



## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BUKHARA SHASHMAQOM AND KHOREZM MAQOM TRADITIONS

Sadullayev Feruzbek Maksudbekovich

1st Year Master's Student,

Direction of Singing and Dance, Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts and Culture

### Abstract

The maqom tradition occupies a central place in the musical heritage of Uzbekistan and represents one of the highest achievements of Eastern classical music culture. Among the regional schools of Uzbek maqom art, the Bukhara Shashmaqom and Khorezm maqom traditions are particularly significant due to their historical depth, artistic complexity, and performance styles. Although both traditions originate from common musical and cultural roots, they differ in melodic structure, rhythmic organization, poetic interpretation, vocal style, and instrumental performance practices. This article presents a comparative analysis of Bukhara Shashmaqom and Khorezm maqom traditions from historical, theoretical, and performance perspectives. The study examines the formation of the maqom systems, their compositional structures, performance characteristics, and their role in preserving national musical identity. The research also highlights the influence of regional culture and historical environment on the development of these maqom schools. Comparative methods, musicological analysis, and historical approaches are used to reveal similarities and differences between the two traditions.

**Keywords:** maqom, Shashmaqom, Khorezm maqom, Uzbek classical music, traditional music, vocal performance, instrumental art, comparative analysis.

### Introduction

Uzbek national classical music has developed over centuries through the interaction of different cultural, philosophical, and artistic traditions. One of the brightest examples of this musical heritage is maqom art, which reflects the spiritual



world, aesthetic thinking, and historical memory of the Uzbek people. Maqom is not only a musical genre but also a complex artistic and philosophical system that combines poetry, vocal performance, instrumental music, and improvisational mastery. Among the major regional maqom schools in Uzbekistan, the Bukhara Shashmaqom and Khorezm maqom traditions hold a unique position. These traditions were formed in different historical and cultural environments and therefore possess distinctive musical characteristics. Bukhara Shashmaqom developed mainly within the court culture of the Emirate of Bukhara and was influenced by Persian-Tajik literary and musical traditions. In contrast, the Khorezm maqom tradition evolved in the cultural atmosphere of Khiva and absorbed local folk performance elements and regional stylistic features. The preservation and study of maqom traditions have become increasingly important in modern Uzbekistan. After independence, the government and cultural institutions began paying special attention to restoring national musical heritage and promoting maqom art at the international level. In 2003, Shashmaqom was included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, demonstrating its universal cultural value. Despite their common roots, Bukhara Shashmaqom and Khorezm maqom differ significantly in performance practice, melodic expression, rhythmic systems, and compositional structure. Therefore, a comparative study of these traditions is necessary for understanding the diversity and richness of Uzbek maqom culture. This research aims to analyze the similarities and differences between Bukhara Shashmaqom and Khorezm maqom traditions and to identify their artistic, historical, and theoretical significance in Uzbek classical music.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study is based on comparative musicological analysis, historical research, and theoretical examination of maqom traditions. Scientific literature related to Uzbek classical music, maqom studies, and ethnomusicology was



analyzed. Audio recordings, performance traditions, and musical structures of Bukhara Shashmaqom and Khorezm maqom were comparatively examined.

**The research methods include:**

Comparative analysis of melodic and rhythmic structures;

Historical analysis of maqom development;

Observation of performance traditions;

Study of poetic and vocal interpretation;

Analysis of instrumental accompaniment and stylistic features.

These methods made it possible to identify both the common foundations and unique characteristics of the two maqom traditions.

**Results**

The research demonstrated that Bukhara Shashmaqom and Khorezm maqom traditions share a common theoretical basis but differ considerably in practical performance and artistic expression. Bukhara Shashmaqom consists of six major maqoms: Buzruk, Rost, Navo, Dugoh, Segoh, and Iroq. The tradition is characterized by philosophical depth, lyrical expressiveness, and strict compositional order. The performance style is generally calm, refined, and spiritually oriented. Vocal interpretation emphasizes smooth melodic development and emotional subtlety. In contrast, the Khorezm maqom tradition demonstrates greater dynamism, emotional openness, and rhythmic diversity. Khorezm performers often use more energetic ornamentation, wider vocal range, and expressive improvisation. Instrumental accompaniment in Khorezm maqom is also more active and rhythmically vibrant compared to the relatively restrained instrumental style of Bukhara Shashmaqom. The study also revealed differences in poetic interpretation. Bukhara Shashmaqom traditionally relies heavily on classical Persian-Tajik poetry, especially the works of Alisher Navoi, Jami, and Hafiz. In Khorezm maqom, local poetic traditions and folk lyrical elements are more visible.



Another important difference concerns vocal timbre and singing techniques. Bukhara singers typically prefer softer and more meditative vocal expression, while Khorezm performers employ brighter vocal resonance and stronger emotional intensity.

### **Discussion**

The differences between Bukhara Shashmaqom and Khorezm maqom traditions can largely be explained by their historical and cultural environments. Bukhara was historically one of the major centers of Islamic scholarship, literature, and court culture in Central Asia. Therefore, Bukhara Shashmaqom developed as a sophisticated classical tradition closely connected with intellectual and spiritual aesthetics. Khorezm, on the other hand, maintained stronger connections with folk musical culture and local ceremonial traditions. As a result, Khorezm maqom preserved a more emotionally direct and rhythmically energetic performance style. The influence of regional dance traditions can also be observed in Khorezm maqom compositions. Another important factor is the difference in performance schools. Bukhara Shashmaqom performance emphasizes discipline, melodic balance, and philosophical contemplation. Khorezm performers often prioritize emotional expression, improvisation, and technical virtuosity. These distinctions enrich Uzbek maqom culture and demonstrate its regional diversity. At the same time, both traditions share essential artistic principles. Both maqom schools aim to express spiritual beauty, moral values, and emotional depth through music and poetry. Both traditions also require high professional mastery from performers and preserve centuries-old oral transmission methods. Modern globalization creates challenges for preserving traditional maqom performance practices. Younger generations increasingly consume modern popular music, which may reduce interest in classical traditions. Therefore, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and researchers must continue promoting maqom art through scientific study, concerts,



festivals, and academic programs.

The inclusion of Uzbek maqom traditions in international cultural platforms has contributed significantly to their preservation and recognition. Today, maqom art serves not only as a national cultural treasure but also as an important symbol of Uzbekistan's cultural identity in the global cultural space.

### **Conclusion**

Bukhara Shashmaqom and Khorezm maqom traditions represent two unique branches of Uzbek classical music culture. Although they share common historical roots and theoretical foundations, they differ in melodic style, rhythmic organization, vocal performance, poetic interpretation, and artistic aesthetics.

Bukhara Shashmaqom is distinguished by philosophical depth, spiritual refinement, and compositional stability, while Khorezm maqom is characterized by emotional dynamism, expressive ornamentation, and rhythmic richness. These differences reflect the cultural diversity and historical development of regional musical schools in Uzbekistan. The comparative analysis confirms that both traditions play a crucial role in preserving national musical heritage and maintaining continuity between past and present generations. Their artistic value extends beyond national borders and contributes to the world's intangible cultural heritage. Further research on maqom traditions should focus on performance pedagogy, digital preservation, comparative ethnomusicology, and the adaptation of traditional music education to contemporary cultural conditions. Preserving maqom art is essential for protecting the spiritual and cultural identity of future generations.

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