

GENRE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MUQIMIY STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATER OF UZBEKISTAN

Umid Rasulov

*Uzbekistan state institute of arts and culture,
department of "Musical theater art" senior lecturer.*

Annotation: This article discusses the genre characteristics of the Muqimiy State Academic Musical Theater of Uzbekistan, the unique features of musical theater art, and the specific requirements for actors in musical theater.

Keywords: musical theater, vocal, composer, director, actor, performance.

There are many musical theaters in the world, including in our Republic. Each musical theater differs based on the era, location, and national characteristics. Whether it's Italian, French, or Russian opera or operetta, it expresses uniqueness through genre-specific features. For instance, the Alisher Navoi State Academic Grand Opera and Ballet Theater, the Tashkent State Musical Comedy (Operetta) Theater, and the Muqimiy State Musical Theater of Uzbekistan all fundamentally differ in terms of genre. In this research, we aim to study the activities of the Muqimiy Theater, which leads all regional musical theaters in Uzbekistan, especially the processes related to vocal art.

Although opera and musical drama both require musicality, they are fundamentally different. In musical drama, actors speak dialogue in plain language and perform monologues in the form of arias, ariosos, or songs. Actors use their natural voices for dialogue with partners. In opera, dialogues are performed through recitative, an expressive reading technique. Recitative is also divided into two types:

- **Secco (dry):** where the actor-singer quickly and fluently delivers lines accompanied by minimal music.
- **Accompagnato:** where lines are delivered melodically with full musical accompaniment.

Another major difference is in vocal classification: women are divided into coloratura soprano, soprano, mezzo-soprano, and alto; men into tenor, baritone, bass, and basso profundo. Opera scores are written accordingly, with continuous performance of arias, ariosos, choruses, and recitatives within acts or scenes. In musical drama, climactic scenes are tied to the music and performed accordingly.

The Muqimiy State Academic Musical Theater of Uzbekistan is a leader among musical theater troupes in the Republic. Since its establishment, it has gone through significant creative development. Outstanding performers such as Lutfixonim Sarimsoqova, Razzoq Hamroyev, E'tibor Jalilova, Tursunoy Jafarova, Mahmudjon G'ofurov, Hamza Umarov, and Farog'at Rahmatova have shaped the traditions of Uzbek musical theater with their unforgettable roles and performances.

Audiences visiting the Muqimiy Theater witness the artistic life portrayed musically on stage. They realize that the theater is not just a place for entertainment but also a platform for enlightenment, morality, and reflection, and they leave with deep aesthetic impressions. Uzbek musical theater art developed from the life-giving creativity of folk performers such as bakhshi, khalfa, musicians, jesters, and entertainers. It is closely tied to national traditions, customs, and musical heritage, making Uzbek musical drama realistic and people-oriented.

Today, most of the regional theaters serve their audiences under the name of "musical drama theater."

How does a musical theater actor differ from a dramatic actor?

In drama, the actor controls the tempo of the performance. The actor uses emotional openness and can choose timing flexibly based on dramatic force. Verbal expression plays a key role.

In musical theater, however, emotional expression is strictly timed with the music. During a monologue (aria), even a one-second delay or rush can ruin the musical and dramatic impact. A musical theater actor must distribute their dramatic energy and skill across each musical measure predetermined by the composer.

In musical theater, lead roles are primarily chosen based on the actor's vocal abilities. This highlights how essential vocal artistry is. Importantly, it's not enough for an actor to simply sing beautifully while standing still - such a performance is considered a song, and the performer a solo singer. In contrast, arias and duets in theater involve psycho-physical actions. The performer must master both acting and vocal technique to succeed.

Musical dramas include not only arias and duets but also trios, quartets, quintets, choruses, and solo pieces. It's crucial to distinguish between songs performed in musical performances and those in concerts - in theater, the song is delivered with targeted physical action based on the story's context.

In musical theater, the events are interwoven through melody and song. The primary component of the stage work is words. From words come the work, and from the work, the song. When the character's inner pain, joy, or sorrow becomes inexpressible through words alone, it is conveyed through singing.

The musical theater actor uses the character's speech to reveal inner feelings and uses high-pitched singing to touch the audience's heart. When creating a role, the actor identifies the character's main goal and driving action, then determines the placement and significance of spoken and musical parts. Transitioning smoothly between speech and song - without losing continuity - is a key measure of an actor's skill. If this organic process is disrupted, the performance becomes artificial and shallow.

According to renowned theater scholar Professor Muhsin Qodirov in his booklet "Magic and Affection", Uzbek national musical drama is defined as follows:

"Uzbek musical drama is a multifaceted, complex art form. A play written in the drama genre can be staged by the director in consultation with the set designer. But for a musical drama, having a finished script isn't enough. It must be passed on to a composer for the music to be written. These interdependent yet partially independent components - the play, the music, and the director's stage interpretation - come together in the 'theater cauldron.' A creative team including the director, conductor, concertmaster, choreographer, and designer undertakes a massive task. Musical theater has its own direction and distinct rules, which require this kind of process. A musical drama consists of three main components: the play, the music, and the stage direction. Only when these are internalized and staged through the performance of the actors, the orchestra, and the creative team, does a musical drama truly come to life."

The success of performances at the Muqimiy Theater lies in the perfect integration of genre elements: musical excellence, emotional richness, completeness of choruses, dances, duets, and arias, and the ability to deeply move the listener, turning the show into a festival of emotion and experience.

The genre characteristics of musical drama require all creatives to possess musical knowledge and skills. A dramaturg with musical literacy is a major asset to a production. Although it may seem old-fashioned to say this today, it remains true. I'd like to recall that the author of the first Uzbek musical drama "Halima" was a musicologist. Although not a professional playwright, he chose appropriate music based on the content - and that's why the piece remains relevant today.

These principles were established by accomplished creatives during the formative stages of national musical theater. Theater is a collaborative art; individual creation is not recognized - teamwork is essential. In musical theater, only the collective effort of the playwright, composer, director, and actors can bring a musical performance to life. Alongside them, set designers, conductors, choreographers, chorus masters, makeup artists, lighting technicians, and stage crew play crucial roles.

A powerful play by a strong playwright alone does not result in a successful performance. Similarly, arias, duets, trios, quartets, and choruses composed by a talented composer remain just a concert without dramaturgy. Only when a composer's music blends into the playwright's script, and the director transfers this musical dramaturgy onto the stage through actors' performances, does a true musical spectacle emerge. In such performances, the vocal skills and professionalism of all actors - from lead roles to minor characters - leave a deep impact on the audience.

These principles were established by accomplished creators during the formative stages of national musical theater art. Theater is considered a profession that inherently requires collective work. Individual creativity alone is not recognized; teamwork and collaborative creation are essential. In musical theater as well, the collaboration of the playwright, composer, director, and actors-working together toward a single goal-results in the creation of a musical performance. In addition to these creators, the artist (set designer), conductor, choreographer, chorus master, makeup artists, lighting technicians, and stagehands also play a vital role in the production.

A powerful theatrical performance does not simply emerge from a well-written play by a talented playwright. Nor do arias, duets, trios, quartets, and choruses created by a gifted composer become more than a concert program without a dramaturgical foundation. Only when the music composed by the composer fully integrates into the playwright's script does a musical dramaturgy arise. This musical dramaturgy is then brought to life on stage through the performances of the director and the actors. From the lead roles to the minor characters, the actors' professional vocal techniques and vocal abilities deeply resonate with the hearts of the audience.

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