

# **REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

### **ALAKBAR ASGAROV'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AZERBAIJANI WIND INSTRUMENT PERFORMANCE**

Speciality: 6213.01 – Music art

Field of science: Art Study

Applicant: **Mahira Alakbar Guliyeva**

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Scientific supervisor: Doctor of Science, Professor  
**Abbasgulu Ismayil Najafzadeh**

Official opponents: Doctor of Science, Professor  
**Irada Tofik Kocherli**

Doctor of Philosophy in Art Study  
**Agahuseyn Anatollu Abbasov**

Doctor of Philosophy in Art Study  
**Saadat Tahmiraz Shirinova**

Dissertation Council FD 2.36 Supreme Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating at the Baku music Academy named after Uzeyir Hajibeyli.

Chairman of the  
Dissertation council:

Doctor of Philosophy in Art Study,  
Professor

  
**Ulviyya Ismayil Imanova**

Scientific secretary of the  
Dissertation council:

Doctor of Science, Associate Professor  
**Leyla Ramiz Zohrabova**

Chairman of the  
scientific seminar:

Doctor of Science, Associate Professor  
**Aytaj Elkhan Rahimova**

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORK

### **The relevance and scientific development of the research.**

The rich heritage of Azerbaijani art has retained its relevance from ancient times to the present day. This includes all types of art: literature, painting, musical instrument studies, architecture, dance art, and other forms of artistic expression.

There were several ancient musical instruments used in the Middle Ages that were later completely forgotten, yet today, we need their diverse sound timbres. The restoration and improvement of forgotten instruments arise from this necessity. In this regard, the study and revival of ancient musical instruments, widely used in the medieval musical culture of Azerbaijan but later forgotten, remain one of the pressing issues of our time.

In this context, the unique constructive modifications made by the renowned virtuoso and innovative performer Alakbar Asgarov in the development of wind musical instruments, as well as the study of the playing characteristics of the instruments he created, remain relevant today.

Although Azerbaijani organology and the creativity of individual performers may seem sufficiently researched at first glance, there is still a great need to investigate such issues in a new context in the modern era. Based on this, Alakbar Asgarov's multifaceted creative legacy (his stage activities, compositions of dance melodies and rhythmic pieces, improvements to several wind instruments, pedagogical and ensemble activities, etc.) has become the main subject of the dissertation.

In general, the proposed dissertation topic has gained attention as it reflects the current issues of instrumental performance art. Since the dissertation work encompasses the past, present, and future, it can remain relevant across all periods.

When starting the research, all archival documents of Alakbar Asgarov were examined and incorporated into the study. A closer look at his personal archive reveals the versatility and richness of his creativity. Over many years, the master artist developed a unique and unparalleled performance style, which brought to light the distinctive "Alakbar Asgarov path" in the world of art.

Master Alakbar's special improvisations in performance, his compositions of dance melodies and mugham rhythmic pieces, his pedagogical activities, and his solo performances in ensemble and orchestral works have captured the joy of the people and the attention of musicians.

The dissertation topic we have addressed, based on the collected materials, can be said to confirm its relevance and modernity even in our contemporary era.

The dissertation also reflects the valuable opinions of scholars who have introduced innovations to Azerbaijani music science. The works of prominent composers and the scientific treatises of musicologists hold a special place in this research. For instance, it is appropriate to mention distinguished musicologists such as Abu Nasr Farabi (873–950) <sup>1</sup>, Safiaddin Urmavi (1216–1294) <sup>2</sup>, Abd al-Qadir Maraghali (1353–1435) <sup>3</sup>, Mirza Bey (16th–17th centuries) <sup>4</sup>, Uzeyir Hajibeyli (1885–1948) <sup>5</sup>, Suleyman

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<sup>1</sup> Axundova, E.A. İslam musiqi mədəniyyətində Əl-Fərabinin elmi-nəzəri tədqiqatları və ixtiraları (Sənətsünaslıq üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru elmi dərəcəsi almaq üçün təqdim olunmuş dissertasiya) // – Bakı: – 2016. – 128 s.; Əbu Nəsr Əl-Fərabi ət-Türki / Elmlərin təsnifatı (orijinalda – “İhsaül-Ülum”) // – Bakı: Adiloğlu, – 2006. – 212 s.; Fərabî, Ə.N. Kitabül-Musiqiyül-Kəbir / Fars dilində, ərəbcədən farscaya tərcümə: Əbülfəzl Bafəndeyi-İslamdust // – Tehran: Part, – 1996 (1375, hicri). – 220 s.; Fərabî, Ə.N. Kitabül-Musiqiyül-Kəbir / Əlyazmanın nəşrə hazırlanması və “Ön söz” – Q.A.M.Xaşba, şərhlər – N.A.Əl-Xifni // – Qahirə: – 1967. – 625 s.; Аль-Фараби. Трактаты о музыке и поэзии. АН СССР // – Алма-Ата: Гылым, – 1992. – 456 с.

<sup>2</sup> Səfərova, Z.Y. Səfiəddin Urməvi // – Bakı: Ergün, – 1995, – 160 s.; Urməvi, S. Kitabül-Ədvar // – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – 2006. – 107 s.; Urməvi, S. Kompozisiya nisbətləri və ritm elmi haqqında “Şərəfiyyə” risaləsi // – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – 2006. – 159 s.

<sup>3</sup> Marağalı Əbdülqadir. Musiqi alətləri və onların növləri / Farscadan tərcümə: M.Müsəddiqindir, “Qobustan” jurnalı // – 1977. – №1. – s. 74-79; Bardakçı, M.G. Marağalı Abdülkadir // – İstanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, – 1986. – 200 sh.; Араева, С.Х. Абдулгadir Марaги // – Баку: Язычы, – 1983. – 46 с.

<sup>4</sup> Mirzə bəy. Musiqi risaləsi (XVII əsr) / G.B.Şamilli, farscadan tərcümə, ön söz, izah və şərhlər // – Bakı: Azərbaycan, – 1995. – 88 s.

<sup>5</sup> Hacıbəyli, Ü.Ə. Azərbaycan xalq musiqisinin əsasları // – Bakı: Apostrof Çap Evi, – 2010. – 176 s.; Hacıbəyli, Ü.Ə. Azərbaycan türklərinin musiqisi haqqında / Ön söz və lüğətin müəllifi Əliyeva, F.Ş. // – Bakı: Adiloğlu, – 2005. – 74 s.; Hacıbəyli, Ü.Ə. Bədii və publisistik əsərlər // – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – 2008. – 544 s.;

Alasgarov (1924–2000)<sup>6</sup>, and others.

Among organologists, the contributions of scholars such as Seadet Abdullayeva<sup>7</sup> (1940–2017), Majnun Karimov<sup>8</sup> (194–2013), Zakir Mirzayev<sup>9</sup>, Abbasgulu Najafzadeh<sup>10</sup>, Ahsan Rahmanli<sup>11</sup>, as

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Hacıbəyli, Ü.Ə. Ömür salnaməsi. 1885–1948 [Bibliografiya] // – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – 2008. – 392 s.; Hacıbəyli, Ü.Ə. Seçilmiş əsərləri [İki cildə] // – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – Cild 1. – 2005. – 408 s.; Hacıbəyli, Ü.Ə. Seçilmiş əsərləri [İki cildə] // – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – Cild 1. – 2005. – 456 s.;

<sup>6</sup> Ələsgərov, S.Ə., Abdullayeva, S.A. Azərbaycan xalq çalğı alətləri və orkestrləşdirmə // – Bakı: Maarif, – 1996. – 174 s.

<sup>7</sup> Abdullayeva, S.A. Azərbaycan xalq çalğı alətləri (musiqişünaslıq-orqanoloji tədqiqat) // – Bakı: Adiloğlu, – 2002. – 454 s.; Abdullayeva, S.A. Azərbaycan folklorunda çalğı alətləri // – Bakı: Adiloğlu, – 2007. – 216 s.; Abdullayeva, S.A. Azərbaycan musiqisi və təsviri sənət // – Bakı: Oğuz Eli, – 2010. – 416 s.; Abdullayeva, S.A. Azərbaycan çalğı alətləri dünyanı valeh edir // – Bakı: Nurlar Nəşriyyat-Poliqrafiya Mərkəzi, – 2016. – 288 s.; Abdullayeva, S.A. Nizamidə musiqi, musiqidə Nizami // – Bakı: Nurlar Nəşriyyat-Poliqrafiya Mərkəzi, – 2018. – 360 s.;

<sup>8</sup> Kərimov, M.T. Azərbaycan musiqi alətləri // – Bakı: Yeni Nəsil, – 2002. – 175 s.; Kərim, M.T. Azərbaycan musiqi alətləri // – Bakı: Yeni Nəsil, – 2009. – 184 s.; Kərim, M.T. Azərbaycan musiqi alətləri // – Bakı: Mütərcim, – 2011. – 96 s.;

<sup>9</sup> Mirzəyev, Z.Q. Azərbaycan qarmonu // – Bakı: Adiloğlu, – 2007. – 162 s.

<sup>10</sup> Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Azərbaycan çalğı alətlərinin izahlı lüğəti [Yenidən işlənmiş II nəşr] // – Bakı: MBM, – 2004. – 224 s.; Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Balabançı Həsən dayının gülməcləri // – Bakı: Min bir mahnı MMC, – 2004. – 80 s.; Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Müşfiqin duyğu yarpaqları // – Bakı: Təhsil, – 2009. – 128 s.; Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Xalq çalğı alətlərinin tədrisi metodikası [Dərs vəsaiti, yenidən işlənmiş II nəşr] // – Bakı: MBM, – 2012. – 92 s.; Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Etnoorqanologiya [Musiqi təmayüllü ali məktəblər üçün dərslik] // – Bakı: Ecoprint, – 2016. – 304 s.; Nəcəfzadə, A.İ., Məmmədəliyev V.M. Muğam [Ali musiqi məktəbləri üçün dərs vəsaiti] // – Bakı: Ecoprint, – 2017. – 160 s.; Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Sənətsünaslıq (6213.01 – Musiqi sənəti) üzrə elmi-tədqiqat işlərinin yazılışına dair tövsiyələr [Metodiki vəsait] // – Bakı: Ecoprint, – 2017. – 56 s.; Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. “Kitabi-Dədə Qorqud” dastanında çalğı alətləri [Tədqiqat və lüğət] // – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, – 2017. – 264 s.; Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Musiqi. Azərbaycan incəsənət tarixi [Beş cildə] // – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – Cild 2. – 2018. – 328 s.; Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Ud çalğı aləti Azərbaycan qaynaqlarında [Tədqiqat və lüğət] // – Bakı: Xəzər Universiteti, – 2019. – 160 s.; Nəcəfzadə A.İ. Nizami Gəncəvinin yaradıcılığında musiqi alətləri // – Bakı: Aspoliqraf, – 2022. – 272 s.; Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Alim Qasimov haqqında düşüncələrim (Dahi sənətkarın 65 illiyinə həsr olunur) // – Bakı: Azərbaycan, – 2022. – 120 s.

<sup>11</sup> Rəhmanlı, Ə.M. Azərbaycanda klarnet ifaçılığı sənəti / – Bakı: MBM, – 2010. – 982 s.

well as Kamal Hasanov (1925–2007)<sup>12</sup>, Rafiq Imrani<sup>13</sup>, Senuber Baghirova<sup>14</sup>, and Ilgar Imamverdiyev<sup>15</sup>, who are experts in related fields, have been a focal point of attention.

The opinions and memories of Azerbaijan's prominent artists – Alibaba Mammadov (1930–2022), Nariman Azimov (1936–2016), Zakir Mirzayev, and others – have also been extensively included in the “Appendices” section of the dissertation. This section also presents poetic samples dedicated to Alakbar Asgarov, written by well-known scholars Ahsan Rahmanli and Ilgar Imamverdiyev, who were inspired by his creativity.

Overall, the information obtained from other sources that we utilized in the preparation of the dissertation has been of significant importance.

**The object and subject of the research.** The object of the dissertation is the multifaceted creative legacy of the master artist.

The subject of the research includes Alakbar Asgarov's performance characteristics; the dance melodies and mugham rhythmic pieces he composed; his ensemble and orchestral creativity; his pedagogical activities; as well as the structural modifications of

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<sup>12</sup> Həsənov, K.N. Qədim Azərbaycan xalq rəqsləri // – Bakı: İşıq, – 1983. – 60 s.; Həsənov, K.N. Azərbaycan qədim folklor rəqsləri // – Bakı: İşıq, – 1988. – 130 s.

<sup>13</sup> İmrani, R.H. Azərbaycan muğam janrının yaranması və inkişaf tarixi // – Bakı: N.Tusi adına ADPU-nun mətbəəsi, – 1994. – 252 s.; İmrani, R.H. Muğam tarixi [I cild] // – Bakı: Elm, – 1998. – 280 s.; İmrani, R.H. Azərbaycanın musiqi tarixi (ən qədim dövrlərdən bizim eraya qədər) // – Bakı: Elm, – 1999. – 148 s.; İmrani, R.H. Muğam şumer dövründən başlayır // – Bakı: Elm, – 1999. – 88 s.

<sup>14</sup> Bağirova, S.Y. Azərbaycan muğamı (məqalələr və tədqiqatlar) [İki cildə] // – Bakı: Elm, – Cild 1. – 2007. – 298 s.; Bağirova, S.Y. Azərbaycan muğamı (məqalələr və tədqiqatlar) [İki cildə] // – Bakı: Elm, – Cild 2. – 2007. – 151 s.

<sup>15</sup> İmamverdiyev, İ.C. Azərbaycan muğam dəramədləri və rəngləri [Üç cildə] // – Bakı: Nurlan, – Cild 1. – 2007. – 90 s.; İmamverdiyev, İ.C. Azərbaycan muğam dəramədləri və rəngləri [Üç cildə] // – Bakı: Nurlan, – Cild 2. – 2007. – 98 s.; İmamverdiyev, İ.C. Azərbaycan muğam dəramədləri və rəngləri [Üç cildə] // – Bakı: Şur, – Cild 3. – 2009. – 80 s.; İmamverdiyev, İ.C. Azərbaycan rəqs havaları [İki cildə] // – Bakı: Nurlan, – Cild 1. – 2007. – 168 s.; İmamverdiyev, İ.C. Azərbaycan rəqs havaları [İki cildə] // – Bakı: Nurlan, – Cild 2.– 2007. – 172 s.; İmamverdiyev, İ.C. Azərbaycan muğam inciləri (dəramədlər, rənglər, diringilər) // – Bakı: Nafta-Pres, – 2010. – 542 s.

Azerbaijan's ancient musical instruments, the balaban and zurna, along with the European-origin clarinet.

In this context, the most significant and distinctive features of the artistic world of the virtuoso and innovative performer Alakbar Asgarov have also become the subject of research.

**The purpose and objectives of the research.** The main objective of the research is to study all parameters of Alakbar Asgarov's creative work. Since this topic has not been examined at the dissertation level until today, we have set the comprehensive investigation of this issue as our goal. To achieve this objective, the resolution of the following tasks is required:

- To review the development paths of the national wind instruments balaban, zurna, and the European-origin clarinet;
- To focus on the transcriptions and arrangements prepared by Alakbar Asgarov for balaban education, following the principle of progression from simple to complex;
- To analyze Alakbar Asgarov's two-key balaban instrument from an organological perspective;
- To examine Alakbar Asgarov's long-term pedagogical activities;
- To present the reconstruction of the twin zurna instrument developed by Alakbar Asgarov;
- To review the reforms made by Alakbar Asgarov on the clarinet;
- To study the history of the establishment of the "Dugah" instrumental-folk ensemble, led by Alakbar Asgarov, and to understand its specific characteristics;
- To analyze Alakbar Asgarov's playing style in Azerbaijan's folk dances;
- To study the structural features of the dances composed by Alakbar Asgarov;
- To examine Alakbar Asgarov's distinctive performance characteristics in mugham music;
- To review the mugham rhythmic pieces composed by Alakbar Asgarov.

**The research methods.** The dissertation employs several commonly accepted methods in musicology, including theoretical, historical, analytical, comparative analysis, and others.

In the research, the transcriptions of several musicologists have been presented in a comparative manner, which can be attributed to the comparative analysis method. The transcriptions by musicologists Ilgar Imamverdiyev, Malik Guliyev, Arzu Guliyeva, and Mahira Guliyeva have been analyzed. Additionally, the synthesis in Alakbar Asgarov's dance melodies is highlighted.

The main methodological basis of the conducted research is derived from the scientific principles of Uzeyir Hajibeyli, as well as Azerbaijani musicologists and music figures such as Afrasiyab Badalbeyli, Mammadsaleh Ismayilov, Ramiz Zohrabov, Zemfira Safarova, Rena Mammadova, Tariyel Mammadov and Leyla Mammadova. Additionally, the research draws from the scholarly work of organology experts, including Saadat Abdullayeva, Madjnun Karimov (Karim), Rafiq Imrani, Zakir Mirzayev, Abbasgulu Najafzade, and Surayya Agayeva.

The methodological foundation of this study is also shaped by the research and scientific perspectives of other scholars dedicated to the history of Azerbaijani music, organological studies, and dance art.

**Main clauses defended.** The main directions of the research conducted in the dissertation are related to the key theses presented for defense. The main theses presented in the study are as follows:

- Alakbar Asgarov synthesized Azerbaijani mugham modes by incorporating several elements characteristic of European music (major-minor contrast, tonal sequences, variations, and various performance figurations) into the art of performance.

- Alakbar Asgarov's transcriptions and arrangements have played a significant role in music education.

- The purpose of establishing the Dugah instrumental-folk ensemble was to bring attention to the same name mugham, which was gradually being forgotten.

- By developing two-valve balaban, double zurna, and the "As" type of clarinet, Alakbar Asgarov introduced new possibilities to the art of performance.



– Alakbar Asgarov had a profound understanding of Azerbaijani mugham, considered the jewel of national music, as well as the characteristics and intricacies of Azerbaijani wind instruments. Every mugham he performed was adapted to the playing capabilities of the instruments and was distinguished by its specific features. Based on each mugham, Alakbar Asgarov composed instrumental reng pieces.

**The scientific novelty of the research.** The dissertation can be considered a scientific novelty in itself, as it is the first research work dedicated to the creative legacy of the virtuoso-innovative performer of wind instruments, Alakbar Asgarov. Additionally, several other innovations are highlighted in the study, which are presented in a systematic manner:

– A previously unstudied melody recorded on a phonograph cylinder in 1937 by Sheki balaban players Habibullah and Hasan (whose surnames were not indicated) and preserved in the House Museum of Bulbul has been analyzed for the first time in this dissertation. It was determined that one of these musicians was the renowned zurna-balaban performer Habibullah Jafarov (1902–1987) from the village of “Kichik Dahna” in Sheki. The other musician, noted as Hasan, was identified as Hasan Mammadov. This was confirmed by another phonograph recording where Hasan’s surname was explicitly mentioned. Further research into Habibullah Jafarov’s wedding performances revealed that Hasan Mammadov had long been his accompanying musician. Thus, it has been established that the balaban players recorded on the phonograph cylinder were indeed Habibullah Jafarov and Hasan Mammadov.

– Before our research, the word balaban in the name of the folk dance “Balaban Kochdu” was believed to refer to the musical instrument. However, it was discovered that in this context, balaban does not signify the instrument but rather a type of falcon that migrates seasonally to Ordubad. Consequently, for the first time, the correct interpretation of this yalli dance’s name has been provided.

– Through the analysis of literary sources, it has been revealed for the first time that the word “kuy” was historically used in the sense of mugham. The poet Nematullah Kishvari (1445–1525)

referred to “mughan kuyu” in one of his poems, implying the singing of mugham by the Mugh people. This suggests that, like modern Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, medieval Azerbaijanis also used the word “kuy” (kü) to mean mugham though its meaning evolved over time.

- A well-known folk bayati about the balaban instrument contains a metrical irregularity in its third line. This syllabic inconsistency has been identified and brought to attention for the first time in this research.

- The two-valve balaban instrument developed by Alakbar Asgarov.

- The double zurna instrument designed by Alakbar Asgarov based on the traditional zurna.

- The modifications made by Alakbar Asgarov to the clarinet, resulting in the creation of the “As” type of clarinet.

- Alakbar Asgarov revived the gradually fading Dugah mugham by establishing Azerbaijan’s first instrumental-folk ensemble and composing an eponymous Dügah piece. In all of the ensemble’s concert programs, the Dugah reng was performed first, followed by other pieces. As a result, the Dugah mugham was reintroduced into educational curricula.

- The structural characteristics of Alakbar Asgarov’s compositions, adapted to both Azerbaijani and European musical traditions, have been identified, along with his innovative performance approach based on the principles of variation and sequence.

### **The theoretical and practical significance of the research.**

The theoretical significance of the research lies in the fact that the most important scientific findings and some materials obtained in the study can be used in exploring the history of musical culture and scientific research related to instrumental performance art.

Some of the provisions of the presented dissertation can serve as auxiliary materials in the teaching of musicology-related subjects at higher educational institutions such as the Baku Music Academy named after Uzeyir Hajibeyli, the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, the Baku Choreography Academy, Azerbaijan Pedagogical University, Khazar University, and the Nakhchivan State University.

The dissertation can be used as additional material in subjects taught at these music-oriented higher education institutions and colleges, such as “Azerbaijani Folk Dance Music”, “Ethnoorganology”, “Instrumentology”, “Arrangement”, “Related Instruments”, “Ensemble”, “Teaching Methodology of Azerbaijani Folk Musical Instruments”, and “Specialization-Notation” “Specialization-Mugham” in balaban.

**Approbation and application.** The teaching materials titled “Alakbar Asgarov’s Dance Melodies and Mugham Reng” and “Alakbar Asgarov’s Transcriptions and Arrangements for the Balaban Instrument” were published after being discussed by experts, in line with the topic of the presented dissertation. The main provisions of the research were reflected in the candidate’s presentations at local and international scientific conferences and symposiums, and have been published.

The materials and scientific results of the dissertation were published as original articles in local and international journals, included in international indexing and abstracting databases recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission: “Conservatory”, “Scientific Work”, “Music World”, “Problems of Art and Culture”, “Turkish Music”, “Music. Art, science, practice”, “Performing arts: science and practice”, “Problems of Music Culture Research of Turkish-speaking Peoples”, “Music Traditions in a Globalized World”, “XXII Republic Scientific Conference of Doctoral Students and Young Researchers”, “VII International Music and Dance Congress”, “6th International Culture, ART and Literature Congress”, “Eurasian Academy Studies” etc.

In these scientific publications, the candidate’s 10 articles and 7 conference papers were included.

**The name of the institution where the dissertation work was performed.** The dissertation was carried out at the “Ethnomusicology” department of the Azerbaijan National Conservatory.

**The total volume of the dissertation is marked with a separate volume of the structural sections of the dissertation.** The research work consists of structural sections “introduction“, “three chapters”, “conclusion”, “list of used literature” and “appendices”. Chapter I consists of three paragraphs (1.1., 1.2., 1.3.). A paragraph

has been added to the second paragraph (1.2.1.); Chapter II consists of three paragraphs (2.1., 2.2., 2.3.) and a paragraph has been added to the first paragraph (2.1.1.); Chapter III also consists of three paragraphs. "Introduction "consists of 8 pages and 12,535 characters," chapter I "consists of 30 pages and 47,346 characters," Chapter II "consists of 42 pages and 60,776 characters," Chapter III "consists of 53 pages and 72,756 characters, "conclusion" consists of 6 pages and 9,653 characters. The total volume of the dissertation, with the exception of the "list of used literature" and "appendices", consists of a total of 139 pages and 203,066 characters.

## THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

In the "**Introduction**" section of the dissertation, the relevance and degree of development of the topic are substantiated, its scientific novelty is revealed, the goals and objectives of the research, including the methods applied in the scientific study, the main provisions to be defended, and the theoretical and practical significance of the research are determined.

The first chapter of the dissertation is titled "Alakbar Asgarov's Multifaceted Creative Activity". This chapter consists of three paragraphs (with one sub-section added to the second paragraph).

**1.1. "Alakbar Asgarov's Life and Directions of His Creative Activity"** is the title of this sub-section. It focuses on the artistic path the artist has followed:

In 1951, he worked as a balaban performer in the folk instrument ensemble at the Musical Comedy Theater.

In 1957, he worked as a soloist and clarinet performer in the Azerbaijan State Estrada Orchestra.

In 1958, he worked as a "*bass balaban*" performer in the Azerbaijan Folk Instruments Orchestra, led by Said Rustamov.

In 1959, he was accepted into the balaban department of the Asaf Zeynalli Music School and, during those years, was invited to join the ensembles of Alibaba Mammadov and Aliaga Guliyev.

In 1965, Alakbar Asgarov worked as a balaban performer at the Azerbaijan State Philharmonic, and a year later, he was appointed as a teacher at the Soltan Hacibeyov Sumgayit Music School. Alakbar

Asgarov worked there as a senior teacher until the end of his life (1995).

From 1973, alongside his teaching profession, he worked as a soloist at the State Song and Dance Theater, led by People's Artist of the former USSR, Rashid Behbudov.

In 1981, Alakbar Asgarov founded the “Dugah” instrumental-folklore ensemble at the Sumgayit City Music Technical School.

**1.2. Is titled “Alakbar Asgarov’s Pedagogical Activity”.** When discussing education, it is essential to highlight Alakbar Asgarov’s contributions to pedagogy. He began his teaching career in 1966 at the Soltan Hacibeyov Sumgayit Secondary Special Music School, specializing in the balaban instrument. From the very beginning, he faced significant challenges: enhancing student’s professionalism and expanding the technical capabilities of the balaban.

Alakbar Asgarov not only taught balaban specialization but also conducted lessons in auxiliary subjects such as “Instrumentology”, “Score Reading”, and “Ensemble Creativity”.

Among his students were notable figures such as Doctor of Art Studies, Professor Abbasqulu Najafzadeh; People’s Artist and Associate Professor Elshan Mansurov; and PhD in Art Studies Saadat Tahmirazgizi, among others. They all remember their mentor with deep respect.

**1.2.1. “Alakbar Asgarov’s Transcriptions and Arrangements for the Balaban Performance School”.** A new subsection has been added to the second paragraph of the first chapter, discussing Alakbar Asgarov’s transcriptions and arrangements.

Alakbar Asgarov adapted compositions by Azerbaijani and international composers to suit the tonal structure of the balaban and prepared a repertoire for educational purposes. These transcriptions have been preserved in handwritten form among archival documents. However, after Alakbar Asgarov’s passing, his handwritten transcriptions were published by us in 2021.

The notation collection includes Azerbaijani folk music as well as works by various composers, including: Uzeyir Hajibeyli – “Rays of labor” “Əmək işığı”, Gambar Huseynli – “Chickens”

(“Cücələrim”), Agabaji Rzayeva – “Don’t sing, beauty” (“Oxuma gözəl”) and other composers’ works.

These transcriptions and arrangements are divided into two parts: performance pieces and technical exercises.

Regarding Alakbar Asgarov’s transcriptions, Sanubar Bagirova, leading researcher at the Institute of Architecture and Art of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, PhD in Art Studies, and Associate Professor, writes: *“Unfortunately, Alakbar Asgarov’s transcriptions for the balaban shared the same fate as his compositions. He generously distributed his transcriptions among students and colleagues, and over time, his notation became widely circulated and part of the common repertoire. It is no surprise that in 1995, after his passing, many of his transcriptions were compiled by some of his students. Had this book been published in time, our national treasure the balaban would not have been recognized by UNESCO as an Armenian instrument”*.

**The title of section 1.3. is “The Specific Features of the Dügah Instrumental-Folk Ensemble Created by Alakbar Asgarov”.** One of the most important subjects of the presented dissertation is the history and characteristics of the Dugah instrumental-folk ensemble. It should be noted that this ensemble began its activities in 1981 and owes its success to its leader, as well as the innovative and virtuoso performer, Alakbar Asgarov. The idea of creating such a folk ensemble was proposed by him.

For the first time in Azerbaijan, the “Dugah” instrumental-folk ensemble was formed without inviting any singers. At the request of Alakbar Asgarov, the ensemble’s instrumental composition included ancient musical instruments such as the tar, kamancha, oud, saz, zarb, naghara, ganun, zurna, ney, balaban, and tutek. Alakbar Asgarov always treated the opinions of each performer with attention and respect. Tirelessly working on himself, our master artist never repeated himself in musical improvisations and applied this principle to the ensemble’s performance as well.

**Chapter II of the dissertation is titled Alakbar Asgarov’s Reforms on the Balaban, Zurna, and Clarinet**

This chapter consists of three paragraphs and one section.

**The title of section 2.1. Is “The History of the Balaban Instrument and Its Literary Examples”.** For centuries, the delicate and soft sound of the balaban has become an ornament of the musical world of Azerbaijani Turks various folk ceremonies, wedding celebrations, and especially Novruz. It is possible to provide information about the characteristics of many wind instruments, but one of the important issues in the research is the study of the development stages of the balaban instrument. In this paragraph, several literary examples are presented. In one of the most widely spread folk bayatis, the balaban is mentioned as follows:

*“Ezizim, balabanı, (7 syllables)*

*Asta çal, balabanı. (7 syllables)*

*Hamının balası geldi (8 syllables)*

*Bes benim balam hanı?” (7 syllables).*

Based on the research, we observe a syllabic distortion in the third line of the bayati. In our opinion, instead of “*Hamının balası geldi*” (8 syllables), it would be better to say “*Gedenler donub geldi*” (7 syllables) or “*Her kes evine geldi*” (7 syllables), which would restore the proper syllabic structure and rhythm of the poem. Thus, for the first time, attention was drawn to this syllabic inconsistency in the bayati, and the issue was resolved.

**2.1.1. “This section titled Types of Balaban, its Improvement, and the Two-Valved Instrument of Alakbar Asgarov”** traces the early examples and primitive constructions of the balaban instrument made in ancient times, and presents the new types that emerged during later developmental stages.

There is no genre in Azerbaijan’s traditional music where the balaban instrument is not used. It holds a special place in the art of mugham and instrumental dance genres.

This paragraph introduces the two-valved balaban created by Alakbar Asgarov. The sound range of the two-valved balaban, first crafted by him, was extended up to the “mi” note in the second octave. It should be noted that, in certain instances, Alakbar Asgarov would play the pure “mi” note without using his fingers, employing a special technique. This technique was usually used when required, specifically at the end of compositions in the “mi” tonality, where he

would finish the performance by holding the “mi” note with a fermata. With this, Alakbar Asgarov brought new playing possibilities to balaban performance.

**2.2. This section is titled “The Double Zurna Instrument Created by Alakbar Asgarov Based on the Zurna”.** Alakbar Asgarov created the double zurna instrument based on the zurna. In fact, this instrument can be considered one of the types of zurnas. The structure of Alakbar Asgarov's double zurna instrument is as follows.

### **Double Zurna**

Unlike the ordinary zurna, it is made of two tubes:

- Two small double reeds made of cane are attached to the double tube with a string;
- The ring: A circular piece placed on the tube to prevent the player’s lips from slipping. It is made from bone or plastic material;
- The mouthpiece: The collective part of all the aforementioned components (tubes, double reeds, their heads, the ring);
- The clamp: Sometimes called the whistle or beche, this part resembles a two-pronged fork at the bottom, and the upper part of it is inserted about 20 mm into the body;
- The body: Made from apricot wood. The end of the tube is expanded in a bell shape. Further details regarding the double zurna instrument, its dimensions, and other characteristics are presented in more detail in the dissertation.

**2.3. This section is titled “The Structure and Features of the “As” Model Clarinet Created by Alakbar Asgarov”.** For the first time in Azerbaijan, a new “As” tuned clarinet was created by Alakbar Asgarov. The “As” clarinet created by Alakbar Asgarov differs from the European-made “A” and “B” model clarinets in terms of its tuning and dimensions. This difference lies in the length of the instrument’s body, its timbre characteristics, and the application of the keys.

Although many Azerbaijani clarinet performers have tried to achieve Alakbar Asgarov’s timbre by using various playing styles, they have not been able to replicate it because the master’s instrument is based on different tuning and structural modifications. The dissertation presents and compares the “As” tuned instrument



created by Alakbar Asgarov, alongside the European-origin “A” and “B” clarinet models, discussing their dimensional differences.

The overall length and the mouthpiece detail of Alakbar Asgarov’s “As” clarinet are longer compared to the same parts of other instruments. According to the science of organology, the longer the tube of a wind instrument, the deeper the sound it produces. In his new model of the clarinet, Alakbar Asgarov was able to perform not only Azerbaijani national music but also the music of other peoples. For example, the “Bulgarian Dance” performed by him is an example of this.

**Chapter III of the dissertation, titled “Alakbar Asgarov’s Playing Style and Innovative Approaches in His Compositions”** discusses the performer’s unique playing style and the innovative features and approaches found in his various compositions.

**3.1. This section is titled “Alakbar Asgarov’s Performative Features in Azerbaijan’s Dance Art”.** Dance art occupies an important place in Azerbaijani folk creativity. However, despite this, some of the dances have been forgotten and have not survived to the present day.

When we speak of ancient Azerbaijani folk dances, we refer to anonymous melodies composed by past musicians, whose authors remained unknown over the years. As is known, in ancient times, folk artists transmitted our national music orally from generation to generation, so in many cases, ancient songs and dance melodies were forgotten and did not survive to the present day.

The first collection of dance melodies, titled “Azerbaijani Dance Melodies” was published in 1936 by Said Rustamov. Indeed, some research works list the year of publication as 1937, but the collection was actually published one year earlier. A technical error occurred at that time, and the year of publication was not shown. We have a copy of it, where the publication year is noted as 1936. A few months later, in the first months of the following year, the same notography was republished with the year 1937.

This paragraph focuses on the playing features of Alakbar Asgarov in the performance of folk dances, and the musicological analysis of the musical scores of the dance melodies he composed,

such as “Adaleti” (“Ədaləti”), “Mehribani” (“Mehribani”), “Natavani” (“Natəvani”), “Rasimi” (“Rasimi”), “Zohrabi” (“Zöhrabi”), “Kurdu” (“Kürdü”), “Gedim reqs” (“Qədim rəqs”), “Vuqari” (“Vüqari”), “Cavidi” (“Cavidi”), “Metaneti” (“Mətanəti”), “Bakhtiyari” (“Bəxtiyari”), “Marali” (“Maralı”) and “From the mill to the station” (“Dəyirmandan vağzaladək”).

**3.2. This section is titled “Structural Features of the Dances Composed by Alakbar Asgarov”.** The melodies composed by Alakbar Asgarov are some of the rare gems in Azerbaijani dance music. His compositions can be classified as programmatic and thematic music. He not only dedicated dance melodies to specific individuals but also tried to express their inner world through music.

It is worth mentioning that in his compositions, Alakbar Asgarov synthesized Azerbaijan’s traditional maqam system with European scale structures, incorporating variations, free modulations, and sequence transitions. To observe such innovation, let us consider Alakbar Asgarov’s dance “Zohrabi”.

When listening to the “**Zöhrabi**” (“Zohrabi”) melody, it initially seems that this dance is based on the bayati-şiraz maqam and the “Bayati-Shiraz” mugham. However, after analyzing all the maqams and the characteristics of the “Zohrabi” dance, we concluded that this melody is not based on the bayati-shiraz maqam and is rather based on major and minor tonalities typical of European music. We can explain our viewpoint by noting that every maqam change in a dance melody should be reflected in Azerbaijani mugham, as our maqam are built on identical mugham structures. If a melody is composed in the bayati-shiraz maqam, it must strictly adhere to the “Bayati-Shiraz” mugham and its structural reference tones. If we cannot explain any element of a dance melody using the “Bayati-Shiraz” mugham, the idea that it belongs to that maqam is questionable. Similarly, we encounter these elements in the “Zohrabi” dance.

How can this be explained? The musical phrases at the beginning of the dance seem to be based on the bayati-shiraz maqam, but the subsequent phrases of the melody are developed according to the principles of variation. For example, the “Zohrabi” dance melody starts with the “re” tonic (maye) of the bayati-shiraz maqam, but

later, the melody shifts to the “fa” tonic of the rast maqam. As far as we know, there is no section in the “Bayati-Shiraz” mugham that starts with a minor third and shifts to the higher rast maqam. Therefore, it would not be accurate to claim that the “Zohrabi” melody is based purely on the bayati-shiraz maqam. Instead, we can explain that this dance was created using the principles of major and minor scales. The dance starts in the “re” minor tonality and transitions to the parallel “fa” major tonality in the middle. An interesting fact is that these variations are built on sequences, and these tonal sequences gradually descend step by step. The melody, starting from the “fa” note, is repeated by sequence at the “mi” note. Strangely, the sequence repeated at the “mi” note reminds us of the segah maqam with the “mi” tonic. However, as we know, there is no section in the bayati-shiraz maqam based on the segah maqam one tone above the tonic.

For this reason, we can accept that the development of the melody is built upon the principles of tonal sequences and variations. Alakbar Asgarov’s brilliance lies in the fact that, as shown, he composed music in major and minor tonalities typical of European music, but no one notices it, and it is accepted in the same way as our folk maqams. The **“Zohrabi”** dance, which we have discussed, is known by the name **“Sabahi”** (**“Səbahi”**) in some of our regions.

One of the main distinguishing features of Alakbar Asgarov’s melodies is his ability to synthesize mugham modes and European scales based on free modulations. According to the analysis, it can be said that “Zohrabi” is built in the “d-moll” tonality.

The dance melodies composed by the artist differ in their structural characteristics, and each of them forms a programmatic element. In the dissertation, Alakbar Asgarov’s dance melodies are analyzed in a comparative manner with musical notation examples.

The dance melody **“Ədaləti”** (**“Adaleti”**) was composed by Alakbar Asgarov in 1961. The artist dedicated this dance to the birth of his first son, Adalet. The playful structure of “Adaleti” reflects the artist’s joy and emotions. The rhythm of the “Adaleti” dance is in 6/8 time, also known as the **“Üç badam bir qoz”** (**“Uch badam bir goz”**) – [“Three almonds and one walnut”] rhythm in folk language, and it is

written in a Moderato tempo. As is well-known, a significant portion of Azerbaijani dance melodies are composed in this rhythm.

The dance **“Mehribani”** (“Mehribani”) was composed by Alakbar Asgarov in 1967, dedicated to the birthday of his daughter Mehriban. The work is written in 6/8 time and Allegretto tempo. In terms of melody, this dance is based on the “sol” maye shur mode. In certain parts of the piece, specifically in measures 43-44, the intonations of the “Segah” mugham can be heard.

The dance melody **“Natəvani”** (“Natavani”) was composed by Alakbar Asgarov in 1977, related to the birthday of his daughter Natəvan. When studying “Natavani” the first noticeable features are the sixteenth-note figurations and mordent symbols. The artist’s daughter is the only curly-haired member of the family, and this distinction is reflected in the structure of the melodic phrases. This dance melody is written in 6/8 time and Allegretto tempo. From start to finish, the melody is based on the “re” minor bayati-shiraz mode, with no modulation or changes in tonality throughout the piece. In the middle section of the dance, there are several small sequences.

The dance melody **“Cavidi”** (“Cavidi”) is composed in Moderato tempo and 6/8 time signature. As with Alakbar Asgarov’s other dances, it begins with an eighth-note pause, characteristic of wind instrument performance. The melody is based on the “fa” maye rast mode, and then, in measures 17-24, it modulates to the “re” maye shur mode. This phenomenon can be observed in Azerbaijani folk music, where it is based on the small-scale “Zemin-Khara” mugham. Although the melody begins with the rast mode, it evolves and concludes in the shur mode, following a minor third interval.

The dance melody **“Vüqarı”** (“Vugari”) is composed in 6/8 time signature and begins with an eighth-note pause. The melody is entirely written in Andante tempo and is based on the “re” maye bayati-shiraz mode. Alakbar Asgarov uses possible alteration marks in this melody, and the dotted notes in the melodic line create a distinctive character in the dance, characteristic of the clarinet.

The dance melody **“Rasimi”** (“Rasimi”) is dedicated to Alakbar Asgarov’s brother-in-law, Rasim Bayramov, a well-known scholar and associate professor at the Azerbaijan University of

Architecture and Construction. The lively discussions and cheerful conversations between the brothers-in-law are reflected in the melody of this dance. The piece is composed in 6/8 time signature, Allegro con brio tempo, and begins with the typical pause found in Asgarov's other dance works. The melody is based on the "re" maye bayati-shiraz mode.

The melody of "**Gədim rəqs**" ("Gedim regs") – ["Ancient dance"] was created spontaneously during a folk celebration. The piece is written in 6/8 time signature, Moderato tempo, and is based on the "sol" maye segah mode ("Hashim Segah"), which reflects the intonations of the "Segah" mugham.

The dance "**Bəxtiyari**" ("Bakhtiari") is composed in 6/8 time signature, Allegretto tempo, and is based on the "sol" maye bayati-shiraz mode. There are no modulations or changes to other tonalities in the piece.

The "**Kürdü**" ("Kurdu") dance begins with the "fa" maye rast mode, then shifts to the "re" maye shur mode in the middle section. The melody is written in Allegretto tempo and 6/8 time signature. Later, the melody moves from the "re" maye shur mode to the "mi" maye segah mode. The relationships between these three modes were explored in the scholarly works of musicologist Mammadsaleh İsmayılov, who discussed the connection between the a "fa" maye rast, "re" maye shur, and "mi" maye segah modes.

The dance "**Mətanəti**" ("Metaneti") was composed by Alakbar Asgarov for his niece Metanet, the daughter of his older brother Ali. The melody is in 6/8 time signature, Allegretto tempo, and is based on the "lya" maye bayati-shiraz mode. There are no modulations or changes to other modes in this piece, but the intonations are well-suited to the clarinet's performance capabilities.

The dance "**Marali**" ("Marali") is composed in 6/8 time signature, Moderato tempo, and is based on the "re" maye shushter mode. Alakbar Asgarov has paid special attention to innovative styles in his performance creativity, and this can also be seen in his other dance works. In "Marali" he employs sequence transitions as well.

The dance “**Dəyirmandan vağzaladək**” (“Deyirmandan vagzaladek”) – [“At the mill to the station”] was first performed by Alakbar Asgarov during a folk celebration. The melody has an interesting history. The father of the groom asked Alakbar Asgarov to perform a lively new melody at the wedding ceremony. The melody would accompany the journey from the groom’s neighborhood in the mill area of Baku to the bride’s home near the railway station.

Alakbar Asgarov, after playing a rhythmic drum rhythm, created a rhythmic melody based on the shushter mode. Today, Alakbar Asgarov’s “Deyirmandan vagzaladek” is beloved and often performed by other musicians at weddings.

**3.3. “Alakbar Asgarov’s Playing Style in Mugham Performance and the Compositions He Created”** is the title. Based on numerous written and reliable sources, it can be confidently said that Alakbar Asgarov was one of the deep connoisseurs of Azerbaijani folk art and mugham music. Each instrumental mugham he performed on wind instruments such as the clarinet, balaban, zurna, ney, and tütək carries a philosophical essence, taking the listener to the deeper layers of history. In these performances, there is both joy and sorrow. It is not accidental that during the tragic January 20 events, when our people faced some of their most sorrowful days, many broadcasts reflecting the national spirit were prepared on Azerbaijani television and radio. During this time, Alakbar Asgarov’s performances of mughams like “Humayun”, “Zemin-Khara”, “Segah” and “Shushter” were broadcasted. These performances seemed to call out for every martyr who gave their life for the homeland.

Alakbar Asgarov’s performances on the clarinet – “Bayati-Shiraz”, “Bayati-Kurd”, “Rast”, “Shur”, “Mahur”, “Humayun”, “Choban Bayati”, “Zemin-Khara”, “Mirze Huseyn Segah”, “Chahargah”, “Segah” on the balaban – “Rast”, “Shur”, “Dugah” on the tutek – “Shushter” on the ney – “Dugah” can be listened to on the YouTube platform.

The purpose of the dissertation is not to analyze the mughams individually, but the “Dugah” mugham is discussed in some detail in the research. The main reason for this is that this mugham had gradually been forgotten, as it was not included in the educational

curriculum. Alakbar Asgarov created the Dugah instrumental-folk ensemble and, by frequently performing with this collective on television, he sounded the “alarm bell” for the preservation and promotion of this mugham.

As it is known, the Dugah mugham was included in the first teaching program compiled by Üzeyir bey Hacıbeyli on May 9, 1925. However, for reasons unknown to us, the Dugah mugham was later removed from the teaching programs.

The instrumental-folklore ensemble created by Alakbar Asgarov regularly performed and presented the “Dugah” mugham, which he composed, in various concerts and broadcasts since 1981. By doing so, he brought the once-forgotten “Dugah” mugham back into the spotlight. As a result, the “Dugah” mugham was reintroduced into teaching programs.

In this paragraph of the research work, the sheet music examples of the “Dügah”, “Bayati-Shiraz” and “Shur” reng composed by Alakbar Asgarov are presented. The transformation of Alakbar Asgarov’s shushter maqam diringi into a song is also discussed. The song “Naz etme” with music by Alakbar Asgarov and lyrics by Tahir Ravan, is examined based on the sheet music.

In the **Conclusion** section of the dissertation, the findings of the research are summarized. The completed dissertation titled “The Role of Alakbar Asgarov in the Performance of Azerbaijani Wind Instruments” presents the final results.

In the **Introduction** section of the dissertation, the relevance of the topic and the degree of research are discussed, the scientific novelty is justified, the object and subject of the research, as well as the purpose and objectives, are clarified. The methods of the research, its theoretical and practical significance are explained, and the main propositions defended are presented in a systematic manner. Detailed and clear information is provided about the dissertation’s approbation and implementation, its structure, and the total volume of its sections (with clear indications).

– In the first chapter, the life and creative activities of Alakbar Asgarov are examined. Here, the creative path of the performer, who enriched Azerbaijani music culture with his mysterious melodies, his

long-term pedagogical activities, the balaban school, as well as the history of the repertoire prepared by Alakbar Asgarov for teaching, are presented. Additionally, the specific characteristics of the Dugah instrumental-folklore ensemble, which he led and created, and its distinctive features compared to other ensembles are discussed.

– The second chapter covers the history of the creation, development stages, and improvement of the wind instruments balaban, zurna, and clarinet, along with their various types presented through poetic examples. The structural characteristics of the two-reed balaban, “As”-rooted clarinet, and double-zurna instruments, created by Alakbar Asgarov, are emphasized.

– In the third chapter, the folk dances and the unique improvisations of Alakbar Asgarov in national dance performance are discussed. The folk melodies performed by him on the balaban, zurna, and clarinet are reviewed, highlighting his distinctive playing style and the timbre differences of the instruments he played. Alakbar Asgarov’s improvised performances on folk melodies such as “Uzundere” (balaban), “Vaghzalı” (clarinet), “Gazaghi” (clarinet), and “Terekeme” (clarinet) are considered gems of Azerbaijani cultural heritage. This chapter also analyzes the dance melodies composed by Alakbar Asgarov, explaining their structural features. In Alakbar Asgarov’s multifaceted creativity, mugham performance, composed diringis, and instrumental colors hold a special place.

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