

MELISMATIC TECHNIQUES IN PIANO WORKS BY UZBEK COMPOSERS: COMPOSITIONAL LANGUAGE AND PERFORMANCE INTERPRETATION

<https://doi.org/10.70728/orien.v07.i05.038>

Nigina Rakhimova Kakharmonjonovna
Institute of Uzbek National Musical Art named after Yunus Rajabi

Abstract: This study investigates melismatic techniques in piano works by Uzbek composers as a defining feature of national musical language within academic performance practice. The research focuses on the transformation of melismatics from oral maqom traditions into structured compositional and pianistic elements. Based on analytical and performance-oriented approaches, the article demonstrates that melismatics function not only as ornamentation but as a fundamental component of thematic development, musical form, and expressive imagery. Special attention is given to selected piano works, including pieces by contemporary Uzbek composers, where melismatic patterns interact with rhythm, articulation, and texture. The study proposes methodological approaches for interpreting melismatics in piano performance and highlights their pedagogical significance. The findings contribute to the development of national performance schools and enrich modern musicological discourse.

Keywords: melismatics, Uzbek piano music, maqom, piano performance, national style, musical interpretation, ornamentation

Introduction

The integration of national musical traditions into academic instrumental practice remains one of the central issues of contemporary musicology. In Uzbek piano music, this process is particularly evident in the adaptation of melismatic techniques derived from maqom and other forms of traditional art.

Melismatics, historically associated with vocal and instrumental improvisation, represent a flexible and expressive system of musical thinking. Their incorporation into piano compositions required a transformation from oral, fluid structures into fixed, notated forms compatible with Western musical systems.

Despite existing research on Uzbek music, the role of melismatics in piano repertoire remains insufficiently explored, particularly from the perspective of performance interpretation. This gap determines the relevance of the present study.

Research Objective, Hypothesis, and Methods

Objective:

To analyze the role of melismatic techniques in piano works by Uzbek composers and to determine their impact on compositional structure and performance interpretation.

Research Hypothesis:

Melismatics in Uzbek piano music function as a primary expressive and structural element, shaping musical form and national stylistic identity rather than serving as mere ornamentation.

Methods:

musicological analysis

intonational and structural analysis

performance analysis

comparative method (traditional vs. academic forms)

Scientific Novelty:

The study redefines melismatics as a structural component of piano composition and proposes a performance-based approach to their interpretation.

1. Melismatics as a Structural Element of Musical Language

In piano works by Uzbek composers, melismatics are deeply integrated into the musical texture and serve as a foundation for thematic development. Unlike conventional ornamentation in Western classical music, these elements often define the intonational core of a composition. Melismatic figures contribute to shaping melodic lines that are inherently dynamic and flexible. Their presence reflects a continuity with maqom traditions, where melodic development is closely tied to expressive nuance and micro-variation. Furthermore, melismatics frequently function as structural markers. They highlight key moments within a form, such as transitions, climaxes, and cadential points. This structural role underscores their importance beyond decorative purposes.

2. Interaction Between Melismatics and Rhythm

The synthesis of melismatics and rhythm is one of the most distinctive features of Uzbek piano music. Rhythmic organization enhances the expressive qualities of melismatic figures, creating a sense of movement and fluidity. In many compositions, rhythm operates as a dominant expressive force. Melismatic passages are embedded within complex rhythmic patterns, including syncopation and asymmetrical metrical structures. This interaction produces a unique musical texture characterized by both precision and flexibility. The performer must carefully navigate this balance, maintaining rhythmic clarity while preserving the expressive freedom inherent in melismatics.

3. Performance Interpretation: Principles and Challenges

The interpretation of melismatics in piano performance requires a specialized approach that combines technical skill with stylistic awareness. A central principle is

the imitation of vocal expressiveness. The pianist must strive to produce a singing tone, shaping phrases in a way that reflects the natural flow of melodic speech. Another important aspect is temporal flexibility. While the notation provides a fixed framework, performers must introduce subtle variations in timing to convey expressive nuance. Technical challenges include finger agility, control of articulation, and coordination. However, technical mastery alone is insufficient; it must be complemented by an understanding of national stylistic features.

4. Analytical Case Studies of Selected Works

4.1. Kahramon Rakhimov - "Raqs"

This piece demonstrates a vivid integration of melismatics within a dance genre. The form can be defined as a complex ternary structure with a contrasting middle section. Melismatic figures play a central role in shaping the energetic character of the music. They interact closely with rhythmic patterns, emphasizing movement and vitality. The performer must maintain clarity while preserving the improvisatory character of the passages.

4.2. Kahramon Rakhimov - "Toccata"

In this work, rhythm becomes the primary expressive element, while melismatics enrich the texture. Rapid figurations and repeated patterns create a sense of continuous motion. The challenge for the performer lies in balancing precision with expressiveness. Melismatic passages should not be reduced to mechanical execution but must retain their expressive function.

4.3. Kahramon Rakhimov - "Scherzo"

The Scherzo reveals a more playful and contrasting use of melismatics. Here, ornamental figures contribute to the creation of a vivid and dynamic musical image. The interaction between articulation and rhythm is particularly important. Lightness, clarity, and flexibility are essential for an effective performance.

5. Pedagogical Perspectives

The inclusion of Uzbek piano repertoire in educational programs plays a crucial role in developing both technical and artistic skills. Melismatic techniques enhance finger agility and coordination while also encouraging expressive playing. They require students to move beyond mechanical execution and engage with musical meaning. From a pedagogical standpoint, it is essential to integrate cultural context into the learning process. Understanding the origins of melismatics in maqom traditions allows students to approach the repertoire more authentically.

Conclusion

Melismatic techniques in piano works by Uzbek composers represent a key element of national musical identity. Their transformation from oral tradition into academic composition demonstrates the adaptability and richness of Uzbek musical culture.

The study confirms that melismatics function as both structural and expressive elements, influencing musical form, texture, and interpretation. Their performance requires a synthesis of technical mastery and stylistic awareness.

Further research in this field will contribute to the development of performance practice and the preservation of national musical heritage.

References

- Yunus Rajabi - Shashmaqom. Tashkent, 1978.
Fitrat - Uzbek Classical Music and Its History. Tashkent, 1927.
Boris Asafyev - Musical Form as a Process. Moscow, 1971.
Lev Mazel - Structure of Musical Works. Moscow, 1986.
E. Nazaykinsky - Logic of Musical Composition. Moscow, 1982.
T. Kurbanov - National Style in Uzbek Music. Tashkent, 1985.
I. Akbarov - Problems of Musical Ornamentation. Moscow, 1990.
V. Khandamyan - Piano Works. Tashkent, 2010.
A. Safarov - Modern Uzbek Piano Music. Tashkent, 2012.
N. Makhmudov - Selected Piano Pieces. Tashkent, 2005.