

“SOGDIANA” UZBEK FOLK INSTRUMENTS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Ro‘ziyev D.Yu., Professor

Bukhara State University, Republic of Uzbekistan

Abstract: The article discusses the formation, historical development, performance styles, repertoire, and creative activity of the “Sogdiana” Uzbek Folk Instruments Chamber Orchestra.

Keywords: “Sogdiana”, orchestra, musical works, creative activity.

The “*Sogdiana*” Uzbek Folk Instruments Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1991 by Professor **Feruza Abdurakhimova**. The orchestra was formed from laureates of international and national competitions, as well as graduates, teachers, and students of the Oriental Faculty of the Tashkent State Conservatory.

Each member of the orchestra is a highly skilled soloist with a bright creative individuality. The ensemble performs on traditional Uzbek instruments such as **rubab, dutar, ud, nay, surnay, qoshnay, chang, and doira**. The orchestra aims to preserve the ancient traditions of Uzbek musical performance, and to expand musical communication by holding friendship concerts and creative meetings with musicians from around the world.

“Sogdiana” is a highly professional ensemble with a repertoire of more than **700 works** representing various national styles and periods. In **1996**, the orchestra won the title of laureate at an international festival in **Spain**.

The main focus of “Sogdiana” lies in exploring the interaction between **Eastern and Western musical traditions**. The ensemble has participated in numerous international festivals and conferences held in **Russia (1993), Kazakhstan (1994), Germany (1995, 1998, 1999), France, Egypt (1997, 1998), South Korea (1996, 1997), and the USA (2002)**. In **2001**, F. Abdurakhimova organized and conducted the “*Tashkent Spring – 2001*” International Festival of Folk Instrument Ensembles and Orchestras, which featured participants from France, Indonesia, Tatarstan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

A significant milestone in the orchestra’s history was **1996**, when the ensemble received a certificate of recognition for high professional performance in **Logroño, Spain**, becoming the first Eastern musical ensemble to participate in the festival. The orchestra’s use of various Uzbek folk instruments—nay, qoshnai, surnay, doira, nagora, chang—greatly impressed both specialists and audiences.



Under the direction of **Feruza Abdurakhimova**, the orchestra has collaborated with numerous international groups. In **February 2002**, in Tashkent, the orchestra worked intensively with the **Scottish folk-rock group “Iron Horse”** and the famous singer and bagpipe player **Annie Grace**, combining elements of folklore and rock music. Their first joint concert project, titled *“Interfolk”*, was held on **March 7, 2002**, in Samarkand, and later in Tashkent at the “Turkiston” Concert Hall. The concert halls were filled to capacity, and Annie Grace captivated the audience with her performance of *“Beshik”* and her remarkable bagpipe playing.

The performance also featured Uzbek singers **Sevara Nazarkhan** and **Ravshan Namozov**, whose collaboration with the international orchestra delighted audiences. The joint creative work of the “Sogdiana” orchestra and the “Iron Horse” group demonstrated that through shared artistic efforts, new cultural phenomena can emerge, uniting people in the spirit of goodwill.

In **2013**, with the support of the **German Embassy**, “Sogdiana” created musical accompaniment for the silent German film *“The Doll” (1919)* directed by **Ernst Lubitsch**. The project was successfully presented in Tashkent, Fergana, Andijan, Namangan, and other cities. The orchestra performed an hour-long soundtrack blending European and Uzbek classical and pop music styles. Each musical piece harmoniously matched the film’s storyline, creating a unified artistic impression.

On **November 20, 2015**, with the support of the **Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany**, a concert of classical music performed by the “Sogdiana” Uzbek State Folk Instruments Chamber Orchestra was held at the Great Hall of the Tashkent State Conservatory.

The program included works by **Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, George Frideric Handel, Gustav Mahler, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Robert Schumann, Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Richard Wagner, Alfred Schnittke, James Last, and Karl**. Notably, Wagner’s *“Ride of the Valkyries”* was performed for the first time on Uzbek folk instruments.

In **1996**, “Sogdiana” toured Germany with great success, receiving the title of international festival laureate and a certificate of high professional recognition. In **1998**, the orchestra participated in the **7th International Arab Music Festival** in Cairo, achieving significant acclaim. The repertoire also includes works by foreign composers such as the German composer **Peter Kiesewetter’s “From Afar.”**

The orchestra has released several albums, including *“Sozlar Navosi”*, *“Uzbek-Bavarian Dialogue”* (Germany), *“Interfolk”* (with Scotland’s “Iron Horse” group), *“Uzbekistan Oidr”* (USA), *“Melodies of Uzbekistan”*, and *“Music of the Nations of the World.”* “Sogdiana” has collaborated with musical

ensembles from **Germany, France, Egypt, India, Japan, South Korea, and the USA** in various international creative projects. Special compositions—suites, poems, and concertos—have been written for this orchestra not only by Uzbek but also by foreign composers.

Thus, the Sogdiana Chamber Orchestra is the first national performing group that combines various genres and forms of music, while preserving the mastery of traditional Uzbek art and modern academic culture. The orchestra masters a variety of musical styles and demonstrates excellent technique. Its program includes traditional music and works by modern Uzbek composers - M. Bafoev, F. Alimov, A. Mansurov, N. Narkhodjaev, A. Ergashev, European and Russian composers - I. Bach, P. Sarasate, O. Fallot, G. Sviridov, I. Gavrilin and others.

Each piece performed by the orchestra is distinguished by vivid emotional images, vibrant timbres, and a wealth of artistic and aesthetic associations. Uzbek folk instruments—nai, chang, rubab, oud, dutar, and doira—appear before listeners as symbols of the nation's essence, an expression of its soul. Familiar melodies are reimagined in a new way, enriched by the talent and artistic power of the ensemble, becoming living music of today. The orchestra's musicians bring profound warmth and intimacy, genuine sincerity, and authenticity to the concert stage.

Literature

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