

The epic poem of Ferdowsi *Shah-nameh* completed in 999 AD gives the picture of musical life in the old Sassanidian Iran. It testifies ensembles of percussion and wind instruments which accompanied chiefly the military but also the civil life of the aristocracy. The pipes *naj* and *surna* in these formations used to be the bearers of the melodic line, while the percussion instruments played the organizing part. The miniatures illuminating the poem, done in 16th 17th century show scenes from festive processions and sports events, polo games and arching. There the *surnai* is presented by the other wind instrument *karnaj* (a metal wind instrument having a long pie used for ceremonies and mass feast) and *nagora* (tambours of various size). Nowadays such formations are still alive in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan [Бызго, 1980:100, 125].

The texts and collections of Russian explorers and travelers of the late 19th and early 20th century also shed light over the place the *zurna* had among the music instruments of Middle Asia. The collection of the orientalist Samojlovitch of music instruments acquired from the khaganate of Hiva contains, among others, *surnais* – wooden wind oboe-like instruments with a conic bore. On the upper end of the bore this instrument has a wooden plug with a metal peg inside holding a double reed. The shift of one of the instruments is made from silver while that of the other one is made from copper. The front side of the body has seven finger holes [Бызго, 1980:139].

There is also a *surnai* in the collection of Eihgorn – bandmaster of Russian military orchestras, who collected instruments from Tashkent and cities from the Fergana valley in the period 1870-1880. The instrument has seven finger holes on the front side and one at the back. According to Eihgorn the real expert in the instrument is capable of playing it “in a single breath” for a long time. This is achieved by a special technique of breathing in through the nose. The collector has put into the notes a dance melody which exhibits the technical capacities of the instrument – large interval leaps in the melody. Commenting on the collection, he has noted that in the 19th century the *zurna* in Middle Asia was a diatonic instrument having a range of an octave which via overblowing could be enlarged to an octave and a half. Eihgorn testifies to the typical ensemble formation including a *surnai*, describing the orchestra of the khan: “three copper flutes – *naj*, one *surnai*, three *nagors*, a large drum, one cymbal player and one triangle” [Бызго, 1980:147].

As the literature and photographs of that time show, the *surnai* is typical of the one of the two main instrumental ensembles in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan of the late 19th and the early 20th century. The ensemble played outdoors serving the khans’ courts and the city feasts, military ceremonies and public shows. This orchestra includes wind and percussion instruments: *surnai*, *karnaj*, *nagora*, *dojra* (a kind of tambourine).

Krestovskij wrote in the second half of the 19th century that the musicians from the military orchestra of Bucchara at first played the *karnajs*, then they included the *surnais* while the drums were playing all the times. Eihgorn provided information on the repertoire that has put down several variants of the popular *Persian March*. The piece known as the *Bucchara March* is a work of Johann Strauss dated 1864. It was composed on the occasion of the visit of the Iranian Shah Nassirudin to Vienna. Probably musicians from the Shah escort brought the melody to Middle Asia [Бызго, 1980:157-159, 1963].

There is no evidence on the *zurna* in the **Indian music culture** before the Islamic invasions (11th – 17th c. AD). According to Sachs, the oboe was imported in India from Persia, keeping its name *surna*. In North India the name changed into *sanayi* under the influence of Sanskrit. The music of the Indian *zurnas* is heard at weddings, ritual proces-