AZER RZAYEV: TRAITS OF AZERBAIJANI FOLK MUSIC AND DANCE IN HIS SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO

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Azer Damirov
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Examining Committee Members:

Dr. Edward Latham, Advisory Chair, Music Studies Department: Music Theory
Dr. Eduard Schmieder, Artistic Director for Strings
Dr. Lindsay Weightman, Music Studies Department: Music History
Dr. Michael Klein, External Member, Temple University
ABSTRACT

After 1950, a few Azerbaijani composers began to pay attention to the sonata, as an important genre of instrumental chamber music. Sonatas contain contrasting motifs among the separate movements constituting the whole composition providing the opportunity for including Azerbaijani folk music inspired motifs. This monograph will demonstrate the impact of folk music on Azerbaijani classical music, specifically in the Violin Sonata in E minor of Azer Rzayev, whose work significantly influenced further composition. This analysis of the folk music aspects of Rzayev’s musical thinking, as expressed in his violin sonata, will provide insight into Azerbaijani music, guidance for appreciating Rzayev’s work, and perhaps most significantly, as a basis for future composition in the genre.

Rzayev is the author of many notable compositions in a few related genres. Rzayev’s unique contribution was his signature approach to the folk music of Azerbaijan, the elements of which he skillfully merged with the traditions of classical music. This approach resulted in Rzayev’s independent style, which played a significant role in the development of Azerbaijani classical instrumental music.

This monograph briefly touches on the Azerbaijani mugham, as it plays a decisive role in the development of Azerbaijani classical music. The people of Azerbaijan over the centuries have created an ancient, rich and distinctive culture. In various fields of art, including music, they created priceless masterpieces of art. One such masterpiece is the pearl of the world musical treasury—mugham. It is no coincidence that the art of mugham deeply influences Azerbaijani composers because it is perceived by Azerbaijanis as a cultural asset that forms the basis of national identity. The study of mugham is
reflected in the works of Soviet and especially Azerbaijani musicologists. Among these works, the treatise of Hajibeyov, *The Principles of Azerbaijani Folk Music*, is fundamentally important.

The methodological basis of the monograph is to draw on Uzeyir Hajibeyov’s monumental work *The Principles of Azerbaijani Folk Music*. Other sources include the works of musicologists Shanubar Bagirova and Mammed Ismayilov, which focus on issues of Azerbaijani folk music.
DEDICATION

In memory of my sister Sevinj Damirova
Let me express my deep gratitude to all those who took part in the preparation, presentation, defense, and discussion of my dissertation.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Edward Latham for the keen interest he showed in my work, for his guidance and support at all stages of this document. His valuable suggestions helped me to articulate my ideas more clearly and forcefully. I am deeply grateful to my dearest teacher and mentor Dr. Eduard Schmieder who taught me through inspiration and love to music to understand the philosophy of violin. I also would like to thank Dr. Michael Klein and Dr. Lindsay Weightman for reviewing my work and offering their invaluable feedback.

I am very much indebted to Mr. Jeffrey Werbock for his useful suggestions on writing style as well as for demonstrating and teaching me the application of Azerbaijani *Mugham* techniques on a violin that helped me better understand the significance of my own argument on performance practice. Ms. Ellen Plaut deserves special thanks for her constant support and unwavering trust in me and my writing. I would like to thank my friend and colleague Dr. Yevgeniy Dyo who helped me to see this work through to fruition. Their critical suggestions helped me keep my nose to the grindstone.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. THE HISTORY AND FOLK MUSIC OF AZERBAIJAN: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- brief History of Azerbaijan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mugham: Azerbaijani Folk Genres, Modes, and Azerbaijani Folk String</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mugham as a Mode</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mugham as a Melody</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mugham as a Genre</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Azerbaijan Folk Instruments</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Kamancha</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Tar</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Gaval</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Azerbaijani Folk Dances</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. THE FOLK MUSIC OF AZERBAIJAN AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZERBAIJANI CLASSICAL INSTRUMENTAL GENRES IN THE MUSIC OF THE 20TH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTURY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Historical Background and the Development of Instrumental Genres in the Classical Music of Soviet Azerbaijan ...........................................27

3. AZER RZAYEV’S VIOLIN SONATA IN E MINOR: ANALYSIS .................34
   The Influence of Mugham on the Violin Sonata of Azer Rzayev .................34
      I Movement ..................................................................................36
      II Movement ................................................................................52
      III Movement ...............................................................................55
   Performance Practice .......................................................................61
      Imitations ....................................................................................61
      Ornamentation ............................................................................68
   Conclusion ......................................................................................70

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..................................................................................72
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: I Movement .................................................................................................................51
Table 2: II Movement .................................................................................................................54
Table 3: III Movement .................................................................................................................60
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Map of Azerbaijan ................................................................. 4

Figure 2: The Kamancha ................................................................. 21

Figure 3: The Tar ................................................................. 22

Figure 4: The Gaval Dash [The musical stone] ........................................ 23

Figure 5: The Gaval ................................................................. 24

Figure 6: Depiction of primitive people holding hands ............................. 25

Figure 7: The Zurna ................................................................. 62

Figure 8: The Left-Hand Wrist Movement (Ulnar Deviation) .................... 68
LIST OF EXAMPLES

Example 1: Rast, Shur, and Segyakh [tetrachords of perfect fourths] ..................................12
Example 2: Shushter and Chahargyah [tetrachords of perfect fifths] .................................13
Example 3: Harmonic Minor vs. Shushter mode .................................................................14
Example 4: Bayati-Shiraz [tetrachords of minor sixths] .......................................................14
Example 5: National Anthem of Azerbaijan ........................................................................15
Example 6: Humayun [tetrachords of major sixths] ............................................................16
Example 7: Folk Song Aman Nene in Rast mode ...............................................................16
Example 8: Valse from Yeddi Gozel [Seven Beautires] in Chahargyah mode ......................17
Example 9: Notes extracted from the main theme of the violin part, I (opening) ...............38
Example 10: Transposed scale from the note B .................................................................39
Example 11: Rzayev, Sonata for Violin and Piano, I (opening) ........................................41
Example 12: The main theme (in the piano part) ...............................................................41
Example 13: The transition section to the second theme .....................................................42
Example 14: The second theme (first part) ........................................................................42
Example 15: The second theme (second part) ...................................................................43
Example 16: The second theme (third part) ......................................................................43
Example 17: The closing theme .........................................................................................44
Example 18: A fragment of the main theme used in the closing theme ............................44
Example 19: Development section (first variation of the main theme) ............................45
Example 20: Development section (second variation of the main theme) .......................46
Example 21: Development section (third variation of the main theme); fragments of bars with meter changes .................................................................47
A Brief History of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has a long and rich history in Eastern music and culture. After Azerbaijan was forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1920, the increased presence of Russian culture in Azerbaijan triggered the rapid development of Western musical compositions, facilitating the synthesis of two distinct cultural streams, Western and Eastern. Soon after the formation of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan, a few pioneering composers in the Western classical instrumental genres began to compose Western-based compositions enhanced with the liberal incorporation of Azerbaijani folk music elements. The origin of Azerbaijani folk music is deeply embedded in the history of Azerbaijan. In order to better understand its critical and complex impact on Azerbaijani classical instrumental genres, it is necessary to provide a brief history of Azerbaijan.

The territory of modern Azerbaijan has been inhabited since the earliest times. “Over the centuries this territory has been invaded and ruled by different peoples and influenced by a number of great civilizations, each passing on some of its legacy to
The name Azerbaijan means in Persian “the land of fire,” derived from the root word *Azer* [flame/fire]. Azerbaijan’s territory was occupied by the Persian Sassanids and Arabic Khalifat from the 3rd to the 7th century AD. One outcome of the invasion was that the population of Persians and Arabs in Azerbaijan increased during that time. As a result, Islam supplanted both Zoroastrianism (an early Azerbaijani / Persian religion) and Christianity over time. The introduction of Islamic religion is marked as an important breakthrough in the history of Azerbaijan. Islam gave a strong impetus to the formation of language, unification of the nation, and the development of its customs.

The Islamic Golden Age — from the end of the 7th century to the 14th century — was a period of significant cultural developments, particularly in literature:

...while Arabic was the language of science, Persian became associated with poetry, which flourished in Azerbaijan between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Among the prominent poets of this period were Gartran Tabrizi (1012–1088), Khagani Shirvani (1120–1194), and Nizami Ganjevi (1141–1209). From the seventh century to the second decade of the twentieth century, Azerbaijanian writers used the Arabic alphabet, which was employed equally by writers in Persian and Turkish, as well as by Azerbaijanians.²

The flourishing of literature in Azerbaijan came amid a rise in Islamic cultural developments that opened new opportunities for music in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani musical language is closely related to the literary heritage of Azerbaijani poets. The

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poems written in the form of ghazal⁢ by the aforementioned poets became an essential part of Azerbaijani literature and music. The themes of love and the pain of loss were preeminent in Ghazals.⁴ Ghazals were set to musical improvisations in specific local modes of mugham. Note that a description of mugham will be given later in this chapter (pp. 6-19).

Later, in the 15th and 16th centuries, a new political development took place in Azerbaijan, when its lands were united by Islam, establishing the new states of Sadzhids, Shirvanshahs, Sallarids, Rawadids, and Sheddadids. In the late 18th century, Azerbaijan broke up into smaller states: khanates [ruled by khan] and sultanates [ruled by sultan].⁵ For over a century (1813-1918), according to the conditions of The Gulistan and Turkmenchay treaties, Iran was forced to cede the annexation of the Northern part of Azerbaijan by Russia, while its Southern part remained in Iran.⁶

The most dreadful and bloody periods in the recent history of Azerbaijan were in the late 19th and again at the end of the 20th century. As one historian explains, “The policy of ethnic cleansing, genocide and aggression deliberately carried out by Armenian nationalists against our people over the past two centuries represents extremely painful

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³ Ibid, 14.


⁵ Khan was the title of a leader ruling over the states populated by turkic-speaking muslims, while Sultan was the title attributed to the leaders who had close ties to Ottoman Empire.

and tragic stages in the history of Azerbaijan, including bloody events.” As a result, the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan was occupied and still remains under occupation (Figure 1). However, as the Soviet Union collapsed, “the modern Republic of Azerbaijan proclaimed its independence on 30 August 1991.”

**Figure 1: The Map of Azerbaijan**

Despite its ongoing occupation as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the music of Karabakh plays a significant role in the history of Azerbaijani music, due to its

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antiquity and originality. Since ancient times, music has had a dominant role in the lives of Azerbaijani people living in the Karabakh region, mainly played through its folk festivals and in religious ceremonies. Along with the oppressive colonial policies in the middle of the nineteenth century, Tsarism brought a measure of Russian / European culture into Azerbaijan. Interest in literature increased in Karabakh, particularly in Shusha, a city in Karabakh region. Although the presence of Russian culture in Azerbaijan was more colonialistic than benign, it did serve one very useful purpose which was to help disconnect traditional Azerbaijani culture from Persian culture, and that set the stage for the flourishing of the Western classical music genres in Azerbaijan, of which Azerbaijani composers and public were beneficiaries.

The great poet of the eighteenth century, Molla Panah Vagif, whose works created a new chapter in the history of Azerbaijani poetry, helped to transform the city of Shusha into a great literary center. A number of cultural and educational institutions were established in Shusha including theaters, circuses, libraries, and educational, typographical societies and art forms in music and dance. Beginning in the 1840s, various types of art began to develop in Shusha, including staged theatrical performances. It should be noted that for the first time in the history of the Caucasus, theatrical performances were presented in Tiflis (Tbilisi, Georgia) in 1845. Shusha, which at the time competed with Tiflis in trade and culture, hosted its first theatrical performance in 1848. Since the first half of the nineteenth century, along with various other types of art, the performing arts developed in Shusha speedily and extensively compared to other regions of Azerbaijan. This phenomenon is likely due to both the geographical conditions
of Shusha, and to the city’s broad cultural and economic ties. Since ancient times, Shusha has been known as a musical center and had become famous across Transcaucasia as a fertile school of folk musical talents. Here one could always listen to folk songs, singers and musicians, and watch dances. Historically, many talented composers and folk musicians have hailed from Shusha, — “a cradle of music which is quite fairly called the “National Conservatory.”” It is sometimes also called the “Conservatory of the Caucasus.” There is a popular joke in Azerbaijan that when babies of Shusha cry, it is in the style of mugham, the main genre of Azerbaijani traditional music.

**Mugham: Azerbaijani Folk Genres, Modes, and Azerbaijani Folk String Performers**

Azerbaijani folk music has been in existence for many centuries. The art of folk singers and musicians passed from one generation to another via aural tradition, eventually becoming widespread. “For centuries, Azerbaijani music has evolved under the badge of monody, producing rhythmically diverse melodies. Music from Azerbaijan has a branch mode system, where the chromatization (sic) of major and minor scales is of great importance.”

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Shteinpress to describe the process of modulation, when a given *mugham* composition incorporates multiple modes and over the time of the whole composition many of the 12 semitones will be played. But to be clear, each and every distinct *mugham* mode is diatonic, never chromatic.

*Mugham* is a very highly developed part of Azerbaijani folk music. The word *mugham* is derived from the Arabic “maqam,” translated as *position* or *location*. The first appearance of this term was in the 14th century in the treatise “Jame’al-Alhan” [Collection of Melodies] written by the Azerbaijani musicologist, poet, and musician Abdulqadir al-Maraghi. UNESCO writes that “*mugham* is a highly complex art form that weds classical poetry and musical improvisation in specific local modes.” As noted by an English music critic Ken Hunt in his article from *Folker* journal, “unlike Western modes, *mugham* modes are associated not only with scales, but also with a collection of melodies and melodic fragments that performers use in the course of improvisation.” As an Azerbaijani scholar in the Department for History and Theory of Azerbaijani Traditional Music at the Institute of Architecture and Art in the Azerbaijan National Academy of Science, Dr. Sanubar Baghirova gives a very useful definition of *mugham*:

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*Mugham* plays a central role in the national culture, as an inexhaustible source of creative inspiration for Azerbaijani composers, artists, sculptors and poets. The term *mugham* in Azerbaijani music means simultaneously categories of mode, melody, and genre.\(^{17}\)

In this definition of *mugham*, Dr. Baghirova identifies three categories classified by the term *mugham*—mode, melody, and genre. Describing each category separately will help avoid possible confusion. It should be mentioned that Eastern music has its own structural realities that do not necessarily correspond to Western modal music theory. For example, the concept of the tetrachord is alien to Eastern music, but in analyzing Eastern modes from the perspective of Western modal musicological contexts and recognizable structural taxonomy, it is necessary to resort to certain Western musicological concepts. This imposition of one system of musicological structure on another is unavoidable in an analysis such as the current monograph, but this note of caution must be included as we go forth and analyze how these Eastern (Azerbaijani) modes influenced the Western-style compositions of Azerbaijani composers.

**Mugham as a Mode**

*Mugham* has existed for at least seven centuries. In his treatise *Principles of Azerbaijan Folk Music*, Uzeyir Hajibeyov\(^{18}\) claims that in the 14th century, in the era


\(^{18}\) Uzeyir Hajibeyov- was a Soviet composer, conductor, researcher of *mugham*, publicist, playwright, teacher, translator, and social figure of Azerbaijan. Recognized as the father of Azerbaijani composed classical music and opera, Hajibeyov was the first to establish a
when the Middle East was at its cultural zenith, twelve *mugham* modes represented the twelve pillars of musical tradition:

It proudly dominated as a twelve-columned, six-towered “building”. From this building one could view all four directions of the world: from Andalusia to China and from Africa to the Caucasus. The following scholars, philosophers, and "architects" erected this "palace of musical culture": Abu Nasr Farabi - a man of encyclopedic knowledge and expert in ancient Greek musical theory; Abu-Ali ibn-Sina, a great philosopher and scientist known in Europe as Avicenna; 'Al-Kindi, and others.\(^\text{19}\)

According to Hajibeyov, there are seven main modes in *mugham*: Rast, Shur, Segyakh, Chahargyah, Shushter, Bayati-Shiraz, and Humayun. Each mode is a strictly organized scale, having strong tonic support [maye], and each step has its own melodic function. Western music generally uses chords, traditional Eastern music typically does not. Western music does not use a drone tone, while traditional Eastern music virtually always does. The radical concept for Western-trained musicians, composers, and musicologists is the utility of the Eastern musical drone tone: it is not necessarily the tonic of the chosen mode.

In his research on the subject of Azerbaijani folk music genres, music theorist Mammed Ismayilov points out modal features of *mugham* that distinguish it from the Western tonal system. Building on Hajibeyov’s Western-oriented observations of the professional music school and orchestra for traditional folk instruments, and to introduce women on stage in the Muslim world’s first opera. He was the first to introduce Azerbaijani music to the world traditions of classical music while preserving national identity. He adopted the twelve-note equal temperament to accomplish East-West musical synthesis.

complexities of Azerbaijani *mugham* music, Ismayilov extrapolates Hajibeyov’s theory of the roles of the notes in the modes of *mugham* music:

- While major-minor scales contain a set of only seven steps, the scales of Azerbaijani modes are multi-stepped. The number of steps varies from eight to eleven depending on the structure of a particular mode.

- In the tonal system of Western music, the tonic possesses the most stable position and is always the 1st, but in *mugham* the *maye* note in different modes can be the II, IV, or VI step.

- The main tone and tonic in both major and minor scales are both recognized in Western modal music as the same step, however in *mugham* the main tone and tonic are not always the same step. In the mode *Shur*, the III step is the main tone, but the tonic is on IV step.

- Unlike major-minor scales where I, IV, and V steps function as tonic, subdominant, and dominant respectively, in *mugham*, for instance, the function of the I step in the mode *Rast* is a lower fourth of the tonic (IV step), while the I step in the scale of *Segyah* mode functions as a leading note to the main tone.

- Due to its inconclusive quality, the VII step as a leading tone in the major and harmonic/melodic minor scales urges stepwise resolution to the tonic. In *mugham* modes, however, leaping from the VII step is allowed. It can, for example lead to the V step and the III step. In addition, while in major-minor scales I, III, and V step are the only strong and stable tones, in *mugham* there are considerably more.

Since Hajibeyov was a Western music composer, he analyzed the notes in *mugham* modes and used the Western concept of the tetrachord, which can be useful to the Western trained composer / musicologist. According to Hajibeyov, each *mugham*
mode is comprised of compound tetrachords connected by four methods of connecting tetrachords:

1. Conjunction
2. Disjunction
3. Combination by Intermediate Semitone
4. Combination by Intermediate Tone

In the conjunction method the last note in the tetrachord coincides with the first note of the following tetrachord, while the disjunction method is a connection where the last note of the lower and the first note of the upper tetrachords form the interval of a major or augmented second.

The third method is a combination in which the last note of the lower and the first note of the upper tetrachords form an interval of the minor third with a passing diatonic note in between them. The presence of the diatonic intermediate tone is necessary to avoid jumps when connecting. The last method follows the same principles of the third method, only forming an interval of the major third.

The first three modes *Rast, Shur,* and *Segyakh* are scales consisting of successive series of perfect fourths formed by three equal tetrachords with the conjunction method. The first mode in this example is *Rast* with a note C (it could be any other note) as the *maye* [tonic]. According to Hajibeyov, the order of building tetrachords for *Rast* mode is

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as follows: G-A-B-C [1-1-½]—C-D-E-F [1-1-½]—F-G-A-Bb [1-1-½]. The maye of the following modes in Example 1 is determined by the first note of the second tetrachord.

The hollow note with a stem is marked to locate the maye of the given mode.

In this manner, Hajibeyov explains the principle of building the tetrachords for all seven mughams is based on the avoidance of a succession of three whole steps. For example, if the tetrachord of the Rast mode formed on the formula 1-1-½ was connected via disjunction and or combination by an intermediate tone, such a connection would result in three consecutive whole steps (1-1-1). However, equal tetrachords with the formula of 1-1-½, connected via conjunction, avoids a succession of three whole steps and forms the mode Rast. If the formula 1-1-½ connected with the combination by an intermediate semitone method forms the Bayati-Shiraz mode (Example 4, p.14).

Example 1: *Rast, Shur, and Segyakh* [tetrachords of perfect fourths]
Two equal tetrachords in Example 2\(^{22}\) forming a sequence of perfect fifths form

*Shushter* and *Chahargyah* modes. Here is how Hejibeyov in *Principles of Azerbaijan Folk Music* defines the formation of the *Chahargyah* mode:

In order to form the main Azerbaijan mode "Chargah", it is necessary to build a tetrachord on the formula \(1/2 - 1\) - \(1/2\). The first grade of this tetrachord will be the "maye" of the mode. Then it must be combined with equal tetrachords: from above-by second method of combination (mixed one - interval of major second), from below-by the first way of combination (conjoint one)\(^{23}\)

**Example 2: Shushter and Chahargyah [tetrachords of perfect fifths]**

![Shushter and Chahargyah tetrachords](image)

Unlike *Rast*, *Shur*, *Segyakh*, and *Chahargyah*, the location of the *maye* in *Shushter* mode is the second note in the upper tetrachord. The tetrachords of *Shushter* in Example 2 are connected separately, combined by the disjunction method. The sound and construction of this mode is to some degree similar to the harmonic minor scale.

\(^{22}\) Ibid, 40.

\(^{23}\) Ibid, 41.
However, the first note of this mode is a half step higher than the corresponding note in harmonic minor (Example 3).

**Example 3: Harmonic Minor vs. Shushter mode**

Bayati-Shiraz is two equal tetrachords formed of minor-sixth dyads, built on the 1-1-½ interval pattern combined by the third method, the combination by an intermediate semitone (Example 4).

**Example 4: Bayati-Shiraz [tetrachords of minor sixths]**

The melody of the national anthem of Azerbaijan, composed by Hajibeyov in 1919 during the two years of its independence, loosely based on Bayti-Shiraz (Example 5). The pitch order in the upper part of Bayati-Shiraz mode coincides with the Western minor scale. An Azerbaijani musicologist, Aida Huseynova, in her book *Music of Azerbaijan: From Mugham to Opera*, effectively explains the implementation of the mode in the context of the Western scale:

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24 Ibid, 29.
Hajibeyov bases the melody of the national anthem of Azerbaijan on the mode Bayati-Shiraz, and he finds affinities between that mode and the Western minor scale, harmonizing his melody with chords from it. The simple melodic and rhythmic patterns of the composition offer the same double reference: they point both to solemn marches in Western music and to instrumental compositions in the traditional Azerbaijani repertoire. That Azerbaijan’s anthem is written in minor, not major, is unusual and verges on denying the musical semantics of national anthems, which tend to use the major scale or can be interpreted in that context. But Hajibeyov’s national anthem appropriately draws on the characteristics of Azerbaijani folk music, which often has a minor-related modal basis.

Example 5: National Anthem of Azerbaijan

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The last mode *Humayun* consists of $\frac{1}{2}-1\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ formula and built in amalgamation of two equal tetrachords with the fourth method (Example 6).

**Example 6: Humayun [tetrachords of major sixths]**

As mentioned, these modes are fully embodied in the art of *mugham*, yet many classical pieces, folk songs, and folk dance are permeated with *mugham* modes. Here are several examples of musical fragments to demonstrate the use of modes in such compositions. In Examples 7 and 8, compositions based on the *Rast* and *Chahargyah* modes are a folk song *Aman Nene* and a Valse from Kara Karayev’s famous ballet *Yeddi Gozel* [Seven Beauties].

**Example 7: Folk Song Aman Nene in Rast mode**
Example 8: Valse from Yeddi Gozel [Seven Beautires] in Chahargyah mode

It is very important to point out that this Western-oriented analysis of mugham modes has no application in the learning and performing of actual mugham; it only serves the purpose of providing a basis for using the structure of mugham modes for Western-style compositions.

*Mugham as a Melody*

Modal melodies in free meter are also called mugham by present-day folk music ensembles and Azerbaijani audiences. Unlike metered Uzbekistan Shashmaqom, translated as the six mughams, Azerbaijani mugham has three types of melodies: bakharsiz hava [improvisational melodies without meter], bakharli hava [metered melodies], and garishik bahkarli hava [diverse-meter melodies]. However, traditionally, it is implied that a musician asked to perform mugham would use bakharsiz hava.
**Mugham as a Genre**

As a genre, *mugham* consists of two main forms: *Dastgyah*, performed by a trio consisting of a singer [*khanande*] and two instrumentalists, with the vocal part taking the lead; and *Zerbi-Mugham*, a vocal-instrumental trio accompanied by a percussion instrument. Instruments in the trio setting include a *kamancha* (a bowed four-string instrument with a bowl-shaped body), a *tar* (a long-necked, double chamber resonating body string instrument), and a *gaval* (percussion instrument). In addition to the two main forms there is also the tradition of solo instrumental performance.

In modern practice, the *mugham* genre is performed in a traditional form with a certain number of sections. However, the tradition did not harden into a strict principle; it is constantly being updated and enriched. In *mugham* performance, the tradition of successive sections was developed. Performance begins with a metered *daramed* (instrumental prelude) and followed by unmetered instrumental *bardast*. Performers typically insert rhythmic interludes between the meter-free sections, the *reng* (dance-like piece) and *tesnif* (song form). The meter-free sections of *mugham* lend themselves to more improvisation than the metered *reng* and *tesnif* which are more structured and composed.

It should be noted that instrumentalists performing *mugham* before the 20th century functioned primarily as accompaniment to the vocal line. *Mugham* performed with instrumental soloists or with an instrumental main melodic line constitutes relatively new directions within the *mugham* genre, initiated at the beginning of the 20th century. The capabilities of certain solo instruments, especially the *tar* and *kamancha*, have
greater pitch range and speed than a typical singer, thus, facilitating unique styles of improvisation. As the genre has developed, musicians have begun to use other folk instruments to perform *mugham*, such as the *oud* (a short-neck lute-type stringed instrument with 11 or 13 strings), *zurna* (an ancient Azerbaijani double-reeded wind instrument), and *balaban*\(^{26}\) (a cylindrical, oboe-like, double-reed wind instrument). Later, various Western classical instruments such as the violin, clarinet, piano, and oboe were also used to play traditional Azerbaijani music; the performance of *mughams* on these instruments is perceived by the public as its own viable genre.

_Azerbaijani Folk Instruments_

Traditional Azerbaijani folk instruments such as the *tar*, the *kamancha*, and the *gaval* play an essential part in *mugham* performance, and have had some influence on classical instrumental genre development. Because these folk instruments are somewhat similar to their Western counterparts both structurally and in how they produce sound, there are ample opportunities for composers to use some ornamentation and physical technique to enrich their classical music compositions while maintaining the principles of classical music composition. Azerbaijani composers at the Azerbaijan State Conservatory were required to take Hajibeyov’s “Principles of Azerbaijani Folk Music” class, where

\(^{26}\) Jean During et al., “*_Balaban*_: Grove Music,” 2001, accessed February 15, 2018
[https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.46900](https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.46900).
they learned the rudiments of *mugham* through listening, transcribing, learning theoretical rules, and composing in the national modes.\(^{27}\)

**The Kamancha**

The *kamancha* (Figure 2), like the violin, has four strings and is played with a bow. The string length from bridge to the nut is nearly identical for both instruments. The main difference in playing technique is that the *kamancha* is held vertically like a miniature cello in a sitting position. A noteworthy feature of this unique instrument is a membrane made of fish skin stretched over the sound bowl which produces a distinct mellow sound. Tunings for the *kamancha* vary depending on which mode is being played. Although there is a wide degree of variation in how the *kamancha* is tuned, the most common tuning is A-E-A-E. For performance of Western classical music repertoire, the *kamancha* can be tuned in perfect fifths G-D-A-E, just like a violin. A decision of the tuning pitch is based on the taste of a player and sound of an instrument.

The Tar

Another popular instrument is the tar, a plucked fretted instrument. It has a brilliant sound, produced using a mizrab [plectrum]. The tar is made of mulberry, walnut, and pear wood, a stretched membrane of cow pericardium over the sound chambers, its number of strings of different thickness, and the various ways they are bound and adjusted. Its body resembles the digit eight (Figure 3), and is divided into two parts: a larger lower part and a smaller upper part. The relatively long neck has 22 frets. The instrument has 11 metal strings. There are three colors used for strings: silver (alloy steel), yellow (copper alloy), and red (steel strings wound in bronze). It has six courses of one bass string and five double strings, each pair tuned in unison. The first pair of double strings are called “singing” strings as they sing the melody line (alloy steel), the next pair are accompaniment strings (copper alloy and steel), bass string (wound copper), and 4

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28 photograph, “Professional Azeri Kamancha – Walnut Big Body.” Ethnic Musical, retrieved on December 12, 2018
www.ethnicmusical.com/shop/professional-azeri-kamancha-walnut-big/.
zeng [ring] strings (alloy steel). “All these strings are running next to the main strings over the bridge and are fixed to a string-holder and the edge of the body.”

**Figure 3: The Tar**

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**The Gaval**

Percussion instruments also play an important role in the folk music of Azerbaijan and have their roots in primitive society. The first percussion instrument that was used in ancient times is believed to be the *Gaval Dash*, the musical stone located in Gobustan, Azerbaijan (Figure 4). By striking or tapping this stone, one can produce a hollow, ringing sound. There is an assumption that it was used to play ritual melodies, and provide a rhythmic accompaniment to the archaic *Yalli* round dance, which is illustrated on some of the petroglyphs at Gobustan (Figure 6, p.24).

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In addition to the *Gaval Dash*, there are other kinds of percussion instruments that were historically used in Azerbaijan such as the *laggutu, goltug Naghara, daf, gaval* (derived from the *Gaval Dash*), *jura naghara, boyuk naghara, dumbak*, and *gosha naghara*. They continue to play a special role in the spiritual life of the Azerbaijani people.

One indication of this special role is that the third instrument in a trio setting for performing *mugham* is the *gaval*, a successor to the *gaval* stone. It has a narrow wooden rim, one side of which is open while the other is covered with fish skin. Rings are affixed to the inner side of the rim. Its diameter is 340-456 mm with a width of 40-50 mm. Sounds are produced by striking the palm and fingers of both hands in the center and edges of the stretched skin, as well as by shaking the instrument (Figure 5).

**Figure 4: The *Gaval Dash* [The musical stone]**

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31 Jose Luis Martinez, “Resultado De Imagen De Azerbaijan Gaval Dash.” Pinterest, retrieved on December 25, 2018 [www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/408842472403357768/](www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/408842472403357768/).
Azerbaijan Folke Dances

Azerbaijani folk dances are diverse in thematic content and divided into the following groups:

- Heroic-military (Cengi dance)
- Ceremonial (Turaci, Mirzai, Innabi, Jeyran-bala, Uzundere and etc.)
- Roundelay (Kocari, Yalli, Nelbeki, Mezhekeli, Terekeme, and Senemi)
- Pastoral (Chobani, the shepherd’s dance)

Unique evidence of dances that existed in Azerbaijan about ten thousand years ago is preserved in the form of cave paintings. The carvings on the rocks depict primitive men holding hands. Their bent legs and postures give reason to assume that this is a round dance, and, according to historians, this depiction represents a Yalli dance (Figure 6). These carvings are located in Gobustan settlement, about 40 miles from Baku city, the capital of Azerbaijan.

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Figure 5: The Gaval

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Azerbaijani traditional folk dance consists of three movements. The first movement is swift and energetic in character. The contrasting second movement is slow, sentimental, and contemplative, and the last movement is a lively roundelay, the round dance with emotional outburst. Azerbaijani folk dances stand out for their changing expressiveness of the melody, achieved through spontaneous rhythmic alternations. Most often used time signatures in Azerbaijani dances are 6/8 and 3/4. The 6/8 meter can be divided into two-part and three-part measures. This way it is easier to follow the beat when performing certain movements. For example, masculine dance moves that involve jumps and sideways movements are easy to perform on a two-part structure, where accents are stressed on the first and fourth beats (3/8 + 3/8)\(^3\). The main movement in men’s dances, which is an imitation of a “canter”, a three-beat horse gait, is in a three-part structure stressing on three beats (2/8 + 2/8 + 2/8). Other common meters


\(^{34}\) Kamal Qasanov, *Azerbaidzhanskii narodnyi tanets* [Azerbaijani National Dance]. (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1978), 11
encountered in Azerbaijani dance music are 2/4 and 4/4. They form the basis for round
dances, such as *Yalli*, and *Kocari*. Dances typically have a well-defined pace—unhurried
slow or energetic fast. Slow most often represents the female dances, while the fast
dances, with fiery temperament, are performed by men. Generally, dances are
accompanied by folk musical instruments, such as the *tar, kamancha, zurna*, and *nagara*.

Azerbaijan as a country with a rich cultural heritage has enriched world musical
culture with its rare pearls. The traditions of folk music and dances passed on from
generation to generation have made a huge contribution to the development of
Azerbaijani folk music.
CHAPTER 2
THE FOLK MUSIC OF AZERBAIJAN AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AZERBAIJANI CLASSICAL INSTRUMENTAL GENRES IN THE MUSIC OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Historical Background and the Development of Instrumental Genres in the Classical Music of Soviet Azerbaijan

The October Revolution of 1917 created favorable conditions for the harmonious development of all Republics and ethnic groups of the Soviet Union, and for the realization of the slogan that “art belongs to the people.” The classical music of the Soviet period was linked with the traditions of the past but also developed progressive features of the Soviet artistic heritage. The diversity of Soviet music is due to its foundations, which reflect a richness of styles, national features, forms, and genres. Themes include finding national identity in music, humanism, love of the Motherland, respect for the cultures and traditions of other ethnic groups populating the Soviet Union, and faithfulness to life's essential truths.

The early 1920s marked the emergence of numerous philharmonic societies, a cappella vocals, and opera studios throughout the Soviet Union. These conditions opened

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a path to musical education for the working class, creating an opportunity for them to attend performances that exposed them to the richness of classical music. Most significantly, a conservatory opened in 1921 in Baku (subsequently named after U. Hajibeyov). In 1938, a Preparatory division was added to the conservatory, called a “special music school” or “a music school for gifted children.” It is important to note that the introduction of these Western-style music institutions were an innovation for the Soviet period. The very first Western-style music school was founded by the young Russian pianist Antonina Ermolaeva a couple of decades before the aforementioned institutions of the Soviet period. Recognized as a branch of the Imperatorskoe Russkoe Muzikalnoe Obschestvo [Imperial Russian Music Society], the school offered a systematic Western music education in Azerbaijan.36

The classical music of the second half of the 20th century in Azerbaijan is marked by the rapid development of instrumental genres. A wide number of concertos, chamber music compositions, and solo works such as sonatas and short pieces were written during this period as a result of composers’ strong interest in different genres of instrumental music.

Starting in the 1930s, Azerbaijani instrumental music gained a foothold and then rose to the forefront of the music scene in the Soviet Union by the late 1940s. A decade later, the instrumental music of Azerbaijan joined the classical music mainstream and gained international success, considered to be an art based on its distinctive stylistic

features.\textsuperscript{37} The classical music of Azerbaijani composers has long since won recognition and touched the hearts of many people throughout the world. Hajibeyov’s operetta *The Cloth Peddler* which played a significant role in the development of Azerbaijani opera became so popular that it was translated into English, Chinese, Arabic, German, Polish, and Persian languages, and has been staged in many countries including the United States of America (1917). The success of *The Cloth Peddler* in the United States has heightened interest in Azerbaijani classical music and has led to performances of the compositions of its prominent composers, such as Fikret Amirov and Kara Karayev, in the United States of America. Many famous compositions written in concerto form and for chamber ensembles in the late 1940s became étalon\textsuperscript{38}—a standard and the model for the composers of the next generation. Soltan Hajibeyov, the cousin of the great Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov and student of Dmitri Shostakovich, composed the first violin concerto in Azerbaijan in 1945. The first piano concertos were composed in the 1950s by Elmira Nazirova and Ashraf Abbasov. During the same period, works in other musical genres such as double concertos for piano and violin, were written for the first time in the Republic of Azerbaijan by Fikret Amirov.

During the Soviet era, music composition was seen as an active search for a new means of expression, that synthesized conventional thinking and a creative application of folk music. In her book *Music of Azerbaijan: From Mugham to Opera*, Aida Huseynova states:

\textsuperscript{37} Sevil Mustavaeva. *National features of musical language in instrumental music of Rzayev.* (Baku: 1997).

\textsuperscript{38} From French Étalon- standard of measurement.
The main challenge that Azerbaijani musicians, and all Soviet musicians, faced was that Azerbaijan’s two nationalist musical sources, traditional music and composed music, were treated by the Soviets as two parts of the same Azerbaijani identity that needed to be synthesized with each other and integrated into their Soviet world. Traditional music tended to be institutionalized, whereas Western music genres were pushed closer to folk idioms.  

By mastering a new musical style and applying all possible techniques of classical composition in their works, composers enriched the musical language in a variety of genres from the 1950s to the 1980s. Azerbaijani composers demonstrated fluency not only in the standard forms and genres employed in Western-style music, but also in their own musical ideas in new styles. According to Aida Huseynova, “Azerbaijani mugham was the genre that organically facilitated the fusion of operatic and Azerbaijani traditions, allowing native musicians to create their first pieces of composed music.” A combination of Classical, Romantic, and Modern genres with the traditions and standards of folk music made possible the use of modal harmonies, and included performative “special effects,” borrowed from folk music and meant to imitate folk instruments.

By the 1950s, the wealth of music written for piano and violin in Azerbaijan was vast. The noticeable increase in the development of instrumental music genres was foreseeable, as it was always one of the more sensitive categories that allowed thorough assessment of the features of new styles and stylistic evolutions in music of this period.


40 Ibid, 111.
As a matter of course, the genres of instrumental music drew close attention from composers of both the older and younger generations. Thus, by the 1950s, when the classical music of Azerbaijan won world recognition with its broad musical ideas and deep emotional expressions, the instrumental music genres had already been firmly established in the repertoire of national composers.

As Azerbaijani instrumental music took form, the growth of skillful Azerbaijani performers encouraged composers to work with established classical forms such as the concerto and the sonata. These forms provided a platform that gave composers the opportunity to create melodies with a flavor of folk music within a homophonic texture. “The most noticeable feature of sonatas and concertos at this time was the implementation of folk music genres, such as dance, mugham, and song, albeit in transfigured form. The instrumental music was enriched by a blending of the siciliana, waltz, and passacaglia with folk-music influences.”41 Azerbaijani composers favored these dances over others due to their 3/4 and 6/8 metric structures which are also typical of Azerbaijani traditional music.

Stylistic synthesis, as for many composers, became fundamental in the works of Azer Rzayev.42 Rzayev successfully synthesized folk music with classical genres and managed to find a unique way and manner of expressing this synthesis. As a prominent Azerbaijani composer whose contributions to instrumental genres was significant, Rzayev based his creative methods of composition on the norms of classicism: motivic

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41 Nargiz Aliarova, Sonatas for Violin and Piano of Azerbaijani Composers (Baku:2000).

42 Azer Rzayev (1930-2015) was an Azerbaijani violinist, composer, professor at Baku State Academy (a conservatory named after U.Hajibeyov), and artistic director of Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater.
and polyphonic development in classical sonata form. Being exposed to the traditional folk art, Rzayev carefully studied the achievements of his peers in the period between the 1950s and 1980s to form his style.\textsuperscript{43} In his compositions relying on folklore, Rzayev incorporates the themes and content of its native music within traditional classical forms. The coexistence of folklore and classical form is the main feature in his works.

For more than fifty years, Rzayev taught in the Azerbaijan State Conservatory (1957-2014). He was born in Baku, Azerbaijan in 1930. Besides giving composition and violin lessons, he coached chamber music classes. Experience gained through teaching chamber music equipped him with detailed knowledge of the piano’s technical and sonic possibilities as well as its limitations, especially in ensemble with the violin.

Rzayev’s instrumental compositions stand out among his works. His affinity for instrumental music was directly related to the instrument he played—the violin. As a violinist, he knew the specifics of the instrument and could accommodate its uniquely flexible timbre, range, bowing / fingering possibilities, and expressive potential in his music for the violin and for other string instruments.

The compositions of Rzayev, both instrumental and symphonic, draw the listeners’ attention with melodious \textit{cantilena}\textsuperscript{44} and challenging techniques requiring virtuosity. When these qualities are combined in a performance of his works, they create a powerful contrast that gives his music distinct impact. Much of Rzayev’s music is

\textsuperscript{43} Sevil Mustavaeva, \textit{National features of musical language in instrumental music of Rzayev}. (Baku: 1997).

soulful. Rzayev suffered tragic circumstances in his personal life; nevertheless he maintained the strength and optimism to compose the Double Concerto for Violin and Viola with orchestra (dedicated to the memory of his mother), the symphonic poem “My Father’s Memory,” and the Symphony *Baku-90*, dedicated to the massacre of civilians on January 19-20, 1990,\(^{45}\) when the aggressive attack of Soviet “troops crushed the makings of an independence movement in Azerbaijan.”\(^{46}\) In certain compositions, however, Rzayev would add jocular elements of Azerbaijani traditional folk dances which gave them their comedy, expressing his humor. The most telling example of humorous effects used in his compositions is “Scherzo”, the third movement of the Sonata for Violin and Piano No.1 in E minor, which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

The rapid development of Azerbaijani instrumental music, combined with the unique and distinctive stylistic features of its compositions, can be credited as reasons why it was able to enter the mainstream of the Western classical music world, and why today it is recognized as a profound art form.


The Influence of Mugham on The Violin Sonata of Azer Rzayev

The violin and piano sonata as an instrumental genre is relatively new to Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, a great number of sonatas for violin and piano have been written in a short time, enriching the country’s musical culture. Azer Rzayev composed his Sonata for Violin and Piano No.1 in E minor in 1963. The history of the creation of his Sonata dates back to 1961, however, when Rzayev wrote an independent piece called “Scherzo,” later included in the sonata as the third movement. This Sonata is one of the most vivid examples of Azerbaijani instrumental music. In addition to being widely played by violinists in Azerbaijan, the sonata has gradually become a part of the repertoire of violinists from other countries. The graceful melodic line and reflection of traditional Azerbaijani folk music and dance in Rzayev’s Sonata sparked the interest of performers.

Rzayev’s Sonata is a three-movement composition that incorporates a number of elements of folk musical language. Rzayev successfully implements elements of the two main folk genres — mugham and the rhythms of traditional dances — in his instrumental works, within the framework of classical form. These two contrasting genres polarize musical material in each movement of the sonata and help to inform their musical ideas.
Rzayev’s Violin Sonata has features typical of the concerto genre, including a cadenza and extensive dialogue between the violin and piano. Like many multi-movement concertos, it contrasts smoothly soulful and dance-like styles.47

The Azerbaijani concerto style, when used in any genre, is built on the principle of variation through mosaic textural juxtaposition, caused by the use of contrasting musical ideas, metric and rhythmic patterns, and timbres. This principle comes from mugham with its contrasting transitions, completeness of sections, and structural alternations. This same principle informs the predilections of Azerbaijani composers in the rondo and variation forms, typically found in the final and second movements of concertos, as in the works of other composers. It creates a unique twist in concerto first movements, in which the contrasting themes of the sonata form are not opposed to each other but rather colorfully complement each other.

Any interpreter of Azerbaijani classical music, whether playing a concerto, a sonata, or a piece written in some other genre, is faced with a great variety of metric design in the musical material. Combinations of meters and frequent changes of even and odd meters give a special fluidity to the music’s accentuated patterns.48 A combination of alternating rhythmical elements within a framework of several measures forms certain patterns. This is due to the peculiarities of versification in Azerbaijani poetry, the changes of meter in the poetic text of the ashug49 songs, and the alternation of two- and


48 Ibid.

49 Ashug, also Ashik is a singer-storyteller who accompanies his songs.
three-syllable poetic feet. Changes of meter are characteristic of dastan, each part of which has its own rhythmic pattern followed by the appearance of a new meter, and the meter in mugham forms is similarly varied. For instance, in Dastgyah form, the alternation of improvisational, dance, and song sections requires changes of meter. Not a single Azerbaijani composition in a classical instrumental genre retains the same meter throughout a movement. This obligatory compositional rule for any periods of different Azerbaijani musical genres is inherent in the most varied styles of composers, such as in the Sonata for Violin and Piano by Kara Karayev, Mugham-Poem for Violin and Piano by Fikret Amirov and the Piano Concerto on Arabian Themes by Fikret Amirov.

**I Movement**

It may not be possible to establish an exact ratio regarding the degree of influence and inspiration composer Rzayev drew from the two primary forms of traditional Azerbaijani music—meter free mugham and metered dance. In both cases the derivations are subtle and abstract. In fact, the one viable connection in Rzayev’s sonata is the 6/8 time signature. Anyone familiar with Azerbaijani traditional dance will recognize the iconic 6/8 time signature with the delayed second beat. Hajibeyov was the first to commit Azerbaijani dance rhythms to the written score. We also know that Rzayev studied Hajibeyov and took his *The Principle of Azerbaijan Folk Music* course, meaning it is reasonable for us to conclude that he would be very familiar with the 6/8 time signature.

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50 *Dastan* is an epic poetic form in the folklore and literature of Central Asia.
Rzayev used that rhythmic element as a basis for composing certain portions of his sonata.

The first movement of Rzayev’s sonata is in traditional sonata form. “Sonata form is one of the fundamental musical designs of the Classical Period. The first movements of sonatas, symphonies, and chamber music are usually composed in this foundational structure.” The movement opens with an introduction in a distinctive rhythmic pattern that is percussive in nature. Although it is in 2/4 meter, the hypermetrical downbeat that comes on the first beat of the fourth measure, with accents stressed on the offbeat eighth notes, gives the sensation of 12/8, thus creating a metrical motive that occurs at the time interval of three measures. The main theme of the violin part joins an ostinato rhythm of dance-like character in the piano part in measure 13. The melody in the violin part is an augmented 6/8 rhythm written in quarters and spread out over three measures. Two groups of three beats are replaced by three groups of two beats (Example 11, p.40). This melody is bold in character and very declamatory. The composer makes extensive use of mugham modes, which he skillfully blends with the classical major-minor system. The modal content of the exposition combines E minor Chahargyah in the main theme with A minor Chahargyah in the second theme, connected by a brief transitional Rast in G major. After the main theme has been stated by the violin, it is passed to the piano in section number five (Example 12, p.41). However, the main theme is soon appropriated by the violin in measure number 78, thus creating something of a power struggle between the two instruments to gain control of the main theme. Through a lively transition section

(Example 13, p.42), the main theme with its dance-like character segues into the melodious second theme in A minor.

The question might be raised whether there is a reason to identify the Chahargyah mode as a basis for the main theme over Humayun and Shushter which also contain four notes that are \(1/2-1\frac{1}{2}-1/2\). In the process of the Chahargyah mode identification in the main theme we extract the notes with accidentals used by the composer in the main theme and string them together into a scale. As a result, we obtained the following notes (Example 9).

**Example 9: Notes extracted from the main theme of the violin part, I (opening)**

![Example 9](image)

It is an E minor scale with raised fourth step. The tonic of this scale is still the note E, but structurally does not fit any of the Azerbaijani mugham modes. The above stated illustration, extracted from the main theme, at the fifth transposition is identical to the mode of Chahargyah with B as the tonic (Example 10). Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that mugham mode Chahargyah is likely to have served as one important source of melodic inspiration.
Nevertheless, a classically trained musician would identify this transposed scale as two upper tetrachords of the harmonic minor scale stitched up with disjunction method and would hear two tonics—E and B. This can be explained by the fact that classically trained musicians develop modal hearing based on the major-minor tonal system of Western music. This kind of training challenges them to perceive Azerbaijani mugham modes. As an Azerbaijani musicologist, Imina Aliyeva, states: “the logic of modal tensions of Azerbaijani modes is very different from the major-minor system. Unlike major and minor scales, the scales of Azerbaijani modes in separate sounding do not generate modal tensions and do not develop modal hearing, i.e. separate learning of scales of Azerbaijani modes is not able to assist in aural mode identification.”

The presence of a shared tetrachord [1/2-1 ½ -1/2 ] is insufficient to substantiate the source of inspiration for a composition. We would need to familiarize ourselves with the context in which this shared tetrachord exists in order to arrive at a sufficiency of confidence in discerning the source of inspiration of a given composition. The tonal context of Humayun is unmistakably different from Chahargyah, rendering Humayun an

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unlikely candidate as a source of inspiration for Rzayev’s sonata. That said, it seems most likely that the general genre of *mugham* which naturally includes *Humayun* makes its presence known in any composition that has that distinctive Eastern flavor, however faint that signal may be.

Although motivically cohesive, the second theme consists of three parts infused by different *mugham* modes. In Example 14, the first part in A minor is based on the scale of the *Chahargyah* mode. In the major-minor tonal system of Western music, the root note of the A minor scale is A. However, in building the scale of the *Chahargyah* mode, the tonic, or the *maye*, A should be considered as the fourth step of the tetrachord [E-F-G#-A] (see Example 2, p.13). The mode used in the next part is *Segyah* in A major. Rzayev gives a hint by laying out the first four notes of the *Segyakh* mode [E-F-G-A] with altered F natural and G natural in the first two measures at the rehearsal number 17 (see Examples 1, p.12 and 13, p.42). The third part returns to *Chahargyah* mode but in the key of B flat minor (Example 16).
Example 11: Rzayev, Sonata for Violin and Piano, I (opening)

Example 12: The main theme (in the piano part)
Example 13: The transition section to the second theme

Example 14: The second theme (first part)
Example 15: The second theme (second part)

Example 16: The second theme (third part)
The exposition concludes with the closing theme in the key of A minor. Elements of the main theme can be traced in this section. The first three measures of this section share the same rhythmic pattern as the first three measures of the main theme (Example 17). A melodic fragment of the main theme forms the melodic contour of the closing theme (Example 18). The closing section shifts emotional gears as though preparing the listener for the energetic and fiery dance of the development.

Example 17: The closing theme

Example 18: A fragment of the main theme used in the closing theme

In contrast to the exposition, the melodic structure of the development section is more complex. It includes dyads, octaves, and chords in both the violin and piano parts. Like the second theme, the development section can be divided into three parts; however,
here all three parts are based on the material of the main theme. Since the material of the main theme is repeated in an altered form in each part, it would be more appropriate to label them as variations. The first variation of the development section in D minor is closely modeled on the form of the main theme, and reflects the same order of instrumental entrances: a frisky piano solo introduction in $11/8$ joined by the violin after eighteen measures (Example 19).

**Example 19: Development section (first variation of the main theme)**

![Musical notation](image)

The composer borrows the toccata principle for the next variation. The toccata principle is found in many works not so called, and a large number of pieces labeled ‘toccata’ incorporate other more rigorous styles (such as fugue) or forms (such as sonata

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54 Ibid.
This variation is woven from the alternation of fast-moving virtuosic passages between violin and piano. This technical aspect gives the variation the character of *toccata* (Example 20).

**Example 20: Development section (second variation of the main theme)**

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The character of the last variation, written in *Shushter* mode is light and coquettish, with the frequent changes of meter typical of Azerbaijani folk dances (Example 21).

**Example 21: Development section (third variation of the main theme); fragments of measures with meter changes**

![Musical notation]

Although the role of the development section is to transform and restate material from the exposition, its dynamic and extensive thematic buildup is prefigured in the exposition. The intensity of the buildup is determined by a principle of contrast—a juxtaposition of diverse characters that retain their individuality within the overall flow. This adds structural variety to the music.⁵⁶

The development retransitions back to the recapitulation, in which the main thematic material returns in E minor, the home key of the first movement. The recapitulation begins at rehearsal 31, in quasi-\textit{Cadenza} form, played by the violin. However, the piano reenters after six measures. It is remarkable that, in contrast to the exposition, the role of each instrument is inverted in the recapitulation; the violin has the accompaniment part while the piano has the melody line (Example 22).

\textbf{Example 22: Recapitulation}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example22.png}
\end{figure}

Aida Huseynova, in her book \textit{The Music of Azerbaijan: From Opera to Mugham}, explains that:
Each mugham has a distinct emotion or ethos associated with it, and Azerbaijani composers carefully choose them to heighten the drama, just as baroque composers understood the dramatic power of musical figures and affects. For instance, Segah, which traditionally expresses romantic feelings, is often used in love episodes. The sorrowful Shushtar works well for the most intense moments.  

The character of the first movement was inspired by the *Chahargyah* mode. The word *Chahargyah* comes from a combination of two words: Chahar [four] and Gyah [position/stop]. Rzayev did not choose this mode at random for this movement. As the mode assigned to the main theme, it becomes a leit-character of the movement. In the words of Hajibeyov, *Chahargyah*, through art (aesthetic) experience, causes feelings of excitement and passion. In psychology, the structure and characteristics of artwork’s corresponding components stimulate certain cognitive processes that produce an art experience. This is how Lloyd Miller, the author of *Music and Song in Persia: The Art of Avaz*, describes *Chahargyah*:

Chahargah is powerful, heroic, festive, exciting, wise, philosophical, profoundly moving and patriotic. Its color is yellow or gold and its element is steam. Its time is from 6 to 8 a.m. and its mystic connotation is tariqat [the mystical path]. Chahargah is used to accompany the recitation of the heroic epic, the *Shahname*. Chahargah expresses the past of love as well as the joy of love and boasts of the success of love.

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In spite of the dominance of the main theme in the first movement, the composer manages to expose the mode *Chahargyah* and its aesthetic feeling of excitement and passion alternatively in contrasting sections of the movement. For instance, the energetic and impulsive opening of the first movement has all the elements of excitement. From the first measure of the movement, the rhythm of the piano part creates an atmosphere of agitation and gives an impetus to the dynamic activities appropriate to this movement. The contrasting second theme, with its alluring melody, evokes a feeling of passion.
Table 1: I Movement (Tonal and thematic outline of the form)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Main theme</td>
<td>Closing material</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; var. of the main theme material</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; var. of the main theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E minor G major</td>
<td>A minor -&gt; A Major -&gt; B flat minor</td>
<td>A minor</td>
<td>D minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>iv -&gt; IV &gt; bV</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chahargyah</td>
<td>Rast</td>
<td>Chahargyah Segah Chahargyah</td>
<td>Chahargyah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II Movement

Rzayev places considerable emotional emphasis on the second movement, making it the heart of the sonata. Analogues to the structure of the Azerbaijani folk dance form, the second movement of the sonata has a contrasting slow, sentimental, and contemplative character. In my mind, this movement represents an “internal discourse,” so to speak—as one psychologist describes it as “the process of continuous inner communication of a person with himself.”61 The themes in this movement bring to the forefront a philosophical and musing character forming an unbroken chain of monologic speeches. One gets the impression of an infinitely developing, intense internal reflection on the meaning of being.

In Rzayev’s music, especially in his Violin Sonata, the dominance of one theme (usually the main theme) creates a sense of monothematicism. The improvisational character of mugham helps to smoothly connect the contrasting sections of each piece, creating a sense of fluidity. As in his other three-movement compositions, the second movement of Rzayev’s sonata lacks thematic contrast with its outer movements, due to the use of the same musical material found in the first movement. Each newly-born musical idea is a variation of the main theme that first appears in the opening movement. This principle of monothematicism is one of the most substantial features of folk music that significantly influenced the musical language of Rzayev.62


This movement opens with a short introduction in the piano part and is written in an asymmetrical compound ternary form where the first and second sections are in simple ternary form, and the last section is an incomplete version of the simple ternary form [(A B A1)-(C D C1)-(A)].

Analogous to the first movement, the dominating mode of the second movement is Segyakh in the key of A major. As the dominating mode of the second movement, Segyakh causes feelings of love, while Bayati-Shiraz which occurs in the modulatory section and in part D in D minor suggest feelings of nostalgia.
Table 2: II Movement (Tonal and thematic outline of the form)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>C'</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>a'</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>c'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A major</td>
<td>A major - D minor - A minor - C Major</td>
<td>F minor</td>
<td>F minor - D minor</td>
<td>D minor</td>
<td>D minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>I -&gt; iv</td>
<td>i -&gt; bIII</td>
<td>bvi</td>
<td>bvi -&gt; iv</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>16:45</td>
<td>46-57</td>
<td>58-90</td>
<td>91-104</td>
<td>105-132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segyah</td>
<td>Shukhtar</td>
<td>Chahargyah</td>
<td>Bayati-Shiraz</td>
<td>Segyah</td>
<td>Segyah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**III Movement**

The form of the *Allegro*, the last movement of the sonata, is five-part Rondo. It is composed in the pattern of “second rondo” (*ABACA*). A chord progression in the first measure of the piano part immediately establishes E minor, the main key of the entire sonata. However, eventually, the “refrain” resolves into A major. The melody of the “refrain” is a combination of a march with elements of a dance (Example 23). Similar to the first movement, the theme of the “refrain” is repeated twice, alternating between the violin and piano voices. The enveloping tune of the episode “B” is mainly in B minor.

The melody for this episode is composed of six main notes A#-B-C#-D-E#-F# [$\frac{1}{2}$-1-$\frac{1}{2}$-$\frac{1}{2}$-$\frac{1}{2}$] (Example 24). Although this episode is in the key of B minor to Western ears, mugham musicians would hear F sharp as the tonic (*maye*) of the Shushter mode. It is remarkable how Rzayev utilized Shushter to his advantage, fitting it into the classical harmonic minor scale. According to Hacibeyov’s *Principles of Azerbaijan Folk Music* a tetrachord with this pattern is from the Shushter scale (see Example 2, p.13). The *maye* in the tetrachord of Shushter coincides with the scale of the harmonic minor, however, built from A sharp. Building a tetrachord from F sharp in this episode does not fit the principles of formation of the Shushter mode. A truncated second “refrain” returns in E minor. The following episode “C” of the rondo is built on material from the first movement in F minor. It is also inspired by the Shushter mode. By deducting the notes given in the first five measures of episode “C” (rehearsal number 13) with F natural as the *maye* [tonic], we get the following notes: A-Bb-C-Dd-E-F [$\frac{1}{2}$-1-$\frac{1}{2}$-$\frac{1}{2}$-$\frac{1}{2}$]. Rzayev helps to identify the mode by giving the main notes of the tetrachord, fitting them
compactly into the first five measures (Example 25). The “refrain” returns in the piano part, while the violin part mocks the second variation of the main theme in the development section of the first movement (see Example 19, p.45 and Example 26, p.57).

Example 23: *Allegro (“Refrain”)*

![Example 23: Allegro (“Refrain”)](image)

Example 24 *Allegro (Episode ”B”)*

![Example 24: Allegro (Episode ”B”)](image)
Example 25: *Allegro* (Episode “C”)

The meter and rhythm play a crucial role in the formation of the *Allegro*, as they do in the previous movements of the Sonata. “Prominently featuring syncopation, the Sonata’s metric and rhythmic framework was established from the first measures of the first movement, defining Rzayev’s conception for the entire Sonata.”

The three-measure pattern rhythmic *motif* which was mentioned earlier in this chapter is reduced to a

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63 Ibid.
one-measure ostinato in the Allegro. In his compositions, Rzayev often uses asymmetry of measures with a view toward creating the effect of an acute scherzo that expresses a humorous character. A popular Azerbaijani folk dance, the Senemi, is a great example of abundant measure asymmetry. A Senemi is a facetious female roundelay, a type of circle dance combining general circular motion with separate improvised performances of a humorous nature. Entering one after another in a circle, the girls use movements and gestures to mimic an old woman, a young and daring widow, and an unduly modest and bashful bride, giving each of them apt, comic, and sometimes evil characteristics. This dance is characterized by the alternation of slow smooth and fast sharp movements, repeatedly juxtaposed. Like Antonio Bazzini in his iconic scherzo fantastique for violin and piano “La Ronde des Lutins”, Rzayev uses vicious leaping from string to string while reiterating the same note to achieve the miscreant gestures of dancers’ ampluá (Example 28). The composer masterfully interprets and synthesizes the rhythms and meters of typical folk dances with the language of classical music.

A strong tendency toward cross-cutting development and unity among movements is evident in the sonata. Rzayev uses connecting devices such as rhythmic patterns and thematic reminiscence in all three movements of the composition. He throws a bridge across the second movement by reprising the first movement’s main theme in the Allegro. The long Coda in the Allegro is based on the recapitulation of the first movement.

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64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
Example 27: Movement I (Recapitulation section)

Example 28: The material of the first movement’s recapitulation used in the Coda of the Allegro

The Allegro is composed mainly in the Shushter mode. The word Shushter derives from the ancient Persian city of Shushter, located in the Persian Bay, on the border of Kuwait. Over the course of history, the name of this town has been changed multiple times: Shushter, Shusht, Sheshder, Sheshter, etc. As Hajibeyov explains, by the nature of its aesthetic experience Shushter expresses a feeling of deep sadness. When listening to this mode, a person tends to ponder, reflect, and indulge in sad feelings.
Despite the playful character of the “refrain” in the last movement, Shushter repeatedly intrudes, thus shattering the playfulness of the movement.

Table 3: III Movement (Tonal and thematic outline of the form)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Refrain”</th>
<th>Episode</th>
<th>“Refrain”</th>
<th>Episode</th>
<th>“Refrain”</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Trans.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E minor</td>
<td>B minor</td>
<td>E minor</td>
<td>F minor</td>
<td>E minor</td>
<td>E minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>I→v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>bii</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-38</td>
<td>39-44</td>
<td>45-91</td>
<td>92-101</td>
<td>102-160</td>
<td>161-192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shushter</td>
<td>Shushter</td>
<td>Shushter</td>
<td>Shushter</td>
<td>Shushter</td>
<td>Shushter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Performance Practice

Imitations

The Sonata is full of imitations of Azerbaijani folk instruments. They are associated with the timbre and methods of sound production on folk instruments. Motifs reminiscent of folk music also often have an improvisational character, as in the piano introduction to the theme from the opening of the first movement (Example 11, p.41). Rzayev establishes a rhythmic pattern as a dance accompaniment that is later stated in altered versions in the other two movements.

With perfect knowledge of the violin’s capacities, the composer takes a percussive approach to the violin. The violin, in addition to possessing lyrical, voice-like qualities is capable of imitating percussive instruments by several precise rhythmic strokes: landing the violin bow on the strings in horizontal motion, the use of open strings, and the left-hand pizzicato. The percussive accompaniment throughout Rzayev’s Sonata represents the folk instrument Gaval (Figure 3, p.22).

In the last movement of the sonata Rzayev keeps on experimenting with elements of imitation. For example, in the second episode of Rondo he marks ½ con sordine to imitate an Azerbaijani folk woodwind instrument called the Zurna (Figure 7). By using this technique, he tried to replicate as closely as possible the specific nasal sound of the Zurna.
Despite the percussive nature of the piano, Rzayev’s skillful application of particular techniques brings the sound of the piano as close as possible to the folk string instrument tar in timbre and articulation. While the composer uses extremely simple techniques (octave passages, glissandi, etc.) to achieve these effects, the results are remarkable.66

What distinguishes mugham singers from classical opera singers is the technique called tahrir—the method of expressive vocal ornamentation. This technique mainly involves a full-throated yodeling technique. The sound of a kamancha, akin to the violin, resembles the human voice, in this case the voice of a mugham singer. Since the tahrir technique is adopted by kamancha players, it can be adopted by violinists, as well. Undoubtedly the melodious cantilena themes in the Sonata represent imitations of the kamancha’s sound. The execution of the tahrir technique—the trademark of Azerbaijani mugham singing and instrumental performance—on violin should be done in the same

66 Ibid.
manner as on a *kamancha*, by quickly and lightly touching the second adjacent note with a finger, thus creating a *falsetto* effect. The following ornamentations in Example 29, if approached with the *tahrir* technique, will give the phrase an authentic flavor.

**Example 29: Movement I (*Tahrir* technique)**

Azerbaijani folk music, as well as that of some other countries of the East, is based on an unequal temperament tuning system and is microtonal. The discrepancy in playing Azerbaijani folk melodies on well-tempered musical instruments inevitably requires the use of alterations.

Hajibeyov, in his scientific work, notes:

while playing Azerbaijani melodies on tempered musical instruments (especially on the piano) one feels some discordance in the pitch of tones, particularly in the thirds and sixths. In Azerbaijani music the major third is narrower than the tempered one. The minor third is wider than the tempered one. Semitones are wider, as well. The difference is about one comma.\(^\text{67}\)

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Alterations are used in order to remove this discrepancy, and to make it suitable for notation in terms of the Western system. The absence of microtones in the published *mugham* modes in Hajibeyov’s work allows the reader recognize Azerbaijani modes in Western genres under the twelve-tone equal temperament. Another important fact which had an impact on *mugham* modification, requiring omission of non-tempered notes, was political in nature. The modification of *mugham* modes was a product of the sweeping process of Westernization in Soviet Azerbaijan. The period of cultural prosperity in Azerbaijan in Soviet Russia was one side of the coin, eliminating native agency in works of intellectuals of 15 Soviet Republics the other. The fear of being accused of the wrong kind of nationalism forced Hajibeyov to modify *mugham* modes to avoid negative consequences. This process yields the advantages of equal temperament. As Huseynova writes:

Removing quarter tones accelerated and facilitated the development of composed music in Europe, and Hajibeyli foresaw the same outcome for his nation. This prediction is the key to understanding the true incentive of Hajibeyli’s eagerness for equal temperament: he was concerned about creating new musical spaces for his native music, rather than sacrificing its authentic rules to the ideological agendas of the Soviets.68

The music of microtonal *mugham* makes it difficult to grasp with Western conceptions of music. Since Rzayev’s Sonata is inspired by the elements of *mugham* that were identified in the preceding analysis, it would be logical to assume that the composer might have wished to imply the use of microtones as well. After listening to several

performances of the same mugham mode by different mugham musicians, a listener with a well-trained ear can spot a slight difference in microtones found between the notes framing diatonic semitones. The use of different microtones depends solely on the taste of the performer and their desire to hear a specific microtone. The power of the unresolved chord or note has a psychological effect on the listener, who yearns for its resolution. A deceptive cadence, where a chordal pattern is resolved unexpectedly, creates musical interest, just as much as microtones do in mugham. Mugham musician/practitioner, Jeffrey Werbock, who has written extensively on the subject of mugham music in the English language, shares his vision on microtones:

> The power of music that includes microtones depends not only on playing the melody with the correct intonation, but also on the musician’s intent. Played unintentionally, a microtone will just sound out of tune. Played intentionally, the same microtone will have an entirely different effect on the listener.  

He further explains that the core concept in playing modal music which is microtonal and meter-free is intentionality. Normally we mean by this word a planned, thought out process; in this case, it means fulfilling a specific wish to hear a note with a particular microtonal inflection and timed to be played at a particular instant of time in the unfolding of the melody in the chosen mode. The musician wishes to experience a particular effect in both the pitch intonation and the timing of it; for that, both the pitch and the timing must be intended. However, it cannot be intended from thought; there is no time for that as the melody unfolds in real time which is far too quick for thought to

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plan anything; it must come from feeling. It is the audience who experiences the choice of pitch and timing of that pitch in the context of the phrase as intentional. If the audience/listener is not convinced the musician intended that microtone and intended the moment it is played, then it will sound out of tune and mistimed. It is a bit mysterious how a listener becomes convinced; if the mode is of a traditional composition as it is with Azerbaijani *mugham* music, then the cognoscenti of this genre will expect that microtone and its timing, having grown accustomed to it. But the novice will not have that advantage and will need to be convinced they are hearing an intentionally pitched and timed note in a given melody. That conviction originates in the musician and how they emphasize those microtonal notes and their timing. Since it happens all too quickly for deliberative thought to be driving the process, it is an intention from feeling, not from thinking, and that represents an uncommon usage of the word "intention". Unfortunately, it is the only word that can explain the mystery of microtonality and the timing of notes in meter free melodies.

In his work "Tonometrical Observations on Some Existing Non-Harmonic Musical Scales," Alexander John Ellis, an English mathematician who influenced the field of musicology, breaks up the interval between the diatonic semitone into 100 “cents.” The human ear can distinguish pitches that are roughly 5 cents apart, which means there are 20 possible microtones per semitone. Even if it were possible to notate microtones, inclusion of microtones in music of a homophonic structure would create

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intolerable dissonance for the listener. Rzayev rectifies the discrepancy between the
mugham and classical music languages by using accidentals to imitate the microtones.
Let us review Example 13 on page 42. The note C flat in the sixth measure of the
rehearsal number 18 is an alien note to the key of F minor, aching to resolve back to B
flat. This C flat opens up an array of choices for the mugham musicians to use microtones
between the interval C flat and B flat.

The ulnar deviation movement of the left-hand wrist (Figure 8) when playing the
vibrato and the slide on kamancha makes it much easier to play microtones. These
techniques allow the kamancha player to calculate the distance between intervals that the
finger travels. However, it requires a slightly different left-hand technique (position) to
play microtones on the violin. Classically trained violinists keep their left wrist straight.
This allows the player to keep the angle of the fingers fixed vertically on the fingerboard.
To produce microtones, however, the wrist should be fully folded up to the neck of the
violin, and the palm pressed into the neck, thus changing the angle of fingers to a more
horizontal position. With this angle, the pads of the fingers lay flat on the string; this
avoids a shift of the hand, yet permits the finger pads to slide quickly back and forth over
a short distance.
Ornamentation

Borrowed from the traditions of folk instrumentalism, the method of ornamental embellishment of melodies is one of the main features of Azerbaijani *mugham*; the quasi-melismatic structure of motifs, where the ornament becomes an organic part of the melody, gives them flexibility, refinement, and an improvisatory character.

The method of thematic development, applied by Azerbaijani composers in the form of ornamented versions of the main melody, as well as doubling of melodic lines and passages with double stops in open fifths, derives from the art of improvisation on folk instruments.

The soft and melodious themes in Rzayev’s Violin Sonata are enhanced by plentiful embellishments, which is typical of Azerbaijani folk music. An ordinary embellishment in Azerbaijani folk music consists of a rapid succession of two notes. The first is the main note and the second one is an upper auxiliary. If the main and auxiliary
notes form the interval of a major second, the auxiliary note is lowered by a semitone in order to achieve a good effect (Example 27).

Example 30: Embellishment. Interval of Major Second [Lowered Auxiliary Note]

![Example 30: Embellishment. Interval of Major Second [Lowered Auxiliary Note]](image1)

The second embellishing note is most often not an auxiliary one, but instead functions as a consonant third above the main note\(^\text{71}\) (Example 28).

Example 31: Embellishment. Interval of Third [Not an Auxiliary Note]

![Example 31: Embellishment. Interval of Third [Not an Auxiliary Note]](image2)

These examples of embellishments are merely formalized in notation, while in practice it is almost impossible to notate the *gruppetto* of auxiliary microtones that come before the main note. As with every other feature of *mugham*, grace notes must be intended.

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CONCLUSION

Rzayev’s music inspired the quest of many artists outside Azerbaijan looking for something new. As a result of this quest, Rzayev became one of the pioneers who introduced Azerbaijani instrumental works to the world of music. Distinct traits of Azerbaijani folk music and dance in his music brought novelty to interpretation in performance, enriching the national performance tradition with new techniques.

Rzayev, as a violinist, was very original in his approach to piano writing. He sometimes gave his piano parts features idiomatic of violin playing, thus enhancing the texture of the piano part and of the musical composition. Another factor that enriched the composer’s style of piano writing is the use of techniques common to folk instruments. Rzayev developed specific techniques to facilitate his desire to imitate the sound of folk instruments.

Remaining formally within the framework of classical sonata structure while introducing novelty into sonata form, relying on the principles of national musical forms, Rzayev concurrently brought features of the concerto to the sonata genre. The chamber music genre enabled him to express the features of concerto through an unfolding composition formed of dynamic contrasts, dramatic solo passages, and cadenza.

The materials of this monograph can be helpful to world-music courses in music universities and music schools by providing English-speaking musicians a better understanding of the Azerbaijani folk music elements in classical music. The methodological section on performance practice can be used by performers—pianists and
violinists playing in ensembles, as well as teachers of the chamber ensemble in the process of working with students.
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