



**HOPKINS CENTER
FOR THE ARTS**

and the Aga Khan Music Initiative
present

World Premiere

Qyrq Qyz (Forty Girls)

Directed by Saodat Ismailova

Written by Saodat Ismailova and Ulugbek Sadikov

Cinematography by Carlos Casas

Music composed and arranged by Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky

Scenography by Kamilla Kurmanbekova

Costumes by Hilola Sher

Lighting design and movement by Séverine Rième

Sound and Technical Direction by Joseph Jabbour

Funded in part by NEA Art Works, the Aga Khan Music Initiative, the Wetzel Family Fund for the Arts, the Arthur J. 1903 and Nellie Z. Cohen Foundation, the Nathan W. Pearson 1932 and Sons Fund, the Chandler Distinguished Lecturer Fund and the Steven W. Drabeim 1966 Fund.

Thu • March 1, 2018 • 7 pm

The Moore Theater • Dartmouth College

Program

Qyrq Qyz

- Part I: Earth
- Part II: Air
- Part III: Water
- Part IV: Fire

The duration of the performance is 1:20, without intermission

The Aga Khan Music Initiative and the entire Qyrq Qyz artistic team acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of Dartmouth College; Dartmouth's Hopkins Center for the Arts; and Le Fresnoy, France's National Studio of Contemporary Art, for their support of Qyrq Qyz's creative development, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music and its executive producer, Joseph Melillo, for their initial invitation to present Qyrq Qyz in the USA.

We give additional thanks to the Dartmouth Department of Music, Leslie Center for the Humanities, Dickey Center for International Understanding, Office of the Provost and Associate Dean of Faculty for Arts and Humanities.

Performers

Raushan Orazbaeva	lead musician, <i>qobyz</i>
Gumshagul Bekturganova	vocal, <i>dutar</i>
Gumisay Berdikhanova.....	vocal, <i>ghirjek</i>
Aziza Davronova.....	vocal
Alibek Kabdurakhmanov.....	conductor, percussion, <i>chang</i>
Tokzhan Karatai.....	vocal, <i>qobyz</i>
Makhabat Kobogonova.....	vocal, <i>kyl-kiyak, chopo-choor, komuz, jygach ooz komuz</i>
Arailym Omirbekova.....	vocal, <i>domyra</i>
Saltanat Yersultan	vocal, <i>jetigen, qobyz</i>
Aysanem Yusupova.....	film actor (Gulayim)

Aga Khan Music Initiative

Fairouz Nishanova.....	Director and Qyrq Qyz co-producer
Theodore Levin	Senior Project Consultant and Qyrq Qyz co-producer
Nathalie de Groot.....	Program Coordinator, Geneva
Kirill Kuzmin	Regional Coordinator for Central Asia

Other Credits

Theodore Levin	Playbill text
Nathalie Héricourt	Map credit
John Pendleton	Qyrq Qyz tour manager

Program Notes

Qyrq Qyz (in Turkic, “Forty Girls” or “Forty Maidens”) is the Aga Khan Music Initiative’s multimedia retelling of an epic poem whose origins are in a constellation of stories and legends widely known in Central Asia and surely of ancient provenance. While bardic reciters of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* disappeared millennia ago, in Central Asia the performance of epic and other forms of oral poetry remains a living tradition—essentially a contemporary form of performance art in which the central figure of the bard is at once narrator, musician, actor and mime. For Central Asian audiences, epic is not merely entertainment, but is imbued with moral values and embodies the history and social identity of clans, tribes, and peoples.

Like other oral epic poetry from Inner Asia, *Qyrq Qyz* interweaves elements of myth, legend, history and geography. *Qyrq Qyz* is distinctive, however, in the realm of gender: its main heroes are female—young women whose equestrian skills, valor and military prowess call to mind the legendary Amazons described by ancient Greek geographers and historians. Indeed, like the Amazons, the heroes of *Qyrq Qyz* may reflect history as much as legend. A recent book, *The Amazons: Lives and Legends of Warrior Women across the Ancient World*, by Adrienne Mayor (Princeton University Press, 2014), cites new DNA and bioarchaeological analysis showing that among the ancient nomadic groups known collectively as Scythians, about one-third of Scythian females were active fighters.

The present production of *Qyrq Qyz* is based on the epic story of Gulayim, the sixteen-year-old daughter of Allayar, a ruler of the semi-nomadic Karakalpak people, who lives in the fortress of Sarkop. Gulayim receives a gift of land from her father on the island of Miueli, where a fort is built for Gulayim and her forty female companions—young women whom she trains in the art of war to defend their lands against invaders. Sarkop is invaded by the Kalmyk khan Surtaishi; Gulayim’s father is killed in battle, and many Sarkopians are led away into captivity. Hearing of the invasion, Gulayim and her forty companions vanquish Surtaishi and the Kalmyks, liberate the captive Sarkopians, and demand that the Kalmyk invaders offer compensation for the destruction

they wreaked upon the Karakalpaks. Before the battle, Aryslan, a knight from the neighboring kingdom of Khorezm, seeks the love of Gulayim, and Gulayim invites him to join her not in love, but in war. Following their victory, Gulayim and Aryslan join their lands, uniting peoples from different tribes and ethnicities, and build a society founded on peace and compassion.

The story of Gulayim resonates with accounts by Herodotus and other ancient historians of female warrior-rulers who belonged to the nomadic or “barbarian” cultures beyond the Black Sea. Among these is Tomyris, ruler of the kingdom of the Massagetae, whose territory lay south and southeast of the Aral Sea. According to Herodotus, Tomyris led the Massagetaens in defending their land against Persian invaders led by Cyrus, founder of the Achaemenid Dynasty of Iran.

Qyrq Qyz represents a vestige of the archaic currents of matriarchy that course through Central Asian cultures, traces of which remain robust today in the form of numerous legends about “forty girls” told and retold particularly among women (in Tajikistan, the Forty Girls are known under their Tajik name, *Chil Duhtaron*). These legends are physically embodied in the eponymous names of ancient fortresses, sacred pilgrimage sites, shrines and personified geological formations such as rock outcroppings and large boulders that local inhabitants perceive as human figures. Pilgrimage sites and shrines are often draped with strips of cloth left as offerings to the spirits of the Forty Girls.

One version of the Forty Girls legend includes the names of Zoroastrian deities, underscoring the pervasive influence of ancient Iranian religion on spiritual and expressive culture in Central Asia. “All around Uzbekistan, you still find local people who believe that fire-worshippers (i.e., Zoroastrians) were the founders of their civilization,” said Saodat Ismailova, artistic director of *Qyrq Qyz*. “In creating a structure for my adaptation of the epic and associated legends, I drew on Zoroastrian cosmogony, which deifies the four elements of earth, air, water and fire. The performance

Program Notes continued

is divided into these four elements, and the emotional development of the main character, Gulayim, is supported by a text that proceeds through these different parts of creation.”

In Saodat Ismailova’s luminous reimagination of *Qyrq Qyz*, video filmed in the wind-scoured Karakalpak steppe and other locations in Uzbekistan is woven together with a musical score by the celebrated Tashkent-based composer Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky that merges ambient sounds of the steppe and live percussion with onstage performance by a group of intrepid young female bards—living embodiments of Gulayim and her forty companions. These bards perform songs and instrumental music drawn from the traditional styles and genres of epic reciters, shamanic healers, improvising oral poets, virtuoso solo instrumentalists and singers of female love songs.

Among Central Asian nomadic peoples, poetic verse, singing and musical instruments were believed to have therapeutic powers—in particular, the power to heal the psyche, and, by extension, to bring about social equilibrium and harmony. In Central Asian Turkic languages, terms for “epic reciter” and “traditional healer” or “shaman” are often cognate—for example, among the Karakalpaks, a *baqsy* is an epic singer whereas among the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, a *baqsy* (or *bakshy*) is a traditional healer—evidence that both professions developed from the same cultural practice. *Qyrq Qyz* filters the panoramic landscape and soundscape of the Central Asian epic world captured by Saodat Ismailova through the prism of Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky’s lambent compositional imagination, providing a modernistic gloss on an ancient tale. This is appropriate, for the story of Gulayim and the Forty Girls is at once primordial, universal and urgently contemporary.

Theodore Levin



The setting of *Qyrq Qyz* is the windswept steppe land south and southeast of the Aral Sea, the territory of the Karakalpaks, who traditionally were both farmers and fishermen.

Qyrq Qyz and the Aga Khan Music Initiative

The Aga Khan Music Initiative, producer of *Qyrq Qyz*, is an interregional music and arts education program with worldwide performance, outreach, mentoring and artistic production activities. Launched to support talented musicians and music educators working to preserve, transmit and further develop their musical heritage in contemporary forms, the Music Initiative began its work in Central Asia, subsequently expanding its cultural development activities to include artistic communities and audiences in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. The Initiative promotes the revitalization of cultural heritage both as a source of livelihood for musicians and as a means to strengthen

pluralism in nations where it is challenged by social, political and economic constraints. Its projects have included publication of a comprehensive textbook, *The Music of Central Asia* (Indiana University Press, 2016), a ten-volume CD-DVD anthology, *Music of Central Asia*, co-produced with Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, a worldwide performance and outreach program that nurtures “East-East” as well as “East-West” musical collaborations, and a network of music schools and centers that develop innovative music curricula and curriculum materials in the Music Initiative’s regions of activity. (akdn.org/akmi)

About the Artists

Soadat Ismailova is one of the most internationally visible and accomplished representatives of a new generation of artists from Central Asia who came of age in the post-Soviet era and have established cosmopolitan artistic lives while remaining deeply engaged with their native region as a source of creative inspiration. Her debut feature film *40 Days of Silence*, a poignant depiction of four generations of Tajik women living in the complete absence of men, was nominated for best debut film at the 2014 Berlin International Film Festival, and thereafter was screened in more than two dozen prestigious festivals around the world. Her video installation *Zukhra* was featured in the Central Asian Pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale, and her documentary film *Aral: Fishing in an Invisible Sea* won Best Documentary at the 2004 Turin Film Festival. Among many other works are nine music documentaries for the CD-DVD anthology *Music of Central Asia*, co-produced by the Aga Khan Music Initiative and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Ismailova resides in Tashkent and Paris, and is affiliated with Le Fresnoy, France’s National Studio of Contemporary Arts.

Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky has produced a distinguished and culturally unique body of work characterized by a

merging of musical influences from his native Central Asia with postmodernist compositional styles of Russia and Eastern Europe. Yanov-Yanovsky’s music has been commissioned and performed by leading musicians and musical organizations in the United States, including cellist Yo-Yo Ma, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Kronos Quartet, soprano Dawn Upshaw and the New Juilliard Ensemble. From 2008-2010, Yanov-Yanovsky was a composer-in-residence at Harvard University, with support from the Scholars at Risk Program. During the same period, he taught music composition at Dartmouth College. His music has been recognized internationally through prizes and awards, recordings, and performances in prestigious concert venues. Yanov-Yanovsky is also a prolific composer of film soundtracks. From 1996-2006, he served as artistic director of the International Contemporary Music Festival Ilkhom-XX, in Tashkent, the only festival of its kind in Central Asia.

Kamilla Kurmanbekova grew up in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and graduated from Kazakhstan’s National Art Academy. She subsequently earned an MFA in Stage Design from Boston University’s College of Fine Arts. She has created scenography, costumes and stage

About the Artists continued

designs for many theatrical productions, both in Kazakhstan and internationally. Her collaborative installation *Zhol* was featured in the Central Asian Pavilion of the 2013 Venice Biennale. She led and curated Kazakhstan's participation in the 2011 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, which presents contemporary work by theater designers from around the world. Recent work includes costumes for the 2015 film *The Wounded Angel*, by Kazakh director Emir Baigazin. Kurmanbekova presently lives in Los Angeles.

Séverine Rième came to lighting design by way of dance and choreography, and much of her work as a lighting designer has involved collaborations with dancers and choreographers, among them, Tyno Sehgal, Myriam Gourfink, Marianne Baillot, Mark Tompkins, Alexandre Roccoli and David Wampach. At the same time that her lighting designs appear in prestigious festivals, concert halls and arts laboratory settings around the world, Rième is also active in bringing her creative work into schools, in particular in the suburban Parisian city of Montreuil, where she makes her home.

Hilola Sher studied costume design and scenography at the National Institute of Fine Arts and Design named after Kamoliddin Behzod, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and subsequently received an MA in book illustration. She worked as principal costume designer at UzbekFilm, Uzbekistan's national film company, where her credits include more than a dozen feature films. Beginning in 2000, Sher regularly produced costumes for the Sharq Taronalari State Music Festival in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. She has exhibited her graphic drawings in many international biennales and had solo exhibitions in Tashkent. She makes costumes for the concert performances of well-known Uzbek singer Sevara Nazarkhan, and is the owner of the fashion brand Hilola Sher.

Joseph Jabbour grew up in Syria, Lebanon, Austria and the United States and earned an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering. He began sound engineering at the age of 14, focusing on live sound

engineering, and has worked with a wide range of musicians in Europe and the Middle East. He served as technical director for the Damascus Jazz Festival, and is in charge of live sound engineering for the Aga Khan Music Initiative. In addition to his work as a sound engineer, Jabbour does general project management for software systems integration.

Raushan Orazbaeva (lead musician, *qyl-qobyz*) is one of Kazakhstan's most celebrated performers on the *qyl-qobyz*, the archaic two-stringed fiddle traditionally used by Kazakh shamans. During the Soviet era, the *qyl-qobyz* became a central instrument of folk orchestras and consorts that performed arrangements of traditional folk music as well as newly composed European-style classical music. A graduate of the Kazakh National Conservatory named after Kurmangazy, Orazbaeva has performed widely in Europe and North America as a member of various ensembles and orchestras. A solo recording of her performances of classic Kazakh instrumental pieces was released by the Italian label Felmay. Her musicianship is also featured in two recent world music textbooks, *The Music of Central Asia* (Indiana University Press, 2016) and *Pieces of the Musical World: Sounds and Cultures* (Routledge, 2015). She currently teaches at Kazakh National University of the Arts, in Astana, Kazakhstan, and has been granted the title Cultural Figure of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Gumshagul Bekturganova (vocal, *dutar*) is from the Karakalpak Autonomous Republic within Uzbekistan, commonly known as Karakalpakstan, a region with its own distinctive Turkic dialect and musical traditions. A student of the Qaraqalpak master musician Ghairatdin Otemuratov, she is a 2017 graduate of Nukus State Pedagogical Institute named after Adzhiniyaz, where her focus was music education. She has won first place in several local and regional musical competitions and participated in international projects focusing on the musical legacy of the Silk Road. She presently works as a teacher at Nukus Children's Music School, specializing in teaching *dutar*.

About the Artists continued

Gumisay Berdikhanova (vocal, *ghirjek*) Gumisay is one of only two female musicians in Karakalpakstan who play the four-stringed spike fiddle *ghirjek* (the Karakalpak name for *ghijak*). She is a first-year student in the Nukus branch of the Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts, studying in the Department of Folklore and Ethnography under Gulbahar Ahimbetova. She also studies independently as a *shogird*, or apprentice, of master musician Ghairatdin Otemuratov. In 2014 she won first prize in the Traditional Music Competition named after Muhiddin Kari-Yakubov, in Nukus.

Aziza Davronova (vocal) is originally from Bukhara, one of the great oasis cities of the historical Silk Road, and moved to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, to study at the Uzbekistan State Conservatory, where she was a student of Shavkat Matyakubov. She works as a professional vocalist in Uzbekistan's State Philharmonia Society, where her specialty is the performance of Uzbek traditional classical music *maqom*.

Alibek Kabdurakhmanov (percussion, *chang*) specializes in contemporary music, and is a member of the Tashkent-based Omnibus Ensemble, Central Asia's most accomplished contemporary music ensemble. A graduate of the Uzbekistan State Conservatory, Kabdurakhmanov also conducts the National Symphony Orchestra of Uzbekistan, and is active as a freelance musician who performs widely in international festivals and projects. As a teacher and mentor, he works with advanced percussion students in Tashkent and has been instrumental in introducing contemporary percussion music from around the world into the repertoire of young percussionists in Central Asia.

Tokzhan Karatai (vocal, *qobyz*) graduated from the Kazakh National Conservatory named after Kurmangazy, and is interested in the intersection of traditional music and contemporary music. As a performer-composer-improviser, she is seeking ways to expand the musical potential of the *qobyz*. Karatai has been active in international projects, and traveled to the USA in 2016 to participate in Bandistan, a program sponsored by CEC ArtsLink with funding from the US Department of State, which brought talented

young musicians from Central Asia together with members of Bang on a Can, one of New York's premier contemporary music groups.

Makhabat Kobogonova (vocal, *kyl-kiyak*, *chopochoor*, *ygach ooz komuz*) is a multi-instrumentalist from Kyrgyzstan. She graduated from the Kyrgyz National Conservatory named after K. Moldobasanova, where she studied guitar. Parallel to her conservatory studies, Kobogonova studied *kyl-kiyak* at the Bishkek-based Centre Ustatshakirt, a project created and supported by the Aga Khan Music Initiative that cultivates new approaches to musical performance and pedagogy and helps talented young musicians reformulate traditional music in contemporary languages of art. In addition to her mastery of the canonical repertoire for *kyl-kiyak*, Kobogonova has performed internationally in a variety of projects that bring together Kyrgyz musical instruments and traditional musical forms with artists from the West.

Arailym Omirbekova (vocal, *domyra*) was raised in the Kyzyl-Orda region of south-central Kazakhstan, one of the country's richest areas for traditional music. She is currently a student in the College of Culture within the National University of Arts, in Astana, studying traditional singing under the mentorship of Elmira Zhanabergenova. In 2016, she participated in "Playing Together: Sharing Central Asian Musical Heritage," a program of workshops, public events, and collaborations in traditional and contemporary music that brings together talented young musicians from Central Asia under the leadership of accomplished performers and composers from Central Asia, India, and the United States, organized by New York-based CEC ArtsLink with funding from the US Department of State's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

Saltanat Yersultan (vocal, *zhetigen*, *qobyz*) studies at the Kazakh National University of the Arts in Astana, where her major subject is film animation. At an early age, she began singing the traditional vocal genre known as *zhyr*, learning from her mother, a well-known traditional performer and a professor at the University of the Arts. Her talent as a singer has been recognized

About the Artists continued

in a number of national and international music competitions. She also plays the *qobyz* and the *zhetigen*, a traditional nomadic instrument similar to a hammer dulcimer.

Aysanem Yusupova (film actor, role of Gulayim) is from Nukus, the capital of the Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic within Uzbekistan. As a young teenager, she began performing as a singer in state-sponsored

celebrations and festivities, and in 2016, she was accepted as a student of film and theater acting at Tashkent State Art Institute. In 2017 she played one of the main characters in the Uzbek film *Maftuningman - 2* (Fascinated by You), a sequel to a 1958 comedy of the same name regarded as a standout in Uzbek film history. *Qyrq Qyz* is her second film project. Yusopova is presently a second-year student at Tashkent State Art Institute.

Connecting Artists with the Community

While at Dartmouth, *Qyrq Qyz* artists visited classes in the Music and Asian & Middle Eastern Studies departments, presented a mini-concert and shared dinner with students at a Residential House Community, presented a lecture-demonstration at Woodstock Union High School, performed in the School Matinee Series, and will participate in a post-performance discussion. In addition, Professor Theodore Levin and Director Saodat Ismailova offered a public pre-show talk "Central Asian Amazons." For more information on Hop Outreach & Arts Education, call 603.646.2010 or visit hop.dartmouth.edu/online/outreach.

Hopkins Center Directorate

Mary Lou Aleskie, Howard L. Gilman '44 Director

Michael Bodel, Director of External Affairs

Jay Cary '68, T'71, Business and Administrative Officer

Joshua Price Kol '93, Managing Director/Executive Producer

Margaret Lawrence, Director of Programming

Sydney Stowe, Director of Hopkins Center Film

Hopkins Center Board of Advisors

Austin M. Beutner '82, P'19

Anne Fleischli Blackburn '91

Kenneth L. Burns H'93

Barbara J. Couch

Allan H. Glick '60, T'61, P'88, GP'19

Barry Grove '73

Caroline Diamond Harrison '86, P'16, P'18, Chair

Kelly Fowler Hunter '83, T'88, P'13, P'15, P'19

Robert H. Manegold '75, P'02, P'06

Michael A. Marriott '84, P'18

Nini Meyer

Laurel J. Richie '81, Trustee Representative

Jennifer A. Williams '85



Please turn off your cell phone inside the theater.



Assistive Listening Devices available in the lobby.



If you do not wish to keep your playbill, please discard it in the recycling bin provided in the lobby. Thank you.