



Research Article

Multidimensional analysis of the tar in Azerbaijani music folklore

Nihad Qedirli¹

Faculty of Instrumental Performance, Folk Instruments (Tar), Azerbaijan National Conservatory, Baku, Azerbaijan

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Abstract

The tar, as a musical instrument, is integrated with Azerbaijani music folklore. To understand the tar's position in music folklore, a multidimensional perspective is required. The tar's place in Azerbaijani culture should be examined from multiple angles, including notable performers and its representation in poetry and literature. This research was conducted using document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods. Accordingly, academic studies on the tar in Azerbaijan were analyzed in this study. Selected documents are A. Najafzadeh' Methodology of Teaching Folk Instruments, Mammadov' Works of Azerbaijani and Foreign Composers (Arranged for Tar and Piano by Aflaruz Mammadov), Mushfiq' Excerpt from the Poem "Oxu tar", Amirov's "Muğamsayağı" a small fragment. I would like to summarize our discussion on the tar, one of the most significant national instruments in Azerbaijani music culture. In this scientific article, we have touched upon certain topics regarding prominent Azerbaijani musicologists such as Safiaddin Urmavi, Mir Mohsun Navvab, and Abdolqadir Maragayi. The works of classical Azerbaijani composers like Uzeyir Hajibeyov, Fikret Amirov, Gara Garayev, and others have also been elaborated upon. The research activities of several contributors from the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, such as A. Mammadov, M. Mammadov, R. Azizov, A. Najafzade, and others, have been included in this article.

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Introduction

The numerous stringed musical instruments that have had an invaluable historical significance in the development of Azerbaijani musical culture have gradually evolved over time, influencing the emergence of modern musical instruments and surviving to this day. Azerbaijani folk music, with a centuries-old history, is extremely rich and diverse. It is impossible to imagine folk music without the tar, kamancha, and daf (Abdullayeva, 2014). Throughout history, songs loved by the people, dance melodies, ashug music, and mugams have been closely related to the people's lives, daily routines, work, and labor, playing an essential and decisive role in their daily productivity. Before the great musician Ü.Hajibeyli, Azerbaijani music had been studied by many scholars. Azerbaijani musicologists such as Safi al-Din Urmavi, Mir Mohsun Navvab, and Abd al-Qadir Maraghi transferred Azerbaijani music onto paper using various charts, notes, and other methods. Many treatises and tracts about music were thus created and have been preserved in history.

One of the efforts in transcribing, researching, and publishing Azerbaijani folk music was the establishment of the Scientific Research Music Cabinet under the Azerbaijan State Conservatory in 1932. In the early years of the 20th century, the notation of musical pieces and texts had already begun. Through this scientific center, expeditions were organized to different regions and districts of the republic. For this purpose, several Azerbaijani composers who distinguished themselves with their talent at the time—such as Asaf Zeynalli, Gara Garayev, Fikret Amirov, Jovdat Hajiyev, Said Rustamov, Tofiq Guliyev, and Zakir Bagirov—visited the Karabakh region, Lankaran, Khachmaz, Guba,

¹ Master's student, Faculty of Instrumental Performance, Folk Instruments (Tar), Azerbaijan National Conservatory, Baku, Azerbaijan. Email: nihad.qedirli923@gmail.com ORCID: 0009-0001-6598-2741

Gusar, Dilijan, Borchali, and other districts, collecting a significant amount of material. Their work also involved collecting folk music samples through technical audio recording methods with the participation of experienced performers. The compilation of "50 Azerbaijani Folk Songs," which was related to the collection of folk music, played a significant role in the study and dissemination of Azerbaijani folk songs. With its help, music enthusiasts, especially the youth, have understood the beauty and richness of Azerbaijani folk creativity for many years. The compilation still retains its relevance, and the songs within it continue to be popular among the general public. In fact, the compositions notated by Said Rustamov, including "Azerbaijani Folk Songs," "Azerbaijani Folk Dance Melodies," "Azerbaijani Ashug Melodies," and "Azerbaijani Folk Rengs," have played a significant role in the study and documentation of Azerbaijani musical heritage (Isazade, 2005).

The tar is a traditional Azerbaijani folk instrument. Mugams are accompanied by the performance of the tar. After graduating from music school, students who complete the music technicum and the Conservatory receive excellent tar master education and step onto the stage. The tar school in Azerbaijan has already reached a high stage of development. The creators of the tar school—Mirza Sadigjan, Mashadi Zeynal, Mashadi Jamil Amirov, Shirin Akhundov, Mirza Faraj, Gurban Pirimov, Mirza Mansur Mansurov, Ahmed Bakikhanov, Behram Mansurov, Haji Mammadov, Ahsan Dadashov, Habib Bayramov, and other excellent tar masters—have performed virtuoso renditions on the world stage.

Ramiz Hasanov, a teacher at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, writes in his research: 'In tar performance, tar players with a unique creative imagination have used various plectrum techniques to emphasize certain parts of the music (mugham), in accordance with the complex playing style and character of mugham. These techniques include "Chahar mizrab", "Alif mizrab", "Santur mizrab", "Rukh mizrab", "Qosha mizrab", "Chirtig mizrab", "Mizrabi-dastgari", "Mizrabi-zirefkand", "Mizrabi-gulriz", "Zangi-shutur", "Tarsi", and "Hal-mizrab". In addition, master tar players employ performance techniques such as "silent finger", "sliding finger" (glissando), string pulling (vibration), and "playing without a plectrum.'" (Hasanov R, 2016). Thus, among Azerbaijani folk musical instruments, the tar holds an important place. It is an ancient musical instrument played with a plectrum. Having undergone the most reforms, the modern Azerbaijani tar, with its unique capabilities, can beautifully and adequately perform both European and Eastern music and continues to be subject to various experiments and reconstructive changes even today. If, as mentioned earlier, this instrument has undergone changes over time and is now at the peak of its development, what then is the reason for ongoing experiments and reforms? (Anatolluoglu, 2017).

It is impossible to imagine Azerbaijani mugham without the tar. (Figure 1) In his scientific article titled 'The Tar, One of the Gems of the Azerbaijani People,' Ramiz Azizov, an honored teacher at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, provides an explanation about the tar musical instrument: - quote "There are many theories regarding the origin of the tar. In his work "Theater and Dance in Iran," Iranian theater historian Majid Rezvani (1900-1962) wrote conflicting opinions [pp. 244-285]. It should be noted that this work was translated from French into Russian by Tamara Semyonovna Vyzgo (1960-1998), an Honored Art Worker of Uzbekistan and Doctor of Art Studies. In that work, it is claimed that the tar was supposedly brought to the Caucasus from Iran by a musician named Ali Shirazi a hundred years ago, in the 19th century. This raises several questions: Was there no tar performance in Azerbaijan before Ali from Shiraz? If this is true, i.e., if the tar was brought to Azerbaijan in the 19th century, then what tar were Azerbaijan's classical poets of the Middle Ages—such as Qatran Tabrizi (1012-1088), Khagani Shirvani (1120-1199), Nizami Ganjavi (1141-1209), Assar Tabrizi (1325-1390), Muhammad Fuzuli (1494-1556), Qovsi Tabrizi (1568-1640), Ruknaddin Masud Masihi (1580-1656), and Saib Tabrizi (1601-1676)—referring to in their works? – end of quote' (Azizov, R, 2021) (Rezvani, 1960).

According to research from various sources, it appears that the tar was first created in the 10th century by Muhammad, the son of Tarhan, from the Turkmen of Farab village in the city of Jarcho. In the second half of the 19th century, Azerbaijani tar player Mirza Sadig (Sadigjan) made changes to the structure and form of the tar. He also changed the way the tar was held, raising it from the lap to the chest. The Azerbaijani tar, which he improved, became widely popular in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The tar mainly consists of three parts: the body, the neck, and the head, where the tuning pegs are located. The modernization of the tar has played a significant role in the development of mugham.

As a result, the tar has not only remained an accompanying instrument but has also become a solo performance instrument.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to examine the place of the tar, an important musical instrument in Azerbaijani music, within Azerbaijani music folklore.

Method

This research was conducted using document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods. Accordingly, academic studies on the tar in Azerbaijan were analyzed in this study.

Documents

Selected documents are Methodology of Teaching Folk Instruments (Najafzadeh, 2007), Works of Azerbaijani and Foreign Composers (Arranged for Tar and Piano by Aflaruz Mammadov) (Mammadov, 2021), Excerpt from the Poem "Oxu tar" (Mushfiq, 1933), "Muğamsayağı" a small fragment (Amirov, 1965).

Findings

This section examines the origin of the tar, which holds an important place in Azerbaijani national folklore, individuals who have worked on the tar, performers in this field, and the organological characteristics of the tar.

Organological structures of Tar

In the article I presented, certain details about the structure of the tar instrument have been provided. Accordingly, the length of the body of the tar instrument is 290x1.47mm. The length of the neck is 426.3mm, the scale (from one fret to another) is 6.66mm, the length of the larger bowl is 185mm, the width of the mouth section of the larger bowl is 150mm, the width of the larger bowl is 205mm, the smaller bowl is 180mm, the length of the smaller bowl is 105mm, the width of the smaller bowl is 133mm, and the height of the bowl is 160mm. The length of the head is 110mm, the width of the head is 32mm, and the height of the head is 86mm. The width of the neck at the bowl section is 45mm, and its height is 42mm; at the head section, the width is 34mm, and the height is 28mm. The diameter of the tuning pegs at the base is 31mm, the diameter of the tuning peg cones is 10-9mm, and the cones of the smaller tuning pegs are 8.5-7.5mm. For this purpose, I have provided a diagram of the structure of the tar instrument for your reference.

Table 1. Structures of Tar instrument

1	Length of the bowl	290x1.47mm
2	Length of the neck	426.3mm
3	Scale (from one fret to another)	6.66mm
4	Length of the larger bowl	185mm
5	Width of the mouth section of the larger bowl	150mm
6	Width of the larger bowl	133mm
7	Height of the bowl	105mm
8	Width of the smaller bowl	133mm
9	Height of the smaller bowl	160mm
10	Length of the head	110mm
11	Width of the head	32mm
12	Height of the head	86mm
13	Width of the neck at the bowl section	45mm
14	Height of the neck at the bowl section	42mm
15	Width of the neck at the head section	34mm
16	Height of the neck at the head section	28mm
17	Diameter of the tuning pegs at the base	31mm
18	Diameter of the tuning peg cones	10-9mm
19	Cones of the smaller tuning pegs	8.5-7.5mm

The photos related to the appearance and parts of the tar (Photos 1-7) were taken from the author's personal archive.



Photo 1. General View of the Tar



Photo 2. Neck, Head, and Frets of the Tar



Photo 3. Tuning Pegs



Photo 4. Tuning Pegs



Photo 5. Front View of the Tar



Photo 6. Upper Section - Small Bowl



Photo 7. Side View of the Tar

Tar Performers in Azerbaijan

The head of the “Scientific Research Laboratory for the Improvement of National Musical Instruments” at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, Mammadali Mammadov, has scientifically determined the measurement systems of the tar musical instrument. He has developed a system for the structure of the tar through mathematical methods using diagrams and graphs. Mammadov has presented the classification of various tar instruments in his scientific research. He has precisely determined the measurements of the tar's body, neck, and other parts. In his scientific articles, Mammadov states that he carried out this work in consultation with many tar teachers from the Azerbaijan National Conservatory (Agaselim Abdullayev, Mohlät Muslimov, Firuz Aliyev, Ramiz Guliyev, and others), tar masters (Master Musa Yagubov, Master Aydin, Master Mazahir Hasanov, and others), as well as experts in other fields. (Mammadov, 2016)



Photo 8. Azerbaijan National Conservatory



Photo 9. Azerbaijani National Musical Instrument
– Tar (Web1)



Photo 10. Azerbaijani Folk Musical Instruments
(Web2)

The great Azerbaijani composer and founder of national music in the Near East, Ü. Hajibeyli, made notes about the tar among other folk musical instruments (Photo 2) in his scientific article titled 'A Glance at Azerbaijani Musical Life.' Regarding this, he stated: 'The bass sounds of the tar are very soft and touching. The tar is likely the primary instrument.' (Hajibeyli, 2008)

Honored teacher at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, master artist, and my teacher (P.S. N. Qedirli), Eflaruz Mammadov, created the textbook titled 'Works of Azerbaijani Composers' (Adapted Pieces for Tar and Piano) for the tar class in secondary specialized and music schools. (Mammadov, 2014). This textbook includes piano arrangements of F. Amirov's 'In the Style of Mugham,' R. Hajiyev's 'Song about Baku,' N. Aliverdibeyov's 'Elegy,' S. Alaskarov's 'Shalakho,' and other works. The notation work for the tar in Azerbaijan falls on many tar masters, as it is the duty of each tar teacher to carry out this task with dignity. We would like to present a piece from Eflaruz Mammadov's tar arrangement for your attention.

Muğamsayağı

Andante maestoso F. Əmirov

The musical score is for a piece titled 'Muğamsayağı' by F. Əmirov, arranged for Tar and Piano. The tempo is 'Andante maestoso'. The Tar part is in the upper staff, and the Piano part is in the lower staff. The score is in 2/4 time, key of B-flat major. The Piano part includes dynamic markings: *mp*, *mf*, *pp*, *cresc.*, and *f*. The Tar part includes a 3/8 time signature in the first measure.

Figure 2. Eflaruz Mammadov. Arrangement for Tar (Mammadov, 2014)

The Tar Instrument in Chronological Aspect

Professor A. Najafzadeh, an expert in national musical instruments, writes in his textbook 'The Teaching Methodology of Folk Instruments' (Najafzadeh, 2007): 'The tar is a stringed musical masterpiece played with a plectrum. In his book "Azerbaijani Folk Musicians," the renowned music researcher Firudin Shushinski (1925-1997) writes about the origin of the tar, citing the "Yeni Yol"² newspaper (1929, No. 15): 'Based on reliable historical documents, it can be said that the tar was crafted in the 10th century by Muhammad, the son of Tarkhan, a Turk from Turkmenistan, in the village of Farab in the city of Jarcho.'

Muhammad, the son of Tarkhan, is Abu Nasir Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Uzlugh ibn Tarkhan al-Farabi (approx. 865/873-950)³, a great thinker, scholar, and musicologist of Khurasani Turkish origin. It should be noted that in Iran, 'Turk' refers to Azerbaijanis, while other Turkic peoples are referred to by their specific names (e.g., Uzbek, Turkmen, Kazakh, etc.). Therefore, al-Farabi, born in the village of Farab in Hamadan, Iran, is ethnically an Azerbaijani Turk.

In al-Farabi's 'Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir,' published in Iran in 1996, it is mentioned that his ancestors migrated from the city of Ardabil to Khurasan.

²F. Shushinski, 'Azerbaijani Folk Musicians,' Baku, 'Yazichi,' 1985, p. 65"

³ Otanazar Matyakubov, 'Farabi on the Fundamentals of Eastern Music,' Tashkent, 'Fan,' 1986, p. 6 (in Russian)

Audio recordings play a significant role in mastering the art of mugham, considered the masterpiece of our national music, and in passing it on to future generations. Recordings from different years, reflecting various interpretations of performance, allow us to trace the history of mugham's development. This tradition continues today, as the performances of mugham artists are recorded on audio and video tapes and uploaded to internet pages using modern technologies. All these efforts expand the audience of mugham performers and increase the number of mugham art enthusiasts among world nations.' (Mammadov, 2021)

Many scientific articles and scholarly works have been written about the tar, considered the crown jewel of our national music. In the history of Azerbaijan's musical culture, the names of many tar players and master artists who performed on the tar are etched in golden letters.



Photo 11. Mirza Mansur Mansurov (Web 4)



Photo12. Mirza Sadigjan with His Ensemble (Web 5)

When talking about tar performance, the name of the famous Azerbaijani tar player Gurban Pirimov should be among the first mentioned. He made significant contributions to the development of the Azerbaijani tar school. Over the years, tar players and master artists have developed the performance of the tar, bringing it to the present day and expressing themselves through this exquisite instrument.

Behram Mansurov is one of the prominent figures in the development of 20th-century tar performance. Seeking to combine classical and modern playing styles, Behram Mansurov followed in the footsteps of Sadigjan, Gurban Pirimov, and Mirza Mansur. Closely connected to the Azerbaijani mugham school, Behram Mansurov made his own contributions to the mugham genre. He used special plectrum techniques, such as 'Chahar,' 'Dastkari,' 'Sazkari,' 'Alif,' 'Gulriz,' and so on. Behram Mansurov also skillfully utilized various playing techniques such as 'sliding finger,' 'silent finger,' 'ostinato style sound,' and 'Angushkari' (Alakbarov, 2023).

Sadigjan was another master artist who had a deep understanding of the Azerbaijani tar and improved it. He introduced some innovations to Azerbaijani mughams, adding the 'Zabul' fret to the tar neck by developing the 'Segah' and enhancing the 'Mahur.' Sadigjan also composed several rengs (a genre of instrumental music in Azerbaijan's professional oral tradition) for the mughams 'Orta Segah' and 'Bayati Shiraz' (Gajar, 1995).

The 'Kavkazskoye obozreniye' ('Caucasus Review') newspaper wrote the following about Sadigjan: 'His performance is clear, his artistic skill is precise, and enchantingly powerful. It would be beneficial if our composers in Tbilisi could make use of Sadig's visit here by learning Eastern motifs from him, which could serve as material for new compositions.' (Gajar, 1995).



Photo 13. Behram Mansurov (center) (Web 6)



Photo 14. Gurban Pirimov (Web 7)



Photo 15. Sadigjan (Web 8)



Photo 16. Azerbaijani Musical Instruments (Web 9)

Artists have contributed to the development of Azerbaijani tar art over time, and they continue to do so. Regarding the Kamil Ahmadov school of tar, M. Asadullayev, a teacher at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, writes: *'The special arrangement of the lower strings on the tar allows for the formation of the chord system related to mugham. Sadigjan's tar has 7 main strings, a total of 11 strings, and 9 frets. Later, certain changes were made to the tar, and one of those who made modifications in recent times was Kamil Ahmadov. The diverse nature of our music is proven by the fact that it includes examples from all over the Eastern world. Our mughams are performed within a system of 17-19 frets. The tar embodies universal music; it is not only an instrument of Azerbaijani music but also a gateway to music worldwide and to Eastern music. If the mode is played correctly, mugham can be improvised in any desired way. Mugham allows for endless improvisation. Within certain modal limits, it is possible to conclude the mugham in any form. Teacher Kamil explained all these subtleties to his students. He worked hard for the development of tar performance.'* (Asadullayev, 2011)



Photo 17. Tar Player K. Ahmadov (Web 10)

In his scientific research 'A Glance at Azerbaijani Tar Performance in the 19th and 20th Centuries,' Associate Professor Alekber Alekberov of the National Conservatory notes: *'The 19th century is considered a new phase in tar performance in Azerbaijani musical culture. The city of Shusha was particularly active in this regard. The August 8, 1945 issue of the "Kommunist" newspaper states: "In the 19th century in Shusha, there were 95 poets and writers, 22 musicologists, 38 singers, 12 nussabands (calligraphers), 16 painters, 18 architects, 5 astronomers, 16 doctors, and about 40 teachers, among others."* It is not surprising that the skills of performers active in Shusha attracted the attention of musicians, writers, and travelers from Russia and Western European countries. The prominent musicologist V. Vinogradov, in his book 'Uzeyir and Azerbaijani Music,' describes Shusha, considered the conservatory of the Caucasus, and its musical life: *'Shusha musicians created the history of Azerbaijani music and represented it not only in their homeland but also in other Eastern countries.'* (Alekberov, 2023)

The famous 19th-century Turkish musicologist Rauf Yekta Bey (Photo 18), in his article 'Music in the Caucasus,' based on information he received from Meshedi Jamil Amirov (Photo 19), writes: *'While the tar brought by Ali Shirazi from Iran had only five strings, Sadigjan created an 18-string tar and always played with it throughout his life. However, the tar played today is the same as the one played by Jamil Amirov, with the only difference being that it has 13 strings.'* (Khaliqi, 1955)



Photo 18. Rauf Yekta Bey and his Ensemble (Web 11)



Photo 19. Meshedi Jamil Amirov (Web 12)

There are various and numerous sources about the structure of the tar musical instrument, its evolution, and its functions. In his monograph 'The Azerbaijani Tar,' the late Azerbaijani musicologist Professor Vagif Abdugasimov explains the opinions of French professor and tar virtuoso Jean During: 'The tar, which is closer to the rubabs and has harmonious strings, has always existed in the Caucasus and was brought to Iran from there at the end of the 18th century. (Abdugasimov, 1989).

American scholar Ella Zonis, who studied Persian music in Iran for a long time, notes in her book 'Classical Persian Music' that the tar was brought to Iran from the Caucasus, specifically from Azerbaijan. (Ella Zonis, 1973). Some of Ella Zonis's views are not confirmed by the methodology of today's tar musical instrument. She claimed that the sixth string was added to the tar by the Iranian tar player Darvishkhan (1872-1925), who supposedly paired the fifth string (the root string) with an additional white string. However, according to Professor A. Najafzadeh's research, this is incorrect. The scholar emphasizes that Mirza Sadig Asadoglu (1846-1902), considered the 'father' of the modern Azerbaijani tar, added six more strings to the tar as early as 1870-1875. He also paired the root string, which produces the C note of the small octave, with a white string during those years. Darvishkhan was not even born when Sadigjan began his reforms on the tar. Since Darvishkhan frequently performed at concerts and weddings in Baku and Tbilisi with the Azerbaijani singer Abulhasankhan Azer from Tabriz (1871-1970) at the beginning of the 20th century, he was undoubtedly aware of Sadigjan's tar reforms. It appears that he paired the root string of the 'ancient tar' with a white string on his tar, and later, other Iranian tar players also adopted this innovation. American researcher E. Zonis was mistakenly informed that Darvishkhan was the author of this innovation.' (Najafzadeh, 2007).

Let's return to the works of Mammadali Mammadov. Mammadov has constructed a complete blueprint of the professional tar and classified its parts. He writes that by using the measurements obtained from the professional tar, he was able to derive the coefficients. This can be seen in the following Figure 2.

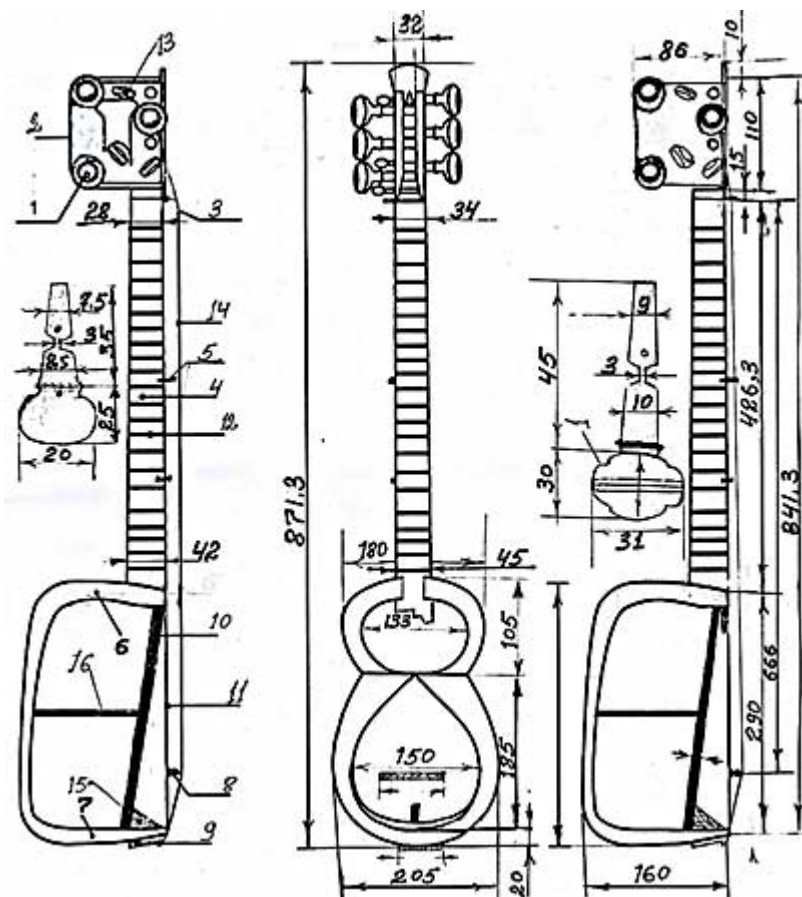


Figure 2. Jean During, 'Traditions and Evolution of Iranian Music,' Paris, 1984, p. 47 (in French)

The researcher who created the blueprints, coefficients, and diagrams of the Azerbaijani tar and some other musical instruments explained the names and measurements of the parts of the professional tar in his scientific article. He writes:

*'After obtaining these coefficients, we can create the tar family using the scale length and string diameters. The tar family

includes: Bass Tar, Contra Tar, Electro Chord Tar. Based on size, the tar has three types: 4/4 tar (professional tar), 3/4 tar (designed for students aged 12-15), and 1/2 tar (designed for students aged 9-12).' (Mammadov, 2016).

In Azerbaijani music, the term 'mugham' simultaneously refers to mode, melody, and genre categories. In the treatise of Abd al-Qadir Maraghi, a prominent 14th-century Azerbaijani music theorist, performer, and composer, the term 'mode' is applied in relation to the 12 main modes (Busalik, Navva, Ushshaq, Rast, Iraq, Isfahan, Zirafkand, Bozorg, Rahavi, Huseyni, and Hijaz), which were widespread in medieval Near and Middle Eastern music. Currently, in Azerbaijani music, not only the seven main modes (Rast, Shur, Segah, Chahargah, Bayati-Shiraz, Humayun, Shushtar) but also numerous tonal variants (Mahur, Dugah, Bayati-Qajar, Kharij Segah, Orta Segah, Mirza Huseyn Segah, Yetim Segah, etc.) are referred to as mugham. In a broader sense, the term mugham also applies to the sections of the main modes, reflecting them as modes in general. These observations are noted by musicologist and associate professor of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Kasimi S., in his monograph 'Periods of Cultural Development in Azerbaijan.' In this three-part book, the author discusses mugham and folk music. (Kasimi, 2019). He writes: *'Currently, there are intangible cultural heritage elements belonging to Azerbaijan on the "Intangible Cultural Heritage" list. These include Azerbaijani Mugham (2008), Novruz Bayram (2009), Azerbaijani Ashug Art (2009), and the making and performance of the Tar musical instrument (2012).' (Kasimi, 2019).

As seen, both the making and performance of the Azerbaijani tar musical instrument have been included in UNESCO's "Intangible Cultural Heritage" list.

The Tar in Lyricism

It is well known that from the early 20th century, the Russian Empire took a chauvinistic approach to the culture, art, traditions, religion, language, etc., of other countries. The immortal Azerbaijani poet Mikayil Mushfig wrote about the tar during the era of repression. It is known that one of the harmful campaigns of the 'proletarian culture' propagandists in the first decade after the Great October Socialist Revolution was directed against ancient works of art and national musical instruments. The tar also fell victim to the proletariat, and its prohibition was announced. The tar was not to be played, and its sound was not to be heard. During these difficult times, the ill-fated artist and one of the victims of the repressive era, Mikayil Mushfig, wrote the poem 'Sing, Tar.' Shortly afterward, poems with themes like 'Don't Play, Tar' and 'Down with the Tar' were published in the press. At the time, 21-22-year-old Mushfig experienced a lyrical excitement for the poem 'Tar.' The temporary success of opponents of the tar, kamancha, and daf in society deeply disturbed and angered Mushfig. In the poem created under the influence of this social event, we observe the poet's worldview, his understanding of the world, and, ultimately, the lyrical embodiment of his perspective, which was labeled 'weak' and 'passive' by ill-wishers. (Mushfig, 2010).



Photo 20. Mikayil Mushfig (Children's Knowledge Portal) (Web 14)

Azerbaijany Language

Oxu, tar, oxu, tar!..
 Səsindən ən lətif şeirlər dinləyim.
 Oxu, tar, bir qadar!..
 Nəğməni su kimi alısan ruhuma çiləyim.
 Oxu, tar!
 Səni kim unudar?

English Language

Sing, tar, sing, tar!..
listen to the finest poems from your sound.
 Sing, tar, a little more!..
Sprinkle your melody onto my burning soul.
 Sing, tar!
Who could forget you?

The poet's deep sincerity toward his subject, convincing the reader that the tar and the people are like "one soul in two hearts," also unites him with this harmony of "one soul.":

Azerbaijany Language

Qüssəməiz ölmədi,
 Xalqımız güləmədi.
 Ağladıq, daima ağladıq,
 Ey qədim aşına, ağladıq

English Language

Our sorrow did not die,
Our people did not smile.
We cried, we always cried,
Oh ancient friend, we cried.

The poem 'Sing, Tar,' boldly written by the 20-year-old Mikayil Mushfig, is inscribed in golden letters in Azerbaijani poetry. The bitter fate of the tar in the 1930s was etched into eternal hearts through the pen of the ill-fated poet, who was killed during this period.

However, we can confidently say that the tar, which has traveled a difficult path, has now reached its highest peak in modern times. The tar, which is the leading instrument of our culture, art, and music, is a beloved instrument that is listened to with great affection by everyone who loves their homeland.

Finally, we would like to note that there have been significant advances in the development of music in Azerbaijan in recent times. As in other fields, the turnaround in musical culture is directly associated with President, Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, and his wife, Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva. Mugham competitions in Azerbaijan, the favorable conditions created for the improvement of various musical instruments, scientific research centers, and laboratories are proof of this.

Conclusion

The purpose of writing this article is to widely introduce the tar, the most important instrument among the musical instruments we have researched, and a national folk instrument of the Azerbaijani people, to the public and to shed light on the efforts to improve it. Many scholars and various writers have shared their thoughts, research, and studies about the tar. There are encyclopedic studies in the history of Azerbaijani music on how the tar has developed and reached its present perfect form through various improvements over time. Most of the sources referenced in our scientific article are fundamental sources. In our scientific article, titled "The Evolution Path of the Azerbaijani Folk Instrument Tar," numerous aspects of the tar have been addressed. Collaborative efforts with the teaching staff of the Folk Instruments Department of the Azerbaijan National Conservatory have contributed to the research and improvement of many national musical instruments. We believe that the scientific studies presented about national musical instruments are not sufficient; the more these works are written, the more they bring new contributions to the Azerbaijani people. The new and refined musical scores of the tar, the king of Azerbaijani instruments, serve as essential resources for tar performers.

In conclusion, we would like to summarize our discussion on the tar, one of the most significant national instruments in Azerbaijani music culture. In this scientific article, we have touched upon certain topics regarding prominent Azerbaijani musicologists such as Safiaddin Urmavi, Mir Mohsun Navvab, and Abdulqadir Maragayi. The works of classical Azerbaijani composers like Uzeyir Hajibeyov, Fikret Amirov, Gara Garayev, and others have also been

elaborated upon. The research activities of several contributors from the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, such as A. Mammadov, M. Mammadov, R. Azizov, A. Najafzade, and others, have been included in this article.

Numerous sources document the life and work of Sadigjan, considered the father of the tar, as well as the advancements he made to the instrument. Several reputable sources also highlight Sadigjan's reforms to the tar. The invaluable contributions of renowned Azerbaijani tar players such as Gurban Pirimov and Bahram Mansurov have laid the foundation of the Azerbaijani tar school. This article also presents the graphical and tabular measurements of the tar, scientifically determined by Mammadali Mammadov, head of the Research Laboratory for the Improvement of National Musical Instruments at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory. Additionally, we have included personal archival materials in the article titled "The Evolution Path of the Azerbaijani Folk Instrument Tar" (P.S. - N.Q). The article takes a lyrical turn by incorporating a stanza from the poem "Tar" by the young and ill-fated Azerbaijani poet Mikayil Mushfig. It is widely known that during the Soviet regime, national values were strictly prohibited, and playing or promoting the tar and other national musical instruments was banned by the authorities. Despite this, young Mikayil Mushfig composed the poem "Play, Tar." Notably, the great composer Said Rustamov composed a beautiful lyrical piece based on the poem, which was created in a minor key and has been performed by many master artists. These performances are preserved in Azerbaijan's Golden Fund.

Biodata of Author



Nihad Qedirli, was born in 2002 in the city of Kurdamir, Azerbaijan. He attended secondary school from 2008 to 2019. In 2019, he was admitted to the bachelor's program in the "Instrumental Performance" faculty, specializing in folk string instruments (tar), at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, graduating from the same field in 2023. During his studies, he learned notation from Honored Teacher, Associate Professor Eflaruz Gulam oglu Mammadov and mugham lessons from Rashad Gashem oglu Ibrahimov. In 2023, he was admitted to the master's program in the same specialty at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, continuing to learn notation from Associate Professor Eflaruz Gulam oglu Mammadov and mugham lessons from Associate Professor Valeh Rahimov. He has been awarded various diplomas and certificates, including:

Diploma in the 3rd National Folk Instrument Competition among children and youth in 2014,

Diploma in the 2016 National Competition dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Adila Huseynzadeh,

3rd place in the 2017 competition dedicated to the 120th anniversary of Bulbul,

Diploma in the 3rd National Competition dedicated to the 95th anniversary of national leader Heydar Aliyev in 2018,

Diploma in the 1st National Competition dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Haji Khanmammadov in 2018,

1st place with Rashad Ibrahimov's ensemble in the 6th International "Mugham" Competition in 2023,

Diploma for participation as an accompanist in the "Young Avaz" project in 2024.



Photo 21. With Associate Professor E. Mammadov



Photo 22. With Professor, People's Artist of Azerbaijan Republic V. Mammadaliyev



Photo 23. With Tar Player R. Ibrahimov

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