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Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The Philosophy of Music* by Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi by Saida Daukeyeva

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ogy at The Hebrew University. It is an important contribution to the history of ethnomusicology as a discipline in Palestine/Israel, and to some extent Germany and the United States. By making the sources accessible and organizing them, Katz opened the doors for further studies and editions, especially Lachmann's book on the music of the Berbers, and in-depth interpretations of the materials. In this lays the achievement of "*The Lachmann Problem*."

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***The Philosophy of Music by Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi***. Saida Daukeyeva. Alma-Ata: Fond of Soros-Kazakhstan, 2002. 352 pp., in Russian, English; summary and table of contents, 3 colored photographs, Russian-Arabic glossary of terms, diagrams and tables of tones, melodies, modes, and forms; bibliography. ISBN 9965-13-819-2.

For eleven hundred years scholars from distant world regions, working in and across scholarly disciplines and writing in different languages, have been allured to the monumental philosophical works of Al-Farabi (870–950). At the roots of the Islamic Renaissance, Al-Farabi navigated and shaped the humanistic thoughts of a period now perceived as the golden age of Eastern literature and sciences. From Turko-Persian historical cultural roots, Al-Farabi and other scholars of Khorosan made a fundamental contribution to Arabic literature, producing Arabic translations and interpretation of Aristotle, Plato, and other ancient classics at a time when Medieval Europe had neither knowledge of the Greek language nor a taste for this culture. Two hundred years later Al-Farabi's works, translated into Latin, inspired and stirred Europeans toward the Risorgimento and later movements marked by fascination with and appropriation of ancient Greece as the origin of Western cultural history.<sup>1</sup>

The discursive, interpretive mode of Al-Farabi's translation and adaptation of Greek texts was embraced by scholars who translated and annotated his works. A founder of political philosophy, Al-Farabi was a music theorist and a performer, an ud player (praised as the inventor of the 5-string ud). Among his surviving writings on music are treatises on tuning, rhythm, and the philosophy of music (*Kitab fi'l Nuqra*, *Kitab al ti Ihsa al-iqa*, *Kitab fi'l Musiqi*) as well as a monumental work, *The Grand Book on Music*, *Kitab al-musiqi al-kabir*—the focus of Saida Daukeyeva's *The Philosophy of Music by Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi*. Daukeyeva's monograph belongs to the steadily expanding literature on Al-Farabi's theory of music and specifically on his masterpiece, reissued in many languages and with multiple commentaries.<sup>2</sup>

Few scholars have Daukeyeva's background and capacity to write about Abū Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Tarkhan ibn Uzlagh al-Farab at-Turku.<sup>3</sup> Al-Farabi, an ethnic Turk from the Central Asian city Farab in Persia's Great Khorasan, traveled and resided in the Arabic cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Cairo, and Baghdad, also spending years of study in Constantinople. Daukeyeva, 11 centuries later, also of Turkic ethnicity and from the Central Asian state of Kazakhstan (formerly a Soviet republic), was trained as a performer and theorist in her native capital and in Moscow (the Moscow State Conservatory of Tchaikovsky), later residing in Damascus and other Arabic urban centers. She completed her book while studying in London (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London). The monograph, engaging her knowledge of Turkish, Arabic, Russian, and English and written in Russian, consists of two parts, her own writing and her translations, the two-part structure mirroring the work she herself examines. In recent decades a number of Russian-language sources on Al-Farabi have been produced in former Soviet republics, now independent Central Asian states, including several volumes on his philosophy, ethics, epistemology, and music issued in Kazakhstan's capital Alma-Ata (Daukeyeva's home), where the Kazakh National University bears the name of Al-Farabi.<sup>4</sup> To this expanding scholarly field Daukeyeva contributes her firm grasp of Arabic sources, familiarity with Soviet and post-Soviet materials, and an intimate knowledge of Central Asian literature as well as European and American scholarship. In this respect, the reviewed monograph is interesting not only because of its subject, but also as a glimpse into distinct intellectual traditions formed in Central Asia.

The three chapters in the first part of the monograph move from a general historical view of the culture and music of Al-Farabi's times in the first chapter, to the philosophy of knowledge and an epistemological discourse on music in the second, and a discussion of music theory focusing on sound, modes, rhythms, and musical form in the third—all topics explored through the prism of *Kitab al-musiqi al-kabir*. Mapping the intellectual domain of the Abbasid *khalifat* in her opening chapter, Daukeyeva explores music and music theory in different social-cultural-religious circles. She refers to several *khalifs* (rulers of Muslim

kingdoms) as refined musical performers, singers, and theorists. She explores the importance of musical discourse within the context of *adaba*—a body of secular Arabic-language literature—and the link between the *adaba* and Greek philosophy reflected in a significant number of Arabic translations and commentaries on the classics. Pointing out the significance of *sama* (audition) to the reading of the Qur'an and acknowledging the denunciation of music by Islamic orthodoxy, Daukeyeva outlines the essential role of music in Islamic Gnosticism and the attitude toward music of the Mu'tazili—early Muslim theologians whose explanations of Muslim doctrines affected the formation of *adaba* philosophy.

The translations in the second part, grouped in the appendix (though considering the magnitude of the material, the term seems somewhat surprising), include extensive parts of Al-Farabi's *Grand Book on Music*, several biographical fragments by early Islamic writers, brief excerpts of Al-Farabi's poetry as well as a long list of his works.<sup>5</sup> The text is supplemented with tables and diagrams from Al-Farabi's original text and an extensive musical glossary with terms in Arabic transliterated in Cyrillic and accompanied by detailed explanations. Medieval accounts of Al-Farabi's life, as Daukeyeva suggests, weave history and mythology—repeating the philosopher's claim of knowing 70 languages, “reading the Greek's *Harmony* forty times, and still needing to go over it again.”

Transmitting highly abstract concepts distant from our own—easily traversing theology, philosophy, logic, and culture—Daukeyeva carefully guides her readers through a discussion of music as a part of philosophy and science, and illuminates Al-Farabi's binaries of knowledge and experience, intuitive and empirical knowledge, art and craft, logical and cosmological, and the creation and performance of music. Daukeyeva also shows how analytical methods employed in Al-Farabi's book befit his wide-ranging inquiry—from philosophical aspects of music and musical knowledge to elements of music arts, theory, and musical instruments to laws of composition, modal and rhythmical language, and the principles of combining musical and poetic elements. Daukeyeva's translation of *Kitab al-musiqi al-kabir* is based on the Arabic edition by Khashabah (1967), which itself represents the compilation of several medieval manuscripts (including the Istanbul Köprülüzade Manuscript dated 654/125, the Princeton Manuscript [Beirut], 899/1461 and the Leiden Manuscript 943/1537 [a copy dated 1089 from Cairo] [Sawa, 19]) raising questions about the reconstruction, translation, and cultural transmission of medieval texts.

Throughout at least the last hundred years, Al-Farabi's works have drawn the attention of Islamic and non-Islamic, Eastern and Western music scholars who, preoccupied with meticulous translation and commentaries on his writings, present his concepts as somewhat remote abstractions. The analytical translations and interpretations of Al-Farabi's works on music—and Daukeyeva's book is not an exception—approach his ideas as precious remnants of the past. While the historical aspect of Al-Farabi's work appears well explored, there is

no attempt to compare his musical system to modes, forms, compositional techniques existing today, or to apply his cosmological system, logic, and ethics to contemporary musical performance, theory, or education. Could historical studies of Al-Farabi's writing about music benefit from using ethnographical methods to examine the relevance of Al-Farabi in the modern intellectual and soundscape?

What constitutes the strength of Daukeyeva's book—her awe of a great master and consequently her profound, attentive, careful, detailed transmission of his ideas—also constitutes a weakness of the monograph. She leaves Al-Farabi's work outside the multivocal, ethnically and musically pluralistic culture in which he once lived. As a reader and an ethnomusicologist, enjoying the volume, I want to know the place of his musical philosophy and theory in the modern Islamic, non-Islamic, or Turkmen world. Perhaps an author like Daukeyeva, who has all the necessary keys to addressing these questions, will prepare an edition of this book, hopefully also in English, with a chapter dedicated to modern musical knowledge and performing traditions that bears the imprint of Al-Farabi.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Henry George Farmer notes that “no less than eight [Al-Farabi's] works appeared in Latin,” translated by John of Seville and Gerard of Cremona. Henry George Farmer, *Arabic-Latin Writings on Music* (Glasgow: Civic Press, 1934, and afterward New York: Hinrichsen, 1965). A revival of interest in Al-Farabi's writing was launched in more recent times by 19th century Orientalists, including J. G. L. Kosegarten and Baron d'Erlanger. See George Dimitri Sawa, *Music Performance Practice in the Early 'Abbasid Era* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1989), 17–20.

<sup>2</sup> To give selected examples: Mahdi Barkashli, *Musiqi-i Farabi* (Tehran, 1975) (Farsi); Azartash Azarmush, *Kitabi musiqi-i kabir* (Tehran, 1996) (Farsi); Salman Salik, *Musiqi'shinakht* (Tehran, 2002) (Farsi); Don Michael Randel, *Five Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Al-Farabi, *Kitab al musiqi al-kabir* (Frankfurt, 1998) (Arabic). The sources in Russian are listed in note 4.

<sup>3</sup> His name identifies the place of his birth (Farab), his family's influential social status (Tarkhan), and ethnicity (Turku).

<sup>4</sup> The selected bibliography on al-Farabi in Kazakhstan and neighboring Central Asian states includes Mukash Seisembaevich Burabaev, *Traktaty o muzyke i poezii* (Alma-Ata: Gylym, 1992/1993); Farabi, *Saz ylmy* (Ashgabat: Miras, 2006); Anzor Samsonovich Ivanov, *Uchenie al'-Farabi o poznavatel'nykh sposobnostyakh* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1977); M. M. Bagizbaeva, *Problemy russkoi i zarubezhnoi literatury i fol'kloristiki* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhskii gos. universitet im Al'-Farabi, 1992); Anatolii Leont'evich Kaziberdov, *Sochineniia Abu Nasra al-Farabi v rukopisiakh Instituta vostokovedeniia AN UzSSR* (Tashkent: Fan, 1975).

<sup>5</sup> Daukeyeva included in the book three colored photographs of Al-Farabi's tomb. According to Islamic tradition, the tomb signifies the Gates of Paradise and represents the respect Muslim communities pay to the last earthly stations of their masters (especially Sufi).

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***Making Scenes: Reggae, Punk, and Death Metal in 1990s Bali***. Emma Baulch. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007. 226 pp., photographs, glossary, bibliography, index. ISBN: 0822341158.

Baulch's ethnography is a much needed alternative perspective on musical production and consumption in Bali, one that adds to the slowly growing body of literature on Indonesian and Balinese popular and underground music. (See Lockard 1998; Wallach 2008; and Laskewicz 2004 for other important