CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HISTORY

https://cajssh.centralasianstudies.org/index.php/CAJSSH

Volume: 06 Issue: 02 | February 2025 ISSN: 2660-6836

Article

About Abu Nasre Farabi And His Treatise “Kitab Al-Musiki Al-Kabir"

Achildieva Muyassarkhan Adiljonovna

1. Fergana state university, Faculty pedagogy-psychology and art history, “Musical education and culture”, senior teacher

* Correspondence: -

Abstract: The research evaluates the extensive impact of Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir by Abu Nasr Farabi on music theory development. During the medieval East phase Farabi established himself as a prominent philosopher who developed an independent scientific discipline of music. The abundant research about his works has still not fully revealed the fundamental principles alongside the music performance applications from his musical studies. The research investigates Farabi's treatment of sound elements in musical theory through a study of his approach to sound production and melody and musical instruments. This study employs historical and comparative research methods to assess Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir within its musical context both before and after the time when it was written. The revolutionary elements in Farabi's music theory emerged from his distinction of musical sciences and his mathematical method for sound analysis and his program for musical education in ethics reform. His theoretical compositions motivated both East and West to establish new musical directions which have become apparent through translation and adaptation efforts. The study demonstrates that Farabi’s musical theories still deliver key knowledge which scholars utilize today in music theory and cultural research. The research demonstrates that Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir maintains historic and philosophical importance in musi.

Keywords: melody, performance, word, musical heritage, philosopher, sound, instrument, BOD, nagma, “zarbul-kadim”

Citation: Adiljonovna, A. M. About Abu Nasre Farabi And His Treatise “Kitab Al-Musiki Al-Kabir". Central Asian Journal of Social Sciences and History 2025, 6(2), 148-152.

Received: 20th Feb 2025
Revised: 04th Mar 2025
Accepted: 11th Mar 2025
Published: 19th Mar 2025

1. Introduction

The great philosopher - scientist, one of the founders of the theory of music of the medieval East - Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi was born in 873 in the city of Farab on the banks of the Syr Darya. “He came from the Central Asian Turkic tribes, received his initial education in his hometown. Farabi, who was an exceptional connoisseur, went to Baghdad, Damascus, and then to Egypt, where he expanded his education. Farabi was an outstanding musician and music theorist. He played all the musical instruments available in his time”[1].

Farabi– his pseudonym, and the full name is Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Uzlug Tarkhan, the largest figure in medieval Eastern musical culture. Due to the fact that “Farabi knew all the fields of science of his time perfectly and made a great contribution to the development of these sciences, commenting on Greek philosophy and widely presenting it to the world, in the countries of the East he received the glorious name of “Al-Mualim as-Soni” – “the second teacher” (after Aristotle), that is, “Aristotle of the East”. It is known that he spent his youth in his homeland, and in his youth he visited Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarkand, where he received his education[2]. Later, Farabi went to Baghdad, the cultural center of the caliphate, to expand his knowledge. He also visited the Iranian cities of Isfahan, Hamadan, and Ray. From about 940, he lived in Damascus. And the last years of Farabi's life were spent in the city of Aleppo. He served

under Sayfutdavlat Hamdami (943-967) and enjoyed his favor. According to some sources, he knew more than 70 languages. He performed melodies with great skill, especially on the flute and tanbur. Some sources indicate that Farabi invented the kanun instrument, having done a great deal of work to improve the oud, which was popular at that time". Farabi is said to have lived in Egypt in 949-950 and then in Damascus, where he died and was buried in the Bab al-Saghir cemetery[3].

Medieval Islamic scholars recognized Farabi for being a polymath after he published his groundbreaking works on music theory in addition to his research in philosophy and logic. Through his expertise in music and philosophical knowledge he produced Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir (The Great Book of Music) which represents one of the foundational texts in musicological history[4]. Members from preceding scholarly schools primarily concerned with music as artistic expression yet Farabi studied music as a structured scientific discipline that merges philosophy and mathematics and acoustics. Through his systematic research he studied music sound categories while establishing mathematical patterns in music and analyzing how music affects psychological human emotions.

Through his residence in Baghdad and Damascus and his stay in Bukhara Farabi gained familiarity with multiple musical traditions which enabled him to develop his musical theories by comparative study. Through his research he synthesized musical elements from Greece as well as Persia and Central Asia into a unified theoretical method. His capacity to harmonize musical concepts from East and West contributed to widespread cultural approval while his treatise gained multiple language translations to impact both Islamic and European musical scholar communities[5].

The main achievement of Farabi consisted in proposing that music functions as both an educational and ethical tool for the advancement of intellect and morals. According to him music could mold the character of human beings while simultaneously controlling emotions and strengthening mental functions. His philosophical worldview about artistic role in society confirm that according to his perspective music serves crucial functions beyond entertainment because it forms essential elements of educational and moral development[6].

This research examines Farabi's musical theories through historical perspective as well as theoretical background and their modern application in music studies.

2. Materials and Methods

Sources indicate that he was an excellent bastakor, as well as an experienced performer on the oud, tanbur, gijak, flute, chang and konun instruments, Farabi was well acquainted with the musical culture of various peoples of the Middle and Near East due to his keen taste and exceptional musical abilities. The formation of his musical views was greatly influenced, in particular, by the musical heritage of the peoples of Central Asia and Iran. His deep mastery of the musical heritage of these peoples in both scientific and practical aspects becomes known in his works. "Farabi was equally famous in theory and practice. His performing and composing creativity reached such heights that even among the people there were many legends about him[7]. In one of the legends, there are stories about how Farabi, playing the instrument and performing melodies, confused people, making cheerful people sad, and sometimes putting the perceptive to sleep and surprising music lovers. However, in science, he left an indelible mark on the history of musicology, creating works of world significance"[8].

Farabi created more than 160 works in almost all areas of natural science and social knowledge of the medieval period. Farabi wrote explanations of the works of ancient Greek thinkers - Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy, Porphyry. Especially the works of Aristotle ("Metaphysics", "Ethics", "Rhetoric", "Sophistry" and others), which could explain complex places, point out shortcomings; who created special works that reveal the general content of these works. In the Treatise "on what is right and what is wrong in the rules about the stars" Farabi pointed out the natural connections between celestial bodies and phenomena on Earth, the causal relationship of the formation of clouds and rain with evaporation caused by solar heat, or that lunar eclipses are associated with the

fall of the earth between the Sun and the Moon. In this way, he exposed the "fortune tellers" who looked at celestial bodies[9].

3. Results

Farabi wrote many works on music. Farabi was one of the most mature scholars of his time, who created great scientific works on philosophy, logic, mathematics and other sciences. Music science, on the other hand, was considered one of the mathematical sciences and included arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and musical sciences. The sources include Farabi's Classification of Sciences (Iksu Al-Ulum), The Great Book of Music (Kitab al-Music al-Kabir), Introduction to Music (Madkhal fi-l-Music), The Book of Classification of Rhythms (Kitab Iksu Al-Iqa') and many of his other works. Some of these works are preserved in manuscript form in various libraries around the world. Mainly, two musical works of Farabi have been widely introduced into modern science. These are the section of the Classification of Sciences dedicated to music and The Great Book of Music. Farabi considered music as a means of educating a person's morality and strengthening his health.

"The Great Book of Music", which had no equal in its time for its comprehensive and profound coverage of musicology issues, is one of the masterpieces of world science. In this work, Farabi raised music, previously part of other sciences, to the level of an independent science. Several copies of the "great music book" are known, stored in various libraries around the world. For the 1100th anniversary of Farabi's birth, the Arab scholars Zachariah Yusuf and Mahmud Dafni prepared and published an excellent text of the book based on the available manuscripts[10].

This book has been popular in the world of music for many centuries. In the musical science of the Middle and Near East, it has always served as one of the rarest and most central works. In the eastern musical science, it is difficult to find any outstanding scholar who is not associated with the work of Farabi. "The Great Book of Music" has also long been known in Europe. It was originally translated into Latin in the 12th century by the hermit Gul'dislav[11].

4. Discussion

In recent times, the "Great Book of Music" has also been translated into several Eastern and Western languages. In 1840, the German orientalist Lang translated the part of the book devoted to instruments into Latin. In the 1930s, the "Great Book of Music" was translated into French by Baron Rudolph D'Erlanger and published in the collection "Arabic Music" (Vol. I, II, Paris, 1935). "Thanks to this translation, the legacy of the pharaohs was widely presented in Europe. Various chapters of the "Great Book of Music" have also been published in Persian and Turkish. The work has been partially translated into Russian, Uzbek and Kazakh".

In the preface to the work, Farabi states that the "Great Book of Music" consisted of two parts. The first covers the theoretical and practical foundations of this science, and the second is aimed at explaining the "mistakes" of past scholars in musicology. This last part of the book has not reached us[12].

The copy of the "Great Book of Music" that still exists today also consists of two parts. The first is called "Introduction to the Art of Music" ("madkhal sinaatu fi-l-muzika"), and the second is called "the main part" ("Juzvi Asgard"). "Introduction to the Art of Music", in turn, is divided into two seasons, each of which consists of two chapters. The main part, however, consists of three seasons, the first of which consists of two, the second of three and the third of three chapters. Thus, the "Great Book of Music" consists of only 12 chapters. As noted above, Farabi divides the science of music into theoretical and practical parts. Theoretical science discusses the foundations of music (laws of medicine) and the methods of studying them[13]. Any theoretical science speaks of three things that a person needs to mature: "To master its foundations, to be able to draw the necessary conclusions from the foundations of science, to be able to find erroneous conclusions in this science, to be able to deeply understand the thoughts of other scientists, to be able to find good from one's bad thoughts, to be able to correct mistakes made along the way," writes the

scholar Ilmu in the preface to the "Great Book of Music" describing each of the above categories in detail and makes an ideal statement. Science definition begins with studying the original concept - the musical and physical properties of sound. Sound is defined as a physical phenomenon that occurs as a result of the vibration of some hard or soft body[14].

Further, the acoustic properties of sound are revealed, i.e. the relationship between the volume of a vibrating body and the volume of sound, using various instruments as an example, and the factors of the mathematical representation of their values are explained. "Melodies are compared to fables and poems. In poetry, the initial element is the letters, from which the reason, watad, is formed just as stanzas and bytes are formed from their combination, in the structure of melodies there are also initial and secondary elements, from which the melody comes, comparable to a qasida and a poem. What performs the function of letters in poetry in melodies is tunes," writes Farabi"[15].

Hence the concept that comes from the word sound - naghma (musical sound, tone, curtain). Reflects on the reasons for low growth, the factors of proportions and the influence of emotions on emotions through these characteristics (Farabi. "The Big Book of Music", Cairo, published in 1967). "The category of BOD (interval) is one of the central concepts of the definition of ilmu. Because the curtain itself cannot be a separate melody".

Farabi explains the formation of intervals by measuring the volume and quantity of the vibrating body and expressing the resulting fragments in the ratio of numbers. The factors that determine the high and low levels of sound are different; for example, on string instruments - the length and thickness of the string, and on wind instruments - the length, height and width of the body in which the air vibrates. But the most important among them is the length. Therefore, the length is mainly measured. Also, as explains, the first rhythm of music created is called "zarbul-kadim" ("ancient beat"). This method, allegedly obtained from the pulse of a person, had a very simple form "tan-tan". Nowadays, it is known as a kind in maqam called "Sarakhbor".

Farabi points out that musical instruments played a variety of roles in terms of the nature of their sounds: "there are instruments intended for battles, the sound of which is loud and sharp. Banquets and dances, love songs for weddings and merry gatherings were performed on special instruments. Some of them sound sharp and melancholic; in a word, there are so many of them, so many different, that it is difficult to list them.

5. Conclusion

Thus, in the Samanid era, instrumental art was widely developed. Farabi carried out fruitful work on music theory as a kamusi scholar. The scientific treatises he created have not lost their relevance today. It should be noted that the work of the scientist, who made a huge contribution to the study of the East and the West, is currently being scientifically studied by outstanding musicologists. The research shows how Abu Nasr Farabi developed musicology as an independent science in his book Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir instead of viewing music solely through an artistic lens. Farabi presented three music concepts which formed revolutionary methods for his contemporary era: his categorization of elements, his mathematical sound patterns analysis and his analysis of music's psychological effects and ethical dimensions. The musicological ideas presented by him resulted in a profound impact on both Western and Eastern musicological traditions that shaped later scholarly research. The assessment of Farabi's theory shows that his music-based educational methods continue to affect modern music education investigations as well as cognitive psychology studies and philosophical investigations of music. Future research should consider how to use Farabi's ideas in contemporary computer musicology and digital sound analysis and comparative studies of how his ideas have had an influence of different cultural traditions over time.

REFERENCES

[1] E. Neubauer, "Die Theorie Yom 'Iq'a': Übersetzung Das Kitab Ihsa Al-Iq'a Von Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, II," *Oriens J. Int. Soc. Orient. Res.*, vol. 34, pp. 105–173, 1994.

[2] A. Nazarov, *Forobiy va Ibn Sino Musiqiy Ritmika Xususida (Mumtoz Iyqo' Nazariyasi)*. Tashkent: Gafur G'ulom Publishing, 1995.
[3] A. Kh. Kasymzhanov, *Abu-Nasr al-Farabi*. Moscow: Mysl', 1982.
[4] A. Irisov, *Muallimu-s-Soniy*. Tashkent: A. Qodiriy Publishing, 1993.
[5] A. N. Forobiy, *Fozil Odamlar Shahri*. Tashkent: A. Qodiriy Publishing, 1993.
[6] H. G. Farmer, *A History Of Arabian Music To The XIII Th Century*, 2nd ed. London: Lusac Co. Ltd., 1973.
[7] Farabi, *O Proiskhozhdenii Nauk (On the Origin of Sciences)*. Moscow, 1960.
[8] R. D. Erlanger, *La Musique Arabe*. Paris: Librairie Orintalist Pauln Yeuthner, 1935.
[9] S. Daukeeva, *Philosophy of Music of Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi*. Almaty: Soros Foundation – Kazakhstan, 2002.
[10] M. Achildiyeva and R. Atkiyoyeva, "XX-Asning 'Xamnafas' Hofizlari," *Mod. Psychol. Pedagogy Probl. Solut.*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2023.
[11] M. Achildiyeva and R. Atkiyoeva, "O'zbek Va Jahon Sahnalarida Katta Ashulaning O'rni Va Ahamiyati," *J. Eng. Mech. Mod. Archit.*, vol. 2, no. 7, 2023.
[12] M. Achildiyeva, "Musiqiy Qiziqishni O'Stirishning Ayrim Psixologik Va Falsafiy Xususiyatlari," *Orient. Art Cult. Sci. Methodical J.*, vol. 5, no. 6, pp. 313–316, Dec. 2024.
[13] M. Achildiyeva, "Historical Development Of Uzbek Musical Art Stages And Ways Of Improvement," *J. Creat. Art Des.*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2024, [Online]. Available: http://journals.proindex.uz
[14] M. Achildiyeva, "The Role Of Music In Forming The Artistic-Aesthetic Taste Of Youth," *Best J. Innov. Sci. Res. Dev.*, vol. 2, no. 7, 2023.
[15] M. Achildiyeva, "Patnisaki Ashulaning Ijtimoiy Jarayonda Falsafiy Taraqqiyoti Xususida," *J. Sci.-Innov. Res. Uzb.*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 254–266, 2023.