
**CURRENT ISSUES OF PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL MUSICAL HERITAGE
TRADITIONS**

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Abstract

This article discusses the pressing challenges and necessary reforms related to the preservation and development of Uzbekistan's national musical heritage, particularly classical music traditions. The Uzbek maqom music, which has been preserved and passed down through generations for thousands of years, remains a central part of the nation's cultural identity. Recent governmental initiatives, including the presidential decree aimed at further developing Uzbek maqom art, highlight a renewed commitment to safeguarding this heritage. However, systemic issues persist, such as insufficient training duration in vocational education, a shortage of qualified traditional instrument instructors, and inconsistencies in the quality and dimensions of handcrafted instruments. The article identifies deficiencies in the existing infrastructure, including the lack of specialized departments for traditional performance in music schools and the need for standardized instrument production. It emphasizes the critical role of institutional reforms in education, curriculum enhancement, and the establishment of centralized facilities for instrument manufacturing and repair. Recommendations are provided to ensure continuity, quality, and cultural authenticity in the transmission of national music traditions to future generations.

Keywords: National musical heritage, traditional instruments, maqom music, music education reform, vocational training, instrument craftsmanship, cultural preservation, Uzbekistan, classical music, pedagogical challenges

Introduction

Every nation in the world treasures its national values and classical music traditions as a vital part of its cultural identity. The Uzbek people have preserved their classical music heritage for thousands of years, transmitting it from generation to generation with great reverence. In recent years, the attention given to national music in Uzbekistan—particularly to maqom music—has reached an unprecedented level. A vivid example of this is the Presidential Decree titled “*On Measures for the Further Development of Uzbek National Maqom Art*” (2017), which reflects the state's high respect and commitment to safeguarding this unique cultural asset.

In light of recent reforms, Uzbekistan hosted its first International Maqom Forum in Qarshi, and established regional Maqom Centers, complete with infrastructure and institutional support. However, despite these achievements, numerous challenges remain in the preservation and sustainable transmission of national music traditions. Among these are the need to prepare highly qualified music educators, the inadequate duration of vocational training (reduced from three to two years), and the shortage of professional instructors in traditional instruments such as the *chang*, *qanon*, *ud*, *nai*, and *qoshnai*. These challenges hinder the effective training of students in traditional performance practices.

In addition, the lack of dedicated departments for traditional performance studies in many music and arts schools—and the absence of high-quality, standardized traditional musical instruments—create significant obstacles. The inconsistencies in instrument craftsmanship, particularly in measurements and playability, also affect students' learning experiences. For instance, varying neck lengths of the *ghijjak* across regions result in difficulties in achieving performance standards.

Given the vital role that instrument quality and instructor expertise play in preserving musical traditions, it is imperative to reform the educational structure, increase instructional hours for professional disciplines, and establish centralized factories for the standardized production and repair of traditional instruments. This paper analyzes these current issues and proposes comprehensive recommendations to ensure the continuity and authenticity of Uzbekistan's national musical heritage.

Materials and methods

This study is based on a qualitative analysis of policy documents, field observations, expert interviews, and pedagogical experience related to the preservation of national musical traditions in Uzbekistan. The primary materials used include the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2017) concerning the development of the national maqom art, as well as official reports on the activities of music and arts institutions across various regions. In addition, curricular documents and regulations governing vocational and secondary music education institutions were reviewed.

The methodological framework of the research employs a descriptive and analytical approach to identify and evaluate current problems in the training of traditional instrument performers. Special attention was given to the structural organization of music education at the pre-college level, including the content of programs, duration of training, and the availability of qualified teaching staff. Case studies from several regions—particularly in relation to the availability and quality of traditional instruments such as the *chang*, *qanon*, *ud*, *nai*, *ghijjak*, and *qoshnai*—were analyzed to reveal inconsistencies and systemic issues.

Furthermore, comparative analysis was conducted to assess regional disparities in the construction of traditional instruments, with a focus on variations in the dimensions of key components such as the neck of the *ghijjak*. The lack of standardization and its impact on pedagogical outcomes were critically examined.

To support the research, interviews and informal consultations were conducted with instrument craftsmen, music educators, and students from music colleges and children's schools of music and art. These sources provided valuable insights into practical challenges, skill gaps, and institutional needs. The synthesis of this data allowed the development of a set of recommendations aimed at improving the preservation and transmission of national musical heritage through structural reforms, investment in craftsmanship, and curriculum enhancement.

Results and discussion

The findings of this study reveal several interrelated issues that hinder the effective preservation and transmission of Uzbekistan's national musical heritage. First, the reduction of the vocational training period from three years to two has significantly limited students' ability to achieve mastery in traditional instrument performance. This shortened timeframe is particularly insufficient given the complexity of instruments such as the *chang*, *qanon*, *ud*, *nai*, and *qoshnai*, which require sustained instruction and individualized mentorship.

Second, the study highlights a systemic shortage of qualified instructors in music and art schools, especially those specializing in traditional performance. The absence of "Traditional Performance" departments in many institutions prevents students from receiving structured and specialized education in national musical forms. In some cases, schools lack any formally trained staff for these instruments, resulting in reduced enrollment and declining interest in traditional music among youth.

Third, instrument quality remains a critical concern. Field observations and interviews revealed that many handcrafted instruments used in educational institutions fail to meet basic acoustic and ergonomic standards. Instrument makers often do not play or fully understand the performance requirements of the instruments they craft, leading to inconsistencies in size, structure, and tonal quality. A prominent example is the variation in *ghijjak* neck length across different regions—ranging from 30 to 33 cm—which compromises the instrument's usability and affects student performance.

Fourth, the lack of centralized production facilities and standardized guidelines for instrument manufacturing has resulted in a fragmented and unregulated industry. The establishment of a national-level instrument factory staffed by master craftsmen is urgently needed to improve the consistency, quality, and availability of traditional instruments.

Conclusion

The preservation of Uzbekistan's national musical heritage, particularly maqom and traditional instrumental music, requires a multi-pronged and coordinated strategy. The study demonstrates that current challenges stem from gaps in vocational education, a lack of specialized educators, and serious shortcomings in instrument craftsmanship. To address these issues, several recommendations must be implemented:

- Reassessment of the vocational training structure, with consideration to reintroduce or extend training duration to meet the demands of traditional music education.
- Expansion and improvement of training programs for music instructors specializing in traditional instruments.
- Development of centralized, state-supported factories for the standard production and repair of national instruments.
- Inclusion of "Instrument Making and Restoration" as an official specialization in music and art education institutions.

These measures, when implemented, will ensure the sustainability and growth of Uzbekistan's cultural legacy, and will support the education of a new generation of skilled performers, craftsmen, and cultural ambassadors.

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