

# Ritual songs "Yor-yor" of the Fergana valley of Uzbekistan

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## Abstract:

Fergana Valley is located on the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan and is one of the centers of culture and art. The population of the valley has been engaged in agriculture, gardening and handicrafts since ancient times. In the social and cultural life of the valley, it has become a tradition to hold mass folk festivals and family rituals, which are accompanied by appropriate songs and dances. In this process, solo and choral song traditions, characteristic of female creativity, were formed. Family ritual songs "Yor-Yor" (Yor-Yor - the refrain word, means "friend-spouse") occupy a special place in this series. From century to century, these songs were sung at weddings, when women accompanied the bride to the groom's house with words of parting words. Songs "Yor-Yor" are accompanied by dance-rhythmic formulas (usul) performed on the national instrument doira (an oval-shaped percussion instrument). In the melodic sense, the songs "Yor-Yor" are carriers of the intonation dictionary characteristic of female creativity. The basis of this intonation dictionary is made up of descending trichordic intonations that express the semantics of sadness. As a result, the songs "yor-yor" based on these intonations are performed in slow motion and are distinguished by their melodiousness.

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**Introduction.** In the regions of the Fergana Valley, it has become a tradition to hold mass folk holidays, such as the "Tulip Festival", "Navruz", "Flower Festival", "Harvest Festival", family celebrations and other customs and rituals. And, quite naturally, at such events, the creative and performing talent of women was widely used. Centuries-old folk traditions, as well as the opinion of authoritative experts, lead us to this conclusion. In particular, according to B. Bartok, a deep connoisseur of folk art, women know more songs than men and sing them more correctly, because in the distant past, the performance of songs associated with certain folk customs and rituals was completely entrusted to women and girls (Bartok B. 1959).

This was mainly due to the way of life of people in antiquity, when men, by the nature of their work or for other reasons, spent more time outside the home, while a woman's life was directly connected with home and everyday life (Ibrohimov O. 1994). In particular, the ritual songs "Yor-yor" have been an integral part of the life of an Uzbek woman since ancient times. For such samples of songs, along with "Alla" (a song performed to lull a baby) and "Cry", are in tune with sacred feelings in the hearts of women (Olimboyeva K. 1996.). And, therefore, the songs of "yor-yor" have not lost their value and significance to this day. Therefore, we will dwell in more detail on this type of female songs.

In the Ferghana valley of Uzbekistan, this genre is widely used and is performed at weddings on the occasion of marriage, i.e. during the farewell ceremony of the bride from the parental home to the groom, women sing "yor-yor". These songs are characterized by melodic simplicity. Musicologists have found that their intonation is based on trichordic terters, the semantic content of which is associated with crying intonations (Karomatov F. 1985., Rajabov I. (2006)).

**Methodology.** The role and place of oriental women in social and cultural life, gender-specific musical and poetic genres, their classification, themes, expressive means and performing traditions have always been in the field of view of world ethnomusicology. In particular, various aspects of women's musical creativity have repeatedly become the object of scientific research by world scientific centers and famous musicologists.

At the same time, the overwhelming majority of scientific studies have recorded the manifestation of gender traditions in the system of family rituals and folk holidays. In particular, the studies of T. Merchand, R. Sultanova highlight some of the creative and performing issues of female folklore in the context of mass holidays and ceremonies. K. Alimbayeva-Akhmedova "Music in the life of an Uzbek woman" covers in more detail the cultural life of women in the Fergana valley and the song genres popular among them, "Yor-yor", etc. The author, on the basis of samples of female creativity, recorded during musical and folklore expeditions, comprehensively explores the songs "Yor-Yor".

At the same time, the information of the musicologist O. Ibrohimov about the semantics of old folk melodies and songs "Yor-yor" served as an important methodological basis for a deeper penetration into the essence and content of this genre of folk art (Ibrohimov O. 1994).

**Result.** Aytim "Yig'layman" ("I am crying") from the repertoire of the famous Namangan yallachi Tursunoy Mamedova testifies to the fact that motives of crying are clearly traced in the basis of the melodic structure of "Yor-Yor". Here the word "Yig'layman", which is repeated like a chorus, as in "Yor-yor", is performed in the range of a minor third in a combination of sounds descending to the base (c-h<sub>1</sub>-a<sub>1</sub>):

### Yig'layman ("I am crying")

А-тир гул-ни сўл-го - ни-га йиғ-лай -  
ман, Ю-рак бағ-рим эз - го -  
- ни-га йиғ-лай - ман, Ма-ҳал-ла-да  
кан - ча йи-гит - лар ту-риб,  
Бе - го - на - га бер-го -  
ни-га йиғ лай - ман.

In 1931, V.Uspensky in Andijan wrote down aytim "Nola" (the dictionary meaning "groan, complaint, crying") performed by To'khtasin Jalilov, whose motive is also based on the minor third (Uspensky V. 1931).

# Нола

Нотага олувчи В.Успенский

мен но- ла қи-лай шо-му са- хар  
 ёр - ёр, э-ши- гинг - да.

The word “nola” is also used in the meanings of “crying; sobbing” and, in our opinion, the title of the work reflects all its semantic meanings and nuances. In the songs “Yor-Yor”, the intonations of crying are skillfully “veiled” every time due to their combination with the dance rhythms (usuls) of the doira. An example of this is “Yor-yor” performed by women from Izboskan district of Andijan region.

## Yor-yor

Дар-ё - га тош от манг - ла-ро  
 чў-кар ке-тар, ёр - ёр чў-кар  
 ке-тар, И-рок - ка киз - бер- манг - ла-ро  
 о - лар ке-тар, ёр - ёр о - лар  
 ке-тар.



ку-да-ла-ро кел-ди-я ёр - ёр.  
 Ку-да - ё жо - но йўл-до - ши,  
 Дав - лат кел-ди ёр  
 Дав-лат кел-ди-я ёр - ёр.

First of all, the intonation structure of these samples deserves attention. Observations show that the intonational vocabulary of the musical creativity of women in the Fergana Valley is based on melodic structures in the volume of the trichord, which are present in almost all Yor-Yor samples and whose semantics are associated with crying intonations (Turg'unova N. 2020.). According to experts, the samples of songs with such a stepwise organization of adjacent sounds in the presentation of the melody belong to the most ancient period in the history of folk art (Rajabov I. 2006., Vizgo.T. 1970.).

According to the scientist-macomologist Iskhak Rajabov, "the songs "Yor-yor" by their simple intonation and rhythmic peculiarities can be attributed to the initial period of development of musical culture" (I. Rajabov 2006.). The following statement of one of the authoritative researchers of uzbek music T. Vizgo, who believes that "... the organization of adjacent sounds within the minor third, undoubtedly refers to the ancient times of modal formations", serves as a serious argument for the above opinion (Vizgo, 1970).

T.Vizgo has serious grounds for such a statement, since, as noted above, a small melodic formation or other melodic structures similar to it can be observed in almost all samples performed in the yor-yor valley. True, listening to "Yor-yor", sometimes we do not feel "frozen motives" consonant with the past. More precisely, this is hindered by the creative resourcefulness of women.

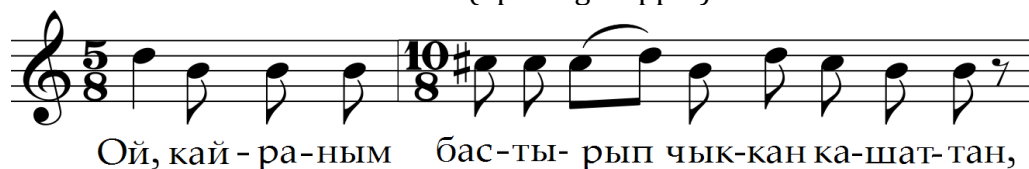
There is also a kind of "leveling" meaning of the three- or six-lobed doyra usuls accompanying the melodies of the "Yor-yor" samples. In fact, "the extraordinary impact of "Yor-yor" is explained by the embodiment in them simultaneously of two different emotional states - mournful crying and festive joy. The artistic expression of crying is manifested in the motives of the aityms, and the state of festivity - in the desires of the doira"(Ibrohimov O. 1994).

The presence of crying intonations in er-erah can serve as confirmation of the antiquity of their roots. In this case, the version is that in ancient times these songs were performed not only at weddings, but also during various ritual ceremonies and holidays. In

this regard, an important question is in what sense our ancestors first used the concept of "koshuk" (song) in relation to "Yor-yor".

According to the Kyrgyz ethnomusicologists K. Dyushaliev and E. Luzanova, koshuk is one of the old sad, mournful family ritual songs, rooted in the era of the ancient Paleolithic and Neolithic (Dyushaliyev K. Luzanova E. 1999.). The note example of koshuk given by scientists is of certain interest from the point of view of the issue we are studying, because its (koshuk) melodic grain, as in the samples of "Yor-yor", is enclosed in the shell of the trichord.

**Koshuk** (opening snippet)



The motives of crying are also felt in the wedding songs of the Kazakhs. However, one should not be surprised at this kind of similarity in the comparative study of the musical heritage of the turkic peoples, since in the studies of numerous scientists-historians, ethnographers, literary critics, etc. repeatedly found a scientific basis for the question of the common culture of these peoples (Gafurbekov T. 1984), (Ibrohimov O. 1994).

In particular, among the Kirghiz "yor-yor" is called "zhar-zharay", among the Kazakhs "zhar-zhar", among the Uighurs "yar-yar", among the Azerbaijanis "er-er", among the Karakalpaks and Tatars "yar-yar" (Dyushaliev K. Luzanova E. 1999.).

It should be noted that in ancient times, ritual lamentation songs were performed in the form of memorial chants (It is noteworthy that in memorial songs mentioned in a number of ancient layers of folk musical creativity, as well as in er-yers, motifs manifest themselves within the boundaries of the minor third. Vizgo T. Development of the musical art of Uzbekistan and its connection with Russian music.). Also, a tradition has been formed to mourn the folk heroes Afrasiyab, Siyavush and others during holidays, festivities, ritual ceremonies (Narshakhiy. 1991.).

Presumably, in ancient times the songs "Yor-Yor" were performed without the rhythmic accompaniment of doira, that is, like aytim-crying. Musicologist from Kazakhstan B. Kokumbayeva explains the common roots of these musical genres as follows: "... a person was perceived primarily as a member of the clan and his departure was a loss for all relatives. The clan could lose its members for two reasons: the marriage of a girl, or the act of death of a person. In both cases, society loses its relatives forever, which has determined the special social significance of family ritual songs-laments". (B. Kokumbaeva. 1989).

To what has been said, we add that earlier, if an unmarried girl or boy died, before their burial they hung the corner of the room with a canopy (chimildik) and sang "Yor-Yor" without the rhythmic accompaniment of doira. According to the old people, if you do not conduct them in this way, then they can remain alone in their eternal life. This custom is still preserved in some regions of the region.

In art, yallachi, concentrated in sounds, themes and emotional experiences (joy, grief, anxiety, pain, etc.) receive their primary embodiment already in the initial intonation structure. As observations show, in the musical creativity of Namangan women, the most



important place is occupied by various qualities of trichords within large and small thirds (Turg'unova N. 2020.).

In this series, the Trichord of the Phrygian mood is of particular importance. On the basis of this trichord, intonational formations of both descending and ascending directions arise. The presence in such formations of a small (Phrygian) second between I and II degrees of the harmony, naturally, further enhances the semantics of hidden sadness (sadness). As a consequence, the samples of "Yor-yor" based on these intonations are performed in slow tempo and are distinguished by their melodiousness (Turg'unova N. 2020.).

It is safe to say that the linking of percussive rhythmic usuls with "Yor-yor"'s was due to the performance skills and professional qualifications of female musicians. However, at the same time, apparently, a significant role was also played in this by religious beliefs, which became widespread among the eastern peoples.

According to a number of scientific studies, in the past, priestesses, in order to drive out evil spirits during religious rituals, under the usul doyrir's performed dance movements (Vizgo T. 1980), (Boltazoda S. 2010.). Therefore, it is quite possible that when linking the doira usuls with the melodic basis of the wedding "Yor-yor", this "essence" was meant.

The validity of this view, in particular, is confirmed by the ancient traditions that have taken root among the women of the Surkhandarya oasis According to the ancient traditions of the local population of this region, in order for the spirit of the deceased to safely leave his home, as well as to expel evil spirits from him, women played the percussion instrument dap (a type of doira).

For example, in Boysun, Punjab, Saiyab and other mountainous areas of this oasis, women who came to the funeral commemoration of the deceased mourn him under usul dapa and thus, as it were, ask his spirit to leave his home (Panjiyev K. 2010).

In the ancient traditional rite of women called "doyira badashlari" dap occupies an important place. According to the testimony of Qurbanniyoz Panjiyev, who conducted ethnographic research in this area. Elements of dance and theatrical arts were intertwined in the movements of the badash, and their aytims were performed on the basis of usuls formed on an unheated dap. In deep antiquity, instead of dap, melodies were performed accompanied by sounds extracted from thimbles, spoons and ceramics. None of the folk rituals or customs took place without the participation of badash. Every badash woman, hearing about a wedding, social or family ritual, came to it with her dap. At present, similar traditions of "doyira badash" have been preserved in Sherabad, Angora, Muzrabat and Boysun districts of the region (Panjiyev Q. 2010).

**Conclusion.** Apparently, later the family-ritual "Yor-yor" absorbed the traditions of the priestesses and began to be performed at wedding celebrations when the bride was seen off to the groom by women to the dancing usul doyira. This tradition, which continues to this day, has long acquired the status of a canon (It is no coincidence that there is a saying among the people that a bride who does not hear the chants of "Yor-yor" will not be happy). Seeing off the bride, who is embarking on the sacred family path, to the groom's house under the chants of "Yor-yor" with words of parting words, our ancestors seemed to protect her from the evil eye, invisible evil forces.

Thus, the first shoots of this ancient genre took root, nourished by the sad and mournful chants of our ancient foremothers and the rhythmic beats of the priestesses' tambourine during sacred rituals, the tunes of skilled craftswomen at the spinning wheel, milking cows in the dark over the cradle, as well as merry songs and incendiary dances of women on holidays. At present, the ritual songs "Yor-yor" of the Fergana valley have become a vivid personification of the rich and wonderful spiritual world of an Uzbek woman.

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