Power, Authority and Music in the Cultures of Inner Asia[1]

Jean During

This article examines the relationship between power, authority and musical practices in Central Asia with a special focus on their frequently bilateral nature. The enforced secularization of the Inner Asian states led to the abandonment of the Arabic script which is fundamentally linked to Islam. The introduction of Latin and Cyrillic scripts led to phonological changes that are mirrored in the musical changes to intonation and intervals which accompanied the introduction of Western musical theory. The development of the concept of nation accentuated the separation, along linguistic lines, of repertories which were originally shared. On the principle that each nation required musical forms not less imposing than those of the West, the cultural authorities imposed the formation of large-scale ensembles whose impact on the aesthetics of performance is analysed here in detail. Such large-scale ensembles or orchestras are typically the product of authoritarian decisions, and do not appear spontaneously from purely aesthetic motives. In the contemporary Central Asian states, in spite of the weakening of the cultural authorities, the prestige of these large ensembles is preserved and, although they offer scant financial rewards, they continue to attract musicians.

Keywords: Inner Asia; Musical Change; Nationalism; Music and Language

The Changing Processes of Change

Power has always interested itself in music and its effect on the psyche, its potential to seduce, to communicate and to unify. The relationship between musicians – whether they serve the people or a patron – and politics is well known and particularly evident in Asia. There is nothing new in this. Nevertheless, in modern times the

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Professor Jean During was born in France in 1947. As a director of research at the French National Centre for Scientific Research, he spent 11 years in Iran and five years in Uzbekistan. He has written twelve books on the musical traditions and cultures of Inner Asia, more than a hundred articles in specialized revues and encyclopedias, and has released around 30 CDs. Three of his books have been translated into Persian; one is in press in Azerbaijani. His fieldwork covers many traditions of Inner Asia. He studies not only musical forms but also Sufi and Shamanic rituals and the cultural traditions related to musical practices. Email: duringj@yahoo.com

factors of change differ from those of the past, especially because of the appearance of new techniques of power that rely on the media. We may distinguish between *internal* change, that is to say that occurs naturally, such as adapting to new situations or in response to public demand (and may be simply aesthetic), and *external* change that results from the direct intervention of non-musical authorities. The authorities do not only manipulate the changes, they skilfully appropriate the cultural heritage, turn it into an instrument of power and misappropriate it to their own advantage. The *toi*, which in Transoxania[2] constitutes a fundamentally private and festive convivial space and is music's principal *raison d'être*, constitutes a recent example of this practice. Having turned traditional *tois* into official ones, the Uzbek president Islam Karimov has intervened to regulate practices, attempting, among other things, to exert financial control over the musicians' essentially private activities.

By examining the case of Central Asia one may observe the new processes of change. Here, the most striking transformations have not come from the inside or from a straightforward process of acculturization, but from the outside under the pressure of colonial, socialist and nationalist ideologies. Beginning in the 19th century, Russian influence created music schools and introduced new instruments. During the early Soviet period there was a deliberate effort to academicize music that affected musical forms (resulting notably in a hybrid style called *akademik*), traditional instruments, methods of playing, the contexts and purposes of performances and methods of transmission. Censorship also served to alter the musical heritage. Certain epics from nomadic cultures with historical themes influenced by animism were prohibited. Sufi and shamanic elements were also expurgated from both popular and classical songs.[3] During a period of three years, between 1956 and 1959, traditional Uzbek music was quite simply forbidden. It suffered from official suppression which was as drastic as that practised by the Taliban, the only difference being that the decision-makers imagined they could replace it with rhapsodic Western musical forms. In China, during the Cultural Revolution period, an even more radical form of control and appropriation was practised that threatened all cultural traditions, but especially those of the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region of north-west China.

In this article I examine the relationship, sometimes obvious and sometimes subtle, between power, authority and musical practices, without losing sight of their frequently bilateral nature.

Transcribing Language, Notating Sounds

The Transliteration and Phonology of Musical Language

The huge political changes that occurred in Central Asia over the last century and a half have brought in their wake spectacular reforms in two related fields: language and music. Since a song's tune, as well as its words, is a symbol of identity, it is equally susceptible to the same kinds of manipulation. In both cases the Soviets sought to fix and transcribe sounds in order to standardize and unify both the musical idiom and

the language. This led to conflicts in usage, and the creation of more or less arbitrary systems. Striking parallels exist between the reform of musical notation and the alphabet in Central Asia.

Various methods of writing music have been used in Turkey since the 18th century. In 1883 a system of notation, consisting of tables showing the positions of the fingers on the lute, was perfected in Khorezm on the orders of the Khan who was a music lover. While the Central Asian peoples wrote using the Arabic script, they wrote down their music using systems that had nothing to do with Western solfeggio. It was at the same time as they began trying to transcribe the Uzbek, Tajik and Azeri languages that they started to write down their music using a system that was as foreign to this music as Latin and Cyrillic characters were to the Turkic and Iranian languages. In both cases, fine nuances were destroyed, by a simplified phonology on the one hand[4] and the 12 notes of the Western musical system on the other. The Latinization of the Turkish language was also accompanied by official attempts to redefine the intervals of the Ottoman *makams* so that they were distanced from Arab and Persian intonation and brought closer to Western and Greek scales. This process also affected Azerbaijan, perhaps through Turkish influence, also at the same time as its writing was reformed. Interestingly, following the fall of the Soviet Union, young Azeri musicians rediscovered traditional intervals at the very moment that Azerbaijan abandoned the Cyrillic alphabet for the Latin one.

It is no coincidence that a small treatise on Latinizing the Persian language comes at the end of the first system of notation for Persian music. Dating from 1923, this system uses the Western scale supplemented by diacritic signs, that is to say half-flats and half-sharps, in order to retain something of the subtleties. Indeed, the brilliant musician Colonel A.N. Vaziri (1886–1981), who studied music in Berlin, campaigned for writing reform (Vaziri 1923). He adopted, probably under the influence of certain contemporary avant-garde composers, a system that divided the tempered scale into 24 equal quarter-tones in order to account for the neutral intervals in Persian music (intervals that are to be found throughout the Middle East). Nevertheless, he intended to *de*scribe rather than *pre*scribe, and, even though the half-flats and half-sharps were very convenient for notating music, no musicians set the frets of their instruments according to the equal temperament of 24 quarter-tones. Neither did the Iranians Latinize their writing. Their lukewarm interest in musical notation shows a similar resistance.[5] Faithful to their language and alphabet, they have remained attached to their musical scales, contrary to what has happened in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Unlike the case in Azerbaijan, Tajik independence in 1991 did not bring about a questioning of scales and intervals. In the same way, after a brief enthusiasm for the Arabic script in intellectual circles, there was a dramatic return to the Cyrillic. This was probably done with the intention of distancing themselves from the Afghans and especially from the Iranians.[6] However independence has brought an opening up on the part of the Tajiks towards Iran, a movement that has been largely one way. Since the great Bârbad Music Festival in 1990, songs have been composed in Middle Eastern

modes and intervals. Ten years later a seventh suite was added to the *Shashmaqom* using the Hijâz mode which, although current to the west and south as well as in the Pamir Mountains, had been practically non-existent in Transoxania. A few *dutôrche* players emphasize the untempered nature of some of their intervals, which is due to this lute's lack of frets. Nevertheless, the last three-quarter tone still used in Transoxania threatened to disappear for ever with the death of the famous singer Ma'ruf Khâja Bahador of Khojand in 1998.

In 1988, I noticed this interval being played by Tchupân Bey, the oldest and most expert *satâr* player among the Salikur Tajiks in the People's Republic of China. However, across the border in Tajikistan, the *satâr*'s frets were moved during the Soviet period to enable musicians to play tunes from neighbouring cultures (India and Afghanistan in particular). It is likely that these intervals will also soon disappear from the music of Chinese Tajiks, whose writing has been transformed by giving up the Arabic alphabet in favour of the Latin.

In contemporary Tajikistan, despite a movement to return to the old modal system in art music (each *maqâm* has to be played based on a particular *tanbur* fret), there is no questioning of intervals, as it were the 'phonological' aspect of musical language. The issue concerns the Uzbeks even less. I obtained the first evidence of the past existence of neutral intervals only in 2002 from the venerable master musician of Uzbekistan, Turgun Alimatov, who gave me a demonstration.[7] This evidence was confirmed later while I was recording Farhâd Qâri Halimou, a Tajik master from Samarkand, whose *tanbur* fretting includes 'three quarter tones' and who uses the term *chorak* (quarter) to define them. After a brief period of using the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets, the Uyghurs have returned to the Arabic script (although with phonetic spelling). Likewise in Uyghur music, intonation has been somewhat better respected; indeed special signs are used to represent neutral intervals in some transcriptions of the Uyghur Twelve (*on ikki*) Muqam (Alibakieva 1988).

Uzbek versus Tajik-Persian Language

In Bukhara in Uzbekistan, the language question took on a particular character because the classical *maqâm* was originally sung in Persian, whereas most popular songs were sung in Tajik. In the 1920s the Minister of Culture, Abdurauf Fitrat (d. 1938), who was a famous progressive intellectual, asked a Russian musicologist named Uspensky to transcribe the Bukharan *Shashmaqom*. Strangely, when the transcription was published in 1927, it did not include any lyrics. Some say that Fitrat forbad their transcription when he discovered that all the texts were in Persian, so that the forcible Uzbekization of the new nation could be carried out. This is not how Uzbek historians regard the matter, not even those from Bukhara. They contend that Fitrat, who was a discriminating connoisseur, knew perfectly well that nearly all the poetry of the *Shashmaqom* was in Persian. According to their argument, Fitrat did not include the lyrics because Persian writing runs from left to right, in the opposite direction from musical notation. The debate is still open. However, there is another

possibility: that Fitrat wished to avoid fixing the *Shashmaqom* in the form of these transcriptions, and instead wanted to prepare the way for a new Uzbek version. Indeed, during the years 1930, Fitrat ordered the composer Yunus Rajabi to give him a version based on Uzbek poetry which, more than 30 years later, eventually became widespread. Today, with the exception of Bukhara and Tajikistan, this is the most frequently heard version. To sum up, this monumental repertoire is now split into two versions: one in Persian, the other in Uzbek.

Should we conclude that all this was a result of official directives destined to arouse a feeling of national belonging that followed the principle of "one language, one music"? Although the Uzbekization of the repertoire serves contemporary political ends, it would be reading too much into the facts to draw such a conclusion. It also answers a real need created by the natural tendency towards the separation of the Uzbek and Tajik (Persian) languages (although, it has to be admitted, this has been greatly speeded up by the Uzbeks). If this need had not existed, the public would not have accepted events, and the Persian version would have been better preserved. The musicians of Ferghana did not have to wait for similar directives in order to develop an Uzbek repertoire, and the Khorezmis did the same thing long ago with the creation of the Khorezm *maqôm* in the mid-19th century. Having said that, it is obvious that in recent years the movement towards mono-ethnic repertoires has become progressively stronger due to the pressure of state directives, precisely because it concerns sensitive question of cultural and national identity.

Until a hundred years ago, following Muslim custom, neither the Jews nor the Muslims of Central Asia defined themselves as Tajik or Uzbek, but rather according to the town where they lived.[8] In the cities, especially in Samarkand and Bukhara, people spoke both Persian (Tajik) and Uzbek. Even today, although Bukharis speak more fluently in Uzbek, all wedding songs are sung in Tajik, which remains the language of feeling and emotion. In contrast to this, the person directing the entertainment pays his/her compliments in Uzbek, and this language is also used to make formal speeches. People speak in Uzbek, but sing in Tajik. Thus the double culture has been preserved in the private sphere. One can, therefore, understand that musicians do not suffer from this dichotomy, and in Bukhara and Samarkand most of them sing and compose equally well in both languages in order to please all audiences.

While all the Tajik musicians from Uzbekistan happily sing in Uzbek, their Uzbek colleagues make no effort whatsoever to learn songs in Persian. It is striking, however, that one of their favourite airs, Oshshâq-i Samarqand, which has been in the top ten of classical Uzbek songs for years, is based on a Persian poem.[9] In Tajikistan the situation is different, with singers of Uzbek origin being more willing to sing the classical *maqôm* in Persian. The department of classical (*maqôm*) music in Bukhara's Teaching Institute still teaches the *Shashmaqom* in Persian, but at the Higher Conservatory in Tashkent it is out of the question to sing it in anything other than Uzbek (except for a few rare pieces of the *tarana* genre which are impossible to put into Uzbek). There are excellent musicians to be found among the Bukharis, but their

loyalty to their Tajik roots is, perhaps, the reason why they have not been allowed to found their own conservatory.

To sum up, the public's passive resistance and genuine demand function as a balance in cultural strategies. With the exception of the 1956–9 political crisis, the situation remained more or less stable throughout the Soviet period. Musicians do not give the impression of having been crushed by directives that went against their convictions and interests. The remarkable artistic level and the wealth of musical activity which could be found during the 1960s and continuing over the next 30 years are evidence of this. The best artists were recorded, produced records, performed on the radio, were well paid and given privileges.[10] Today many musicians look back on this as a golden age. Nevertheless, the image that is perpetuated in the West is one of a static, academic musical world which was cut off from its spiritual roots (cf. Levin 1984).

Collectivization as an Exercise in Power

The reason for this perception is that the promotion of collective expression, and the sidelining of individual expression, has been the most spectacular effect of musical policy in the Soviet world. Classical urban traditions, such as the Tajik, Uzbek, Khorezmi and Uyghur *maqôms*, tolerate this process relatively well, providing it does not overstep reasonable limits. However, in the context of nomad music, which is essentially individualistic, it risks leading to a stultification of the repertoire.[11] The enterprise of collectivization, whether in the field of music or more broadly in society, always stems from power holders. The state's desire for control over nomadic peoples is even more obvious. Harsh regimes across the world have systematically sought to control the nomadic sections of society by sedentarizing them. In the field of music, from a purely aesthetic point of view ordinary musicians rarely think of forming a large orchestra. Whether the motivation is a desire to impress the public or to affirm the presence and vitality of an ethnic culture or tradition, large orchestras are typically formed following decisions taken in high places.

The most ostentatious form of this power game took place in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. There is, however, no need to look for the origins of this practice in some Soviet or Maoist doctrine. It is simply the expression of a political power which, searching for legitimacy, constantly needs to justify its existence. Moreover, the tendency has by no means disappeared from Central Asia in the post-Soviet era. All authoritarian regimes are tempted by their ability to mobilize the maximum number of musicians and put them on a stage that, by traditional aesthetic standards, is oversized. This goes hand in hand with the ability to fill vast halls with audiences that are often literally supplied by the military[12] or drafted in by the negligible ticket prices.

Central Asia's fundamentally individualistic musical cultures, like the nomadic bardic tradition, have not been spared this tendency. Kazakh *dombra* lute players, who have a remarkable and highly sophisticated repertoire, complain of having been

rejected and humiliated for years by cultural directors who could conceive music only on the collective model of the Western symphony. In this way, orchestras of dozens of lute and fiddle players were formed, playing melodies which were transfixed in scores in unison and octaves. But on what kind of instruments was this music played?

The Reinvention of Musical Instruments

Early teachings of the new discipline of ethnomusicology recommended respecting indigenous musical instruments and withholding judgements based on the criteria of the Western instrumentarium. Expressions such as "a primitive guitar" and "a fiddle with a screaming sound" were strictly prohibited and investigators were put on their guard against claiming to make instruments, sometimes thousands of years old, "better" through techniques inspired by Western instrument-making. From this point of view the attitude of Russian musicologists, especially during the Soviet period, constitutes a heart-breaking example of ethnocentrism and interventionism. They had a passion for putting the music played on traditional instruments into three or four parts (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone), as well as for "democratising" instruments by using industrial materials that actually deformed the sound (Spector 1967). Other interventions were less obvious, but were still pernicious. Among other examples, one can cite the use of fixed metallic frets on the Uzbek *rubôb*, when lutes with skin soundboards are sensitive to humidity and should have movable frets in order to cope with the variations in the height of the bridge.[13]

The traditional Uyghur *ghijak* is no different from what the Azeris and Iranians call a *kamânche* and the Uzbeks and Turkmens a *qijak*. In the 1950s, it was "deconstructed" and then restructured to make the modern professional instrument, with a parchment soundboard *inside* the wood sphere, connected to a wooden soundboard by a 7cm-long bar. Uyghurs in the diaspora in the Central Asian states, critical of the sound produced by the new instrument, have stayed faithful to the traditional *ghijak* which has disappeared from Xinjiang over the last few decades. One suspects that the intention was precisely to introduce an instrument that was *different* from that of their neighbours, in order to demarcate cultural frontiers that had not existed in the past. The Uyghur *khushtar*, to cite another example, is a fantastical violin-type instrument, created in the 1970s, inspired by poor interpretations of miniatures that depict a sort of *sarinda*. This instrument, which thankfully appears only in large official orchestras, symbolizes a link with a specifically Uyghur cultural history, purified of any admixture.

Other instruments of this kind, artificially reconstructed or altered to the detriment of the original, are to be found everywhere where large-scale orchestral performance is valued. We can cite the modernized Uyghur Dolan *rawap* with its sympathetic strings amputated and pitched an octave lower. We can also cite the Baluchi *sorud* (or *qeytchak*) which the Iranian string players from the Ministry of Culture have also stripped of its sympathetic strings and transformed into a fiddle similar to the Uyghur *khushtar*. The Afghan *rabâb*, introduced into official Iranian

orchestras in 1975, is another example of an instrument stripped of its sympathetic strings.[14] Only the Kurdish *tanbur*, which is often found in large ensembles, has not undergone any alterations, perhaps because of its sacred status. Paradoxically, no-one has dared even to add frets to it in order to permit it to play neutral intervals.

As for more subtle interference, we can cite the Uzbek *qijak* fiddle which is no longer tuned in fourths but, like the violin, in fifths. Inversely and paradoxically, it was decided that the violin (held vertically) should be tuned in fourths like the *qijak*, as if to give it some sort of legitimacy by using it like the old *qijak*. Like the *satô*, the *qijak* is nowadays played with a very badly adapted violin bow. These instruments are held vertically in a way that makes it much more difficult to use the violin bow with its tightly stretched, flat hairs. The traditional bow, with thicker, loosely strung hairs is much better adapted to the instrument.[15] In Kazakh conservatories the bow for the *qobyz* fiddle is held like that of a 'cello whereas traditionally it was held like that of a *viola di gamba*. Only the Azerbaijanis (and, as usual, the Iranians) have remained loyal to the traditional way of holding their instruments.

In contrast, changes have taken place naturally in Afghanistan, probably because of the historical lack of any cultural directives.[16] The frets of the *dotâr* (like those of the Tajik *satâr*) have been shifted in order to be able to play Indian melodies. More recently, in Herat, the Kabul *rabâb* was given new 'Middle Eastern' frets that produce three-quarter tones (Baily 1988). Recently the virtuosos of the Afghan diaspora have multiplied the frets of the *rabâb* in order to play easily in sharp keys.

In the course of the natural evolution that has taken place in Transoxania, after the adoption of the Uyghur *rawap* in the early 20th century, and its transformation into what is now called the Uzbek *robôb*, in recent years it is often replaced by the Azeri *târ*.[17] Strangely, this *târ* has undergone no modifications,[18] perhaps simply because it is already as perfect as it can be made. The Turkish *saz* (or *baghlama*) has become more widespread in Uzbekistan over the past ten or so years. However, having imported it, the Uzbeks have set about making it in their own way: heavily and ungracefully, with mechanical guitar pegs, a mulberry wood soundboard and three strings each with a corresponding string producing notes an octave higher or lower. In addition, it produces a powerful, deep note that fits in well with light music groups and, more rarely, classical music ensembles. Sometimes solos are played on the Uzbek *rubôb*, but it is mostly played by singers who want to accompany themselves; the *târ* is also used only for accompanying singers, and the *saz*, which lacks subtlety, is played only as part of an orchestra.

Apart from these regional borrowings, the violin, that most versatile of Western instruments, must be mentioned. Since Central Asians consider its sound to be softer than that of the traditional *qijak* fiddle,[19] it has become widespread without any intervention from the authorities in Central Asia. As is the case in many parts of the world where the violin has been adopted, it is played in the vertical position. After a brief appearance, the accordion did not catch on except in Azerbaijan (where it is called the *garmon*) and in the women's light song genre (*khalfa*) in Khorezm. Its tempered scale means that it has been excluded from Iran and the Middle East. In

Afghanistan, they prefer the harmonium to the accordion, which has more recently been ejected from Transoxania by the synthesizer. The latter has the advantage of possessing a rhythm-box and being able to reproduce all kinds of timbres, for example that of the *tanbur* with its characteristic downward and upward vibratos.

The Soviet period hardly affected the bardic tradition of the Turkmen, which continues to use two musicians performing together: a singer with a two-string lute (*dotâr*)[20] and a *gijak* fiddle player. However, the advent of an extremely autocratic regime, which has ruled since independence in 1991, seems to have entailed the progressive stamping out of individual expression. According to well-informed sources, recent directives have ordered Turkmen bards that from now on they should sing in choirs, and sing texts celebrating the nation and its leader. This is the only significant case of collectivization of a bardic tradition. If the situation in Turkmenistan does not improve, it may well be that this great tradition will be preserved only in Iran where a large Turkmen community resides.[21]

The Persistence of the Soviet Model

The large-scale, collectivist style of musical performance with its artificial and redundant instrumentarium still has its supporters in the region, independently of the current political regimes. Thus, despite their ideological distance from the regime which they have suffered or fled, musicians working at the Uyghur Theatre in Almaty, who play a leading role in the cultural life of the Uyghur diaspora in Kazakhstan, are still enthusiastic supporters of the large-scale orchestra. According to them, at least one representative of each instrument should be present in the Uyghur orchestra, that is to say a total of 12 instruments, 12 being a symbolic number like that of the Twelve *Muqam*. Since there exist only seven instruments which might traditionally have been employed in a Uyghur ensemble, they have invented new ones or restructured the old ones in bass and treble versions. The motivation behind this is different: it is probably a case of a minority group asserting itself by gathering together the largest possible ensemble with a greater variety of instruments than that of their Kazakh comrades.

The aura surrounding Soviet institutions, however, fascinates their members even more than large orchestral formations. No cultural institution in the Central Asian states today, be it the philharmonic, the radio, the television or the conservatory, is capable of guaranteeing musicians even a modest living. They do, however, offer other advantages linked, for example, to the status of civil servant, or master musician who can exercise authority over his/her students (unless they have already paid for their conservatory or university place under the table). Belonging to these institutions means that musicians have free time, even when they are at work, to establish contacts or prepare themselves for more lucrative activities. It can also be a spring-board for foreign tours. The financial profits of such tours are extremely uneven, depending on whether the musicians travel as part of an official delegation or independently at the invitation of a European manager. In spite of everything, the institution's prestige remains the most attractive factor, not only for the old guard

who knew the Soviet system in its hours of glory, but also for young people who do not see that times have changed.

Group T: a case study

The story of group T from Tashkent, which existed between 2000 and 2003, is worth presenting in some detail as it illustrates the persistent preference for large ensembles, and demonstrates how this habit does not fit well with contemporary pressures. The group was established when a 'sponsor', supposedly private but probably encouraged by some cultural authority, announced to some young musicians that he was going to create a new, independent, classical Uzbek ensemble. His material aid was limited to putting together the costumes and finding a rehearsal room. As the head of the group he named a young woman who had the advantage over the others of playing the *chang* (*santur*, hammer dulcimer), whose sticks accord its player the role of a conductor. He stimulated her enthusiasm by dangling a generously paid one-month tour of Malaysia in front of her. The date of this tour was constantly put back, yet the group continued to practise for several years. They rehearsed for so long that they reached concert standard and could make appearances, first brief, then longer, in concerts. As time went on, other tours were announced but were never followed up, for what organization would want to take on 12 to15 musicians presenting what was, despite a few pleasant arrangements, an ordinary programme, even if it only took on the travelling and lodging costs? An agent suggested inviting four or five of the best members for a concert which would rediscover the lightness and dynamic of a traditional performance, but, the 'conductor', still very Soviet in spirit, would not hear of it, arguing that the number of members constituted the group's strength and quality, and it could not be broken up.

The impresario succeeded in arranging some recording sessions for radio and television in order to strengthen group T's image. Typically this entailed exhausting special rehearsals, recording, make-up and clothing sessions. In common practice in Uzbekistan a song is never filmed live. First the music is recorded, then played back while the musicians are filmed, with very approximate synchronization.[22] Even soloists have to bow to this rule. Consequently, it is impossible to find any film or television recording with professional synchronization. To make the singers' job easier, the play-back is often used in concerts as well. The public appears to accept this or not to notice it, because anyway it is only a concert, not a performance in the traditional context of those private parties called *tois* where hundreds of people gather. In certain studios, recording is an especially laborious task, because the more the sound engineer persecutes the musicians by making them replay their piece, the more he reinforces his authority and affirms technology's supremacy over art, and thus that of the institution over the artists.

In spite of all the effort demanded, and all the disappointments, most of group T's members stuck it out. They sometimes had the satisfaction of putting on their costumes and playing in public or at some official function, after which they were

invited to a banquet. A time even came when they started to be paid, for example, 100 dollars to be shared between 15 of them. Even though their performances were almost free, some of them refused much more interesting and profitable suggestions which would have meant that they had to leave the group. At last their validation arrived in the form of a collective prize awarded to young musicians, with a brief spot on the television news. But still there was no sign of an international, or even national, tour.

The little story of ensemble T poses one more mystery in the already complex wheels of Uzbek culture and in a musical setting that functions in a very specific way. Whether you come from the East or the West, it is difficult to understand how the group came together, developed and lasted. We can only make suppositions: group instinct, the idea of one day entering the state apparatus, of tasting the ostentation of official functions, perhaps the social aspect of the group, or of being invited to some important person's private parties (*toi*), or, for those from the provinces, the prospect of permission to live in the capital[23] may all have been sufficiently strong motives to keep the group together. The artistic dimension must not be forgotten either. It is much more gratifying for a singer to be accompanied by ten instruments rather than two. If a young and middling instrumentalist cannot go solo or join a small ensemble, it can be satisfying to be a member of a larger group that plays music that he/she has nearly always heard played by large ensembles. And with practice even complex melodies are not difficult to arrange if you have played them 50 and heard them hundreds of times.

The Double Game Musicians Play

The phenomenon of the orchestras is simply a question of power, perhaps a tradition of power. The majority of musicians are able to pass from one genre to another, from an official performance to a festive or convivial context such as the *toi* or the *gap* where a very different aesthetic rules. Many Central Asian musicians thus play a double game which they do not really win, but do not lose either. Belonging to an orchestra gives them status and assures them of a minimum income. Another aspect of the power of certain Central Asian institutions is demonstrated by a singer like M. one of the greatest singers in the region who could command large fees for performing at private parties. Yet she contents herself with a nominal salary and for 25 years has submitted to the discipline demanded of the members of a national orchestra. Being attached to such an institution is a civic act, a sign of political good will, without which, however famous he/she may be, the independent musician's life becomes difficult. A singer like the Uzbek Sherali provides an example. His straight-talking has excluded him from the system, and thus from the media and honours, and has also shut him off from access to foreign countries. He finds comfort in his admirers: two or three hundred celebrities from artistic circles come together for each of his birthdays, and the best musicians are honoured to play or sing for him.

The Return of the Soloists and their Entrance into the Political Game

Heads of state often seek to strengthen their image by connecting themselves with personalities whose glory is directly and freely legitimated by the people. If loyalty is, on the whole, rewarded, the smallest sign of divergence on the star's part brings disgrace in its wake. The case of Sherali is a reminder that, in the majority of Inner Asian cultures, soloists who do cooperate with the system have been venerated to the highest degree. Historically the bard was bound to temporal power and to his clan, as their cantor and their memory. He exalted national feeling and chivalric values (through the epic genre), he designated historical enemies and incited the people to mobilize in reality or in their imaginations and, finally, he was the guardian of popular wisdom and myths (lyric and wisdom genres) of which he sang in a classical or archaic style. His prestige and knowledge associated him naturally with men of power. The Kazakh *zhyrau* sat next to the khan. It is therefore not surprising to see in contemporary Kazakhstan, for example, a remarkable bard such as Aqbulat made Director of Music at the Kazakh Ministry of Culture, that is to say, reaching the highest level in the system. The condition of his appointment was that he gave up performing in public, which should be understood as a contemporary version of an ancient custom of patronage whereby the prince demanded that his artists should perform only at his command. Before Aqbulat, during the Soviet period, the bard Jambul had celebrated the virtues of socialism and of its personalities *ad nauseam*. With the coming of independence the Kazakhs were somewhat bothered by such compliance, a feeling that was heightened because, contrary to certain insinuations, Jambul really was the greatest bard of his time.[24] They explained his attitude by the bards' historical role as cantor to politicians. Although this feature is less obvious in Iranian and sedentary cultures than it is in Turkic and nomadic ones, it comes as no surprise that Davlatmand Khôlov was promoted to the rank of personal advisor to the President of Tajikistan after having been *the* bard (*hâfez*) *par excellence* for nearly 20 years. Another outstanding musician, Abduvali Abdurashidov, holder of the secrets of the *Shashmaqom*, has earned the same sort of favours, which include their burden of constraints and obligations.

The prestige of the bards, which is always greater than that of the best musical group or choir, has probably contributed to protecting their art from official directives. Thus, the kinds of music that were least affected during the Soviet period were those that arose from fundamentally personal and individual expression. The *bakshi* of Turkmenistan, just like their cousins in Qaraqalpakstan (a small 'autonomous' republic in Uzbekistan), have changed none of their customs. The reason for this is that these cultures do not separate classical genres from popular ones. The art of Turkmen and Qaraqalpak bards is both hyper-professional and popular, as well as being profoundly individualistic: singers accompany themselves on the lute (*dutar*) which may or may not be accompanied by a fiddle (*qijak*). There are few animist or religious elements in the poetry, which is lyrical or moral, and so it offered no pretexts for Islamic or Soviet censorship. If a few old photographs show

groups of *dutars*, and if the conservatories sometimes gather their students for collective performances, these are simply superficial exercises answering the demands of the stage, rather than the consequences of a Western-style cultural policy.

Neither have the Uzbek bards (the Qongrat or Barlas tribes) suffered from the old regime. They accompany themselves only with a small, fretless two-stringed lute. Not only is there no other instrument, but it seems to be impossible for them to play as a duo.[25] Their Tajik neighbours have no objection to adding two or three instruments (*dutôrche*, *tanbur*, percussion, etc.) because their repertoire consists of the well-regulated 'song' (*falak*) genre, often based on classical poems, and, not being in the narrative genres (epic or lyric), is, in essence, freer.

In Iran and Pakistan it is the Baluchis who have maintained this great professional tradition of fundamentally personal expression. Those responsible for Iranian culture, who have managed to make Khorasani *dotar* players play in groups, have never succeeded in making Baluchi masters play in this way, except for the lightest song genres (*sawt*, *nazink*, *lahro*, etc.), with a fiddle, a *rabâb*, a *benjo* sitar and a *sorud*, with the rhythm being played by a *tanburag* lute and a *doholak*, a drum with two sides. The most difficult genre (epic, *shervandi*), which is played as a duo (*sorud* and *tanburag*) with or without a singer, and the ritual genre (*qalandari*, *damali*) remain resolutely individualistic. In addition, Baluchi masters rarely attend official events to which they have been invited in either Tehran or Islamabad. Thus, despite having been sedentarized, they perpetuate the aesthetic and cultural values of the bardic art in the purest nomadic spirit.

In the field of classical traditions, instrumentalists who have attained the highest standards often end up by withdrawing from the ensembles in order to play as they like unaccompanied or at most with a singer. The case of Ahamd Ebâdi in Iran (d. 1993) corresponds exactly to that of Turgun Alimatov in Uzbekistan. Both developed an inimitable and fascinating personal style of playing their long-necked lutes (*setâr*, *tanbur*).[26] They disliked being bothered by percussion or having to follow a singer. They were popularized by the radio and the public cherished them both, yet they did not allow themselves to be compromised by the official institutions.

In the domain of classical music, Azerbaijan offers the most resistance. Here the traditional style of performance has never changed: a singer with percussion, a *târ* lute and a *kamânche* fiddle. (The appearance of a clarinet or solo percussionist is a recent innovation). The tendency to collectivize has been channelled into the invented genres, the symphonic *mugam* and the *mugam* opera, which have deservedly enjoyed success. Neither have Azeri bards allowed themselves to be forcibly formed into orchestras. At the very most, a few come together on a stage and play one after the other. It can be said that similarly Iranians have scarcely been tempted by large ensembles, perhaps because of the individualist character of the Iranians. Under the Shah's regime the Minister of Culture grouped together between 12 and 20 musicians with various instruments, while nowadays, perhaps under the influence of Iran's ex-Soviet neighbours, they sometimes get ten Kurdish or Khorasani lutes

to play popular airs together. This is, however, only a marginal and provincial phenomenon that demonstrates yet again that collectivization has little to do with political choices.

The same individualist tendency means that the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz are drawn to forms of personal expression that lie at the heart of their traditions. Thus, with the end of Communism and with independence, importance has once again been given to competitions of soloists and bards. The Uzbek President Islam Karimov has created a high honour, that of the People's Bard,[27] and the 19th- and 20th-century Kazakh and Kyrgyz composers who made the marvellous *kuu* repertoire of instrumental solo pieces for lute, fiddle or flute are now lionized in their respective countries.

Aesthetic Criticism

Playing the same melodies in unison in the artificial context of a concert not only ends up by freezing pieces that are in essence adaptable and flexible, but also goes against the spirit and the aesthetic principles of Inner Asian musical traditions. Musicians as well as most musicologists are more and more conscious of this. A questioning of modes of transmission and traditional performance conditions also demonstrate the return of individual expression. The 'master-disciple' (*ostâd-shâgerd*) concept of transmission, which implies a personal relationship, imitation and performing as a duo, enters into all serious discussions about the future of traditional music. It goes hand in hand with the rehabilitation of oral transmission, to replace the systematic use of notation. Nobody denies the usefulness of written music but not as a pedagogical medium.

Thus, after decades of 'academicism' and conservatory pedagogy, Tajik musicians are comforted and strengthened in their new positions by seeing that their Iranian colleagues for the most part have nothing to do with notation.[28] Nowadays, it seems much more important for singers to have a knowledge of prosody, the ability to understand the sense of poems and to be able to accompany themselves on a lute tuned in the old way, than to know the solfeggio. For instrumentalists, it is more useful to know how to sing than to be able to decipher a score. Since independence and the rehabilitation of nomadic culture, Kazakh and Kyrgyz masters from purely oral traditions, who, even if they know musical notation have never used it, are held in high esteem, like the holders of secrets or even of the spirit of a tradition, whereas those trained in music schools and conservatories are regarded as mere virtuosos or imitators. The connoisseurs are right. Indeed, it is impossible not to doubt these institutions when, during a concert, a virtuoso playing the Kazakh fiddle (*qil qobyz*) joins an air inspired by shamanism to an extract from a concerto by Katchaturian, or the orchestra is replaced by a minidisk as if the player were in a karaoke café.

Rhythm

Rhythm and intonation are also affected by assembling a large number of musicians. Only fairly straightforward pieces without *rubato* can be played collectively. Certain rhythms have a characteristic groove that cannot be played to a metronome, which makes them very difficult to play together, and impossible for an ordinary rhythm box to reproduce. This is the case for the Uzbek-Tajik Talqin cycle (*osul*) and those pieces derived from it.[29] A detailed analysis shows that in general each measure of this 9-beat rhythm finishes with a *ralentando*. In a small ensemble the musicians are able to play synchronically despite the blurring caused by the slowing down because they can both look at and hear each other. In large groups, the beat must be rigorously maintained in order to keep the musicians playing together in time. The case of professional Baluchi music is even more obvious. The measures that seem to be in three-beats are in fact made up of three unequal beats that gradually get faster. None of these subtle nuances allows more than two instrumentalists to play together, let alone programme a rhythm box. It is music that has been designed for two instrumentalists, one of whom plays the accompaniment on the *tanburag* rhythmic lute. The rhythms of the epic genre, which brings together a singer, a fiddle and two *tanburags*, are much more regular, in 6/8, 10/8, 7/8 and 4/4.

The Ideal Couple

In the majority of the bardic traditions (Turks, Kurds and Persians from Khorasan, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz) it is enough for the singer to accompany him/herself on a lute.[30] If they want to strengthen the instrumental part they add a fiddle, so that the fiddle-lute combination is very common across Inner Asia. It is found from Anatolia in the West (*cura* and *keman* or violin) to Khotan (*satâr* and *dutar*). One exception exists: the Uyghur tradition of the Ili valley with its two long-necked lutes, the *tämbür* (metallic strings) and the *dutar* (silk strings), though there is no percussion. If they do add another instrument, it will be the *ghijak* fiddle or violin, and then percussion.

In many Inner Asian musical traditions, the lute-fiddle couple (of whatever name or variety: *târ*, *dutâr*, *tanburag*, *kamancha*, *qijak*, *sorud*, etc.) makes up an instrumental combination that is minimal but sufficient. The Turkmen or Qara-qalpak *dutâr-qijak* duo, scarcely different from the Azeri *târ-kamancha* duo, is the equivalent of the Baluchi *sorud-tanburag* pair. This couple is often strengthened in sedentary cultures by a percussion instrument, as in Tajikistan (*dutôrche, jighak*) or in Azerbaijan. *Âshiq* Azeri bards do not use a fiddle to accompany the *saz* lute, but the *balaban* clarinet, another instrument with a continuous sound, and the percussion instrument called the *qaval*. The presence of percussion instruments signifies the sedentarization of essentially nomadic traditions, or simply indicates a style's urban or sedentary origin. Khorezmi bards abandoned the *dutôr* and the fiddle for the *târ* lute and the accordion (the continuous sound of which replaces that of the fiddle) several decades ago.

Intervals

Intervals are a favourite area for the exercise of power. Chinese emperors marked their enthronement and the start of a new imperial cycle by setting a new fundamental pitch for the whole country. Plato had anticipated this relationship when he said that one could not touch the musical modes without also threatening the stability of the state. According to this line of reasoning, a political upheaval is likely to bring about change in the realm of musical intervals. And that is certainly what has happened in Azerbaijan, and more discreetly in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The process is irreversible in the latter two countries, and the masters who acknowledge the existence of subtler intervals in the past, or who use them, are becoming rarer. Only singers and violinists still use them sometimes, although they do not necessarily realize that they are doing so.

In order to introduce Western instruments (piano, accordion, guitar, etc.) into the orchestra, it is necessary to tune traditional instruments to tempered intervals. In Azerbaijan the *târ* lute's intervals have been modified in a way that brings them close to those of the tempered scale, which allows the Azerbaijanis to assemble mixed orchestras (despite small differences in intonation which are not noticed). Nariman Mamedov's 1960s transcriptions of the *mugams* for the *târ* testify to the official abolition of untempered intervals at that time (Mämmädov 1963, 1965, 1970). In order to get past the censor, the modes were transcribed as if they were a piano score, with only sharps and flats in two staves (in the keys of F and G). Little by little, the official intervals have penetrated musicians' ears and driven out the old intonations that were near to those of the Middle East and Iran.

However, the old intervals have resurfaced with the independence of Azerbaijan, a nation that always had a strong ethnic and cultural identity. Those artists born after the Soviet reform and completely impregnated with the new intonations reject the old pre-Soviet intervals (the three-quarter tone in particular), which some young players are using once again, as 'Iranian'. All that is needed to find the truth of the matter is to doubt the dogma of the conservatories and to listen to old recordings before the Soviet period, in which most of the modes were played in Iranian-Arab intervals. A return to the older style began some ten years ago.[31] Musicians, however, have not regressed during the process of redefining the intervals. They have been able to create new, very original genres such as *muqam* jazz, and use instruments like the accordion (*garmon*), the oboe and the clarinet with the same originality and quality as their great traditional music. What they have lost in nuance of intonation, they have gained in other ways, and today all the genres contrive to exist side by side without cramping each other.

In spite of the intensive modernization of Iran, musical intervals have never been questioned other than in some inconsequential speculations of a few theoreticians.[32] One can see the same resistance in the Arab world. This probably arises from the long tradition of measuring intervals that marks the history of Arab and Persian science, as well as the rootedness of these traditions in the soil of the populace. In these

profoundly sedentary regions the attachment to the intervals is symbolically linked to the ancestral attachment to a territory. It may well be that the provisional abandonment of Middle Eastern intervals in the Republic of Azerbaijan has resulted from the influence of the scales and modal types of popular bards that guarantee a Turkic identity.[33] This change of intonation has allowed the country to forge a new musical identity by differentiating itself from its neighbours.

In Central Asia, where the population is largely of nomadic origin, the attachment to a territory is less powerful: they adapt, they make do, they borrow from others. For them it is more important to preserve the sense of rhythm, musical space, organization of performances, context and rapport with the public than the content, form and canons.

Poison and Remedy: The Positive Role of the West

It is at this level that the West has a role to play. Through concerts and recordings it is possible to encourage living and creative traditional performances; to rehabilitate genres and instruments that have been devalued; to give the limelight back to the soloists; to get rid of grandiloquent stage settings, rhapsodic arrangements and gratuitous demonstrations of virtuosity; and, finally, to assemble a well-informed public that listens attentively to musicians and shows them esteem and good will. The point to which a successful concert tour can change musicians' point of view, restricted by decades of directives coming from cultural decision-makers, cannot be imagined. It can even be hoped that, with time, the decision-makers will also be persuaded.

In 1992 a young Tajik musician was given the opportunity to give a solo concert in France on a small budget. A good *dutôr* player, he also had a beautiful voice, and delighted the audience with this fresh and unfamiliar tradition. On his return home, the Minister of Culture asked to see him and shared his perplexity with him: how was it that an unknown artist was invited to Europe to play 'folk' music when Tajikistan had a symphony orchestra, chamber music ensembles, a ballet company, etc., that could play the Western classics? Why him and not a string quartet? The answer, obvious to all, nevertheless surprised the minister so much that he called a committee to hear it again. Westerners play their own music better than ours; they do not want to hear us playing hybrid forms; they want to hear authentic melodies from our cultural heritage, interpreted according to our own aesthetic criteria. That is the reason why connoisseurs prefer an honest soloist to a group formed on Western models (which are often dated anyhow), wearing pseudo-national costumes reinvented by the dressers of the Dushanbe or Almaty Opera-Ballet. The message got through, but this was only a first step in overturning a point of view that is expected of the political authorities and intellectuals. The following story arises from a more subtle preoccupation.

In the year 2000 a cultural official from the Foreign Ministry summoned me to Tashkent's Turkistan Theatre where the directors and other officials were present. The

reason was that I had organized concerts and tours of Europe with Uzbek artists for several years but without collaborating at all with the cultural and political authorities, indeed, without even informing them. The crux of the matter was that when I dealt directly with the musicians, official institutions were deprived of any form of control, particularly over the choice of musicians, and over the taxable part of their salary.[34] At this time the government was trying to control musicians' comings and goings in order to tax the supposedly prodigious salaries that they earned abroad. This was related to attempts to impose a professional card on musicians in order to tax their earnings from private parties (*toi*).

The arguments advanced during this meeting were, of course, of a different kind. In essence they said, 'As a foreigner you don't understand our music and aren't qualified to choose the artists who deserve to be introduced to Europe. It is painful for us to see the same singer constantly invited when there are many more talented artists here.[35] We have large, very professional ensembles and famous stars, but small groups and second-rank artists are invited because foreigners do not possess the necessary competence.' Far from claiming such competence, I replied:

> It is true that we don't understand much about your music and that you know better who are the best musicians. However we do know what is liked and disliked in the West. It's unfortunate that the Western public is uncultivated. They like the singer you named a lot and the organizers aren't interested in finding another. In addition, where we come from they don't like large ensembles which also cost far too much. You know what deserves to be put on, but the concerts that the European public wants to hear are not those that you want to organize, and there's nothing we can do about it.

I had no problems in my work with Uzbek musicians during the two years that followed this conversation; indeed, I sometimes received direct support from the Minister of Culture.

It is easy to laugh at our Asian colleagues in the name of that 'authenticity' which we Westerners sometimes consider our right to demand, when this right is really that of financial means or that of supply and demand. But what are the entertainment professionals in Europe doing to promote this authenticity? Many are happy to produce the same artists all year long, in such a way that some feel obliged to find new formulas so as not to bore the public. The market rule of 'one star per country'[36] protects the organizers from any risks and relieves them of the need to 'explore the territory' to discover new talent.

Faced with this situation, I believe that it is ethnomusicologists' duty to leave their precious studies from time to time and descend into the show business arena. Having learnt everything they want to know from their 'informants', it is incumbent upon them to 'pay back', to reciprocate the hospitality that they have enjoyed, invite their friends to their own country and introduce them to a new public. The development of the musicians' art will benefit enormously from the radical re-centring of their performance through this exchange. On their side, the ethnomusicologists will

understand many things by observing the musicians in totally different contexts, faced with other musical cultures or other conditions and experiences. Their response to an ethical demand, therefore, also carries appreciable methodological advantages.

Notes

[1] The term Inner Asia refers to a wider geographical region than Central Asia, including Iran, Azerbaijan and Pakistan.

[2] Transoxania (in Islamic sources *mâvarâ an-nahr*) means 'beyond the Oxus river', and refers to the territory of contemporary Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The term is widely used in these countries.

[3] Shamanism, which in an Islamic form is widespread in Transoxania, was suppressed by the Soviets. Male ritualists suffered the most because local custom, which was stronger than the Soviet revolution, kept strangers away from female circles. Thus today most shamanic ritualists (*bakshi*) are women.

[4] In both Uzbek and Tajik the long â is transcribed o, as in *bolshoï* in Russian, which has eventually made people pronounce the â like an o. The instruments that are called *satar* and *rawap* in Uyghur are pronounced *sato(r)* and *rubob* in Uzbek and Tajik. The Arab h is frequently mixed up with the x (kh). A notice at the entrance to an Uzbek bazaar for example may read *haridaringiz ucun raxmat* instead of *xaridaringiz ucun rahmat* ('thank you for your shopping'). The analogy with musical intervals is striking: the Azerbaijani A half-flat disappeared in the 1930s or 1940s and sometimes turned into an A, sometimes an A flat. Uzbek and Tajik scales have suffered from the same slippage towards the tempered scale. Certain instruments (or musicians) have kept something of the old intervals: thus the scales of the *dutôr* and *rabâb* (whose status is less canonical) are tempered, while that of the *tanbur* is not. When the *dutôr* and *tanbur* are played together, the player compensates for the inequalities by playing with the left hand by pulling and pushing the strings.

[5] The canonical repertoire (*radif*) was published for the first time in 1962, very late for a country with such enthusaism for academic publications. M.T. Mas'udie's transcription of the sung *radif* was not published until 1978, and During's transcription of the most widespread *radif* in 1991.

[6] After independence there were moves towards Persianizing the Tajik language, but official directives have sought to reverse this trend, to the extent that it is now forbidden to use the Arabic script in public places. Modern Persian terms, such as *dâneshgâh* (university) or *havâpeymâ* (aeroplane), were adopted then abandoned again and their Russian equivalents reinstated (*universitet*, *samaliot*). The clumsiness of Iranian diplomacy is in part responsible for this rejection.

[7] He played a Uzbek *dutôr* melody in which the third fret, corresponding to an E flat minor third (if the instrument is tuned in C) had to be played a quarter-tone higher. As this fret no longer exists, the master gave us an idea of this interval by playing an E flat F flat *vibrato*, which corresponds exactly to the blue note in blues guitar music. Uyghur instrumentalists playing the Muqam on *tämbür* or *satar* also commonly use this kind of vibrato.

[8] In this regard the following dialogue between the author and a young Bukhari woman is revealing: 'Are you Uzbek or Tajik?' 'Uzbek of course: I live in Uzbekistan.' 'Do you speak Uzbek or Tajik?' 'Uzbek more, especially as all the lessons at school are in Uzbek.' 'Which language do you speak at home?' 'Tajik.' 'So your family is Tajik?' 'We're Bukhari, so we know Uzbek, Tajik and Russian.' She had also learnt Arabic through reciting the Koran with her grandmother.

[9] *Biô ke zolf-e kaju o chashme sormasâ injâst* . . . .

[10] The state radio paid them according to a precise hierarchical system of relatively generous payments, particularly for the most famous artists. Today, in contrast, musicians pay to be played on the radio or appear on television, because they regard it as a publicity operation.

[11] Even though certain orchestral arrangements possess some charm. This comes from the polyphonic potential of Kazakh and Kyrgyz music developed in the interactions of long-necked lutes (*dombra*, *komuz*). The Uzbek, Tajik and Uyghur traditions do not have the same potential.

[12] On the occasion of a concert organized by an NGO in 2001 in one Kazakh town, the governor had the consideration and courtesy to requisition a whole barracks, giving the young soldiers a few hundred armchairs, so that the foreign organizers would not be humiliated by having a hall only a quarter full.

[13] In spite of this fault, an official decision was not the cause of the spontaneous appearance of the Uzbek *rubôb* in the 1930s. Rather, it came about as the response to a need which was later satisfied by adopting the Azerbaijani *târ*.

[14] Sympathetic strings generate natural frequencies that reinforce diatonic intervals. However, they produce dissonance when they are tuned in three-tone or five-quarter scales (Near Eastern and Iranian scales). Thus instruments with resonating or sympathetic strings are found only in diatonic systems, i.e. India, Afghanistan, Xinjiang, 18th-century Europe, etc. This is why the Iranians wanted to get rid of these strings on the *rabâb* and the *sorud* (or *qeychak*). One understands as well that, by abandoning popular melodies in order to follow the Indianized manner of Kabul, Herat *dotar* players transformed their two-stringed lute with 'Iranian' intervals into a sort of 'Indian *sitar*' with sympathetic strings. The same process ended up by transforming the Tajik *satâr*.

[15] The *satô* players to whom I lent traditional Middle Eastern bows were convinced of their superiority over the ones that they normally used. However, that was not enough to make them change their ways. In Central Asia profound change very often comes about through official directives because strength of custom generally dominates personal initiative.

[16] Without forgetting the worst of all: the eradication of music by the *Talibân*.

[17] Interestingly, the Azeri *tars* played in Transoxania preserve several of the original frets (tone minus one or two commas, weak minor third, etc.) but these are *never* played. Very rarely does a player have the idea of removing these useless frets. The foreign product is kept in the state it was when imported, just as they do not take off the labels stuck on radio-cassette players or the nylon covers on new cars.

[18] Sâdeq Asadoghlu invented the Azeri *târ* around 1870 to replace the Persian *târ* in the Caucasus. Apart from its intrinsic merits as an instrument, it had the advantage of strengthening the identity of the young Azeri nation, whose political links with Iran had been cut in 1828.

[19] This comes from the fact that the violins produced in Central Asia are often of low quality, as well as from the construction of the *qijak* (its skin, strings, bridge, etc.) which produces a more aggressive sound than that produced by its Persian and Azeri equivalents.

[20] However, more than 60 years ago the two silk *dotâr* strings were replaced by steel ones in the Turkish, Kurdish, Tajik, Turkmen and Qaraqalpak traditions of Greater Khorasan. Gut, silk or, if this is unobtainable, nylon, but never metal, strings are still used on the similar Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Uyghur lutes.

[21] Principally the Göklen and Yomud ethnic groups.

[22] A rare exception is the five hours of film of the masters Turgun Alimatov (*sato*, *tanbur*, *dutôr*), Abdorahim Hamidov and Shuhrat Razzaqov (*dutôr*) that, thanks to a small subsidy from AKMICA, we recorded with Bertrand Duageron. These unique recordings, which could play an important role in transmitting the instrumental art, have never been copied or broadcast because of a lack of support. The same is true of a four-hour video recording

I made, which was synchronically filmed by Saodat Isma'ilova, of the great Kyrgyz *komuz* masters Nurak Abdurahman and Balosh Madazimov (who died soon after the recording).

[23] Students from other towns and cities are not allowed to reside in the capital after their studies unless they join an institution or gain a place on a doctoral course.

[24] He was so popular that people changed the name of the city from which he hailed (Taraz), into his own name (Jambul).

[25] I have noticed this several times. Once, when filming, a famous bard was asked to play with his closest disciple. Not only did they not make sure their instruments were in tune, but, one playing and then the other replying, each sang in their own key without making the least effort to find the other's pitch. The famous Turko-Kurdish bard Soleymâni often performs with his son in the West, but their *dotârs* are never properly in tune with each other and their frets give slightly different notes.

[26] Turgun plays the *tanbur* with a *satô* bow equally marvellously and also has his own style of *dutôr* playing.

[27] This honour was created for Shoberdi Bakhshi (Baltaev), and was also given to the Qaraqalpak Jumabey Bazarov and the Khwarazmi Nôrbek Bakhshi.

[28] All instrumentalists read musical notation but, staying faithful to the spirit of tradition, they use it very little, simply as an aid to memory. The instrumental masters of the old generation whom I have known, such as Shahnâzi, Fortuan, Hormozi, Ebâdi, Borumand, Bahâri, Kasâi, Bigjekhâni and others, had nothing to do with musical notation. Today, however, notation is sometimes used in private teaching at elementary level. It seems that middling musicians want to give themselves some legitimacy by resorting to notation as a symbol of 'scientific' music.

[29] This famous rhythm must have appeared strange to early musicologists because Ouspensky transcribed it in 8 beats (in 1924). Later it was decided that it was made up of two sections: 3/4 and 3/8, and it has been written in this manner ever since. This comes down to cutting it simply into 2+1. Now, a rapid phenomenological or comparative examination has led me to conclude that the measure should be heard as 2/2 (or 4/4)+5/4, with a stress on the first and fifth beats. This structure is in fact typically Turkic. It is the foundation of the Anatolian *zeybek* genre, and is also found in the Mevlevi *ayin* (*usul* Evfer), and in certain *Ikkinchi dastan näghmä* of the Uyghur *On ikki Muqam*. The master Abdurahim Hamidov was convinced by my argument and decided to transcribe the *Shashmaqom Sawt* in 4+5.

[30] There are a few cases when he accompanies himself on a fiddle, such as the Qaraqalpak *zhyraus* (singers of epics) and certain Baluchis.

[31] For more details on the question of intervals, see During (1999, 2004).

[32] In particular the measures given by Mehdi Barkeshli.

[33] It should be stressed that Turkic musical traditions are based on intervals from the diatonic scale and *do not have three-quarter tones*. Exceptions (in a part of Anatolia and in the maqâmic music of Turkey and Azerbaijan) are due to loans and the return to diatonic intervals can be seen as a strengthening of a feeling of identity. That, in any case, was the opinion of Turkish intellectuals at the time of Ataturk.

[34] In most cases, income from foreign sources is subject to heavy taxes.

[35] In order to be discreet and to respect this person's art we will not divulge any names.

[36] Azerbaijan = Alim Qasimov, Iran = Shajarian, Uzbekistan = Monajat Yulchieva, Pakistan = Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (since his death no replacement has yet been found), Afghanistan = Khoshnavâz, South India = Subramaniam, North India = one soloist per instrument, etc.

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