and delight. In a word, everything that the then-young composer put into his autobiographical declaration of love.

The song was first performed in 1963 on a tour of Kazakh cultural figures in Mongolia. The composer himself have offered this song to R. Baglanova, apparently realizing not only that the popularity of the pop singer could determine its fate but also that she could convey the subtle emotional content and the sublime spirit of the song associated with the traditions of western chamber vocal lyrics while at the same time counting on a large audience.

Ye. Rakhmadiyev later noted more than once that this was the best interpretation. And today, it remains an unsurpassed example of the disclosure of the composer’s idea. Observations on other recordings of performers show that pop singers rarely sing it. There may be different reasons for this, apparently. One of them consists in the very complexity of the song, in the fact that it is not originally pop, not mass. More often, it is sung by singers with western-style classical vocals (female and male voices). But they are characterized by strict performance; without a bright palette of feelings, the voice is shown more than the intonation characteristic of the song (Bibigul Zhanuzak, Azamat Zheltyrguzov).

In the aspect of the unity of the art of song, it is noteworthy that there is information about the performance of “Tan Samaly” by the traditional singer Bekbolat Tleukhan, who sings accompanied by a *dombra* or solo. Among pop singers, Makpal Zhunusova created the interpretation closest to the composer’s idea after R. Baglanova. This singer also has a bright personality, has her own unique repertoire, and is close in style to both the author’s song and traditional culture. And yet, none of the subsequent performers could convey this facet of the song, connected with academic vocal, in synthesis with the song culture aimed at the mass listener in the way that the outstanding singer R. Baglanova did at the time. She created an unsurpassed standard of interpretation for this song-romance masterpiece of Kazakh music of the 20th century.

The study of the intersections of academic and pop styles in Kazakh music on the example of the art of interpretation of R. Balanova's song "Tan Samaly" by Ye. Rakhmadiyev allows us to draw conclusions. The song, in its historically predetermined artistic mission of the "primary" genre, performs a unifying role. In the aspect of typological differences of creativity (folklore, academic, pop), "the division of culture, whatever it may be, fundamentally has no sharply defined and insurmountable, opaque boundaries" (Zemtsovsky 31). Cross-influences and intra-genre stylistic trends in the "Tan Samaly" song and in the art of its interpretation by R. Baglanova outline two mutually directed processes in the song art of Kazakhstan. Composers of the academic direction build connections with mass culture by referring to the song. Pop performers do not limit themselves to song material within the stylistic limits of their creativity; they expand their palette, showing individual capabilities. Therefore, along with the established separate study of the varieties of song (folklore, academic, and pop), the unity of the national song culture, which is historically mobile, dynamic, and multidimensional, is methodologically important.

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