

**THE HISTORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF POP (ESTRADA) MUSIC IN CENTRAL ASIA**

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**Abstract**

This article provides a historical and theoretical analysis of the emergence, formation, and development of pop (estrada) art in Central Asia as it entered the region from foreign cultural environments. The study highlights the origins of pop music in France based on chanson traditions, its spread to the territory of Turkestan through the Russian Empire, and its evolution throughout the 20th century in Uzbekistan as a form of professional stage art.

The article also reveals the close connection between pop vocal performance and national musical traditions, examining its musical and aesthetic features, performance culture, and factors contributing to its mass popularity. In addition, state policy aimed at developing pop music during the independence period, as well as existing challenges in this field, are analyzed on a scientific basis. The research findings demonstrate that Central Asian pop art has been shaped through the harmonious integration of national and modern musical thinking.

**Keywords**

Central Asian music, pop (estrada) art, pop singing, chanson, popular music, stage art, vocal performance, musical culture, professional singing, contemporary music.

Music is a broad and multifaceted phenomenon and is one of the oldest and most influential forms of human culture. Regardless of nation, religion, language, or territorial boundaries, music functions as a universal medium that unites all peoples. Understanding and feeling music does not require knowledge of a specific language, as musical melody, rhythm, and intonation directly influence human emotions and inner experiences.

The concept of “estrada” first emerged in France, where public song performances by chansonniers (Arabic: instrumentalist; Uzbek: singer) were referred to as “estrada concerts.” In ancient French folklore, the word *chanson* broadly denoted simple and light songs written in various forms and genres. The term *chansonnier* acquired two meanings: first, a simple, easily memorable song; second, the professional title of a performer who sang popular songs. Chansonniers were regarded as the most beloved performers among the people. Possessing expressive and pleasant voices along with high performance skills, they attracted audiences by performing songs accompanied by a single instrument or an ensemble<sup>1</sup>.

Many chansonniers, emerging from the common people without formal mentorship, showcased their art in streets, squares, cafés, and restaurants. Their art flourished particularly during and after the period of the Great French bourgeois-democratic revolution and the Paris Commune (1871). The repertoire of chansonniers expanded through the works of poet-artists such as Pierre Béranger, Pierre Dupont, Eugène Pottier, and Pierre De Geyter, as well as through

<sup>1</sup> A.Jabbarov. Ozbek Estrada san’ati. Andijon 2025.12-bet

self-composed songs and dance music. Concert programs featured socio-political and patriotic songs alongside lyrical, entertaining, and satirical pieces.

As this art form evolved, alongside numerous amateur groups, professional pop ensembles, orchestras, cabarets, variétés, café-chantants, and the “music hall” tradition that originated in England emerged. From the second half of the 20th century onward, the branches and forms of this art developed extensively.

Pop art, which emerged in Western Europe, entered the Russian Empire at the end of the 19th century. In major Russian cities and colonial territories, including large cities of Turkestan, pop artist groups were permitted to perform in restaurants and theaters. During this period, pop art created opportunities not only for solo creativity but also for the formation of professional stage performance.

Following the collapse of the Russian Empire on October 25, 1917, profound political and ideological changes occurred, significantly affecting literature, music, and theater. The ideological struggle and creative renewal that began in the early 20th century intensified under new historical conditions. Artists increasingly addressed not only national but also contemporary social themes, reflecting the people’s new life experiences. Consequently, pop art could not remain independent of political and social changes; instead, it was compelled to renew itself, expand its repertoire, and establish closer contact with audiences. As a result, in the early years of the 20th century, pop art evolved not only as entertainment but also as a means of spiritual, social, and cultural enrichment.

In Central Asia, considering that during the first half of the first millennium BCE ancient social systems reached their final stage and class-based societies emerged, it can be argued that the foundations of professional singing began to form approximately two and a half thousand years ago<sup>2</sup>. Even in ancient vocal art, professional characteristics and distinct creative processes were evident. This demonstrates that the territory of present-day Uzbekistan possessed a high level of spirituality and a highly developed singing tradition from ancient times, serving as one of the important spiritual centers of world civilization<sup>3</sup>.

Ancient Uzbek vocal art stood out not only for its aesthetic and spiritual values but also for its professional creative processes. Performance developed as a profession requiring not only talent but also specific knowledge and skills. Thus, Uzbek musical heritage holds significance not only nationally but also within the broader context of world cultural heritage.

Pop music, often referred to as “light music,” is characterized by accessibility and ease of perception. While generalized in character and aesthetic level, its musical structure combines traditional musical elements with specific expressive means. In major cities, music enriched with electric instruments began to flourish. Modern concert forms emerged based on European and classical traditions. In traditional cultural life, two primary forms of music consumption persisted: collective listening in public spaces such as cafés and restaurants, and individual listening.

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<sup>2</sup> Hamidov H. O‘zbek an’anaviy qo‘shiqchilik madaniyati tarixi. Toshkent: ‘O‘qituvchi’-1996.

<sup>3</sup> Elov M. Ashulachilar ansambli o‘quv qo‘llanma. Toshkent – 2019 17-bet.

Collective musical functions were diverse, including wedding and funeral rituals connected to religious and customary practices<sup>4</sup>.

By the mid-20th century, pop art in Uzbekistan began to take shape as a stable direction of professional stage music. In the 1940s–1950s, drawing upon the experience of pop ensembles from Moscow and Leningrad, stage music developed systematically. In the 1940s, the “Music Hall” group led by M. Jolkov was established in Tashkent, and in 1942 a pop ensemble began operating under the Uzbekistan State Philharmonic.

On June 26, 2001, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 272 “On Further Development of Pop Singing Art.” The resolution emphasized that significant efforts were being made to develop modern pop singing, with increased state support and growing interest among youth, leading to the emergence of new creative groups and performers. However, shortcomings remained in improving pop culture standards, enhancing professional skills, and creating favorable conditions for young artists<sup>5</sup>. Alongside high-quality musical works promoting patriotism and national ideals, low-quality and artistically weak songs also appeared in concerts and media, negatively affecting spiritual education.

Between 1917 and 1950, the nation’s rich musical heritage and traditions gained widespread dissemination. Amateur music movements expanded, and both professional and amateur groups promoted folk songs, instrumental music, and ancient melodies. During this period, Uzbek pop art began developing both solo and multi-voice stylistic directions. National vocal and instrumental ensembles, jazz, and symphonic-jazz orchestras emerged, nurturing the first generations of amateur and professional performers.

In the 1920s–1930s, performances by “Song and Dance Circles,” “Instrumental Circles,” and “Musical Ethnographic Ensembles” were increasingly labeled as “concerts” or “pop concerts.” From that time, terms such as “concert,” “estrada,” and “ensemble” became widespread. In 1927, Ali Ardobus (Ibragimov) announced the performance of the “Blue Shirts” ensemble in Samarkand as an “estrada concert.” These included instrumental and vocal-instrumental ensembles (VIA)<sup>6</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the emergence and development of pop art in Central Asia represent a long historical process closely linked to the region’s socio-political and cultural evolution. The article demonstrates that pop art was not an alien phenomenon but developed in harmony with long-standing traditions of professional singing and stage culture. Political changes of the 20th century, particularly the events of 1917 and Soviet cultural policies, strongly influenced the

<sup>4</sup> Nadirova.A. «Qaraqalpaq muzika tariyxı». Tashkent «Sano standart». 2018, 349 b.

<sup>5</sup> Ózbekstan Respublikası Ministrler Kabinetinin 26.06.2001 jildagi 272-sanlı qararı.

<sup>6</sup> Oyto‘rayev A. “O‘zbek estrada san’ati” Innovations in Science and Technologies” ilmiy-elektron jurnali. 2024 №1. 133-bet.

# JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENCES AND INNOVATIONS

VOLUME 05, ISSUE 01  
MONTHLY JOURNALS



ISSN NUMBER: 2751-4390

IMPACT FACTOR: 9,08

institutional development of pop art. During the independence period, pop art entered a new stage characterized by national self-awareness and integration into the global cultural space. Despite challenges related to mass culture and artistic quality, the history of Central Asian pop art reflects a complex interaction of external influences and internal traditions, serving as an essential component of the region's cultural heritage.