



SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PLECTRUM INSTRUMENTS IN UZBEK TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract. This article examines the role of plectrum instruments in Uzbek traditional musical culture, their formation and development, as well as the specific characteristics of their performance practice. Particular attention is paid to the significance of plectrum instruments in the national musical heritage, their distinctive construction, tonal capabilities, and performance techniques. The article also considers the role of such plectrum instruments as the dutar, tanbur, and rubab in folk instrumental performance and professional musical art, the performance traditions transmitted from generation to generation, and their significance in contemporary music education. The study demonstrates that plectrum instruments constitute an important component of Uzbek national musical culture and substantiates the relevance of preserving, safeguarding, and further developing these traditional instruments.

Key words: plectrum instruments, Uzbek musical culture, dutar, tanbur, rubab, national musical instruments, performance art, traditional music, musical heritage.

Kashgar Rubab

The Kashgar rubab began to be used in Uzbekistan from around 1937. An interview with Muhammadjon Mirzayev, a prominent rubab performer and People's Artist of Uzbekistan, indicates that a Uyghur musician was initially performing this instrument in Tashkent. Having seen the rubab, Muhammadjon Mirzayev visited the workshop of Usto Usmon Zufarov, a master craftsman and Honored Art Worker of Uzbekistan, with the intention of having a replica made. It was precisely in 1937 that preparations were underway for Uzbekistan's First Decade of Art and Culture, which was to be held in Moscow, and various musical instruments were being manufactured for this event. In the same year, Usto Usmon made several replicas of the Uyghur rubab brought by Muhammadjon Mirzayev and presented the first Kashgar rubab he produced to him. It is known that this type of rubab was structurally similar to the tanbur: its frets were tied onto the neck, and its tuning was also similar to that of the tanbur. However, in the newly manufactured rubab, the tied frets were replaced with frets made of steel. Its traditional tuning was a fifth-based tuning, corresponding to the pitches **A–D–A**. In subsequent years, the tuning of the redesigned rubab was changed to **A–E–A**, corresponding to a fourth-based tuning.



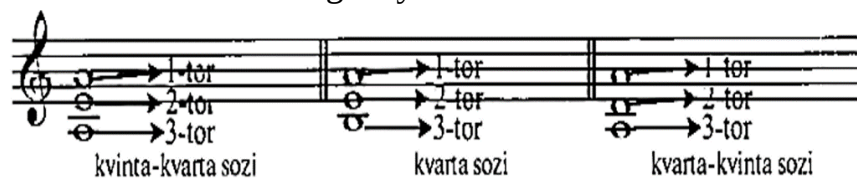
Nevertheless, to this day, Muhammadjon Mirzayev and his son Shavkat Mirzayev have composed numerous musical works using the traditional tuning and have continued to perform them in instrumental and vocal performance styles, as well as in ensemble performance involving two rubabs. In 1937, additional copies of this rubab were produced, and musicians such as Abbos Bahromov, Bo'riboy Mirzaahmedov, and Ergash Shukrullayev began studying the techniques and performance principles of the instrument.



Figure 1. Kashgar rubab

Although the Kashgar rubab originally derives its name from Kashgar, a historical city in Eastern Turkestan (present-day Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China), it has become one of the most widespread and popular instruments among Uzbek national musical instruments. It is estimated that more than 50 percent of those who are beginning to learn music use this instrument. The Kashgar rubab has a bright, resonant, and pleasant sound and is considered one of the instruments that can be mastered relatively quickly. It can be performed both as a solo instrument and as part of instrumental ensembles. Musicians such as Muhammadjon Mirzayev, Ergash Shukrullayev, Shavkat Mirzayev, Qobiljon Usmonov, Sulaymon Taxalov, Ari Bobokhonov, and Tohir Rajabiy made significant contributions to popularizing and promoting this instrument.

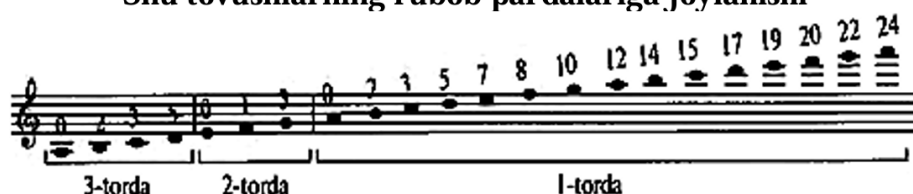
Tuning of the Kashgar Rubab. The first pair of strings of the Kashgar rubab is tuned to the pitch A of the first octave, while the second pair is tuned to E of the first octave, and the third string is tuned to B of the small octave. Depending on the musical composition being performed, the third string may also be tuned to A of the small octave, while the second string may be tuned to D of the first octave.



Tvushlarning nota chiziqlarida joylanishi



Shu tovushlarning rubob pardalariga joylanishi



Diapazoni



Musical compositions written for the Kashgar rubab are notated in the treble clef and sound one octave lower than written.



Afghan Rubab

The Afghan rubab is a very ancient musical instrument. Various sources provide different accounts concerning its historical origin and development. For instance, when describing the musical instruments of his time, al-Farabi (10th century) regarded the ability to achieve different types of performance on the rubab as one of its principal advantages. Darvish Ali (17th century), in his treatise A Treatise on Music, describes the construction of musical instruments and writes that the rubab





is a stringed musical instrument that spread throughout Central Asia during the reign of Ala al-Din Muhammad Khwarazmshah (1200–1220). According to his account, a master rubab player named Mahmud, who was unrivaled in his skill, lived at the court of the Khwarazmshah during this period. The rubab had five strings, four of which were made of silk and one of silver. N. N. Mironov noted the presence of the Afghan rubab in India and stated that in Kashgar it was known as the *rabob*. Professor Fitrat, in his work *The History of Uzbek Classical Music*, relates a legend according to which this instrument was constructed in the city of Balkh during the reign of the Khwarazmian ruler Muhammad Khwarazmshah by an unidentified craftsman. The Afghan rubab has been widely used among the Uzbek people since ancient times, particularly in Bukhara and Samarkand. Its body is large, deep, and wedge-shaped, with indentations on its sides. Its neck is considerably shorter than that of the Kashgar rubab, measuring approximately 8–10 cm, and its upper end is slightly curved backward.

The body and neck are carved from a single piece of wood, most commonly mulberry wood. The neck is divided into frets, while its lower section becomes wider and joins the soundboard, covering the upper part of the body up to the indentations. The remaining part of the body, beyond the indentations, is covered with animal skin. The overall length of the instrument is approximately 70–80 cm. Six or seven additional khashparda frets are installed on its wooden fingerboard. The Afghan rubab is tuned in fourths and has five main strings that produce a melodious tone, as well as 10–11 sympathetic strings stretched toward the tuning pegs and tuned in seconds. The main strings are traditionally made of gut, while the sympathetic strings are made of metal (steel).

The instrument has a diatonic range exceeding one octave.

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