



WOMEN WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF KYRGYZ CULTURE

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Abstract: This article provides a brief overview of the lives and works of two prominent women who made significant contributions to the dance and cinema arts in Kyrgyzstan – Bibisora Beyshenaliyeva and Sobira Kumushaliyeva. Additionally, it highlights the life and activism of Urkuya Saliyeva, a Kyrgyz woman who fought for gender equality and social activism as early as the beginning of the 20th century.

Keywords: dance, ballet, cinema arts, political activism, Urkuya Saliyeva, Bibisora Beyshenaliyeva, Sobira Kumushaliyeva

In the early 20th century, after the establishment of Soviet power in Kyrgyzstan, a number of measures were introduced to involve local Kyrgyz women in active social life. These included the opening of public schools to eradicate female illiteracy, organizing them into cooperative artels, teaching them various trades, training female leaders, and providing opportunities for women with talent in fields such as visual arts, sculpture, national music and dance, and cinematography. The following article provides a brief overview of some famous women who made significant contributions to the development of Kyrgyz culture.

In the 1920s, the issue of encouraging women to remove their veils (*paranji-chachvon*) and engage in active social life became a daily agenda across the entire Turkestan region. Since the majority of the population in Kyrgyzstan led a nomadic lifestyle, the process of involving women in active social life progressed somewhat more slowly. One of the socially active women of that time was Urkuya Saliyeva. Urkuya Saliyeva, born in 1910 in the Novkat district of Osh, was a politically active woman¹

At the age of 17, she became a member of the local Komsomol organization and was elected its secretary. In 1928, she became the leader of the Murkut village Soviet, where she was born and raised² In 1931, she joined the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan. Later, she was elevated to membership in the Central Executive Committee of the Kyrgyz Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic. On February 4, 1934, Urkuya Saliyeva and her husband were killed by anti-Soviet partisan forces opposing the policy of forced collectivization. Although the movement had lost its strength in other areas, it was still active in southern Kyrgyzstan during the early 1930s³ Other sources suggest that the reason for her killing was due to her efforts in promoting gender equality and the work she had done in advocating for women's rights.⁴

A famous Kyrgyz woman who contributed to the development of dance art is undoubtedly Bibisora Beyshenaliyeva. The first ballerina of Kyrgyzstan and People's Artist of the USSR (an honorary title given to Soviet Union artists), B. Beyshenaliyeva was born on May 17, 1926, in the village of Vorontsovka,

¹ "Urkuya Salieva". Central Asien Gruppe. 2017-01-20. Retrieved 2021-11-12.

² "Личность Кыргызстана: Борец за свободу Уркуя Салиева (Personality of Kyrgyzstan: Freedom Fighter Urkuya Salieva)". Limon (in Kyrgyz). October 15, 2014.

³ Loring, Benjamin H. (2008). "Rural Dynamics and Peasant Resistance in Southern Kyrgyzstan, 1929-1930". *Cahiers du Monde Russe*. 49 (1): 183–210.

⁴ Abazov, Rafis (2007). *Culture and customs of the Central Asian republics*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press. p. 219.

Kyrgyzstan (now Tosh-Dobo in the Chuy region).⁵ At the age of ten, she left for Leningrad to attend the Choreography School along with a group of children from Kyrgyzstan. The legendary Russian ballerina A. Vaganova became Bibisora's idol and mentor.⁶ In 1941, Bibisora became a soloist of the Kyrgyzstan Opera and Ballet Theater, named after Maldiboyev. In 1944, after performing the role of Cholpon in the Kyrgyz ballet of the same name, she became the prima ballerina of Kyrgyz ballet. In 1959, she performed the role of "Ay-Dai" in the film *Cholpon*, directed by Roman Tikhomirov. Later, she became a ballet teacher and professor at the Kyrgyzstan National Ballet School. The outstanding ballerina performed across the Soviet Union and abroad. Starting in 1949, she began teaching at the M. Kurenkeev Music and Choreography School (now the Bazabaeva Choreography School).⁷ Janish Qulmambetov, inspired by the love story between Bibisora and the famous Kyrgyz writer Chinghiz Aitmatov, wrote the play *Chingiz va Bibisora* ("Chinghiz and Bibisora").⁸ Based on this love story, which received unfavorable reviews from Kyrgyz film critics, a movie was also made. The ballerina passed away on May 10, 1973, in Bishkek at the age of 47 and was buried in the Ala Archa cemetery.⁹ Bibisora Beyshenaliyeva is depicted on the 5 som Kyrgyz currency note, and her statue is located near the Kyrgyzstan Opera and Ballet Theater in Bishkek.

In Kyrgyzstan, there are many women who have made significant contributions to the development of cinema. One of them is Sobira Kumushaliyeva, a Soviet and Kyrgyz actress of cinema and theater. She was awarded the titles of Hero of Kyrgyzstan (2000)¹⁰ and People's Artist of the Kyrgyz SSR (1967). Sobira Kumushaliyeva, known as the "Umay Ene" of the Kyrgyz people and the recipient of the special "Ak-Shumkar" award from the Kyrgyz Republic, was born on March 19, 1917, in the Tokoldosh village of the Frunze region (now Bishkek). After finishing school, she enrolled in the Frunze Pedagogical College. From 1932 to 1934, she worked as a teacher at a primary school. Starting in 1934, she became an actress at the Kyrgyzstan Drama Theater, where she performed over 120 roles.

In addition to her work in theater, Sobira Kumushaliyeva also made significant contributions to the development of Kyrgyz cinema.¹¹ She joined the film industry in 1966 and appeared in over 20 films. Starting from 1957, she participated in several notable films, including *The Legend of the Ice Heart* (1957), *The Shootout at the Qorash Pass* (1968), *Salute to Fire* (1971), *The Little Soldier* (1972), *Red Apple* (1975), and *Early Cranes* (1979). Her first film was *Sultanat*, and her last film role was in *The Cry of the Nomadic Bird* (1991), where she played the role of a mother. This marked her final work in Kyrgyz cinema, but she continued her theater career until her later years.

Sobira Kumushaliyeva passed away on September 15, 2007, at the age of 90 in Bishkek and was buried in the Ala-Archa cemetery. Her husband, actor and People's Artist of the USSR, Muratbek Risqulov, whom she met in the theater, was her life partner. Together, they raised four children: Asilqul, Nurjamal, Isken, and Baktibek.

Filmography: "The Cry of the Nomadic Bird" (1990) – Beksaat; "Angry Fugitive" (1989) – Qurmanjon-Datka; "Intrigue" (1989) – Liza; "Climbing the Fudzi Mountain" (1988) – Oysha Opa; "The Stag Man..." (1985) – Oqtana Khola; "Stairs in the Building with an Elevator" (1984) ; "Wolf's Den" (1983); "The Thirteenth Grandchild" (1982) – Kulash; "Among People" (1978) – Saykal; "Qanibek" (1978) – Supaxon; "Spring Deficit" (1976); "Red Apple" (1975) – The Watchwoman; "White Steamboat" (1975); "Here Come the Swans" (1972) – Jong-apa; "The Little Soldier" (1972) – Avalbek's Grandmother; "Salute to Fire" (1971) – Bubukan ; "Jamila" (1968); "Shootout at Karash Pass" (1968) ; "The Sky of Our Childhood" (1966) ; "Yura" (1964) ; "Toqtogul" (1959) – Choknig's Wife; "The Legend of the Ice Heart" (1957) – Nazira's Mother ; "Sultanat" (1955) – Epizod

In conclusion, many of the famous women from Kyrgyzstan, who contributed greatly to the country's

5 Брудный Д. Бибисара Бейшеналиева // Киргизский балетный театр. — Фрунзе: Кыргызстан, 1968.

6 Биография Бюбюсары Бейшеналиевой на сайте Кыргызского национального ордена В. И. Ленина академического театра оперы и балета имени Абдыласа Малдыбаева. Дата обращения: 5 февраля 2013.

7 Ермаков В. Актриса, депутат, педагог // Московская правда : газета. — М., 1958. — 14 октября.

8 Чинова А. Легенда о любви // Советская культура : газета. — М., 1966. — 5 декабря.

9 Некрополь. Дата обращения: 9 сентября 2011. Архивировано 4 ноября 2009 года.

10 Герой Кыргызской Республики Кумушалиева Сабира. Информационный портал о Кыргызстане, новости Кыргызстана и туризма. Дата обращения: 8 марта 2022

11 Личность Кыргызстана: «Умай эне» кыргызского народа Сабира Кумушалиева (рус.). limon.kg (11 ноября 2014). Дата обращения: 8 марта 2022

culture across various fields, emerged after the establishment of Soviet power in the country. Among these celebrated women were political activists like Urkuya Saliyeva, dancers like Bibisora Beyshenaliyeva and Kulbubu Mademilova, actresses like Sobira Kumushaliyeva and Aisha Tyumenbaeva, and opera singers like Sayra Kiyizboeva. These women left an indelible mark on Kyrgyz cultural heritage.

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