



NARGIS NEWSLETTER

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THE HOTTEST STREETSTYLE TRENDS



EDITOR'S DIARY



The Maestro Behind the Music

INTERVIEW NIGAR MAHARRAMOVA PHOTO PRESS MATERIALS

In October, a concert celebrating the 75th anniversary of composer Mamedagha Umudov, a Honoured Artist of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was held at the Azerbaijan State Academic Philharmonic, named after

M. Magomayev. We had the opportunity to meet with the composer to discuss his creative process, inspirations, and the journey that has established him as one of Azerbaijan's most prolific composers.

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Horoscope

What do the stars have in store for us? What should we expect, and how can we protect ourselves in advance?

H HOROSCOPE

Join us on an exciting
journey through our pages!



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Composers are not merely people who arrange notes; they are philosophers, psychologists, and individuals with a remarkably broad perspective on life.
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The first Azerbaijani to compose a symphony in 1936

Did it all begin with the Tar class your father enrolled you in? Was it your wish?

My father just took me to the Culture House in Surakhani. I must have been around six years old. There were no musicians in our family, although it was said that my maternal grandfather, who was repressed in 1937, played the harmonica. After music school in 1964, I was accepted to the Asaf Zeynally Music School in Baku. In 1968, I continued my studies at the Azerbaijan State Conservatory, named after Uzeyir Hajibeyli (now the Baku Academy of Music), at the Faculty of Performing Arts, specialising in the tar. It should be said that our most famous composers, such as Fikret Amirov, Arif Malikov and Jahangir Jahangirov were tar players.

In 1973, after graduating with a specialisation in tar, I enrolled in the second year of the Composition Faculty at the Conservatory, under the tutelage of the renowned composer, People's Artist, and Professor, [Jovdat Hajiyev](#). This was the beginning of a new stage in my musical life. And in 1978, I became a member of the Composers' Union.

You studied with the coryphees of Azerbaijani music, what did they teach you above all?

Soltan Hajibeyov was the rector of the Conservatory and taught me. Unfortunately, a month later, he passed away. I was then transferred to Arif Malikov's class. When I came to class a while later, he reprimanded me about where I had been for a few days. This became a valuable lesson for me, and years later, we became good friends. In general, the specificity of the music school was in great democracy, even unprecedented for those times. We had friendly relations with our teachers. Gara Garayev's office door was always open, and the atmosphere was very democratic. Niyazi was known to be a strict person, yet we became friends within just two hours during a flight together. Tofiq Guliyev,

on the other hand, was exceptionally kind and approachable.

There is often talk about composers not getting along, but history proves that they have always come together for a common cause. Composers are not merely people who arrange notes; they are philosophers, psychologists, and individuals with a remarkably broad perspective on life. My teacher Jovdat Hajiyev once told me, "Write, you will make a good composer." Those words have probably had a profound impact on my life.

What is the most important lesson you strive to teach your students?

I have been teaching for many years and have authored several books on music theory. A teacher can guide you on technical aspects, but, of course, they cannot dictate how to compose a piece. I tell students all the time to write and improvise, even mistakes will make

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you better. In music, everyone learns through their mistakes.

What is the uniqueness of the tar?

The tar is an important part of Azerbaijani cultural heritage and history. No matter the musical genre a composer works in, the roots of their music, especially the way it is expressed, are often linked to folk music. The uniqueness of the tar lies in its deep connection to Azerbaijani



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folk music, particularly through its relationship with mugham. It is through the tar and this closely related art form that the world came to understand the essence and richness of Azerbaijani music.
In the early 20th century, during the 1920s and 1930s, there was considerable debate on whether the tar should be preserved or

in Persian, "Chahar" means "four," and "Gah" means "time", "period" or "place", "location"

abandoned. However, it was the genius of Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli who ensured the tar's continued relevance in the realm of composition, particularly by incorporating it into opera and symphonic works. Thanks to his efforts, tar classes began to be established in higher education institutions, as well as in secondary specialised and music schools.

One of the key features of the tar is its unique tuning system. The instrument is played using a single key, unlike other instruments that require multiple keys. This singularity in its key structure adds to the tar distinctive sound and character, making it truly unique.

How did your development as a composer take place?

The early stages of my professional journey were greatly influenced by my teacher, Jovdat Hajiyev, who was often referred to as "a living encyclopaedia". These were elements that characterised the oral folk art and musical art of Azerbaijan. My early works "12 Preludes",



he was the chief conductor of the Istanbul University State Conservatory Orchestra (1995-2022)

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"Piano Trio", "Preludes for Piano", "Sonatina" and "String Quartet" combined shades of the musical heritage of the Azerbaijani people engraved under the format of modern classical music. A special furore was created by the "String Quartet", which won the recognition of professional audiences within the framework of the Decade of Azerbaijani Art in Moscow in 1978. The final chord of my student years was the "First Symphony" – my graduation work. I completed this composition in 1977, and a year later, the symphony was presented to the public. It was performed under the direction of conductor Ramiz Malik-Aslanov, live on Azerbaijan State Television (now known as "AzTV").
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Which of your own works do you consider the most successful?

This is a very difficult question to answer, but I can say that all the works I have composed have been performed, and I am very proud of that.

"Concerto for the Tar and Symphony Orchestra" stands out due to its original means of musical expression. In 1985 it was performed by famous tar player Ramiz Guliyev under the direction of conductor Ramiz Malik-Aslanov at the VI Congress of the Azerbaijan SSR Composers Union. Then, 26 years later, "Concerto" was performed by tar player Sahib Pashazade within the framework of the II International Festival "World of Mugham", and the piece was very talented! Then the violin took the place of the tar, and the new version of the concerto, now transformed for violin and symphony orchestra, was successfully performed by the talented violinist Jamila Garayusifli, accompanied by the Azerbaijan State Symphony Orchestra named after Uzeyir Hajibeyov, and the production was directed by Rauf Abdullayev, People's Artist of the Azerbaijan SSR, conductor.

I also have several patriotic works: two

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marches "To Victory" and the march "Republic" for choir with piano, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Republic Day.

In 2014, I completed work on the mugham "Chahargah". Here I applied revolutionary musical innovations created in 1948 by the great Fikret Amirov, a composer who made extensive use of improvisation techniques, transmitting Azerbaijani folk melodies and rhythms in combination with variation cycles.

Your children didn't follow in your footsteps, but they achieved success in chess – how do you feel about that?

The eldest daughter, Ulkar, contributed to the family's glory by becoming the first female Azerbaijani international arbiter, the highest title attained through FIDE, the International Chess Federation. The youngest daughter Nargiz is a woman grandmaster and a silver medalist of the World Junior Chess Championship in 2006, as a member of the female team of Azerbaijan. She represented Azerbaijan with dignity at different international competitions and won the Tschaturanga Open International Tournament in Vienna, Austria, in 2014. – ■