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Bukhara Broadway

Sound Tracks of Emigration

by Jean-Claude Kuner

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Atmosphere: train journey / women singing

Announcement:

Bukhara Broadway

Sound Tracks of Emigration

A feature by Jean-Claude Kuner

Original English: Jumaev

When I talk about maqam to a European audience I try to compare it with European symphony music. Symphonic music in Europe is something on the top of culture. The same position in Central Asia urban culture belongs to Shashmaqam.

Author:

**Shashmaqam has the same significance in Central Asia
as symphonic music in Europe.**

Music

Original: tour guide

Architecture, literature and philosophy are all very closely connected. Our shashmaqam is always slow, slow, slow, slowly rising. That is because of love that is how I see it!

Where was shashmaqam performed?

Ah ... I am not a great expert.

But as far as you know as a tour guide?

Well they had so-called evenings. 10, 20 friends somewhere in a tea house. Make a plov and choose a topic. It can be philosophy, it can be love. And each one tells a rubai, then they drink!

I witnessed this, as a child. Because my father did this too. Then of course this music especially this drum. The drum is very important with us. Like a conductor for the music. Slow, slow that is interesting!

You have to feel it all rather than know it ... !

Music

Poetry:

**When you love, to part from your beloved
brings pain, oh friends.**

**How much parting can I bear? I grieve
for my lover, oh friends.**

Poetry:

Do not reproach me for my solitude.
I was courted once by a gentle rider,
swift in the saddle, oh friends.

Original English: Yuhan

Maqam is music about love, about – I am not afraid of saying – about sex it is about the relationship between woman and man on a very very deep level. It is politics too. It's history. That's what maqam is about.

Author:

Maqam is about love.
Relationships.
Politics and history.

Poetry:

Grant me kindness and pass me a brimming cup
from time to time, oh friends.
Drink the wine, for driven by destiny
we have sought much and found nothing.

Original: Angelika Jung

The texts are classical Persian and Uzbek poems, ghazals, which are always about love. But in different ways. And usually it is left entirely open, so that anyone can identify with it in some way. It is aspiring to higher things, as you can tell even from the nature of the music.

Poetry:

When your beloved
invites you to be one with him,
thank him for it.
Navoi however
is deeply distressed
by his loneliness, oh friends.

Atmosphere Bukhara - market

Atmosphere in the background: the Maqams' titles

Author:

The shashmaqam, which translates as: 'six maqams', consists of six suites with hundreds of instrumental and vocal parts.

Nobody knows when this tremendous body of music and mystical poetry first emerged. It evolved over many hundreds of years before its definitive form coalesced in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries. At the court of the Emir of Bukhara – which now lies in Uzbekistan.

Original English: Ark Fortress – guided tour

We stand here inside of Ark. Here was the residence of the Emir. This is the way to the coronation courtyard.

We are inside the coronation courtyard of the fortress Ark that was mostly used for the ritual things, but also for the singing of the shashmaqam. When the Emir had special meetings, he invited the shashmaqam singers. They started to sing after the sign of the Emir and usually the very famous singers were invited. Levicha Babakhanov. He was the favourite of the last Emir of Bukhara and to the order of him he sang something for the gramophone. It was specially ordered by the Emir to preserve his music.

Levicha Babakhanov was from the Jewish community. But I would like to add that the Jewish community gave a lot of the famous musicians.

Author:

The Ark Fortress perches high above the city of Bukhara on an artificially constructed hill.

It is a steep climb up to the Coronation Courtyard, where Mohammed Alim Khan, the last Emir of Bukhara and a great music-lover, held audience and had shashmaqam played to mark official occasions. By both Muslim and Jewish musicians. Centuries living peacefully side by side. Until in 1920 the Red Army forced the Emir to flee to Afghanistan – depriving the court musicians of a job.

The musicians sat on this side and began to play at a sign from the Emir.

Levicha Babakhanov was his favourite singer, and the Emir so admired his signing that in 1910 he had his voice recorded on shellac.

Levicha was a Jew, like many of the other musicians. He died in 1926 in mysterious circumstances.

Music: Levicha Babakhanov

Original: Ari introduces himself

Author:

Leipzig

Original: Ari (playing on his instrument)

This is my grandfather's tambour. Later my father played it.

Author:

Ari Babakhanov, born in 1934, Levicha's grandson, is one of the

few remaining masters who understand shashmaqam in all its facets.

Original: Ari

Ota Jalol, on znatok Shahmaqoma i kak minister kulturi....

Author:

Ota Jalol was a musician and minister of arts at the Emir's court. One day, as he was walking around the area, he heard a voice, and he thought: who can that be? My grandfather sang for him and Jalol was delighted that at last he had found a suitable voice. Unusually for a man, he could sing three octaves

without any effort.

Any teacher is pleased to find a pupil. They didn't have notation in those days ... so for the masters it was particularly important to find suitable pupils, so that they could pass on their knowledge.

The next day Jalol reported back to the Emir, who wanted to hear him at once. Grandfather was 20 years old then, and Jalol was 60 already. His voice was starting to fail him, and he could not hit the high notes as well as before.

Music: Levicha

Original: Ari

Otnosheyne emira k moyemu dedushku.....

Author:

The relationship between the Emir and my grandfather was very close. But after the Revolution that caused problems. Rumours were put about. When the Emir had to leave the country in 1920, my grandfather was no longer allowed to sing his poems.

After the Revolution, Samarkand was made the capital. Many musicians moved there, including my grandfather. One day he had visitors.

'Let's go and have a beer. Toast the Revolution!'

Grandfather was gullible. He was in the best of health and only 52 years old. And then, suddenly, he died. They must have put something in his beer. Poisoned him.

I don't know why he was killed. Lenin had issued an order to kill all religious officials in the Soviet empire, as they were no longer needed.

Music: Levicha, then Moshe Babakhanov

Poetry:

Fill the rose beds with the blossom of
musk hyacinths,
Let the curls fall across your cheek, and
hold this world entranced;

Music: Moshe Babakhanov

Original English: Kim

During the Soviet time in the twenties and thirties all the traditional scales were forbidden. After 70 years now many generations only got used to new ear experiences. And only few of the real musicians tried to keep all these scales and traditions orally.

Author:

Our traditional scales were forbidden by the Soviets.
Our musicians lost their ear as a result. Only a few
saved the traditions and passed them on orally.

Artjom Kim – Uzbek composer.

Music: Moshe Babakhanov

Poetry:

Let your gaze float skywards like the bubble
from the beaker
and learn from this how stable is
the world's design.
The time of the roses teaches us to go swiftly,
for life fleets by,
O taverner, hurry to pour us

the rose-coloured wine.

Original: Ari

Mi s nim xodili po svadbab po vecheram....

Author:

We went along to weddings and heard the songs sung by our fathers. We grew up with it and we learned it all by ear.

In Soviet times, nobody banned it exactly, but it was considered undesirable, because poets had been discredited as mystics. They simply had no place in socialist ideology.

Poetry:

O smell the scent of violets, caress the curls
of the lovely girl,

O soak up the colour of tulips, and drain
the full cup.

The time of roses shows to leave,
as life hurries:

Music: Moshe Babakhanov

Author:

The six suites of the shashmaqam reflect the metamorphosis of our consciousness and our soul.

Poetry:

... caress the curls
of the lovely girl,
O soak up the colour of tulips, and drain
the full cup. O learn to be.

Author:

As in Sufism, the ecstatic crescendo of the music puts worldly experience behind us. We return to God.

The number six also symbolises the creation of the world.

Poetry:

O learn to be, so that your being
never
shatters fruitless and futile
in your hand.

Original: Jung

I think so too, that the shashmaqam was designed to take people through different stages of suffering and joy, and in that way purge the soul.

Author:

Musicologist Angelika Jung, who worked with Ari Babakhanov to publish his notation of the Bukhara shashmaqam in 2010.

Original: Jung

In the end it is a kind of liberation. The listener passes through these different phases of tension and release, just as the singer does. And in the end there is resolution.

Original: tour guide

Officially Bukhara is 2700 years old, but in reality the city is even older. And since time immemorial about 10 % of the inhabitants had been Jews. Sadly, in the nineties, with all the political changes, the economic problems many Jews emigrated. To Israel, to Europe, to the United States. Our neighbour is Jewish, too.

This is a Jewish neighbourhood. And it's interesting ... today we have what they call Bukhara Jews ... and they speak Persian. Basically I think there isn't such a big difference between Jews and Arabs. The Arabs say Salam aleikum, the Jews say Shalom alechem.

It's just a pity that there are now so few Jews ... about 300 families.

Nowadays they are Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz ... this is all the result of Soviet policy. The city had always been a huge trading centre. And everything was open.

(Walking)

This narrow streets. So-called Jewish quarter. Straight ahead, then left, please. A pretty street. I think this is much better, left please! This is the Central Asian lifestyle. These narrow streets. These little doorways. But inside can be beautiful!

Right!

So this is the Jewish quarter. Here a synagogue, here a synagogue. Jewish school. People living here.

(rings)

The synagogue, here! You can go in

Here, please, the Jews

Synagogue is 420 years old.

Here you see a thora. 500 years old.

In the old days there were 25,000 Jews here in Bukhara. Now 300 remain.

They went to Israel, France, America, emigrated to Israel.

Original: Ari

Kagda uyejzayesh, govoryat predatel....

Author:

If someone emigrated, they called him “traitor”. He had sold his country and run away. In Russia, Uzbekistan, in many cities, after 1991 they betrayed people and took away all they had. It was terrible.

Not a single political leader, either in Russia, or in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan or Kazakhstan, said then that the Jews are natives with old roots here. “Your home is here, stay here.” Nobody said that. Many of us were frightened that we had no future here at all anymore.

Original: NYC

Original English: Mark – trip through Queens

The area over here is Forest Hills

It is one of the higher end areas of Queens ... Most people are from the Central Asian region. Because Bukharians lived in a few countries of this area. I show you now a few houses

Author:

Mark Kandharov, 25, law student, born in Dushanbe,

Tajikistan. When the country gained its independence, there was anarchy and civil war, with attacks on the Jewish population. His entire family emigrated to the United States.

There are about 60,000 Bukharian Jews in American, some 40,000 of them here in Queens. They came from different parts of the former Emirate of Bukhara.

Forest Hills, a prosperous area of Queens, reflects the economic success of emigration from Bukhara. Many found their fortunes in the diamond trade.

Original English: Aronov

Because ... when something happens, it is easy to get out. A piece of diamond costs so much money. So if the revolution comes you can take it with you. You can't take your assets, not take your car, not take your home. Something that good is easy to move.

Author:

When something happens, fleeing with diamonds is easier.

The houses of Bukharian Jews are simple to distinguish: brickwork and hefty metal gates.

Yes, there is even a kosher sushi restaurant!

In Forest Hills, around 108th Street, the cultural mix is obvious. Russia, Middle East, Bukhara. And all with a touch of America.

(in a shop)

The Bukharians work very hard. The whole family help out. They are doing better and better.

Original: Mosque prayers

Original: Ari

Delo v tom shto, ne nado zabivat, shto mi jili v musulmasnkom strane.....

Author:

We should not forget that we were living in a Muslim country. Strict religious leaders did not approve of music. Music was the tool of the devil. It makes you lose your mind, as if you are drunk. It can lull you to sleep or make you jump for joy. This hold over the emotions was considered to be dangerous.

That is why the musicians did not play cheerful music, but slow, calming, melancholy music. They were afraid of the clerics. That is what things are like now in Afghanistan, too. The Taliban prohibit music, and if you do not obey them, you get your head chopped off.

Original English: Rafael Nektalov

Somebody asks me: why are Jewish people so talented in music? Opera, shashmaqam, Indian music The secret of this is that we have music tradition inside in culture, in everyday traditions. I.e. if you ask Muslim people how many times they sing? How many times they dance? Only if they have a wedding party. One time, that's it. Bukharian people sing every day in synagogue. Shabbat, it's like competition. You can hear how many people have beautiful voices. Everybody sings. Everybody wants to be a singer.

They sing every day! Every week. On Shabbat they go to synagogue singing. Later in Carnegie Hall they may sing again!

Author:

Rafael Nektalov was a musical scholar in Uzbekistan and since he emigrated in 1992 he has been publishing the Bukharian Times in Queens.

What made the Jews such talented singers? They would sing every day in the synagogue. Not like the Muslims, who only used to sing and dance at weddings.

For us the Sabbath is like a singing contest.
Everyone wants to be a singer. In the synagogue on the
Sabbath, and with any luck later in Carnegie Hall!

(Singing)

Original English: Rafael Nektalov

Of course it's Tajik and Uzbek culture. But the Jewish part of this music is very important.

Author:

Of course, the shashmaqam is Tajik and Uzbek culture.
But the Jewish input was very important.

Original English: Rapport

What a career is shashmaqam singer in New York? The shashmaqam continues to live and be adapted and absorbed. But so what! To know 250 shashmaqam melodies and can play all the six suites who cares in New York? Nobody!

I think that the vibrancy of the shashmaqam repertoire is extremely exciting and strong in New York. I see a tremendous amount of creativity. They are using the shashmaqam creatively. Ezra Malakov wants to set every song to music using shashmaqam melodies. Ezra is using the mushkilat, the instrumental melodies. That's never been done. It's never been used for vocal setting.

That's cool!

Author:

The New York music ethnologist Evan Rapport.

A career as a shashmaqam singer in New York?
Unimaginable!

Who cares here if you can play all six suites their 250
melodies? Nobody.

People are very creative here. Ezra Malakov wants to
be the first to turn instrumental melodies from the
shashmaqam into new songs.

Original English: Ezra Malakov/Aron Aronov

We had our own melodies and happened to be in Uzbekistan. That influenced local melodies too. So it was sort of a mixture. Jewish and ... Maybe if we would have been in Russia, there would be Russian influences.

But is it possible that melodies sung in the synagogue entered the shashmaqam?

Yes. Melodies yes, but not the texts.

(sings)

Some parts went from theirs to ours and vice versa, from us to them.

Some melodies don't resemble shashmaqam.

(sings)

It is how we perform the prayer.

I wouldn't say that shashmaqam belongs only to Tajik and Uzbek people. People in Tajikistan say we are founder of the shashmaqam. People who performed it in Bukhara say it's Uzbek. But to be exact it is a Central Asian music.

Author:

Most of all they like to speak Bukhori, a Persian dialect. Ezra Malakov and Aron Aronov are old friends who have spent most of their life in Uzbekistan and are now trying, in New York, to preserve the traditions and culture of their homeland for future generations.

Ezra Malakov knows the shashmaqam repertoire just as well as he knows the Jewish music of Bukhara, with its roots that reach back to biblical times.

Have tunes from the synagogue influenced shashmaqam?

Yes! Our melodies were absorbed into shashmaqam. Just as our shashmaqam melodies were absorbed into our religious singing.

Shashmaqam is neither purely Tajik nor purely Uzbek music, as people like to claim these days. It is music for Central Asian as a whole.

Original : Rapport

You have a lot of Jewish performers and a lot of them ended up in New York as a natural place for them to go. Here in New York they immigrated at a time when this sort of was the mainstream ideology at work here. And it was very similar to these nationalistic policies. Here we are Bukharian Jews and this is our music. They have the

freedom to say that. In Uzbekistan people are going to say: What do you say? You are Bukharian Jews and that is your music? What do you mean? It is Uzbek music!

Author:

It's only natural that so many Jewish musicians ended up in New York. It was the fashion to be multicultural. But ultimately that is merely an ideology, just like in the Central Asian countries, except with different content.

Here the Bukharian Jews have the freedom to say: the shashmaqam is "our" music. Something that would have been out of the question in Uzbekistan.

It has to be Uzbek music.

Music

Original: Ari

Antisemitismus bil, no on ne bil antesimitistim, Ota Jalol...

Author:

There was always some anti-Semitism, of course. But not with Ota Jalol and the Emir. God doesn't care about nationality when he grants somebody a fine voice.

Art knows no anti-Semitism.

Music

Poetry:

While knowledge is your quest, wisdom
shuns your path.

I tell you: Gaze not on yourself,
and inherit freedom.

Original English: Street in Bukhara / Valeria

Do Jewish families have a harder life here than the Uzbeks?

No, in general it is the same.

Jews who had enough money mostly emigrated to other countries. Most of the Jewish people who were staying are mostly poor or old.

Author:

Is life harder for Jewish families here in Bukhara than for Uzbeks?

Valeriya Kraeva from the Jewish Centre in Bukhara, a social institution funded from America.

Whoever had enough money emigrated. It's the old and the poor who remained.

Original English: Street in Bukhara / Valeria

So what is the reason that most of the people left?

Author:

What was the main reason why people left?

Divided families wanted to be together. Many wanted a better life for their children as well.

So it wasn't the problems people had after 1991?

No! It's just that the open borders made it easier to emigrate!

Original English: Street in Bukhara / Valeria

Some of them want to live with their families. Others are searching for better perspectives. Better job. Some wanted their children to get a better education.

Jews had problems, no? After '91? This way?

Yes, we go to the right.

No, I don't think so. Because the borders became open and it became easier to emigrate.

That's the main reason?

Yes.
Stop. We have arrived.
(Knock)
(Singing)
Welcome!

Author:

The Borochovs are a religious family, one of the few remaining Jewish families in Bukhara.

They don't have much income. The two adult sons have to help out in the photography business.

At home, like so many families in the old days, they make music. Or sing prayers to shashmaqam melodies.

Original Mrs Borochov

Iza eto, iza togo shto u nas netu devushek i parney...

Author:

But it's hard now, laments the mother, for the younger ones to find a Jewish partner to marry. That is why more and more of them are leaving. Like her daughter, who has gone to America.

How they are really faring in their dwindling community she does not dare tell.

Everything is fine. Then she heaps praise on their protector, President Karimov, who has ruled here since independence. Outside Uzbekistan he is seen as a dictator.

Original English: Gavriel Borochov

We need 10 men in order to pray. Very often

You don't have enough people?!

Yes!

Author:

As prayer leader, her son Gavriel has trouble finding ten Jewish men to pray each day. Without them, worship cannot take place.

He, too, would rather go to New York.

Atmosphere: Gavvirel Borochoy praying

Original: Reciting an ancient Uzbek poem

Atmosphere: Music school

Original: Ari

Uchitel k studentu uchil dolgiye godi....

Author:

The pupil had to spend many, many years learning it from his teacher: 10 years, 15 years.

In those days it was all done by ear. Nobody knew about notation. That is how things were passed on from one generation to the next.

Atmosphere: conservatory, teacher – pupil

Author:

In all Eastern cultures, teaching is oral, based on the teacher to pupil principle. The teacher plays, the pupil repeats.

Original: Yulduz Turdieva

Maquam...

Author:

A lifetime is not enough to learn the whole shashmaqam. It is extremely demanding. From the rhythm to understanding the texts. And it is a considerable strain on the voice.

It took the young singer Yulduz Turdieva, an Uzbek maqam star, ten years to learn just three of the six suites.

Hours of practice over several weeks for just one song.

Original English: Jumaev

Soviet policy was very conservative. They made it as a stable text. Notated. No changes. Please keep it without changing it. And that was the reason that a very important thing for maqam music like creativity has disappeared.

Author:

Alexander Jumaev, musicologist in Tashkent.

Soviet cultural policy was very conservative. The shashmaqam was notated and fixed. No more changes were allowed. What had been a living tradition until that point therefore lost a vital component: the creativity that gave rise to regional differences.

Atmosphere: Osh – Abror Zufarov

Author:

In Uzbekistan and in Tajikistan there are efforts to reconstruct and preserve the original shashmaqam, which has been losing its audience.

The shashmaqam used to be heard at every wedding celebration. But it is hardly ever played now at the Osh, the traditional early-morning get-together for men before a wedding. Nor at the evening parties, now that young people prefer dancing to pop music.

And so professional musicians are finding it hard to live from the shashmaqam alone.

Is Osh the right place for it?

Abror Zufarov – grandson of the famous musician Turun Alimatov – complains that at Osh he can only play one or two pieces from the shashmaqam. If he plays more, people are soon bored.

So what do you do after Osh?
After Osh ...?
You go to bed?
Yes!

He has been performing at Osh ceremonies for four days in a row. They are held from 5 to 8 in the morning. In cold, unheated halls where up to 400 men consume the traditional rice dish plov in silence.

Because after yesterday for example early I have been in Osh. After Osh to the conservatory, there I was teaching. After conservatory restaurant! After the restaurant again Osh in the early morning. No sleep!
So we should let you go to sleep now!

All he wants to do now is go to bed.

Poetry:

**Spring clouds scurry
and a new-year breeze rises;
Tell me, minstrel, has everything arrived
that men need to make wine?**

**I doubt not that fortune will look fondly on me,
for today
as I prayed, the true morning
kissed my brow.**

Original: Ari:

Pedesyat u menya bil gotov, devenosta sedmom godu
u menya bil gotov....

Author:

In 1997 I wanted to publish my version of the Bukhara shashmaqam. I took my notes to the Ministry of Culture in Bukhara. I neither heard from them again, nor did they return my manuscript. It was lost. I hadn't made a copy.

After he emigrated to Germany, he did the work all over again with the help of musicologist Angelika Jung.

Music: Moshe Babakhanov

Author:

Some musicians salvaged the shashmaqam in its original form throughout the Soviet era. Behind closed doors. In private. Just as Muslims and Jews resumed the practise of their once forbidden religions.

Original: Ari

Bili bucharski evereii, cotni

Author:

There are many Jews who have great knowledge of shashmaqam and perform it.... But officially we are given no recognition, nor are we allowed to participate. Neither in Uzbekistan nor in Tajikistan.

Original: door / Koran singer / tour guide

-And where are we now?

Now comes the so-called ancient city. The renaissance for Bukhara was the 9th/10th century. Culturally highly advanced country. Beautiful country. Rich country.

(children)

Empire was big. Afghanistan and Iran were part of it.

-What languages do the children speak?

We have just spoken Tajik, but in school they learn Uzbek.

(children)

At home he speaks Uzbek. He speaks Tajik.

-And to each other?

The language of the street is Tajik. Because we are Bukharians.

-Did they just speak Tajik to each other?

Yes. And with me, too. That is the way we live.
(children call)

Music: Shashmaqam college rehearsal

Author:

Bukhara was a multicultural city long before the term became fashionable in the West. With different religions and languages. That was all reflected in the music. And that includes the originally bilingual shashmaqam, with its Tajik, Uzbek and Jewish musicians and its Persian and Uzbek poems.

Original English: Ted Levin

..... It's been cut off

Music: Shashmaqam college rehearsal

Atmosphere: New York – Queens

Original English: Aronov – Bukhara Museum

I have a very good map which shows how we were labelled the Bukharian Jews. And how we happen to be here.

Author:

Aron Aronov with his Bukharian Museum in Queens is preserving the history and culture of his native city. He speaks ten languages and interpreted for President Nixon when he visited Uzbekistan in the 1960s.

The overflowing museum is bursting at the seams. A colourful portrayal of everyday life in Uzbekistan, in the middle of New York. But also of a long history of emigration, which began in biblical times and ended in the 21st century.

Original English: Aronov

So ... that's the life of Jews. They have to move to be safe!

Author:

That is the fate of Jews: they have to stay on the move if they want to be safe.

Original English: Aronov

What I want to say about the Uzbek and Tajik people in Central Asia. We lived like brothers and sisters. We left Russia not because of these people. We left because of the Soviet communist system, which was incompatible with our way of life.

Author:

We felt like brothers and sisters to the Tajiks and Uzbeks. We did not leave because of them, but because of the communists, who were at odds with our way of life.

Original English: Aronov

We go miles and miles and miles, and we never stop.
That is the success of life. You have to be active, and go and move. Move!

Author:

**We are always wandering. We never stop.
That is the key to success in life: be active and keep moving!**

Original English: Aronov

Come here!
To show the children how we lived. I created a backyard
Sit down on this bench.
(Music)
This brings people back they burst into the tears. It reminds them of their life.
Now it is freedom Still ... because you can go to synagogue free. But it is too late.
I wish it would have been 25, 50 years before. I wish my parents saw it.
We were hiding. We were closing the doors. We were praying very whispering. So today ... situation is when we go there they say we miss you. We go back and forth. They come here. But

To tell you the truth we here in America enjoy our way of life. But there is another problem. Assimilation problem.

Author:

The older ones start crying when they hear this music.
It reminds them of home.

True, there is more freedom in Uzbekistan nowadays.
But for us it is too late. The tide of emigration could
no longer be stemmed.

I wish it had happened 50 years ago and my parents
could have witnessed it. In the old days we had to
whisper our prayers behind closed doors.

We often go back to Uzbekistan ... But now we are
enjoying our lives in America.

Although there is a new problem here now:
assimilation.

Atmosphere: Wedding celebrations in Queens

Original English: Yuhan

Now ... our Bukharian community they are not looking for folk music anymore. They
are American.

That's what we do ...

That's how they celebrate.

It's not Europe. It's the United States.

That's a Bukharian wedding.

United States is a very big influence on us. You have to be very strong to save your
heritage and your history.

They are still Jews ...

Author:

Our Bukharians here have become Americans. They
don't want Uzbek folk music any more.

Yuhan Benjamin is a wedding entertainer. He organises
the lavish parties, sings, keeps everyone's spirits up,
and takes the videos.

That's how they celebrate these days!

America is a very big influence. A difficult one to

resist.

Music

Poetry:

Like an autumn leaf, I turned yellow when I parted from
your rose-like face,
Oh my tulip-eyed lover!
Have pity on my pale countenance,
when you see it.
Have pity on my pale countenance,
when you see it.
Oh rose, like the cypress you never
relinquish your pride.
But like an autumn leaf I fell at your feet and travelled
far afield.
Stay there in your comfortable garden,
blossoming like a rose.
But I, like an autumn leaf, have flown away,
out of the garden of time.

Original English: Aronov

When we have Jahrzeit, anniversary of your passing parents, we always ask somebody to sing shashmaqam, because it touches your heart.

Author:

On the anniversary of our parents' death we want to hear shashmaqam, because it touches our hearts.

Original English: Aronov

Music is part of life. To make you happy. To make you feel good. To make you relax.

Poetry:

What destiny is mine?
I took the book of heaven like a notebook
and searched it page by page,

and yet I have not found my lucky star.

Original English: Aronov

It is philosophy. It is life. Makes you forget about today's problems.

Author:

Shashmaqam is like philosophy.

It makes you forget your everyday worries.

Poetry:

The reproach and the praise of the world are all one to me, Babur.

Original English: Aronov

The food is just for your body.

The music is for your soul.

Author:

Music is food for your soul.

Poetry:

For in this world I have travelled through good and evil.

Original English: Aronov

You float back into that part of the world where you lived. You close your eyes. You remember your childhood. You differently look up to your life. You take philosophical approach of life.

It touches our hearts.

It is sort of a therapy.

This is what shashmaqam mostly means.

Author:

You are drawn back to your home.

You remember your childhood.

It is like a therapy, and after it you look back on your life with fresh eyes.

That is what shashmaqam means.

Poetry:

While knowledge is your quest, wisdom
shuns your path.
I tell you: Gaze not on yourself,
and inherit freedom.

Credits

BUKHARA BROADWAY

Sound Tracks of Emigration

A feature by Jean-Claude Kuner

The German translations of poetry used for this feature were
by Sigrid Kleinmichel and Friedrich Rückert.

The readers were:

Eva Meckbach and the author

Sound and assistance:

Peter Avar

Directed by:

Jean-Claude Kuner

Produced by:

Gabriela Hermer

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