

Article

Stages of Formation of the Uzbek Drama Theater

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Abstract: The development of national theater is closely linked to socio-cultural evolution, reflecting historical changes, ideological transformations, and the formation of collective identity, with Uzbek drama theater playing a key role in shaping public consciousness during periods of renewal. A distinctive feature of Uzbek theater is its connection with the Jadid enlightenment movement, which viewed theater as a medium for education, spirituality, and modernization, integrating traditional culture with modern dramaturgy. Despite existing descriptive studies on performances and playwrights, there is a lack of systematic analysis of the developmental stages of Uzbek drama theater within a unified conceptual framework, particularly in comparing pre- and post-independence transformations. This study aims to identify and analyze the stages of formation and evolution of Uzbek drama theater through a historical-analytical perspective. The findings reveal that the theater has undergone significant qualitative changes since its establishment in 1968, especially during independence, marked by diversification of repertoire, renewal of directing approaches, and increased engagement with socially significant themes such as patriotism and spirituality. The study provides a comprehensive stage-based analysis of Uzbek drama theater, highlighting the interaction between socio-political context and artistic development. The results emphasize the role of theater as both a cultural and social institution and suggest the importance of further research on its modernization, global integration, and influence on national identity.

Keywords: science, knowledge, spirituality, culture, education, literature, drama, theater.

Citation: Isroilova Mohina Adhamovna. Stages of Formation of the Uzbek Drama Theater. *Horizon: Journal of Humanity and Artificial Intelligence* 2026, 5(1), 24-28.

Received: 18th Jan 2026
Revised: 10th Feb 2026
Accepted: 19th Feb 2026
Published: 18th Apr 2026



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1. Introduction

The development of national theater is closely connected with the socio-cultural evolution of society, reflecting historical transformations, ideological shifts, and the formation of collective identity. In Uzbekistan, theatrical art has played a significant role in shaping public consciousness, particularly during periods of political change and cultural renewal. The emergence and growth of Uzbek drama theater, especially during and after independence, demonstrate how artistic institutions adapt to new realities while preserving cultural heritage and promoting national values [1].

A specific feature of Uzbek drama theater is its strong relationship with enlightenment movements, particularly the Jadid movement, which emphasized education, knowledge, and modernization. The Jadids viewed theater as a powerful medium for educating society, influencing spirituality, and shaping progressive worldviews. This conceptual link between theater, education, and national identity forms the theoretical basis for analyzing the evolution of Uzbek theatrical art. The interaction between traditional cultural elements and modern dramaturgy also reflects broader theories of cultural transformation and artistic adaptation.

Previous studies have primarily focused on descriptive accounts of theatrical performances, individual playwrights, or historical milestones. While these works provide valuable insights, there remains a gap in systematically analyzing the stages of development of Uzbek drama theater within a unified conceptual framework. In particular, limited attention has been given to the comparative evolution of theatrical

criteria from the early independence period to the present, as well as the institutional and creative transformations that have shaped the theater's trajectory[2].

This study employs a qualitative historical-analytical approach, examining archival materials, theatrical repertoires, and scholarly literature to identify key stages in the formation of Uzbek drama theater. By analyzing changes in themes, directing styles, and institutional structures, the research aims to highlight patterns of continuity and innovation. The expectation is that such an approach will reveal the dynamic interplay between socio-political context and artistic expression, providing a deeper understanding of the theater's development.

The findings are anticipated to demonstrate that Uzbek drama theater has undergone significant transformation, particularly during the independence period, characterized by increased creative freedom, diversification of repertoire, and integration into the global cultural space. These results have important implications for future research and practice, suggesting the need for continued exploration of theatrical innovation, preservation of cultural identity, and strengthening of the theater's role in shaping societal values[3].

2. Methodology

The methodology of this study is based on a qualitative historical-analytical approach aimed at identifying the stages of formation and development of Uzbek drama theater. The research relies on the analysis of primary and secondary sources, including archival materials, theatrical repertoires, scholarly publications, and documented performances presented in the attached material. Special attention is given to the chronological development of the Uzbek State Drama Theater, beginning from its establishment in 1968 and continuing through the period of independence, which is characterized by significant institutional and creative transformations. The study applies a comparative method to examine differences in thematic content, directing styles, and artistic approaches across different historical periods, particularly comparing pre-independence and post-independence stages[4].

In addition, content analysis is used to evaluate the ideological and artistic components of selected theatrical performances, focusing on themes such as patriotism, youth identity, spirituality, and social responsibility. The research also incorporates elements of cultural analysis to interpret how socio-political changes influenced theatrical production and audience perception. By synthesizing these methods, the study seeks to reveal patterns of continuity and innovation within the theater's evolution. The methodological framework allows for a comprehensive understanding of how external factors, such as political independence and cultural policy, intersect with internal creative processes, ultimately shaping the trajectory of Uzbek drama theater and its role in national cultural development[5].

3. Result And Discussion

From the first days of independence, radical changes began to occur in our cultural life. This was first clearly felt in the development of theatrical art, new theaters were opened. In 1991, state puppet theaters began to operate in Fergana and in 1993 in Khiva, and in 1994 a puppet group was opened at the Kashkadarya regional theater. The youth theater, which had been operating on a public basis in Andijan, was taken over by the state, and in 1994 it was transformed into the Andijan City Youth and Children's Theater named after Abbos Bakirov[6].

A wide path has been opened for Uzbek theaters and artists to enter the world stage. These include the tours of the A. Navoi Opera and Ballet Theater to Malaysia and Thailand, and the tours of the Uzbek State Drama Theater to England, Scotland and Germany.

Thus, the theater art of the period of independence has sought and continues to seek to create its own image. The feature that clearly distinguishes theater art from other types of art is its strong influence. Because it vividly shows the events taking place on the stage to the viewer.

It has been more than forty years since the establishment of the Uzbek State Drama

Theater. In this short period of time, the theater has undergone a huge creative process. Especially during the period of independence, the creative activity of the theater has increased even more. Therefore, there is reason to say that the time has come to take stock of the path that this theater has taken in twenty years. We believe that comparing the criteria of performances from the first days of independence and today will serve the future prospects of theater art.

The theater opened on October 26, 1968, with Maxim Karimov's play "Diydor". "M. Karimov's play "Diydor" was a work of art written with passionate passion, discussing the vibrant life of the youth of the time, filled with noble dreams and plans, their hard work, and their lifestyle of loyalty and betrayal." Director Ergash Masafiev, who devoted himself to the organization of the theater, paid attention to revealing the deep psychology of the youth of the time in staging the play. The events of the play tell the story of the people's fate after World War II. The director, seeking to reveal the terrible consequences of the war, has deeply and touchingly explored the concepts of patriotism, the integrity of people's faith, the scale of time as a cause of loyalty and betrayal, and the duties of fatherhood and filial piety[7].

After that, one after another, works on various themes began to appear on the stage. In particular, such plays as "Okar suvlar" by Umarbekov, "Birinchi kosa" by A. Ibrohimov, "Besh kunlik kuyov" by Shukhrat, and "Darbadar" by T. Tursunov were staged. "The First Kiss" was staged by the theater's chief director E. Masafiev himself, while "Okar suvlar" and "Five-day kuyov" were staged by U. Bakaev, and "Darbadar" was staged by directors such as V.S. Iogelson. Meanwhile, the theater team turned to the dramaturgy of fraternal countries and the world. As a result, such plays as "Duel" by M. Baijiev, "The Third Dream" by V. Blažek, and "The Executioners of Auschwitz" by P. Weiss were born. This led to the further strengthening of the theater's repertoire[8].

"The theater troupe, headed by E. Masafiev, has set as its leading task the creation of performances that emphasize the special responsibility of the younger generation in solving the problems of homeland and patriotism, war and peace, loyalty and betrayal, honest labor and gluttony, true love and passion."

The above-mentioned plays were staged in a new spirit, in accordance with the requirements of the time, and received their due appreciation. Naturally, the main characters of these performances were young people[9].

Where there is work, there is movement, growth, and advancement. However, where there is work, there are also disagreements and mistakes. Disagreements arose between the leader E. Masafiev, who was just learning to walk and who was growing the "Young Guard" theater, and the theater team. There were specific reasons for this. As a result, the talented director left the theater. After that, B. Ikhtiyorov was appointed as the theater's chief director, and he worked in this position from 1976 to 1980. During these years, the director staged a number of plays, such as Nusic's "Mind is Not for Sale", H.H. Niyazi's "Poisonous Life or Victims of Love", M. Baijiev's "Bride and Groom", G. Figoreido's "Aesop", O. Umarbekov's "Unfired Bullet", M. Boboev's "Thirty Years", and Isfandiyor's "Father's Daughter". Among these, Hamza's play "Poisonous Life or Victims of Love" brought the director fame.

Together with B. Ikhtiyorov, director R. Bobokhonov staged the plays "Looking at the Blanket" by U. Khoshimov, "Thornless Typraticans" by Sh. Boshbekov, "Earth Vein" by M. Boboev, "Introduction" by D. Valeev (1981, 1982); young director N. Abdurakhmonov staged the plays "Young Guard" by M. Vorfolomeev (1982). In 1982, Habibulla Faiziev was appointed the chief director of the theater. The director began his career with the performances of Maxim Karimov's "Secretary of the District Committee", B. Vasiliev's "The Mornings of This Place Are Quiet", and Sh. Boshbekov's "The Door of Destiny". H. Faiziev, like E. Masafiev, sought to replenish the theater's repertoire with performances reflecting the lives of young people[10].

In 1984, a serious change took place in the theater. Together with the talented director B. Yuldashev, who had left the Hamza (now National) Theater, artist G. Brimm, as well as a group of twenty-five actors and actresses, moved to the "Young Guard" Theater.

"Between 1984 and 1990, B. Yuldashev, in the new team he began to lead, staged the plays "The Devil and the Angels" by N. Miroshnichenko and L. Gerchikov, "Zinulya" by A. Gelman (1985), "Uzoq kishloq" by H. Rasul (1988), "Ziyofat" and "Kora kamar" (1989)

by Sh. Kholmiraev."

The first performances staged by B. Yuldashev, who had extensive experience, in this theater set a new creative standard for the "Young Guard" theater. Of the above, the resounding performance of Sh. Kholmiraev's "Black Belt" in some sense signaled the approaching steps of independence. The play "Black Belt" occupies an important place in our literature because it reflects the human destiny in its entire tragic scale. The play truthfully reflects through vivid images the places where false beliefs can lead people and how much disbelief can humiliate a nation[11].

In the first year of independence, such works as "Farmonbibi Arazladi" (S. Ahmed), "Maysara's Work" (H. Niyazi), "Malikai Turandot" (K. Gottsi), "Beautiful and Mirshablar" (T. Uzokmand) were directed by B. Yoldoshev, Yu. Staged by Ergenlar.

The play "Farmonbibi Arazlady" was written at the suggestion of director B. Yuldashev and was a logical continuation of the comedy "The Brides' Uprising". Although the play did not gain the same fame as "The Brides' Uprising", it was met with great interest by the audience.

The staging of the comedy "Maysara's Work" brought the theater a great success. Because B. Yuldashev staged the play in a new interpretation, in accordance with the times. The director, together with the artist G. Brim, used elements of the square theater on stage and showed a performance by a clown group[12].

"The main character, Maisara, in the performance of N. Tashkenbayeva is distinguished by her intelligence, courage, resourcefulness, and determination. However, without contradicting the style of performance found by the director, she emphasizes humor, irony, and witty remarks in her performance. Everything in the play, from the scenery to the costumes and performance, is conditional. Just like the comedians and clowns of the past, the play dominates the stage. The performers are completely absorbed in the game."

The Uzbek State Theater named after Abror Khidoyatov is thus completing its first season of independence. The second season has begun with new preparations, big changes for the theater's creative team and theater fans, and new stage productions.

In the second season, such performances as "A Deceived Woman is Good" (Poiret), "Arshin Mololon" (U. Khozhibekov), "Besh Sum" (Urdibodi) were staged on the theater stage by directors E. Volobuev, B. Yuldashev, and Kh. Kasimov. All the staged performances are in the comedy genre. However, these performances clearly show the flaws and virtues of modern people[13].

If we look at the performances of the next season, we will see that the theater team has tackled quite serious topics. In particular, the new style of staging of the work "Iskandar" by Sh. Rizaev based on the melodies of the work "Khamasa" by our great grandfather Alisher Navoi by director B. Yuldashev is clearly visible. Although this play, recognized as a two-act tragedy, consists of a mixture of historical figures, its artistic power, philosophy, and logical connection of events are skillfully revealed. The play begins with a conversation between Jami and Navoi while playing chess in a humble hut. Navoi tells Abdurakhman Jami that he has finished the epic poem "Khamasa" and that he no longer has the peace to write about King Alexander. Jami approves of this idea. The first scene ends with Navoi's words, expressing his intention to write about Alexander. The second scene begins with a conversation between Alexander and Failakus in a palace in the form of a fortress. Navoi becomes the narrator of the story and sometimes an observer on the sidelines.

The fifth part of A. Navoi's epic poem "Khamasa" ("The Wall of Alexander"), "Saddi Iskandariy" (The Wall of Alexander), is dedicated to one of the sons of Huseyn Baykara, Bediuzzaman. Navoi sought to create a true image of a just king in the person of Alexander. The play shows the process of writing "Saddi Iskandariy". In almost all scenes, the events take place under the supervision of Navoi, as if the events are happening in the writer's imagination. At the end of the play, when the just ruler Alexander sits on the throne, after the curtain closes, Navoi appears and addresses the audience[14].

All the performances of the 1992 theater season were directed by B. Yuldashev himself. Such performances as "The Old Woman" (J. Saran), "The Queen" (F. Galer), "To Whom Shall I Tell My Pain" (Shushkin) are among them. All the staged performances are distinguished by the thoroughness of the idea raised, each of them is unique in its artistic imagery[15].

It was during this period that director B. Yuldashev gave new pages to the Uzbek State Drama Theater. The theater staged a number of performances that met the requirements of world theater standards with a new breath and a new spirit. The staged performances were imprinted in the history of Uzbek theater.

These include performances such as "A Donkey's Tale" (Dürenmant), "Kitmir" (B. Muhammadkhujayev 1995), "The Great Silk Road" (M. Boboev 1997), "Checha" (M. Yusuf), "Navruza" (Antakolsky 1998), "Uncle and Nephews" (R. Bobojon), "The Magic Wand", "Where Are You Nowruz" (M. Ashurova 1999), "Assalamu alaykum kizlar" (Tsagareli, 2000), "Room 97" (Nil Simon, 2005).

4. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the formation and development of Uzbek drama theater represent a dynamic and historically conditioned process shaped by socio-political transformations, cultural policy, and artistic innovation. The findings highlight that from its establishment in 1968 to the period of independence and beyond, the Uzbek State Drama Theater has undergone significant qualitative changes, including the diversification of repertoire, renewal of directing approaches, and strengthening of its role in addressing socially relevant themes such as patriotism, spirituality, and youth identity. In particular, the independence period emerges as a critical stage marked by increased creative freedom, institutional expansion, and integration into the international cultural space, which collectively contributed to redefining the artistic identity of the theater. These results imply that theater continues to function not only as an artistic institution but also as an influential medium for shaping public consciousness and preserving national values. Furthermore, the study suggests that future research should focus on comparative analyses with other national theaters, the impact of globalization on theatrical practices, and the role of modern technologies in transforming stage production and audience engagement, thereby ensuring a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the evolving landscape of Uzbek theatrical art.

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