

Muslim Magomayev - Orpheus of the 20th Century

A. Haydarov

Fergana regional branch of Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts and Culture

ABSTRACT

Muslim Magomayev's talent is unique and multifaceted. He was called "our Elvis" - perhaps because of his incredible velvety timbre, which sounded incomparable in opera arias, in lyrical compositions, and in pop songs with fantastic drive. The unique voice of Muslim Magomayev - a ringing and clear baritone - is recognized from the first sounds by listeners of the older and middle generation, born and lived in the former USSR. An opera and pop star, an aristocratic artist, he managed to turn the diamond of his talent into a real diamond. His fame in his homeland was comparable to Beatlemania.

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"As soon as Magomayev appeared, it became a phenomenon. He was head and shoulders above all the young people. Everyone really liked him." Klavdiya Shulzhenko

"I attended many concerts in which Muslim Magomayev sang, and there was never a case where the presenter had time to give the artist's full name and surname. Usually, after the name "Muslim," such applause is heard that, despite the most powerful speakers and all the efforts of the presenter, the name "Magomayev" is hopelessly drowned in the enthusiastic roar." Robert Rozhdestvensky

Muslim Magomayev was born on August 17, 1942 in Baku. Muslim's father, Magomet Magomayev, was naturally gifted: he played the piano and sang a lot; being a theater artist, he designed performances in Maykop and Baku. He died at the front, 15 days short of Victory. 27 years later, the world-famous Muslim Magomayev was able to visit the mass grave where his father was buried - in the Polish city of Chojna.

Muslim's mother Aishet Magomayeva is a dramatic actress who took the pseudonym Kinzhalova. Turkish, Adyghe and Russian blood flowed in her veins. Muslim considered himself an Azerbaijani by nationality, and Russia as his mother. Aishet Kinzhalova sang and accompanied herself on the accordion.

The grandfather of the future artist is the Azerbaijani composer Abdul-Muslim Magomayev, the founder of folk classical music. Named Muslim Magomayev in honor of his grandfather. Although he grew up in the family of a blacksmith-gunsmith, he began to play the eastern accordion early, mastered the violin, oboe, and created an orchestra and choir. Magomayev Sr. organized concerts based on works of folk music and his own compositions wrote two operas and became one of the founders of Azerbaijani classical music.

"I have always been firmly convinced that my grandfather is a great composer and conductor. I had to follow his path - to become a composer, a conductor, and a pianist. And in order to secure this idea in absentia for me, they named me at birth with the name of my grandfather. So I became his full namesake.

While my peers were playing on the floor with cars and toy soldiers, I set up my grandfather's music stand, picked up a pencil and led an imaginary orchestra.”

Muslim studied at the music school at the Baku Conservatory, and avidly listened to the records left over from his grandfather. The first “teachers” of the future singer were Enrico Caruso, Titta Ruffo, Beniamino Gigli. The young man compared his performance with famous singers.

Next door to his uncle lived the family of the famous Azerbaijani singer Bulbul, and Muslim listened to the star singing in the mornings. He became friends with Bulbul's son Polad.

The boy's successes at the music school at the Baku Conservatory, where his uncle took him, turned out to be half-hearted: in piano, solfeggio and choir lessons, Muslim was given the highest scores, but in physics, chemistry and mathematics, according to Magomayev, his brain “switched off.”

Cellist and Professor Vladimir Anshelevich noticed a capable student and took him under his wing. The mentor showed the young vocalist how to sharpen his voice. Soon, the experience gained helped Muslim Magomayev in his work on the role of Figaro in the opera *The Barber of Seville*.

At the Baku Music College, the singer improved his vocals. Muslim Magomayev's first opera performance took place at a music school. His mentors were Alexander Milovanov and accompanist Tamara Kretingen. Muslim became seriously interested in vocals, and accompanist Tamara Kretingen began looking for unknown romances and works by ancient composers for him. They performed at the evenings of the vocal department on the stage of the Philharmonic. One of the numbers was an excerpt from “Mazepa” by Pyotr Tchaikovsky.

At the school at the Baku Conservatory, Muslim Magomayev was noticed by cellist Vladimir Anshelevich and decided to additionally study vocals with a talented student. The master did not give the young singer a voice, but only showed how to refine it - carefully and gradually reveal all the individual characteristics. This made it possible to avoid the consequences of teenage withdrawal.

Magomayev combined opera performances with pop performances, invariably including compositions about his homeland in the program. “My City Baku” is still considered one of the symbolic songs glorifying the capital of Azerbaijan.

The artist's creative biography began in his hometown, in the House of Culture of Baku Sailors. Magomayev's family was afraid for his voice and forbade him to perform at full strength, but the 15-year-old boy went on stage secretly from his family, receiving the first applause. He managed to avoid teenage voice mutation.

In 1961, Muslim Magomayev made his professional debut in the Song and Dance Ensemble of the Baku Military District. A year later, he performed the song “Buchenwald Alarm”, and his talent was noted at the World Youth Festival in Helsinki. The aspiring singer was the only soloist from Azerbaijan at the VIII World Festival of Youth and Students in Helsinki. In Finland he performed in halls and on the streets. After the trip and the television program, Magomayev began to be recognized on the streets, and the first step towards his dream was an internship at the Azerbaijan Opera and Ballet Theater.

In the same year, in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses, the vocalist won all-Union fame by performing at the festival of Azerbaijani art.

In 1963, the singer's first solo concert took place in the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall. This year, the press again had a reason to write laudatory reviews about Magomayev: “His magnificent vocal abilities and brilliant technique give reason to say that a richly gifted artist has come to opera.”

A year later, he had an internship in the homeland of bel canto, at the La Scala theater. In 1966, Magomayev performed on the stage of the famous Olympia Theater, and in Cannes, at the International Festival of Recordings and Music Publishing, his records sold millions of copies. The Soviet singer received the Golden Disc. Muslim Magomayev was the first Soviet pop artist to go to the USA through the State Concert.

In Baku, Magomayev became a soloist at the Azerbaijan Opera and Ballet Theater named after M. F. Akhundov. In 1964, the vocalist went on an internship at Milan's La Scala theater for two years.

In the mid-60s, Muslim Magometovich toured the cities of the Soviet Union with the musical performances “The Barber of Seville” and “Tosca”. The talented vocalist was invited to perform on the stage of the Bolshoi Theater, but he did not want to limit himself to opera.

In the mid-60s, the singer toured in Paris. Admired by his talent, the director of the famous Olympia, Bruno Cockatrice, offered the singer a contract for a year. Magomayev was destined for world fame, and he thought about the proposal.

Magomayev also achieved success as a composer: he wrote music for films by Eldar Kuliev, for the plays “A Bird Gives Birth to a Bird” and “Yaroslavna” based on “The Tale of Igor’s Campaign.” Muslim Magomayev recorded Prince Igor’s aria, and Tamara Sinyavskaya recorded Yaroslavna’s lament. The performance was not performed on stage, but near the walls of the Spaso-Preobrazhensky Monastery.

Muslim Magomayev began to perform frequently at the Bolshoi Theater. Of the entire repertoire, I preferred performances with the participation of Tamara Sinyavskaya. The acquaintance took place with the light hand of Robert Rozhdestvensky at the Baku Philharmonic named after Muslim Magomayev, Sr., which the singer considered a “family abode.” In 1972, Muslim Magometovich’s romance with singer Tamara Sinyavskaya began. In November 1974, Muslim Magomayev married the singer: the couple planned a modest celebration, but family and friends gave them a banquet in a restaurant in the capital.

In Sopot in 1969, Muslim Magomayev won first prize at an international festival; in Cannes, the International Festival of Recordings and Music Publishing awarded him the “Golden Disc” for millions of records sold. In 1973, the famous hit “Melody” by Alexandra Pakhmutova and Nikolai Dobronravov appeared in the musician’s repertoire. Tamara Sinyavskaya was the first to hear this song performed by Magomayev.

Since 1975, Muslim Magometovich led the created pop-symphony orchestra for 14 years. He toured with musicians until 1989 throughout the USSR and foreign countries. The artist managed to popularize modern Western trends, which in those years was not approved by the highest party leadership of the USSR. The singer performed the Beatles hit “Yesterday” for the first time in the Soviet Union.

Songs performed by Muslim Magometovich to the music of Arno Babajanyan occupy a special place in the star’s work. The compositions “The Best City on Earth” and “Nocturne” are so bright and expressive that the listeners remembered them right away.

Magomayev’s hit “Beauty Queen” Babajanyan was inspired by a Yerevan beauty contest held in the 60s. The composition was the leader in the “Best Song of 1965” competition.

The verses for the poignant song “Blue Eternity” were written for the singer by a friend, a Baku resident Gennady Kozlovsky, who moved to Moscow in 1971, and since 1979, at the suggestion of Magomayev, worked as the director of the Azerbaijan Pop Symphony Orchestra.

The song “We can’t live without each other” to the words of Alexandra Pakhmutova, performed by Muslim Magomayev, is still a hit these days. The same can be said about the hits of the 70s “Snow is Falling” and “Ray of Golden Sun”. The last composition is heard in the sequel to the animated film “The Musicians of Bremen”, where it is presented as a Troubadour serenade.

Muslim Magomayev left the stage at the height of his fame in 1998. He stated that each talent has its own time, which cannot be overstepped. The artist devoted the last decade to painting, lived in Moscow, and communicated with fans through the website. One of the last songs, “Farewell, Baku” based on the verses of Sergei Yesenin, was recorded in 2007. A year later, the singer passed away.

For decades, the artist was friends with the President of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev. After the death of a friend in 2003, Magomayev became isolated. A sick heart and lungs worried the star more and more often.

In 2005, Magomayev accepted Russian citizenship, but considered himself an Azerbaijani and was part of the leadership of an all-Russian public organization that united the Azerbaijani diaspora of the Russian Federation.

The last years of the singer's life were spent next to the woman he loved. Muslim Magomayev and Tamara Sinyavskaya often vacationed in Baku and barbecued on the shores of the Caspian Sea. In the spring and summer, the couple lived at a dacha near Moscow, where they grew a picturesque garden and built an alpine hill. Muslim Magometovich painted, composed arrangements and music.

At the age of 60, Magomayev left the stage: his illness worsened. The soloist could not lead his old lifestyle, perform on stage or tour.

On October 25, 2008, Muslim Magometovich Magomayev passed away; he died in the arms of his wife Tamara Sinyavskaya. The cause of death of the great singer was coronary heart disease and atherosclerosis.

The farewell ceremony for the great artist took place at the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in the capital. According to the will, Magomayev's ashes were taken to his native Baku and buried in the Alley of Honor, where the famous grandfather Abdul-Muslim Magomayev rests. He was buried in Baku, on the Alley of Honor, next to his grandfather. In Moscow, on his house in Leontyevsky Lane, in the year of the artist's 75th birthday, a memorial plaque was installed with the inscription: "Orpheus of the 20th century."

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