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MODAL-TONIC ORGANIZATION IN THE VARIATIONS COMPOSED BY AZERBAIJANI COMPOSERS

Musical diversity, to a large extent connected with the world around man – climate, relief, biological diversity, nutritional features – has changed along with the world. A special role over the last 300–400 years has been played and is played by urban musical culture, which, as the interdependence and unity of human society has grown, has accumulated much uniformity and other features. The acceleration of the pace and rhythm of life, the development of information technologies have led to an increase in the possibilities of music's influence on the consciousness and feelings of people. The relevance of the study is dictated by the need to study the mechanisms of perception of modern music, which requires special training through education, social conditions and general ideological attitudes of the era. Music complements and sharpens existing ideas about oneself and the world. This is especially true for the national musical genre – mugham. The purpose of the article is to study the features of modality and melodic construction arising from the traditions of mugham in the variation-formal compositions of Azerbaijani composers. The research methodology is based on the structural-analytical method of research, which allowed to consider in detail the dramaturgy of the works, as well as to analyze variability as a method of compositional development. This method made it possible to trace the change in musical parameters, such as tempo, character, melody, harmony, rhythm, tonality and mode. In addition, the author, using the method of comparative analysis, compared the methods of variation in different works of Azerbaijani composers. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that for the first time the author proposed a new analytical approach to the study of Variations for Piano by Fikret Amirov and Tofig Guliyev. In addition, for the first time the tonal organization of the works, melodic-harmonic architecture, rhythmic properties and stylistic diversity of these works were studied. Conclusions. It is concluded that the composers engage with the resources of national mugham with confidence and creative liberty, incorporating its modal-tonal system and melodic structure as foundational principles in their compositional approach. Reflecting on the analytical discourse of the "Variations" created by Azerbaijani composers, the author concludes that the dramatic development of the stages of the work is carried out through variations marked by gradual transformations of character, tempo, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic structures and modal-tonal basis.

Key words: compositional practice, mugham, piano music, variation, modal-tonal structure, melodic construction.

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МОДАЛЬНО-ТОНІЧНА ОРГАНІЗАЦІЯ У ВАРІАЦІЯХ, СКЛАДЕНИХ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСЬКИМИ КОМПОЗИТОРАМИ

Музичне розмаїття, в значній мірі пов'язане із зовнішнім світом-клімат, рельєф, біологічне різноманіття, особливості харчування – змінилося разом зі світом. За останні 300–400 років особливу роль відігравала і про-

довжує грати міська музична культура, яка в міру зростання взаємозалежності і єдності людського суспільства знайшла багато однаковості та інших рис. Прискорення темпу і ритму життя, розвиток інформаційних технологій привели до збільшення можливостей впливу музики на свідомість і почуття людей. **Актуальність дослідження** продиктована необхідністю вивчення механізмів сприйняття сучасної музики, що вимагають спеціальної підготовки через освіту, соціальні умови і загальні ідеологічні установки епохи. Музика доповнює і заго-струє існуючі уявлення про себе і світ. Особливо це стосується національного музичного жанру-мугама. **Метою статті** є вивчення особливостей модальності і мелодійної структури, що впливають з традицій мугама в варіаційно-формальних творах Азербайджанських композиторів. **Методика дослідження** базується на структурно-аналітичному методі дослідження, який дозволяє детально розглянути драматургію творів, проаналізувати варіативність як метод розвитку композиції. Цей метод дозволяв відстежувати зміну музичних параметрів, таких як темп, характер, мелодія, гармонія, ритм, тональність і гармонія. Крім того, автор, використовуючи метод порівняльного аналізу, порівняв варіаційні методи в різних творах Азербайджанських композиторів. **Наукова новизна дослідження** полягає в тому, що автором вперше запропоновано новий аналітичний підхід до вивчення варіацій для фортепіано Фікрета Амірова і Тофіка Гулієва. Крім того, вперше були вивчені тональна організація творів, мелодико-гармонійна архітектура, ритмічні особливості та стилістичне різноманіття цих творів. **Висновок.** Робиться висновок, що Композитори впевнено і творчо вільно звертаються до ресурсів Національного мугама, використовують його модально-тональну систему і мелодійну структуру як основні принципи в своїх композиційних підходах. Розмірковуючи над аналітичним дискурсом «Варіацій», створених азербайджанськими композиторами, автор приходить до висновку, що драматичний розвиток етапів твору здійснюється через варіації, відмічені поступовою зміною характеру, темпу, мелодійних, гармонійних, ритмічних структур і модально-тональної бази.

Ключові слова: композиційна практика, мугам, фортепіанна музика, варіаційна, модально-тональна структура, мелодійна структура.

Introduction.

The relevance of the problem. The dialogue between mugham and composed music, initiated by Uzeyir Hajibeyli, has continued to develop within the field of piano composition, representing a significant aspect of Azerbaijani musical creativity. From this perspective, an investigation into the modal-tonal and melodic characteristics of mugham as reflected in piano works constitutes a topic of particular relevance within contemporary musicological discourse.

Azerbaijani composers have contributed extensively to the piano repertoire across various genres, thereby enriching the nation's musical heritage. Among these contributions, compositions in the form of variations occupy a special place. The analysis of the modal-tonal and melodic architecture of such works foregrounds a number of conceptual issues – chief among them, the internal structure of the variation genre itself. The formal principle of “theme and variations,” grounded in transformation, inherently reflects connections with stylistic and structural features characteristic of mugham.

Studying degree of the problem research issue.

The variation form appears both as an independent compositional structure and as a constituent element within larger cyclic forms, such as sonatas and symphonic works. Since antiquity, variation has been among the most widespread compositional forms across musical cultures, influencing compositional thinking throughout history.

The principle of variation is deeply embedded in both Azerbaijani traditional music and professional compositional practice. At the core of the concept of “variation” lies the notion of “variant.” In her musicological study, I. Pazicheva identifies the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon across traditional genres and composed music. She observes that “variations and the cognitive processes associated with them were formed through collective experience and, over time, acquired semantic depth. In the development of a composer's musical language, such material is selected and processed in accordance with the composer's aesthetic orientation and stylistic position, as well as their affinity with particular layers of orally transmitted improvisational culture” (Abasova, 2020, p. 337).

In Azerbaijani folk songs and dances, ashug melodies (songs and epics performed by singer-poets accompanying themselves on the saz) (Omerov, 2008; Efendiyev, P., 1981), tasnifs (classical lyrical compositions performed before or after mugham, historically patriotic in theme and later focused on love poetry) (Qasimli, Allakhmanli, 2018), renga (instrumental interludes performed between sections of mugham) (Musiqi lugheti, 2015), zarbi (rhythmic) mughams (in which percussion assumes a dominant role, with its rhythmic formulas echoed by the entire instrumental ensemble accompanying the vocalist) (Mustafazade, 2019), large-form dastgah suites (multi-sectional vocal-instrumental works characterized by the prominence of vocal

development) (Mustafazade, A., 2019), and short-form mughams (smaller-scale mughams derived from larger dastgahs, now functioning as autonomous entities, such as Katar, Bayati-Kurd, and Dashti) (Kichik khedjmlı mughamlar, 2015), the technique of variation emerges as a primary expressive device.

This principle is particularly evident in instrumental genres such as daramads, rengs, and folk dances, where the transformation of initial thematic material is achieved through diverse melodic and rhythmic modifications, serving as a central mechanism for musical development and expression.

The **purpose** of the study is to identify the features of modality and melodic construction arising from the traditions of mugham in the variation-formal compositions of Azerbaijani composers.

Main part.

Dastgah structures of mugham.

It is noteworthy that within the dastgah structures of mugham, the musical motif of the fundamental section designated as “Maya” exhibits variation on multiple hierarchical levels and serves as the foundational musical content for subsequent sections at intervals of the perfect fourth, fifth, and octave. In his seminal theoretical work *Foundations of Azerbaijani Folk Music*, U. Hajibeyli elucidates the principles of melodic composition predicated upon modal scales, with particular emphasis on these phenomena. He demonstrates that melodies composed in the Rast mode comprise successive sections constructed upon specific scale degrees, namely: Mayeyi-Rast (the fourth degree – Maya), Huseyni (the seventh degree – the upper fourth of Maya), Vilayati (the eighth degree – the fifth of Maya), Erag (the transposition of Maya an octave higher), and Karai (the return to the initial Maya). Within this framework, Hajibeyli advocates for the methodological employment of thematic variation in the structural composition of these sections. As he articulates, “The initial statement of Vilayati necessitates repetition executed in the form of variation” (Hadjibeyli, 2010, p. 57). Comparable prescriptive guidance is evident in his treatment of melodic construction across other modal systems. The codified modal foundation established by Hajibeyli is of considerable analytical utility in both the scrutiny of compositional output and the study of traditional musical exemplars,

thereby facilitating the incorporation of works across diverse genres into analytical discourse.

The piano variation genre has been explored extensively by Azerbaijani composers, including Fikret Amirov, Tofiq Guliyev, Elmira Nazirova, and Sardar Farajov, among others. Notwithstanding, Amirov’s *Variations*, composed in 1941, constitute the inaugural example of this genre within Azerbaijani piano music and have attained a canonical status within the pedagogical repertoire of pianists. T. Seidov asserts that Amirov’s *Variations* “reflect a successful realization of professional musical form predicated upon the distinctive characteristics of Azerbaijani folk music” (Azerbaydjan musiqisinin inkishaf tarikhinden setirler, 2008). This work garners scholarly attention due to its multifaceted musical language and the intricate manner in which its features are inextricably linked to the idiomatic qualities of Azerbaijani traditional music. Structurally, the *Variations* comprise a thematic statement followed by six successive variations, arranged in a manner that foregrounds contrast and articulates discrete stages within a cohesive developmental arc. This compositional progression exemplifies salient aspects of variation technique as manifested within the mugham tradition. Specifically, the expansion of musical language diversity arises through the modulation of the thematic material along multiple vectors, closely aligned with mugham’s intrinsic characteristics aimed at the realization of a unified aesthetic objective.

The thematic material of the variation, indicated as *Moderato cantabile*, is characterized by a lyrical disposition, an uncomplicated structural design, and a melody of a song-like nature. The theme is firmly anchored on the tonic pitch “mi” of the Shur mode.



Amirov’s Variations.

The structure of the theme bears a resemblance to the introductory section of the mugham, owing to its distinctive melodic-harmonic and modal-tonal characteristics. Within the dastgah of mugham,

the introductory function is fulfilled by the Daramad and Bardasht. These are instrumental musical passages that establish the overall tonal foundation of the mugham and set the melodic atmosphere. The eminent musicologist Ramiz Zohrabov observes the structure of the Daramad as follows: “Daramads possess a unique compositional architecture. Initially, an introduction is presented, followed by the middle register, then a relatively ascending register preceding the climax, subsequently the directly ascending register which constitutes the climactic zone, thereafter the climax itself, and finally a return to the previous register – these constitute the structural features inherent to the Daramad” (Zokhrabov, 2013, p. 148).

Stylistically, Amirov’s Variations may be compared with the Daramad. That is, the Variations manifest a variational expression of precise, rhythmically substantiated melodic content characteristic of this genre, alongside structural features predicated upon the principal tonic degrees of the scale.

The first variation, marked *Allegretto grazioso*, preserves the principal melodic and harmonic traits of the theme; however, the rhythmic structure of the theme undergoes modification.



In this variation, as well as in the melody and harmonic background, figurative melodic movements become evident. This engenders a transformation in the character of the theme, while the tonality of E-sharp remains preserved. The second variation, marked *Con moto brillante*, exhibits a pronounced change in the musical character through an acceleration of the tempo. The staccato articulation animates the musical lines with the vivacity characteristic of a toccata.



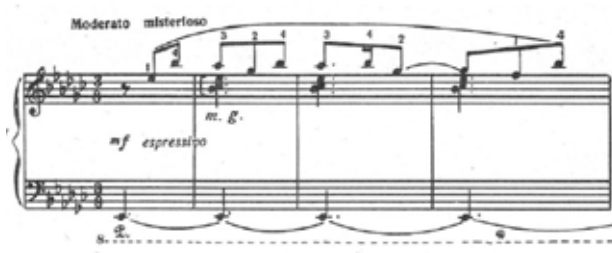
The variation is founded upon the tonic “H” of the Shur mode. However, within this passage, a certain alteration of the quint-tonal relationships in terms of modal tonality is discernible, a characteristic feature inherent to the mugham Shur. It is pertinent to note that, while compositions in the global musical canon are generally predicated upon a single tonal center, Azerbaijani music similarly grounds its mugham structures upon tonal foundations. A principal indicator of polyphony within mugham is the presence of multiple pivotal scale degrees, which constitute the bases of mugham sections bearing autonomous nomenclature. Consequently, within variations, alongside the tonic of the mugham, one may also perceive the foundational degrees of its sectional divisions. For instance, in this variation, the mugham exhibits a modulation from the principal tonality to the Shur tone a fifth above – representing a transition to the section known as Hijaz.



The culmination of the variation sequence is realized in the fourth variation, marked *Allegro con brio*, which may also be characterized as a dynamic reprise. It is a common feature within the expansive development of mugham that pivotal measures are succeeded by an ascending melodic line, modulations to novel tonalities reach a zenith – namely, the tonic of the cimbalom – and the principal theme undergoes variation within the principal modal tonality in the upper register. However, in the Variations, the composer approaches this aspect in a distinctive manner. Specifically, upon the conclusion of the third variation within the cimbalom, which functions as an approach to the climax, the subsequent variation unexpectedly emerges not in the anticipated high register but in the bass. In the fourth variation, the fundamental tonality is reinstated: the pitch “E” is articulated within the framework of the Shur mode.



The fifth variation, marked *Moderato misterioso*, presents a contrast in character to the preceding variation, constituting the lyrical core of the composition and dissipating the preceding tension. It is also necessary to note a tonal modulation within this variation. Although the theme is presented in its original form, the pitch “Es” is articulated in the Shur mode – a semitone lower than the initial tonality.



The sixth variation, *Allegretto agitato*, completes the developmental series. This variation emerges from fragments of preceding sections, which can be interpreted as thematic reminiscences within the overall fabric of the composition. Such a structural approach is characteristic of the classical variation form and holds particular significance within the codex of variation technique. The principal tonality of the work, “E,” is firmly established in this final variation.



In summation, concluding the analysis of F. Amirov’s Variations, it can be asserted that the composition possesses a compelling musical language and is notable for its tonal foundation. The construction of the theme upon the tone of Shur and the modulation of modal tonality throughout the developmental process stand out as defining features characteristic of traditional music, especially within instrumental genres such as the Daramad.

T. Guliyev’s Variations.

T. Guliyev’s Variations for piano, comprising a theme and ten variations and composed in 1953, constitute a significant work within the concert repertoire of numerous pianists. This

series includes both earnest and freely elaborated variations. While the initial variations maintain the melodic and formal integrity of the theme, subsequent variations display a freer transformation of thematic material.

The musical language of the theme attracts attention due to its pronounced national characteristics. Its thematic content, tonal basis, and intonational structure acquire a more developed, complex, and richly textured fabric throughout the course of the variations. The theme, set at a moderate *Andante* tempo, is founded upon a major scale with the tonic “B.” It is also notable that the points at which the major scale intersects with the tonic of B minor are strongly emphasized, as reflected in the structure of the major-minor chords employed in the harmonic treatment.



The first variation, marked *L’istesso tempo*, closely aligns with the theme in terms of structure and expressivity. However, its texture is further enriched through the polyphonic technique of incorporating subvocal lines composed of melodic phrases. The variation retains the tonality of the theme, though it exhibits a somewhat expanded formal design.



A discernible transformation of texture is evident in the second variation, despite the absence of alterations in the melodic and formal structure of the theme. Specifically, rhythmic variation, refinement of rhythmic patterns, and the utilization of diverse groupings characterize the texture. Such modifications, typically manifested in variation form, are also emblematic of national musical idioms, particularly observable in instrumental

music exemplars and in the variation of timbral coloration employed within the series of percussive mugham compositions.



This technique persists in the third variation, wherein the variability of texture remains prominent and the figurative structure assumes primacy.



The fourth and fifth variations are presented in a combined form, which may be interpreted as a novel stage in the musical development. Herein, a transformation of expressive style emerges, evidenced by alterations in meter and rhythm, alongside a freer mode of variation. The thematic structure itself is altered such that the theme is not articulated in its entirety but rather in truncated phrases. These changes collectively influence the character of the theme.



The developmental trajectory initiated in the fourth variation is further elaborated in the fifth, wherein new modal-intonational features come to the fore. Specifically, the orientation towards the Rast tonality results in the expansion of the theme.



There exists a discernible connection between the third and fifth variations, grounded in their shared textural characteristics. The sixth variation, although succeeding a distinct developmental phase, structurally approximates the theme and reiterates its expressive configuration. Here, modulation to

the parallel major key – D-flat major – engenders a change in the character of the theme, imparting a more vivid coloration.



The variation concludes in F minor through a modulatory process. This tonality corresponds to that of D-sharp minor, thereby facilitating a transition to B minor in the subsequent variation.

In the seventh variation, a scherzo-like motif reappears, establishing characteristic links with the fourth variation. This variation is performed in E-flat minor and features various tonal intonations that may be regarded as constituent elements of the developmental section.



Thus, the transformation of variation form, the gradual consummation of the melodic thematic structure, and the modal-tonal modulations underscore the particularities of the developmental process, indicating a relatively free approach to variation in this context.

The eighth variation adopts a lyrical character in its thematic development.



The climax is attained in the ninth and tenth variations. The ninth variation, imbued with a turbulent and agitated character and marked by continuous transitions, signals the commencement of the climax. Here, further deviation from the original theme is observable.



The tenth variation assumes the character of a solemn hymn.



Characterizing the modal-tonal nature of the Variations cycle, it can be posited that it unfolds through multiple stages. Within this framework, intersections with the Shur mode emerge against the backdrop of a major-minor tonal system (Eliyev, 2007). The principal tonality is B minor; however, modulations to D major and E minor occur, before ultimately returning to the fundamental tonality. This process may be construed as comprising the conventional stages of exposition, development, and recapitulation. These tonal shifts transpire concomitantly with the melodic evolution and establish conditions conducive to the integration of form with the musical content of the cycle. Such a modal-tonal structure finds its reflection in the sequences characteristic of mugham.

Within the musical construction of the Variations, the convergence of tonalities with national modal-tonal intonations is distinctly evident. The composer employs shared degrees of the minor and Shur modes that share the same tonic, integrates Shur modal-tonal intonations within the melodic material, while the functional harmonic architecture of the minor mode assumes prominence. Conversely, as the music transitions toward the major mode, the modal-tonal characteristics of Rast begin to manifest. Broadly

speaking, within mugham tradition, the transition from Shur to Rast is considered conventional.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. In summary, reflecting upon the analytical discourse of Fikret Amirov's and T. Guliyev's Variations, it is apparent that the dramaturgical progression of the work's stages transpires through the variations, marked by gradual transformations in character, tempo, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic structures, and modal-tonal foundation. Each variation, while constituting an integral component of the unified whole, possesses an intrinsic autonomous character within its internal structure. Beyond the fact that each variation exhibits its own architecture and developmental trajectory, an interconnection among the variations is established, whereby the composer achieves a coherent and sequential unfolding. A particularly noteworthy aspect is that specific musical elements from each variation are reutilized in subsequent variations, thereby serving as their continuations. This practice engenders systemic and harmonic cohesion within the musical fabric of the work. Such characteristics are intimately tied to the mugham tradition and, based upon the essential traits of the variation genre, have been systematically employed by the composer in his piano oeuvre.

Thus, further study of the analytical discourse of variations in the works of Azerbaijani composers allows us to delve into the study using new approaches within the framework of musicology. It is theoretical and analytical, as well as cultural approaches that can expand the range of works studied: to involve both classical and modern examples of variational form in the study of the evolution of compositional thinking, to consider variation not only as a compositional technique, but also as a manifestation of the national intonation model associated with the traditions of mugham.

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