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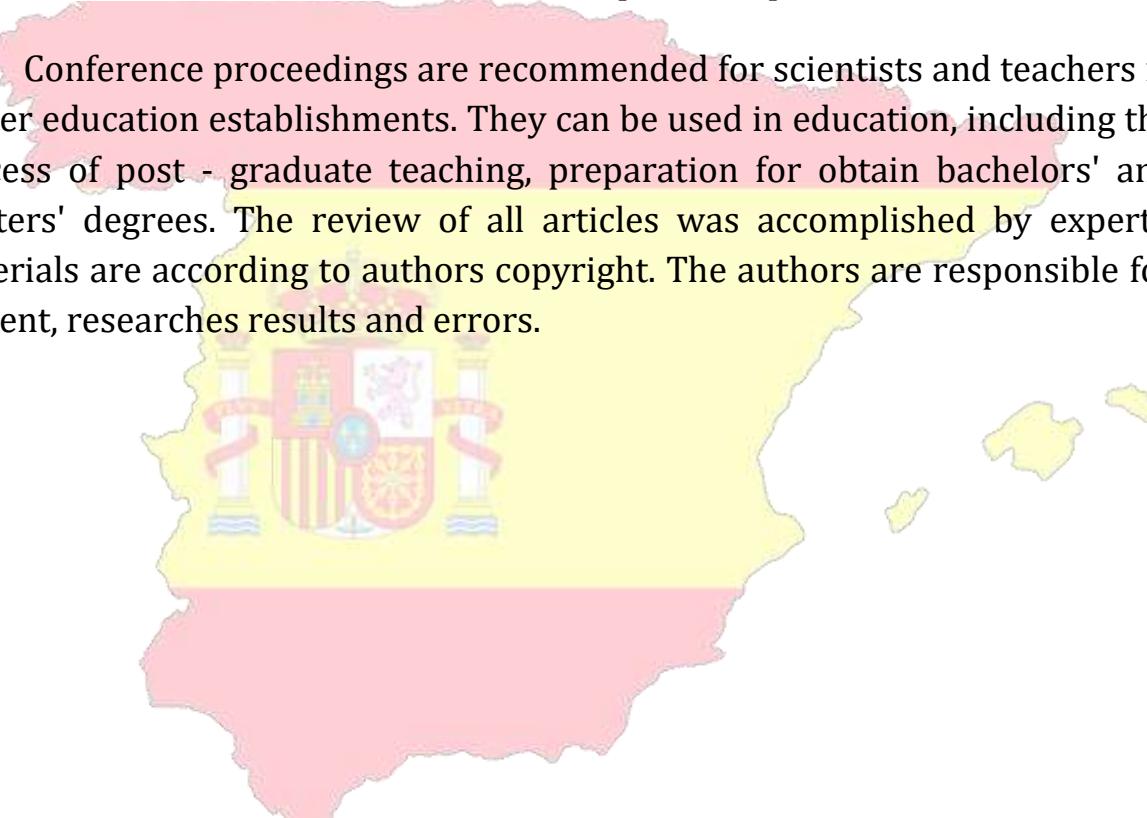
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## **BRIDGING MUSICAL TRADITIONS AND MODERN PEDAGOGY IN UZBEKISTAN**

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**Abstract:** The landscape of higher music education in Uzbekistan is currently a site of profound and necessary negotiation, standing at the intersection of a deep-seated cultural heritage and the demands of a globalized world. This article examines the complex process of bridging the nation's revered musical traditions with the frameworks of modern pedagogy. It explores the inherent tensions and potential synergies between the holistic, oral-based ustoz-shogird (master-apprentice) model and the systematized, literacy-oriented structures of the contemporary university. The analysis focuses on the critical challenges of codifying oral traditions, redefining the role of the teacher, and integrating technology without diluting the essence of the music. Furthermore, the article proposes that a successful pedagogical bridge is not a one-way street of modernizing tradition, but a reciprocal process where tradition challenges and enriches modern educational paradigms. The ultimate aim is to envision a cohesive educational philosophy that produces musicians who are both authentic bearers of their heritage and innovative contributors to the 21st-century artistic world.

**Keywords:** pedagogical synthesis, ustoz-shogird model, modern music education, cultural transmission, oral and literate traditions, educational reform

The sonic heritage of Uzbekistan, from the profound classical dimensions of the Shashmaqom to the vibrant diversity of its regional folk music, represents an invaluable cultural capital. For centuries, the sole vessel for the transmission of this capital was the ustoz-shogird tradition, an intimate and immersive master-apprentice relationship that formed the bedrock of artistic education across Central Asia. This system was not merely a method for teaching music; it was a holistic process of cultural and spiritual enculturation. The shogird learned through meticulous imitation, absorbing not only the technical intricacies of the tanbur or the dutor but also the philosophical underpinnings, the poetic contexts, and the unwritten nuances that gave the music its soul. The advent of formal higher education, modeled largely on European conservatory systems, introduced a new paradigm based on standardized curricula, theoretical codification, and mass instruction. The contemporary challenge, therefore, is to construct a durable and respectful bridge between these two worlds - to honor the depth of the tradition while leveraging the strengths of modern pedagogy to ensure its sustainability and relevance.

The primary point of tension in this bridging endeavor lies in the fundamental conflict between orality and literacy. The ustoz-shogird model is inherently aural and experiential. Knowledge is transmitted through sound, gesture, and presence, creating an embodied understanding in the student. The modern academy, in contrast, relies heavily



on literacy - on textbooks, sheet music, and standardized assessments. The attempt to notate the fluid, improvisatory passages of a maqom performance, for instance, can feel like forcing a river into a pipe. The fixed notes on the page can inadvertently obscure the music's essential fluidity and the creative agency of the performer, known as ijro. The risk is producing a generation of musicians who can read and reproduce the skeleton of the tradition but lack the ability to imbue it with its necessary lifeblood - spontaneity and deep personal expression. The bridge here must be architected to accommodate both flows. A modern curriculum must include rigorous training in musical literacy to provide students with analytical tools and access to a wide repertoire. Yet, it must simultaneously protect and prioritize a significant space for aural transmission. This requires dedicated coursework in advanced aural skills, call-and-response exercises, and the mandatory memorization of repertoire without the aid of notation, ensuring that students develop an internalized, living map of the music.

This synthesis directly impacts the core of the pedagogical relationship: the role of the teacher. In the traditional system, the ustoz was a revered figure of absolute authority, a singular guide on an artistic and spiritual journey. In the modern classroom, the instructor often functions as a facilitator, a resource among many, within a structured institutional framework. Bridging this gap requires a redefinition of the teaching identity. The modern educator of traditional Uzbek music must be a hybrid figure - a performer of the highest caliber who commands the respect of a traditional master, coupled with the skills of a modern pedagogue. They must be able to deconstruct their own embodied knowledge for classroom explanation, articulate the theoretical principles behind the practice, and guide a diverse cohort of students with varying aptitudes. Furthermore, the institution must formally integrate visiting master artists into the curriculum, not as peripheral guests but as central pillars of instruction. This creates a "rotating ustoz" system, where students are exposed to a plurality of stylistic interpretations and techniques, thus preventing the homogenization of the tradition under a single institutional style and enriching their understanding of its inherent diversity.

Technology serves as one of the most potent materials for constructing this pedagogical bridge, provided it is applied with cultural sensitivity. The traditional learning environment was the intimate setting of the master's home or a dedicated workshop. Today, digital tools can extend and enhance this environment without replacing its core values. High-quality audio and video recordings allow students to engage in repeated, detailed study of master performances, observing finger placements and expressive gestures long after a lesson has concluded. Software that slows down complex passages without altering pitch enables a microscopic analysis of technique that was impossible in a purely live setting. Digital archives of historical recordings, such as those of the great mid-20th century masters, provide an invaluable resource for stylistic comparison and historical research, giving students direct access to the legacy they are inheriting. However, the use of technology must be carefully calibrated. It should be a supplement to, not a substitute for, live interaction. The goal is to use these tools to deepen the student's engagement with the human source of the music, not to create a barrier of digital mediation.

A truly successful bridge must also allow for traffic in both directions. While modern pedagogy offers tools for systematization and dissemination, the Uzbek musical tradition offers profound critiques of and alternatives to Western-centric educational



models. The modern academy often prioritizes individual achievement and technical virtuosity. In contrast, the traditional ensemble practice in Uzbek music, with its intricate interplay between the lead voice and the accompanying instruments, emphasizes deep listening, mutual responsiveness, and collective musical expression. This offers a powerful model for teaching collaborative skills that could enrich pedagogical approaches far beyond music. Similarly, the holistic nature of the ustoz-shogird relationship, which attended to the student's artistic, ethical, and personal development, challenges the often-fragmented and compartmentalized structure of modern university education. Thus, the process of bridging is not merely about making tradition fit into a modern box; it is about allowing the tradition to reshape the box itself, encouraging a broader reflection on the ultimate goals of artistic education.

The ultimate test of this bridge is the profile of the musician who emerges from it. A graduate of this integrated system should be a versatile and articulate artist. They are a performer who can execute a traditional maqom with authenticity and depth, informed by a direct lineage to its masters. They are a scholar who can contextualize their performance within the music's historical, theoretical, and poetic frameworks. They are an innovator, equipped with the creative confidence to collaborate across genres and disciplines, finding new resonances for the old modes. And they are an educator, capable of passing on this integrated understanding to future generations, whether in formal classrooms or through community practices. They are, in essence, living embodiments of the bridge itself - fluent in the languages of both tradition and modernity, and capable of building new connections for their culture in an ever-changing world.

In conclusion, the project of bridging Uzbekistan's musical traditions with modern pedagogy is a continuous and dynamic process, not a finite task with a simple solution. It demands a thoughtful, critical, and respectful dialogue between two powerful educational paradigms. By consciously designing curricula that value both oral and literate transmission, by fostering a new generation of hybrid educator-masters, by leveraging technology as a supportive tool, and by remaining open to the ways in which tradition can modernize pedagogy itself, Uzbekistan can create a truly sustainable model for the future. This bridge does not lead away from the past but ensures that the profound artistic wisdom of the past can confidently and creatively cross into the future.

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