

The Saraxbari Buzruk Maqam And The Analysis Of Its First Melodic Piece

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the first tarona of the Saraxbory Buzruk maqom from a musical-theoretical perspective. It explores the modal-tonal structure, melodic organization, rhythmic characteristics, and performance style of the piece. The study highlights the stages of melodic development and the artistic significance of this tarona within the maqom tradition. The analysis concludes that the first melodic piece of *Saraxbory Buzruk* exemplifies artistic harmony, emotional depth, and the refined aesthetics of Uzbek classical music.

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Introduction

"Buzruk" is one of the most prominent and authoritative paths within the Maqom tradition. The term *Buzruk* or *Buzurg* (Persian: "great, grand") refers to a maqam that historically belonged to the system of the Twelve Maqams, and today forms an integral part of the Bukhara Shashmaqom, Khorezm maqoms, and the Fergana–Tashkent maqom traditions. In the works of classical scholars such as Jami, Kavkabi, and Darvish Ali—including their treatises on music theory ("Risoi Musiqiy")—the pitch structure, scale degrees, primary tonal configuration, intervals (*bu'd*), and other theoretical principles of Buzruk are described in detail.

The Buzruk maqam encompasses a vast collection of vocal and instrumental pieces. In the Shashmaqom cycle, the Buzruk maqam includes:

- seven instrumental pieces,
- thirty-five vocal compositions,
- a six-taronah cycle called Saraxbari Buzruk,
- the single-taronah cycle Talqini Uzzol,
- the triple-taronah cycles Nasrullovi, Nasri Uzzol, and Ufari Uzzol, which form the first group of *shu'ba* (branches).

The second group of *shu'bas* includes Mo'g'ulchai Buzruk, Savti Sarvinoz, Bukhoro Irog'i, and Rok, each consisting of sub-branches traditionally named *Talqincha*, *Qashqarcha*, *Soqiynoma*, and *Ufar*. In addition, numerous instrumental (particularly *surnay*) and vocal variants of Buzruk also survive in regional performance practices. Notably, the Rok *shu'ba*—performed with *surnay*, *karnay*, and *nag'ora* ensemble—is widely known as the instrumental piece "Shodiyona". Likewise, *Surnay Buzrugi*, *Savti Buzrug*, and *Ufari Savti Buzruk* from the Fergana–Tashkent tradition are highly esteemed examples.

All these features demonstrate the elevated artistic and cultural stature of the Buzruk maqam. Beyond its musical complexity, Buzruk represents one of the invaluable legacies of ancient Eastern culture, bearing profound spiritual, philosophical, and Sufi meanings.

Historical and Spiritual Significance

The Buzruk maqam has long been known as one of the most important and central parts of the Shashmaqom tradition. From ancient times, people have described it as the “path of the mature,” a musical and spiritual journey meant for those who seek wisdom, self-knowledge and a deeper understanding of life.

In traditional performance, Buzruk helped musicians and listeners develop inner strength, cleanse their thoughts and reach a higher spiritual state. During Sufi gatherings, spiritual seekers used this maqam to express their inner struggles, emotions and hopes through music. The overall character of Buzruk reflects ideas such as longing for the divine, understanding that life is temporary and looking deeply into one’s own heart. These ideas form the basis of how the maqam is performed and understood.

The sound of Buzruk has a wide range and a complex modal structure. It contains contrasting emotions that blend smoothly with each other. Its main melody is similar to a minor mode, but instead of sadness, it carries dignity, grandeur and spiritual strength. At certain moments, brighter and more uplifting tones appear, creating feelings of inspiration and hope. The main note of the maqam is strong and stable, giving a sense of confidence and balance. Because of these musical qualities, the maqam brings feelings of respect, calmness and inner peace to the listener.

The structure of the Buzruk maqam is made up of several sections that flow into one another. The *Tasnif* introduces the main idea of the piece and often includes philosophical or poetic lines. The *Guzar* creates a smooth transition and raises the emotional energy. The *Talqin* develops the main theme more deeply and expresses inner reflection. The *Nasr* is played without words and encourages the listener to think quietly. The *Ufar* adds rhythm and liveliness, while the *Sakta* offers a brief pause that lets the music “breathe.” Together, these parts take the listener on a spiritual journey that moves from solemn calm to emotional and spiritual elevation.

When the Buzruk maqam is performed, it creates a feeling of dignity, peace and heightened awareness. It is especially fitting for formal, religious or philosophical gatherings. Through its melodies, it offers moral lessons, inspires reflection and supports inner purification. The music speaks not only to the ears, but also to the heart, the mind and the soul.

Representative Performances

The Buzruk maqam is the opening cycle of the Shashmaqom and is traditionally regarded as the “key” to all maqams. It occupies a central place in classical Uzbek musical heritage.

Outstanding performances of Buzruk can be heard in the works of renowned artists such as:

- Fazliddin Shahobov – known for conveying the grandeur and solemnity of the sound.
- Abduhaqim Hamidov – noted for his synthesis of spiritual elevation and melodic power.
- Halima Nosirova – who expressed feminine emotional depth through the timbre of Buzruk.

In particular, the cycle known as Saraxbari Buzruk belongs to the most demanding stylistic layers of the maqam and requires significant spiritual and technical preparation. Performances beginning with these pieces serve as both musical and spiritual preparation for the listener.

Poetic Analysis: The Harmony of Philosophy, Love, and Spiritual Insight

The poems performed in the Buzruk maqam are not ordinary lyrical texts. They are filled with philosophical ideas, sincere love, spiritual awareness and messages that call a person to reflection. The symbolic images often used in these poems, such as the sun and the moon, the state of heedlessness, false thoughts and moments of ecstasy, are closely connected with Sufi concepts and spiritual meanings.

The Buzruk maqam also has great educational value. In music schools and universities it serves as a source of moral and aesthetic upbringing. Through this maqam, students become familiar with Eastern philosophy, spiritual thinking and the cultural values reflected in classical poetry and music. In modern art, Buzruk continues to inspire many composers. Its rich melodies and deep emotional expression help create new works that combine classical tradition with contemporary musical styles.

Buzruk is more than a musical path. It influences and educates the listener, helps the performer grow and mature, and transforms poetry into meaningful wisdom. Through melody, it expresses the relationship between the material world and the spiritual world. Every sound, every word and every pause in this maqam carries an inner message. Its very name, derived from the word “buzurg” meaning “great” or “grand,” reflects its noble and powerful character.

Performances by well-known artists such as Fazliddin Shahobov, Abduhaqim Hamidov and Halima Nosirova show how expressive and emotionally strong the Buzruk maqam can be. The Saraxbari Buzruk section of the Shashmaqom is the opening part and has a majestic, deep character. It serves as a key to the whole maqam. In the first tarona, the rhythm is heavy and steady, drawing the listener's attention and preparing the mind for reflection. Its melody matches the meaning of the poetry, touching on themes of the temporary nature of life, the passing world and admiration for beauty.

Poetic Analysis

In the first verse, the poet says that any thought which does not come from truth and awareness is empty and false. A life spent in forgetfulness is also unproductive. The poet wants to remind the reader that real thought is the search for truth and understanding.

In the second verse, the poet says that a person often understands pain, hardship and injustice very well, but at the same time forgets the path of loyalty, love and kindness. This idea shows the contradiction inside human nature.

In the third verse, the poet describes the beloved's beauty. Her face is compared to the sun and her eyebrows to the new moon. The poet himself is a lover filled with admiration and desire.

In the fourth verse, Bobur admits that he has wasted many years in carelessness and pointless behavior. He gives advice to the reader: do not spend your life in heedlessness, do not lose your time in vain.

Overall, the poem speaks about three main ideas. It has a philosophical meaning, reminding people that the world is temporary and life is short, so one should seek real meaning. It also has a romantic meaning, describing the beloved's beauty and the lover's admiration. And it has a spiritual meaning, encouraging people not to waste their time in forgetfulness, because time is one of the greatest gifts.

In the explanations of the verses, the meanings become clearer. False thoughts are ideas without truth. A life without awareness is like a fruitless tree. People often understand harm and injustice, but they forget the path of love and kindness. The comparisons to the sun and the moon show the perfection and charm of the beloved. When Bobur speaks about his wasted years, he is calling the reader to live with awareness.

In this poem, every word carries both an emotional and spiritual meaning. On the surface it talks about a lover and the beloved, but at a deeper level it describes the relationship between a human being and God. False thoughts represent ideas without wisdom. Fruitless years represent a life spent in neglect. Pain and oppression symbolize the struggles of the self. Love and loyalty symbolize the path of truth. The sun-like face and the moon-like eyebrows symbolize beauty and spiritual perfection. And a life spent in heedlessness symbolizes the loss of one's spiritual direction.

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