

DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURE AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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Abstract

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has successfully continued the development strategy founded by the national leader Heydar Aliyev. Relations with the Caucasian republics are very important and are one of the main parts of international cultural connections in the Republic of Azerbaijan. All spheres of culture are very important for the development of international relations. His decree on the development of theatre in Azerbaijan from 19 February 2007 is of great significance. State Program "Azerbaijan Theatre in 2009-2019 years" was approved by the order of the President of Azerbaijan Republic on 18 May 2009.

Keywords: development strategy, capital repair, systematic development, popularization, cultural and moral values, creative potential.

The State Program on the development of Azerbaijan cinema for 2008-2018 by the President of Azerbaijan Republic in 2008 has played significant role in the development of this field.

Systematic policy in the development, popularization and agitation of all types of Azerbaijan music, which has ancient and rich historical traditions, has played important role in the close recognition of national music in the world. Measures taken in the development of mysterious mugham art of Azerbaijan in recent years have created opportunities for this old musical art in becoming more popular.

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At present, Azerbaijan state implements important works in the protection and popularization of non-material cultural heritage of our nation. Due to the purposeful work Azerbaijan mugham was included to the "List of Folklore and Mon-material Masterpieces of Humanity" by UNESCO in 2003, ashug art and Novruz Holiday in 2009 year, carpet-weaving craft in 2010 year, tar mastery art and Chovhan Garabaghgame on horse in 2013 was included to the "Representative List on Non-material Culture of the Humanity". Azerbaijan state and its corresponding state structures decisively struggle against the attempts of our disgraced neighbors to introduce our unique cultural and historical wealth to the world as material heritage of Armenian nation.

All the steps taken by the President Ilham Aliyev for the development of the culture, protection and popularization of the cultural and moral values create strong assurance on continuation of the cultural and moral development of the country in near future.

Radical changes occurred in the cultural activity with Heydar Aliyev's coming to power (1993) after restoration of the state independence of Azerbaijan. At the end of the XX century, the collapse of the Soviet Empire, created a favorable condition for the restoration of state independence of the Azerbaijani people like other nations which was a part of the union. Despite some resistance of the conservative forces, the Supreme Soviet of the republic adopted "The Constitution act on the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan" on October 18, 1991. Thus our people stepped to independent state-building period after the colonial oppression, which lasted for roughly 200 years. The restoration of independence gave a favorable opportunity for the development of national culture. And relations with the Caucasian republics are very significant.

At the same time, the first years of independence, became a real trial period for Azerbaijan people. Involving our people to war by Armenians' who strived to occupy Garabagh, breaking off economic ties with the former Soviet republics brought the country's economy to crash and worsened the welfare of the people. The tension in the struggle for power at the time of incompetence of the Republican heads in the country increased the risk of creation conditions for civil war.

In the first years of independence chaos, anarchy showed clearly its negative impact in the field of culture. Created serious financial situation paralyzed most state cultural institutions' activity. Serious financial difficulties obliged many workers of culture to leave the country. Most high schools, as well as the Baku Academy of Music lost its professional cadres.

Our country has achieved important successes in the cultural and moral development as in all other fields in its life. Considered cultural policy of the head of the Azerbaijan state and always keeping the development of this field in the focus played great role in the achievement of these successes.

During 2003-2017 years has signed 6 state programs, and more than 500 orders and decrees about the development of different fields of the culture, and as a result of their implementation Azerbaijan culture has taken decent place in the world culture.

Several steps have been made in the development of the theatre; measures have been taken in the strengthening of the material and technical base of the theatres, improvement of the creative potential, and development of theatrical education in the Azerbaijan Republic since 2003. In this regard, President Ilham Aliyev's decree on the development of theatre in Azerbaijan from 19 February 2007 is of great significance.¹

In accordance to the execution of the decree, State Program "Azerbaijan Theatre in 2009-2019 years" was approved by the order of the President of Azerbaijan Republic on 18 May 2009.² The program serves to the protection of rich literal heritage and creativity traditions of our national wealth- Azerbaijan theatre, to the popularization of world and national values in the field of theatre, to the integration of national culture to the world culture, and effective use of the information and financial resources. As a result of the implementation of the program, material and technical base of the state theatres operating in the country has been strengthened, and the theatre buildings were provided with the equipment complying with the modern standards. Altogether, buildings of State

¹ ***, "Decree of the President of Azerbaijan Republic on the Development of Azerbaijan Theatre", 19 February 2007.

² ***, "State Program on Azerbaijan Theatre for 2009-2019 years. Approved by the Decree of President of Azerbaijan Republic", 18 May 2009.

Theatre of Young Spectators, State Musical Drama Theatre, Russian Drama Theatre, Academic National Drama Theatre, Puppet Theatre, Yugh Theatre, Mahni (Song) Theatre, Pantomime Theatre, Mingachevir Drama Theatre and others have been completely repaired and opened for the use of spectators. The ceremonial opening of the Azerbaijan State Philharmonic Society after its capital repair in 2004 was one of the memorable cultural events. The world famous musician Mstislav Rostropovich participated in the opening ceremony both as a singer and conductor, the composer F. Alizadeh's "Ithaf (Dedication)" devoted specially to this ceremony was played in the event.³ Making speech in the opening ceremony, the President of Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev stated that the reconstruction of the Philharmonic is the logical result of Heydar Aliyev's policy.⁴

The positive trends in the cinematography shall be mentioned as an important appearance of cultural development in the country in recent years. The State Program⁵ on the development of Azerbaijan cinema for 2008-2018 years signed by the President of Azerbaijan Republic in 2008 has played significant role in the development of this field. As a result of implementation of the works considered in the program, this field was able gradually to get out of the decline. Only in 2003-2008 years, the amount of the financial allocations for the cinema industry from the state budget increased from 600 thousand AZN to 6 million AZN, that is, it increased 10 times.⁶ The increase of the state all occasions for the cinema production, capital reconstruction of "Azerbaijanfilm" film studio, application of modern equipment covering all technological processes in this studio, capital repairs of "Nizami" cinema, and the becoming Cinema Center are the display of attention drawn to the cinematography. Due to this attention 35 full-lengthfilms, 27 shortfilms, 11 animation and 79 documentary films were shot in Azerbaijan during 2003-2013 years.⁷

At present, on the basis of the state order through competition films are shot by studios like "Azerbaijanfilm" (feature), "Salnameh" and

³ ***, *Annual Report of Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan Republic*, Baku, 2005, pp. 2-3.

⁴ ***, *President Ilham Aliyev and Culture*, Baku: Ideal Print, 2008, p. 10.

⁵ ***, "State Program on Development of Azerbaijan cinema for 2008-2018 years. Approved by the Decree 2961 of the President of Azerbaijan", 4 August.

⁶ ***, *Annual Report of Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan Republic*, Baku: House of Tale, 2009, p. 36.

⁷ A. Garayev, "Cultural Development: Successful view of 10 years", *Culture*, 20 September.

“Yaddash” (documentary), “Azanfilm” and “Debut” (animation) and other private cinema companies. As a result of the allocation of the funds for cinema and TV companies for shooting TV series by the decree of the President of Azerbaijan Republic, Azerbaijan audience have gained opportunity to watch series produced by the country in the national TV Channels. Competition “this is challenge, and here is screen” has great significance in exposing young talents in the field of cinema.

Systematic policy in the development, popularization and agitation of all types of Azerbaijan music, which has ancient and rich historical traditions, has played important role in the close recognition of national music in the world. Measures taken in the development of mysterious mugham art of Azerbaijan in recent years have created opportunities for this old musical art in becoming more popular. Republic competitions of young mugham singers held with support of Heydar Aliyev Fund, “Mugham World” International Mugham Festival and other events are obvious examples for this. Systematic works have been implemented also in the promotion and popularization of miraculous Azerbaijan ashug art in the world and increasing its role in the development of the national culture. In this regard, the importance of the International Ashug Festival held in 2010 shall be specially noted. Ashugs and ozans from Turkey, Iran, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirgizstan and Dagestan also participated in the festival along with Azerbaijani ashugs.⁸

Program “Folk art capitals for 2010-2014 years” was prepared and implemented by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan Republic for the purpose of development of folk art. Through analyzing general preparation of country cities, historical traditions and other factors on nominations of ethnography, folklore, study of art and culinary Ganja (2010), Shabran (2011), Gedabey (2012) and Khachmaz (2013) cities have been chosen as “Legendary capitals of Azerbaijan”, Shaki (2010), Ismayilly (2011), Guba (2012), Goygol (2013) and Absheron (2014) as “Capital of handicraft”, Gazakh (2010), Lankaran (2011), Masally (2012), Zagatala (2013) and Balakan (2014) as the “Capital of Folklore” within the program. In 2015, Shamakhy was declared as “Capital of Literature”, and Gakh as the

⁸ A. Garayev, "Cultural Development: Successful view of 10 years", *Culture*, 2013, 20 September.

“Capital of National Cuisine”. During a year, national and international scientific and practical conferences, competitions, festivals, exhibitions, concerts were held in the cities chosen as “Capital”. At present, the project “From the Region to the Capital” is being conducted in Baku city. Cultural and folklore collectives of various regions perform colorful programs in front of Baku people, and demonstrate the folklore, art samples and cuisine of their regions.

According to the instruction of the President, jubilee celebrations of some well-known artists, literal, scientific and cultural workers have been carried out in the districts of their birth in order to increase the attention to the regions.

Important works have been done in the development of art of painting, improvement of work condition of artists, architects, sculptors, and the introduction of their work to the world. The President of Azerbaijan Republic has signed several decrees on immortalization of the memories of the people who had significant contribute onto the development of the art of painting in Azerbaijan, and carrying out their exhibitions. The building of Azerbaijan Painters Union has been capitally repaired on the account of state allocations, and buildings were constructed and given for a use for the Academy of Painters. In recent years, the art works of new generation of Azerbaijani artists are bought by the MND, which gives a big boost to the development of the national fine arts. Purchase of the art works of young painters along with the works of famous painters of Azerbaijan such as T. Salahov, K. Najafzadeh, M. Rahmanzadeh, R. Mehdiyev, M. Jafarov, S. Mammadov and others, their demonstration in the exhibitions held in the country and beyond the boundaries of country, allocation of special grants for some young painters has strengthened the self-confidence of the young painters.⁹ In these years were many exhibitions in Georgia, Tbilisi (Farhad Khalilov 2016) and other. Georgian artistes exhibitions were in Baku: Mamuka Tsetskhladze (2011, 2015), Lia Shvelidze (2014, with Azerbaijan artist Inna Kostina – 2016; 2017) and other.

“Law of Azerbaijan Republic on Culture” reinforced by the decree of the President of Azerbaijan Republic in 2012 defines the aims and

⁹ ***, *President Ilham Aliyev and Culture*, Baku: Ideal Print, 2008.

principles of the state politics on culture, right and duties of the subjects of cultural activity, legal, organizational, economic and social security in the field of culture, and regulates the attitude created in the formation, collection, application, popularization and protection of the cultural wealth. Success in the social and economic field, becoming one of the rapidly growing economic countries in the world and constant political condition in the last 12 years in Azerbaijan is one of the main factors in the stipulation of the cultural development of the country. All these are based on the purposeful considered political strategy of the President of Azerbaijan Republic. During his presidency, his steps taken for the development of the culture, protection and popularization of the cultural and moral values create strong assurance on continuation of the cultural and moral development of the country in near future.

Republic of Azerbaijan considered very important the cultural policy and cultural events held in abroad. In this connection establishment of ties with UNESCO and its development is of great importance. The first successful step in this way was made in 1993. In the same year a group of representatives for the first time took part at the 27th session of UNESCO's Chief Conference.

In 1999, in Paris, in UNESCO's headquarters 1300-year jubilee celebrations of our national cultural monument "Kitabi Dede Gorgud" were held. Among these events the international symposium, exhibition of Azerbaijan carpets and books published in relation with "Kitabi Dede Gorgud" in Azerbaijan and abroad were of particular importance. All these events were held in conformity to Heydar Aliyev's order on 1300 jubilee of "Kitabi Dede Gorgud".

The epos "Kitabi Dede Gorgud" is the most ancient written monument of Azerbaijan people. Within the 1300-year jubilee of "Kitabi Dede Gorgud" celebrated all over the world under the order of UNESCO on April 9, 2000 the ending concert was organized in Baku. Such events played an important role in popularizing our country in all over the world.

Jubilee of "Kitabi Dede Gorgud" also was celebrated in Turkey and in other Turkish-speaking countries, and in Caucasus Republics too.

In connection with holding Azerbaijan National Day at World exhibition "EKSP0-2000", performances of State Chamber Orchestra, State Dance Ensemble, State Music Theatre and other masters of art in Hanover

were of great success. Head Commission of the exhibition where 174 countries and 34 international organizations of the world took part highly appreciated the concert program of Azerbaijan participants and included it into the best art programs of the world. The Organizational Committee of the exhibition estimated our masters of art's talent with a special certificate.

In conformity to Azerbaijan Republic President's order 596 from December 26, 2000, "On plans for welcoming the XXI Century and the 3rd millennium" in May 19-21, 2003, in Baku was held Symposium dedicated to "Azerbaijan Carpet and folk applied art" by Ministry of Culture and National Academy of Sciences. At the symposium took part professionals from different countries – the USA, Great Britain, Turkey, Germany, Russia, Iran and Estonia.

Republic of Azerbaijan always took care of art people. In 1991-2017s orders issued by him about culture, laws, orders about cultural people; certificates, medals, presentation of art studios to artists was a proof of his care to national culture.

In 2003 with order of Azerbaijan Republic's President were celebrated jubilees of great composers Niyazi and FikratAmirov, and the book of their compositions was prepared for publishing.

With support of UNESKO, Azerbaijan ministry of Culture and Azerbaijan national commission of UNESKO in 2002-2003 years was organized a meeting between "GUAM countries and Europe-Caucasus-Asia cultural spaces".

The meeting was held in Baku on July 9-10, 2003 with the participation of representatives from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, the Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Nizami, Fizuli, Nasimi they all mean Azerbaijan. "The history usually appreciated its famous representatives who enriched. In different times there were a lot of famous people in history. Every nation is proud with its genius sons calling them to bright life, progress and to happy life.

Azerbaijani people always are proud with its Nizami, Khagani, Fizuli, and others."

Azerbaijan National Music is very rich and Heydar Aliyev loved it very much. He said, "U. Hajibeyov's works are the national wealth of Azerbaijan nation". At the 100-year jubilee concert of the great composer, founder of national music and opera art U. Hajibeyov (1995, September 18)

Heydar Aliyev made a speech. After this event, on September 18 is celebrated as National Music day every year. On September 18, 1996, with the order of Heydar Aliyev was celebrated 110 years jubilee of great composer Muslim Magomayev. On December 3, 1997, in 100-year jubilee of the founder of professional vocal art in our country Bulbul Azerbaijan Republics President visited the grave of the famous singer. Then he visited his House- Museum. This museum was opened on June 10, 1982.

In 1997, we celebrated 100-year jubilee of first professional woman opera singer in Azerbaijan Shovkat Mammadova.

Republic of Azerbaijan always highly appreciated creativity of great Gara Garayev, Fikrat Amirov, composers Arif Melikov, Shafiga Akhundova, People's artist Zeynab Khan-larova, conductor, People's artist Rauf Abdullayev, People's artists Rashid Behbudov, Polad Bulbulogli, Jahangir Jahangirov, Sara Gadimova, Soltan Hajibeyov, Jovdat Hajiyev, Rauf Hajiyev, Lutfiyar Imanov, Ramiz Guliyev, Tofiq Guliyev, Muslim Magomayev, Azer Zeynalov, Firangis Ahmadova, Fidan and Huraman Gasimovas, Farhad Badalbeyli.

“Azerbaijan painting school is very rich”.

“Azerbaijan monuments and buildings made and built by sculptors and architectures is the wealth of our people.”

Republic of Azerbaijan paid great attention to sculpture, painting, art and architecture, praised the people working in this field. He said about the great role of Omar Eldarov, Akif Asgarov, Sattar Bahlulzadeh, Tahir Salahov, Toghrul Narimanbeyov, Maral Rahmanzadeh, Elmira Shahtakhtinskaya, Ogtay Sadighzadeh and others working in this field. Heydar Aliyev said, “Among Azerbaijan sculptors Omar Eldarov's creativity takes a particular place with its expressions, beauty, impressions.” He is the author of monuments of great persons as Muslim Magomayev, Fikrat Amirov, Niyazi, Sattar Bahlulzadeh, academician Zarifa Aliyeva, Hussein Javid, etc.

We know that scientists, poets, composers, painters, writers, actors are uncommon people. They are very fragile and sensible strata of the society. They have a particular role in formulation and development of society. In difficult times of each nation people of culture, literature, science and art have their own part; with their plays they help them in such situations. So Heydar Aliyev usually cared workers of art and culture.

Celebration of jubilees of our great masters who contributed a lot to the treasure of culture of Azerbaijan, who made our land famous throughout the world, organization of music, cinema, theatre and literature events, numerous festivals and participation of the Head of the State in these events is the manifestation of great attention and respect. A group of creative people who devoted their lives to art were awarded with money and medals. Culture is an important part of the development of the government.

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