



Nightingale of Uzbek Estrade

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Abstract: The article talks about the life path of the bright star of Uzbek estrade, Botir Zakirov, his severe illness, the hardships he faced in the path of creativity, and his art.

Keywords: voice, pop-symphony orchestra, disease, performance, record, art, Moscow, Arabic tango, Sinbad, music hall.

Batyr Zakirov ... His star rose in the sky in the fifties of the last century. A soft voice, intimately penetrating the soul, then conquered millions of lovers of pop music that was nascent in our country. Batyr Zakirov performed an Uzbek song for the first time accompanied by a pop-symphony orchestra. In essence, it was a revolution in the national song art. And today we listen to his lyrical songs with the same trembling as the generation of our parents once listened to them. Batyr Zakirov sang not only in Uzbek, but also in French, Arabic, Afghan and Indian languages, his songs spread all over the world.

“... From year to year, from end to end
A wave of sadness carries me
So much in life I've learned
If only we could start over...”

In 1963, there was a sharp exacerbation of the disease, and Batyr flew to Moscow for examination. In order to somehow combine treatment with creativity, he decided to use this trip one hundred percent. Having settled in the Herzeno sanatorium, already knowing the appointed day of the operation, the singer phoned the composer Ikram Akbarov and agreed to record a new song. Their creative friendship began several years ago, during the decade of literature and art of Uzbekistan, held in Moscow in 1957. At one of the performances of the first pop orchestra of Uzbekistan with Batyr Zakirov, Ikram Akbarov was captivated by the soft soulful baritone of the young vocalist. At the end of the concert, the composer, who had long since moved from Tashkent to Moscow, offered Batyr cooperation. Then together they looked through hundreds of poems, ranging from Uzbek poetic classics to contemporary authors. It was during these years that the songs “Where are you, my black-eyed”, “Rano”, “Gazli” to the verses of Turab Tula appeared in the repertoire of Batyr Zakirov. These songs fell in love not only in Uzbekistan, but in Russia and abroad. And, probably, there was no family where familiar lyrical melodies did not sound in the house.

All his childhood and adolescence was associated with art. Even as a child, she and her sister Louise staged small performances, copying the play of actors seen in the performances of theaters where Shohist Saidov's mother worked in the musical name Mukimi and father Karim Zakirov in the Khamza Theater. The father told the children a lot of interesting things about the history of Uzbekistan, about the ancient cities of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, about the legendary heroes of folk tales.

For health reasons, Batyr had to leave the Conservatory, and he entered the theater institute. But he continued to sing. At that time, the student vocal ensemble "Youth" of the institute was preparing a

repertoire for participation in the World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow, which took place in 1957.

During a performance in Moscow, the song "Uzbekistan - my homeland" received the bronze prize of the festival. So in Uzbekistan, on the basis of the ensemble "Youth", the first pop-symphony orchestra was formed.

For a long two years of treatment in anticipation of working on songs, Batyr did not waste it. He revised his early poems, edited them for publication, and came up with a series of fairy tales for children's magazines. He translated the famous fairy tale "Shadow" by Yevgeny Schwartz into Uzbek. Sometimes he sat down at the easel, diluted paints and experimented for the soul.

Once, Batyr heard a radio performance based on the fairy tale by the French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupery "The Little Prince" performed by artists of Moscow theaters. The musical accompaniment of the performance, the play of the actors made a huge impression on him. Especially, he was captivated by the performance of the People's Artist of the USSR Maria Babanova in the role of the little prince. Philosophical reflections on friendship, love and betrayal were in tune with the views of Batyr. And now, this topic excited the young man. He repeatedly thought of making a dramatization for Uzbek listeners, and Batyr translated Exupery's wonderful philosophical tale "The Little Prince" from Russian into Uzbek. On the Republican radio, Batyr, together with his wife, staged a fairy tale, which was included in the "golden fund" of radio. Recording continued for three days in a large radio studio. The role of the little prince was talentedly played by Erkli Malikbayeva with childlike spontaneity. Obid Yunusov spoke from the author, and all other roles of Baobab, Fox, Astrologer and others were voiced by Batyr Zakirov.

As a student of the directing department, he came to practice at the theater. Hamza. Their teacher Alexander Ginzburg introduced his students to the theater director Tolya Khodzhaev, who in 1955 staged the play "Algeria is my homeland". As is customary in theaters, students always participated in extras. Having come to practice, Batyr again plunged into the years of carefree childhood and youth. He watched with interest as the director threw out the mise-en-scenes, as he accurately and figuratively explained the tasks to the actors. The performance was a great success with the theatrical community and the audience.

In 1956, the theater troupe with the play "Algeria - my homeland" went by train to Moscow for the All-Union Theater Festival. In 1957, work began at the Uzgostrada Theater on a large extended variety performance in two acts. It was headed by Anatoly Kabulov, appointed chief director of the theater and director from Moscow Alexander Konnikov. Together with Konnikov, the then unknown composer Yan Frenkel arrived in Tashkent. The magnificent virtuoso violinist Yan immediately singled out Batyr Zakirov and offered him several songs from the foreign East to perform. Yan and Batyr worked especially hard on the Arabic tango of the composer Dariz-el-Attash "Oh, the light of my dreams", later better known as "Arabic tango". Frenkel made an arrangement of the song, and performed by Batyr, it sounded unusually touching and heartfelt. For many years, this tango has become his original calling card. On whatever stages, in whatever countries he later had to perform, the "Arabic Tango" was invariably received enthusiastically by the audience. Batyr also included in his repertoire a cheerful comic song "Arzikhramari" by an Indian composer, "Beautiful Girl" by a Lebanese composer and a lyrical song by an Uzbek composer M. Burkhanov from the film "Enchanted by a sack". With the new pop performance "Salute, Moscow!" the team went to Moscow for the Decade of Literature and Art of Uzbekistan in February 1959.

After the triumph in Moscow, inspired by success, the artist returned home. He plans a new theatrical performance. But the joy was overshadowed by the news of a split in the theater. Eighteen artists led by Kabulov resigned. Now, Batyr, together with the new artistic director of the theater, a talented composer, musician, arranger Albert Malakhov, have begun staging.

It was then that the body could not withstand such stress and failed. An x-ray showed that an operation was needed. In 1961, for the first time, he had to go to a sanatorium near Moscow in Gertsen. It's been almost a year since the first surgery. And now, feeling the strength in himself, the artist decided to make this dream come true: to create a new team. He had to run around a lot in

different instances, from the Uzbek Concert to the Ministry of Culture. The creative union of Batyr with composers Ikram Akbarov and Albert Malakhov acquired new qualities of the pop genre. Uzbek chant is monophonic in nature, it has never had choral singing. And now, for the first time, I. Akbarov's song "Kizma Nigor" performed by a female vocal quartet appeared on the Uzbek stage. But the number, on which the creative team had high hopes, was cut down by the commission.

After the failure, Batyr nevertheless achieved and has already received the go-ahead for the creation of a large concert revue "Stars of the East" on the basis of the variety orchestra of Uzbekistan. Everything was almost ready - the script, the orchestra, the lined up program, and again the singer was crippled by illness. He was back in the hospital bed. While preparations were underway for the next operation, Batyr received guests almost every day. Ikramov, Konnikov, young Iosif Kobzon, with whom Batyr became intimately acquainted, Tashkent friends and acquaintances who were in Moscow, visited him.

In 1968, Uzbek artists were invited on tour to Tallinn. Batyr decided to present to the Estonian audience not just singers and musicians, but to show on the stage a kind of oriental bazaar - with its colors, jokes, colorful figures of its inhabitants, with songs and dances. For the production, he attracted Alexander Ginzburg, a connoisseur of folk customs and traditions, director of the theater. Hamza. Together they gathered in this concert "bazaar" all the best that was on the Uzbek stage. And the tour in Estonia and other republics showed how right B. Zakirov and A. Ginzburg were in their desire to bring the stage closer to folk art. The performances of Uzbek artists were enthusiastically received by the audience everywhere. Newspapers noted that their performances were filled with a festive atmosphere.

Alexander Konnikov was preparing at that time, together with the French producers Cocatrix and Yurk, a concert program for a tour in Paris. Performing on the Parisian stage of the Olympia Hall were awarded stars of the world magnitude of musical art. Among them are such names as Edith Piaf, Mireille Mathieu, Lizi Minnelli, Placido Domingo and others. The performance of the Uzbek singer in the Paris Olympia was a triumph. He conquered the refined audience with his voice, his manners, his courage. After all, this thin, swarthy, sweet-voiced guy, who perfectly performed the melodies of the distant, incomprehensible East, dared to compete with their idols, chansonnier C. Aznavour, J. Brel and E. Macias! The French audience greeted Batyr Zakirov with a storm of applause. In newspaper articles, he is compared to Charles Aznavour. And the impresario, Mr. Heller, offered him solo concerts in Paris.

A new stage began in the life of Batyr Zakirov - work that took years. He invited talented director Mark Zakharov and pop artist Alexander Shirvindt from Moscow to create the script and stage the musical. With the excellent Tashkent artist G. Yungval-Khilkevich, he discussed the scenery, costumes, lighting design. He ran around the administrative offices, seeking to allocate apartments and places in the hostel for artists, instruments for the orchestra, and props for the performance. It took more than a million rubles to stage the musical - crazy money for that time. Throughout the republic, Batyr gathered musicians, dancers, vocalists, presenters, artists of the original genre. In total, more than a hundred people entered the musical - a huge team.

Finally, by June 1973, the titanic work of creating the first Uzbek music hall was completed. The performance was called "The Journey of Sinbad the Sailor". The appearance of the Uzbek musical was, of course, an event of all-Union significance. Almost immediately, after the premiere in Tashkent, "Sinbad" began its journey through the Union. The first performance took place in Leningrad in the Oktyabrsky cinema and concert hall. In 1977, the musical toured in Moscow, in the cinema and concert hall "Russia". The brainchild of Batyr, the only musical in Central Asia has lived on stage for more than five years. For all this time, it has never been shown in full on television, no film has been made about this pop miracle. None of the cultural officials even thought about it. All these years, Batyr Zakirov, in fact, alone pulled a huge and heavy cart called a musical, being at the same time an administrator, an artistic director, and a leading artist. In 1978, the decision was made to disband the musical. Batyr suffered, cursed when faced with misunderstanding, ignorance, bureaucratic arbitrariness. No matter how hard his fate was, no matter how hard his soul was, he went on stage and brought joy, love, kindness to the audience.

After the closing of the music hall, Batyr began to perform in concerts with blocks of his songs, accompanied by the Yalla ensemble led by his brother Farukh Zakirov. Batyr was invited as a jury to various competitions and festivals. In recent years, he has helped many young vocal groups and singers find their way to the stage. In 1980, film director Elyer Ishmukhamedov began work on the film "Youth of a Genius" - about the childhood and youth of Ibn Sina - Avicenna. He invited the Zakirovs to the main roles. Batyr for the role of the father, Bakhtiyar, his eldest son - for the role of Avicenna. The role of the doctor - a good sorceress in the film was played by Juna Davitashvili. At that time, it was rumored that she treated L. Brezhnev himself. Juna treated Batyr with great sympathy and predicted a long life for him.

On January 23, 1985, the weary heart of Batyr Zakirov stopped ... Farewell to the singer took place at the Philharmonic, in the concert hall named after Sverdlov. When the removal of the body began, the "Arabic tango" began to sound. The crowd of thousands gathered at the theater, hearing the voice of the artist, shuddered. Everyone had tears in their eyes. The funeral procession grew larger and larger, turning into a stream of people. People buried their favorite singer...

Only the dead fall silent. To sing is to live.

How I envy those who can live

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