

# BULBUL



THE OUTSTANDING MEN OF AZERBAIJAN



EIchin

BULBUL



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BAKU YAZICIHI 1988

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**Elchin.**

953 Bulbul. Baku. Yazichi, 1988. 36 p.

The booklet deals with the life and creative activity of professor Bulbul, outstanding Azerbaijani singer, well-known stage actor, People's Artist of the USSR; Bulbul's lifepath, stage activity, qualities as a vocalist are illuminated through the writer's pen in close unity with his rare voice that made his songs, romances and arias immortal.

3 4702060200—40  
М—656—88

ISBN 5-560-00271-2

Приказ Госкомиздата  
Азербайджанской ССР № 41  
от 1 февраля 1987 г.

С(Аз)2

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*Эльчин*  
БЮЛЬ-БЮЛЬ  
(на английском языке)  
Баку — 1988  
Издательство «Язычы».  
370005, Баку, площадь Натаван, 1.

The tape-recorder sounds and we hear how the passionate, melodical song thrills hearts, feelings and emotion:

My charmer, swinging, still,  
Button your shirt, button, please...  
Your grief made me sick and ill  
Button your shirt, button please...

This beautiful, melodious folk song by Bulbul is not only the expression of love and emotions of a lyric hero; his breath, modulations of his voice are so native and dear, that they embody in a generalized single image the spirit of the people and those of Garib, Shah Ismail, Karam, Abbas — the heroes of love legends of Azerbaijan and speak of an eternal admiration and love which is the source and initiator of life.

Flax-bloused, slim figured  
I lost myself, I fainted  
When I saw you, when I saw you...

Bulbul's voice, his manner of singing raise these simplest words to the level of love song not only of a lyric hero, but that of a song coming from the hearts of a whole nation. In another folk song we hear:

Green meadows beam with your smile,  
Your songs charm people from a mile  
Is there anyone as lucky as you are?

These words sung by Bulbul make the meadows beam with smile, bring happiness to all who hear them...

"I feel intoxicated when I see you", "Look towards me", "I've grown an iris", "My beloved!", "I flung an apple into the sack", "Black hairs", "I was asleep in the castle" and many, many other ancient folk songs, facing the ups and downs of history, experiencing the hardships and ordeals of ages, have reached us (and undoubtedly will live in future!), they are reflections of the feelings and emotions of people, the expression of their spiritual world. Bulbul's art is a truly national art as it rises to a height to express all the above mentioned.

As a master, a lyric tenor, Bulbul's timbre as if portrays the whole nature, the mode of life, the national psychology of Azerbaijan.

Shusha is called conservatory of the Cauca-

sus, and it is not accidental, of course. Uzeyir Hajibeyov, Jabbar Garyagdioglu, Seyid Shushinski, Fikrat Amirov, Sadigjan, Gurban Pirimov, Niyazi, Rashid Behbudov, Khan Shushinski, Zulfugar Hajibeyov, Zulfi Adigozalov, Soltan Hajibeyov and dozens of other composers, singers were born and grew up in Shusha, whose art later acquired a universal recognition, the art that originated in the bosom, in the climate, in the art circles of Shusha.

Bulbul was born in Shusha in the summer of 1897. His father Mashadi Rza, a tanner by profession, named the boy Murtuza, but when he was eight people began to call him Bulbul (nightingale), then he turned to be the Bulbul of the whole Azerbaijan as years passed.

Bulbul's birth has an interesting history, it is related by Adila-khanum, the singer's wife and a staunch protector of his heritage, like this:

"The people used to rest after the long summer day's travel by the coachroad that rose to Shusha, in the mulberry garden, known as the Garden of Khan, and then continue their trip. On that June evening Mashadi Rza, the tanner, and his wife Govhar-khanum were going home to Shusha. When they stopped to rest in that

mulberry garden they were obliged to send for a midwife to the nearest village of Malbeyli.

On that clear summer night Govhar-khanum gave birth to a son in the Garden of Khan, the midwife advised to call the boy Aydinlig (clarity) in honour of that clear night, and Govhar-khanum called her only son by that name as she had been advised up to her last breath.

Bulbul was nine when his mother died and all the story was then related to him by his father, Mashadi Rza, when they were again resting in that garden<sup>1</sup>.

Now, when I am writing these lines, the story of Bulbul's birth seems symbolic to me: Bulbul was born while travelling, and his whole life passed travelling, in the true and figurative meaning of this word, he travelled different countries, different cities, his songs were heard in different concert halls, and as a man of art he was always travelling along the fiery roads of art, along the artistic-aesthetic roads that led to the highest peaks of art.

\* \* \*

Gara Garayev wrote in one of his articles: "...there is no musical art without its national

<sup>1</sup> А. Мамедова. Бюль-Бюль, Баку, 1964, с. 6.

foundations, those geniuses whose music is now regarded as the cultural wealth of all nations and of the whole world originate from their native soil and people, from their culture, history, nature, and at last from their national music<sup>1</sup>.

Bulbul's whole creative life-way, his whole activity, his destiny as a man of art is a visual, sensible and remarkable embodiment of the above given opinion, and the main thing and cause that turned Bulbul's art into the "wealth of world culture" is in its indivisibility with his native people and land.

In the years of his youth, in the first days as a singer Bulbul belonged to the national Azerbaijan vocal school, but the starting point of the way that led to the conquest of the highest aesthetic peak of his future professional vocal art is connected with his stage activity as an actor in the city of Ganja.

In 1915, the opera "Seyfal-Muluk" by Mashadi Jamil Amirov (the father of Fikrat Amirov, a popular Azerbaijan composer) was staged in Ganja, Bulbul appeared on the stage here for the first time, performing the part of Saadat, a young lady.

<sup>1</sup> «Советская культура», 28 ноября, 1962.

...forty-two years would pass from that stage debut. These forty-two years would turn into a creative path which led that young lady Saadat to Koroglu, the heroic incarnation of people. In 1957, sixty year old Bulbul would again sing the part of Koroglu, would mount his steed Ghirat and the whole Azerbaijan would applaud the great artist...

After "Seyfal-Muluk" Bulbul performed the parts of Karam, in Uzeyir Hajibeyov's opera "Asli and Karam", Ibn-Salam in "Leili and Majnun" by the same author, Garib in Zulfigar Hajibeyov's "Ashug Garib", being perfected as an actor and singer in these mugam operas he attended first the classes of professor F. Polyayev, then of professor V. Nikolski, in 1924 he went to Italy for the further perfection of his mastership, there he watched the plays on the stage of La Scala, beginning from 1925 he continued his studies under professor N. Separanski's guide in the conservatory of Baku. But even then Bulbul never lost those national peculiarities inherent to Karam and Garib.

In 1927 Bulbul again went to Italy, this time for a long term perfection. No one could imagine that one of the queerest meetings would take place in this foreign country far from his native

land. In Italy, namely in Milan, two young Azerbaijan actors — Bulbul and Shovkat Mammadova met each other.

At that time Shovkat Mammadova studied under the guide of popular Italian music teacher Dotti Ambrozi; she was already a professional singer and actress and was just back from her Paris tour when once on a fine day...

Let us hear what Shovkat-khanum will say about that meeting:

A radio broadcast devoted to the memory of Bulbul after thirty-five years of that unexpected, unforgettable meeting would recall it as an event of the past.

"Once I was sent a large basket of flowers. I was very much puzzled, to tell the truth... In several hours I saw Bulbul coming up to me. I was very glad for I did not expect him at all..."<sup>1</sup>

Again years would pass... The years of education in Italy would turn into past but unfading pages of their lives, and these two great persons of art would return to their native country and would play a matchless role in the development of Azerbaijan opera and vocal art,

<sup>1</sup> Әһмәд Исәзәдә. Бәјүк мүғәнни, Бақы, 1967, с. 22.

would perform and sing on the stage of the Hall of Columns of the House of Unions in Moscow, both of them would be honoured by the title of the People's Artist of the USSR, and both would become professors...

Bulbul and Shovkat-khanum were the Koroglu and Nigar in the art for Azerbaijan people. Now, bringing into sight that past, unexpected meeting in the far Italy, it seems to me that it was not an accidental encounter, it was the result of their love and attachment to their art as the love and attachment of Koroglu and Nigar to each other...

Let us again return to Italy.

Bulbul began to study under the guide of Delliponti, a well-known woman singer. He came into professional contacts with famous representatives of Milan music school as Dotti Ambrozi, Raffaello Granini, watched the performances directed by A. Tosca, listened to Jildini, Totti Dal Monte, Effini, Galli — all the singers of La Scala, watched the tour-performances of Feodor Shalyapin on La Scala. He was especially impressed by the aria of Boris sang by Shalyapin in Modest Musorgsky's opera "Boris Godunov", and last but not the least, he completed his studies of perfection which lasted for

four years and returned home as a brilliant performer of different parts from classical operas as "Karmen" by Zh. Bizet "Traviata" and "Louzi Miller" by J. Verdi, "A woman from Africa" by J. Meyerber, "Jaconda" by A. Ponkelli, "Toska" by Puccini, "The Juice of Love" by G. Donizetti and others. He gave concerts in Baku, Moscow and other cities. His repertoire included the parts of Loengrin (from "Loengrin" by R. Wagner), Levko (from "May night" by N. Rimsky-Korsakov), Askar "Arshin Mal Alan" (The Peddler who Sells Cloth) by U. Hajibeyov, young gipsy (from "Aleko" by C. Rakhmaninov), the duke (from "Rigoletto" by J. Verdi), Vertier (from J. Massnet's "Vertier"), romances of Shubert and Shouman, Neapolitan songs and parts of many other best images created by the European composing schools. All of them found their way very easily to the hearts of the audience when introduced by Bulbul. But these great creative achievements never affected national colour, national spirit of his art, on the contrary, as he rose to the peaks of the professional vocal art he came closer and closer to his national background, to his people. Azerbaijan folk songs and tasnifs acquired a new colour when sung by Bulbul.

Short after his return from Italy Bulbul joined the national movement of collecting Azerbaijan folk songs, tasnifs, dance and variations of other melodies and began to put them into note and soon he became one of the leading figures in this field.

On one hand, he began to work out the theoretical basis of Azerbaijan musical folklore, made reports in different authoritative, theoretical and practical meetings, phonographed popular Azerbaijan singers, especially the songs of Jabbar Garyagdioglu<sup>1</sup>, helped composers to copy and put these melodies and tunes from phonograph into note, worked as an editor and compiler. He edited and published about three hundred folk dances collected and systematized by Afrasiyab Badalbeyli and two hundred and fifty folk songs by Tofiq Guliyev.<sup>1</sup> He compiled in a collection variations of folk melodies systematized by Fikrat Amirov and Artogrul Javid, on the other hand, as a professional vocalist, he began to put into practice the theoretical achievements gained in the field of musical folklore and ideas of musical enlightenment. He sang

<sup>1</sup> 50 Azərbaycan ел маһнысы, Бақы, 1938.

<sup>1</sup> Әһмәд Исәзәдә, Бөжүк мүғәнши, Бақы, 1967, с. 36—37.

Azerbaijan folk songs, tasnifs with a particular warmth (therefore he found way to the hearts of people very easily!), he gave a new life to many long forgotten vocal pieces, real pearls of musical folklore, included them again into the contemporary spiritual world of the people.

Just after his return from Italy, where he studied for four years, in 1931 he made a report in the conservatory of Baku on the theme "The Diaphragmic way of Transmission of Voice and its Application to Azerbaijan Folk Songs". This fact is notable because it manifests conspicuously the attempts to bring together what is national and universal, i. e. to make use of the achievements of world musical culture in the national culture of Azerbaijan, it helps to reveal the methodological principles of Bulbul's art and the aesthetic bias that leads to the conquest to the highest national and universal peaks of this art from an artistic point of view.

We stress it here, for in many cases the education obtained abroad influenced negatively the national language and culture, even the national psychology. Azerbaijan men-of-letters of the XX century never lost sight of this serious problem. In this connection it is impossible not to remind the play "My Mother's Book"



by Jalil Mammadguluzade, in which the above-mentioned negative typic bias has found its striking artistic reflection. The main characters of the play are three brothers. Everything would become quite evident if we only read the characteristics of these three brothers given by Jalil Mammadguluzade in the beginning of the play:

"Rustam bey — dressed as a Russian intellectual, i. e. in a lounge coat, vest, a stiff-collared shirt with stiff white cuffs, with spectacles. A University graduate in Russia...

Mirza Mahammadali — dressed as an intellectual from Iran, i. e. with a high Persian cap of sheep skin, a long light Persian coat with a cloth belt, a long Persian overcoat, large trousers and white socks with his soft leather shoes off at the door, sitting on his knees... with spectacles... A supporter of Persian morals and education.

Samad Vahid — a graduate of the Philological faculty from Istanbul University. With a red Turkish fez, a lounge coat, a stiff collared white shirt and a tie, in spectacles... A supporter of Ottoman morals and education...<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Чалил Маммадгулузаде. Эсэрлери үч чилдде. I чилд, Баки, 1966, с. 85.*

The efforts of these three brothers in the road of national and spiritual development of the people are like those of the characters of a fable by A. Krilov who try to pull the cart his own way, and these efforts practically contradict the true love for one's own people.

Let us remember two men from Uzeyir Hajibeyov's musical comedy "Mashadi Ibad" — Intellectual Hassan and Pressman Rza: both of them got their education abroad, their speech, their mode of life and thinking are alien to their own people, and in reality their education has nothing in common with the interests of their people.

We know that vulgar-sociological attitude towards art harmed the dialectal development of our culture and the creative activities of separate men-of-letters. In this complicated historical period Bulbul's activity in the field of Azerbaijan music was the result of his moral duties as a citizen for which he lived and worked to fulfil, and in this sense, Bulbul was the successor of tens of Azerbaijan enlighteners, men-of-letters, men-of-art, public figures like Jalil Mammadguluzade, Mirza Alakbar Sabii, Nariman Narimanov, Uzeyir Hajibeyov, Omar Faig Nemanzade and the ideological friend of

many others who belonged to the coming generations.

Bulbul has great merits not only in the field of theoretical studies and development of Azerbaijan mugams, folk songs and tunes, but also in the study of Ashug music from a pure organizational point of view. He made a report in the second Congress of Azerbaijan Ashugs in 1938 on the theme "Investigation of Ashug Music". Attachment to this rich national property, propagation and love for it remained an integral part of all his musical activity to the end of his life.

Exactly five months before his death, on April 27, 1961, he made a report in the third Congress of Ashugs which was highly estimated not only by ashugs and theoreticians of ashug music, but by the whole public and mentioned as well.

Bulbul tried hard to collect musical folklore, and to study and develop its theory, and as a professor of the Azerbaijan State Conservatory he did much to find talented young people among the common folk, helped them to get musical education who later became outstanding figures of Azerbaijan culture. Among them was our unforgettable composer Fikrat Amirov

who later wrote: "After a short hearing in the Conservatory, Bulbul took me to Uzeyir Hajibeyov and said: "Uzeyir bey, this young man is Mashadi Jamil's son. A very gifted boy." From that day on I became the object of fatherly concerns of these two great men" Further he wrote: "Up to now Bulbul has been the closest friend, adviser and helpmate in all what I have composed. I created my symphonic mugams "Shur" and "Kurdoвшari" on Bulbul's initiative"<sup>1</sup>.

"Shur" and "Kurdoвшari" sounded in big and popular concert halls of the world, they revealed the spiritual world of Azerbaijan people in France, Turkey, the USA, England, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, GDR, Rumania, Iran, Irak, Poland and in many other countries, they occupied the main part of repertoires of many well-known conductors as L. Stokovski, G. Rozhdestvenski, Niyazi, G. Abendrot, Sh. Munsh, and all these creative successes and triumphs started from Bulbul's initiative, for Bulbul was a staunch son of his people, his strength was in the culture of his native land, in its rich literary and musical traditions, in his

<sup>1</sup> Фикрат Әмиров. Мусиги дүшүнчәләри, Бақы, 1971, с. 137—138.  
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versatile world outlook without local and national limitations, in his ability as an artist to feel and see what is positive in the Russian and European culture, study and estimate them, but not like "the so-called supporters of alien morals and educations" as Mirza Jalil wrote, therefore Bulbul's art is common to all people by its essence.

\* \* \*

In the spring of 1934 on the stage of Azerbaijan Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet named after M. F. Akhundov, Bulbul played the part of Garib in R. Gliere's opera "Shahsahnam" in which Azerbaijan national music was abundantly used. This part was the synthesis of national and universal musical traditions and brought a striking creative success for Bulbul as an artist, but despite this striking triumph the peak of art to be conquered by him as an opera artist and vocalist was still awaiting for him in the opera "Koroglu".

The versatile development of people's culture is certainly the result of a creative collective effort, but nevertheless, there happen to emerge such individual creative achievements that later function as a turning point or stage

in the development of the whole culture. Such was the opera "Koroglu" by Uzeyir Hajibeyov which formed a new stage not only in Azerbaijan music, but in the whole Azerbaijan culture as well, it rose to the level of an effective and brilliant fact of artistic and aesthetic self-expression of ancient, rich traditions of people.

For long centuries the heroic epos "Koroglu" expressed the will, love of freedom and struggle of the people through the people's own creation which later turned into the symbol of might of the people as it possessed high artistic-aesthetic qualities.

The same feeling and emotions of the people were again expressed by Uzeyir Hajibeyov's opera "Koroglu" through the power of music, and the opera not only accorded with the criteria of this spiritual wealth stabilized through long centuries, but raised these criteria still to higher peaks. The opera "Koroglu" enriched the same theme from the point of view of artistic reflection of a new type of the feelings and emotions of the people and from the point of view of monumental perception and lyricism. It is a common fact that there happens to emerge rare phenomenon of art which forms a new stage in the individual creative development

of the artist, in this sense, the opera "Koroglu" formed a new stage in the development of the whole Azerbaijan culture, on one hand, and in the creative activities of Uzeyir Hajibeyov and Bulbul, on the other.

Fikrat Amirov wrote: "Whenever "Koroglu", the pride of Azerbaijan opera, is mentioned we first remember Bulbul". Then he tells of his observations from a methodological point of view: "Bulbul created the monumental image of a legendary folk hero by a synthesis and union of people's art and professional vocal art".<sup>1</sup>

One of the features of Bulbul's art, highly appreciated by great men-of-art and ordinary people, is the highest artistic and aesthetic perception of vocal diversity of folk songs, tasnifs, even mugams and the most complicated opera and operetta parts of world opera art which discord at first sight.

As far back as 1938, Uzeyir Hajibeyov, in his article "Some Remarks on "Arshin Mal Alan" (The Peddler Who Sells Cloth), noted that the party of Askar by Bulbul "seems a little strange from the point of view of the ampule"

<sup>1</sup> Фикрат Әмиров. Мусиги дүшүнчәләри, Баки, 1971, с. 8.

(the part of Koroglu has nothing to do with the part of Askar?!), but in reality he was delighted to write that "Bulbul made a smooth pass from a wide opera stage to a party in a comedy masterfully".<sup>1</sup>

Generally we come across Bulbul's name in many articles and speeches by Uzeyir Hajibeyov, and everywhere he is mentioned as a great and mighty artist. From this point of view one fact is worth of special attention.

We had already said that the twenties and the beginning of the thirties of our century the ways of development of Azerbaijan music was the object of hot discussions all based on vulgar sociological biases and maximalistic opinions contradicting each other. One of such discussions was held in Azerbaijan State Conservatory in the December of 1931 and Bulbul made here a report on the theme "The Diaphragmic Way of Transmission of Voice and its Application to Azerbaijan Folk Songs".

Among those who took part in the discussion on the report was Uzeyir Hajibeyov who began his speech with the following notable words:

<sup>1</sup> У. Һачыбәјов. Әсәрләри он чилдә. II чилд, 1965, с. 291.

"Comrades, the report made by Bulbul today is very estimable. I, myself, made a sense of it how to train our students in the conservatory in future".<sup>1</sup>

If the report of a thirty-four year old singer (a young man by our criterion of nowadays!) made an artist like Uzeyir Hajibeyov, a great theoretician and teacher, think "how to train the students in the conservatory", it says of the unique talent and theoretical information of that thirty-four year old singer.

And Bulbul, for his part, determined the grandeur of Uzeyir Hajibeyov's art in this way: "The grandeur of Uzeyir's art is in the fact that he knew all the subtleties of Azerbaijan folk music, mugams, he could feel their charm, he was in constant search in order to create new musical compositions to be loved by people".<sup>2</sup>

Bulbul proved it through a scrupulous musical analysis of Uzeyir Hajibeyov's art with the courtesy of a professional, and it is noteworthy that by doing it he appraised the grandeur of his own art. It is not accidental that Bulbul valued his friendship with Uzeyir Haji-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Бәстәкарын хатирәси, Бақы, 1976, с. 14.

beyov as "the echo of our love for our people" in the same piece of memories.

The opera "Koroglu" was first performed on April 30, 1937, in the Azerbaijan State Theatre of Opera and Ballet named after M. F. Akhundov, and on that day for the first time Bulbul appeared on the stage mounted on Koroglu's legendary steed Ghirat; further whether he appeared on the stage mounted on Ghirat or not, even dozens of years after his death Bulbul was imagined, as he was seen on that first occasion, mounted on Ghirat, and he will be imagined thus for ever unless the Azerbaijan people, the Azerbaijan language, the Azerbaijan musical art is alive, for the grandeur of that moment, in reality, is the grandeur of Uzeyir Hajibeyov and Bulbul's art as well.

In April of 1938 a decade of Azerbaijan art was held in Moscow. On the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre the opera "Koroglu" by Uzeyir Hajibeyov with Bulbul in the title-role revealed the grandeur of Azerbaijani art, the heroic past of Azerbaijan people, the triumph of people in reality...

...One of my childhood recollections is connected with Bulbul's role as Koroglu who ap-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

peared on the stage mounted on Ghirat. At that time I could never imagine Bulbul as an actor or singer, for me he was the real Koroglu, that real folk hero. I read the epos of "Koroglu" at least ten times from the beginning to the end in my years of childhood and adolescence, and Bulbul was that gallant Koroglu from that folk epos in my imagination.

Once I was so surprised and amazed that even now I feel the amazement of that moment. My father and I were walking through a place called "Kitab Passazhi" (Book Passage) when we came face to face with Bulbul. My father and he both stopped and greeted each other very warmly, exchanged inquiries about the health and other necessities, and I remember the instant of that chance conversation that surprised me.

My father:

"Professor, thank God, you are healthy and young as ever!..

Bulbul did not merely play and sing as an opera or variety actor, stage was his life, be he on the stage or outside there was a kind, sincere smile present on his face all the time, and on this occasion too he beamed with the same smile (Bulbul's unforgettable smile!):

"No, Ilyas" he said, "whether we want or not, age does its job!"

My father asked half joking:

"How old are you, professor?"

Bulbul answered this time laughing:

"Don't ask!"

"Really, won't you tell?"

I was watching Bulbul with great interest, he looked at my father and me, and said:

"I am the man of the last century!"

I began to relate the sentence "I am the man of the last century!" in my mind to ancient times, nearly to the epoch when the dinosaurs were alive, and for me, as a child, it was a shock to learn that Bulbul who appeared in the stage mounted on Ghirat in the role of Koroglu was "the man of the last century".

I had heard that phrase once before when my father and I visited doctor Ismail Veysov, a good specialist and friend of all writers. While showing us his photos taken before revolution together with the intellectuals of Shamakhi (If I am not mistaken, there was Abbas Sahhat among them too) he had said:

"Eh, I am the man of the last century".

But the doctor's words at that time did not surprise me because he was so slow in his

speech and gait, so heavy and reserved that he really reminded the man of the last century...

But Bulbul...

There was a tremendous, unimaginable abyss in my childish mind between "the man of the last century" and Bulbul with his elegance and grace...

We speak of the time when it probably was 1955, or 1956, then Bulbul was 58, or 59 years old. I mention this date exactly because some time later I watched the opera "Koroglu" devoted to the sixty years anniversary of Bulbul's birth, I saw him again mounted on Ghirat in the role of Koroglu, and when the sixty-year old Bulbul sang the part of Koroglu, when he waved his club and the sword of Egyptian steel, when he twisted his long moustaches gracefully I was again watching the real folk hero, the real Koroglu, but not "the man of the last century..."

And then, after the part of Koroglu, Bulbul played an important role in the development of Azerbaijan national Opera art, he was one of the active participants of the process of development, he created the brilliant vocal images of Khosrov (in the opera "Khosrov and Shirin" by Niyazi), Aslan (in "Motherland" by G. Ga-

rayev and J. Hajiyev), a little earlier Alyar (in "Nargiz" by M. Magomayev), but the image of Koroglu remains irreplaceable for ever (even now!) in Bulbul's art, in Bulbul's spiritual world.

Bulbul and Koroglu were inseparable after the 30th of April, 1937. I do not know where and when, on what day Bulbul sang the part of Koroglu for the last time, but I never doubt for an instant that Koroglu was with Bulbul till the 26th September, 1961 when he breathed his last.

Bulbul played the role of Koroglu on the stage of opera for more than 400 times. He sang the part of Koroglu in innumerable concerts, conferences, radio-broadcasts... But it seems to me that all these figures taken together never reflect the inseparability of Bulbul and Koroglu entirely, for this inseparability was not a mere inseparability of an artist and his role, but more than a spiritual inseparability in essence.

\* \* \*

Reminiscences take me thirty years, back to one of the summer days of 1959. At that time I had just passed to the tenth form of the secondary school and gone to Moscow for my sum-

mer vacations with my father, a participant of the decade of art and literature of Azerbaijan held in Moscow, and whenever there was an invitation or a ticket I attended the meetings, concerts, discussions held by the participants of the decade.

The most unforgettable impression of those days for me is connected with the closing concert of the masters of Azerbaijan art in Bolshoi Theatre. I was sitting in one of the central boxes side by side with an aged Russian lady who watched and listened with deep interest, as if not breathing at all.

Bulbul appeared on the stage, that aged Russian lady rose her opera-glasses to her eyes and then moved them away, screwed up her eyes which were full of love and regret (as if she cried "alas!" inwardly) and whispered to her own self (I remember those words up to now):

"How has he grown old..."

In this whisper I felt the sorrow and regret of long, eternal bygone years unattainable by any means (perhaps, the beginning of the thirties), it even seemed to me that the woman's eyes were filled with tears, and then...

Then Bulbul began to sing "My Beloved",

and I remember as well how the hall of Bolshoi Theatre fell into a deep silence.

As Bulbul went on singing the regret in that aged lady's eyes seemed to vanish, the youthful passion in the singer's voice as if made those past years return back as the romance sounded, as if those eternal days had not gone to the past, as if they were present and Bulbul's voice full of grace and youth, spoke of love, faith and youth.

Then an applause broke out, of course, Bolshoi Theatre had not once witnessed great triumphs of art, but this time it witnessed a new triumph of art — the triumph of Azerbaijan art. That aged lady by me, as if throwing away the burden of years off her shoulders began to cheer Bulbul by clapping her hands with a grace of youth and passion, her former regretful whisper now was substituted by "bravo, bravo..."

Two brilliantly composed romences by Uzeyir Hajibeyov — "My Beloved" and "Without You", as to me, forms a new, the second stage in Bulbul's activity as a singer. This stage is characterized not only by the artistic-aesthetic cognition, but by the philosophical cognition of the world as well,



My each night is a disaster, full of grief without you...

Nizami's gazal "Without You" is one of the best examples of love lyrics not only in the creation of the great poet, even not in the rich oriental poetry, but in the poetry of the whole world as well.

Uzeyir Hajibeyov's romance "Without You" sung by Bulbul is the expression of world grief, of man's temporal life on the earth, of the wisdom which impressed men and made them think for thousands of years as it is said in "Kitabi—Dada Gorgud" (My Father Gorgud's Book):

You endow man with life and death, world,  
The last goal of man is also death, world

The loneliness expressed here is not a mere longing of the poet for his mistress, it is the fear of loneliness in general; it is the fear of death when man is left quite alone, it is the expression of the woeful and lyric alarm of desperateness and absence of salvation from death. The artistic-aesthetic peculiarities and philosophy of this romance are organically interwoven when sung by Bulbul.

Bulbul's timber expresses the psychological emotions of the hero very naturally and preci-

sely. When he sings the romance "Without You", the lyric hero, a traditional lover at first, grows to the level of an image who realizes the faithlessness of life, who moans for the loss of his mistress with a burning heart.

My each night is a disaster, full of grief without you...

As if I again hear the voice of Bulbul and remember the bitter September morning of 1961...

Then I was a second year student of the Philological Faculty of the Azerbaijan State University and every early morning I went to hear the lectures. On that morning, in September 26, I was hurrying by Khagani Street where Bulbul lived I saw a large crowd in the doorway (now there is a memorial plate on the wall of that building), here I heard the bitter news which passed as a wind through my whole body: that night Bulbul had died unexpectedly.

I was about nineteen then, and as it was expected I was far from the fear of death, but this unexpected news shook me so utterly that I moved away at once, but could not proceed my way, for a long time stood paralysed in the middle of the street,

Then I came to the garden of 26 Baku Commissars and for some time I remained alone here, then went to the philological Faculty of the University in Nizami Street.

Our first lesson was the Russian Language. It was taught by the late assistant-professor Movsumzade, a man of profound knowledge, cultured, reserved and exigent. I was late for the first lesson and arrived only in the interval between the hours. He saw me when he went out of the class-room and asked me angrily:

"Where were you, young man?" he asked, then looking at me very intently from behind his spectacles, "What's the matter?"

"Bulbul is dead..." I answered.

I was sorry to tell the bitter, unexpected news. Movsumzade startled, his brown leather case fell on the floor from under his arm, and then mechanically gave a low cry of terror which still sounds in my ears even now.

I am not sure whether Movsumzade and Bulbul knew each other, but in that interjection of terror there was such a bitter regret and stunning that it might be pronounced only when one lost one's dearest closest friend.

Bulbul was the dearest man of the whole nation.

His death was an unreplaceable and heavy loss for all those who spoke the Azerbaijan language, for those who loved Azerbaijan, for Bulbul's art was an integral part of Azerbaijan life, morals and manners, a closest friend of Azerbaijan (it is so today and will remain as it is tomorrow!).

My each night is disaster, full of grief without you...

I listened to the romance "Without you" sung by Bulbul for hundreds of times, his "Without you" will always be distinguished among the same romances sung by other singers, it will never be forgotten, whenever it is remembered it immediately shakes the man, whether you are moody or in high spirits a deep feeling of grief and melancholy begins to reign all over your existence...

On that mournful September 27th the whole Azerbaijan was bidding farewell to Bulbul.

Bulbul's body was placed in the building of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. The most grievous, impressing, hardly tolerable minutes of this farewell was that his romance "Without You" began to be broadcasted by radio and tape-recorders...

Generally, I think, that even famous Fizuli's funeral took place under the melodies of "Without You" sung by Bulbul. As if this romance performed by Bulbul existed all the times. Whenever I remember a close friend, a dear to me person who is no more alive I hear Uzeyir Hajibeyov's "Without You" from Bulbul's mouth. Nothing can express the grief for the loss of my dearest or closest friends or people as the romance "Without You..."

It is true that the romance "Without You", the joint product of two great men-of-art, Uzeyir Hajibeyov and Bulbul, speaks of loneliness, faithlessness of life, pangs of love, but at the same time the feelings and emotions expressed in this romance tell of loftiness of human nature and high artistic-aesthetic peaks attained by art...

I also remember another meeting and the words said here concerning Bulbul...

It was the January of 1973, our unforgettable, popular composer Fikrat Amirov invited us to an evening party in his house. That evening when Bulbul was mentioned Fikrat Amirov rubbed his wide forehead, his greenish eyes were pinned to some unseen point far away:

"What role did Bulbul play in our culture?

Up to now we have not understood it yet. We'll know it, may be after fifty years".

I put those words down in my note-book.

Why did he say so? Was there anyone who didn't love Bulbul? Was there anybody who did not acknowledge Bulbul as a phenomenon in Azerbaijan culture?..

There was a pain in Fikrat Amirov's words, and now I think that the pain did not emerge as a result of his great love for Azerbaijan culture, but was also the result of expression of pure human feelings, a pain caused by the unexpected death of a close, dear friend, of his eternal departure.

Fikrat Amirov is also dead now. But the art that thrills the hearts of many, many new generations (and reveals what is there in their hearts!) is immortal. This is the art of Bulbul... This is the art of Fikrat Amirov...

There are also reminiscences and memories in written form (which can never be forgotten!); and these reminiscences always mention the names of Fikrat Amirov, and his great teacher Uzeyir Hajibeyov, and Gara Garayev, and Ni-yazi with respect, love and gratitude...

We have written and heard much about the eternity of art and immortality of the men-of-

art, but we repeat these words again and again, because, may be, it is so in reality, in this repetition we seek and find consolation...

Describing the last minutes of Bulbul's life, his wife Adila-khanum produces the exact words told by him to the doctor:

"Doctor, it is too late, I am leaving..."<sup>1</sup>

In the early hours of September 26, 1961, at the age of sixty-four, Bulbul joined the eternity...

The generations succeed each other.

And the sound of Bulbul's song from the tape-recorder passes from heart to heart:

My charmer, swinging, still,  
Button your shirt, button, please...

<sup>1</sup> А. Мамедова. Бюль-Бюль, Баку, 1964, с. 119.

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Художественный редактор Р. Ахмедов.

Технический редактор Н. Алиева.

ИБ № 3122.

Сдано в набор 28. 11. 1987 г. Подписано к печати 10. 03. 1988 г.  
Формат бумаги 70×90<sup>1</sup>/<sub>32</sub>. Бумага № 1. Гарнитура литературная.  
Печать высокая. Усл. печ. л. 1,32. Усл. кр.-отт. 1,53. Уч.-изд.

л. 1,3. Тираж 1000. Заказ № 1008. Цена 15 коп.

Государственный комитет Азербайджанской ССР по делам издательства, полиграфии и книжной торговли.

Издательство «Язычы», 370005, Баку, площадь Натаван, 1.  
Типография им. 26-ти бакинских комиссаров, 370005, Баку,  
ул. Али Байрамова, 3.

A-27617

15 kop.

Bulbul is a phenomenon in the vocal art. His life as an actor is written in letters in the history of Soviet art.

Bulbul rose to the peak of the world art from the depth of the folk art.

A. Khorava  
People's Artist of the USSR

