

TURKMEN DANCE: HISTORY, AESTHETICS AND MODERN DEVELOPMENT**Usmanova Gulasal Normukhammad kizi**Head of the Department of "Head of Choreographic Teams"
of the Uzbek State Academy of Choreography, Associate
Professor, Doctor of Philosophy in Art History (PhD)**Rasulova Rukhshon**1st year master's student in the specialty "Head of Choreographic
Teams" of the Uzbek State Academy of Choreography

Annotation: This article provides a detailed analysis of the history of the formation of Turkmen dance art, its artistic and aesthetic features, dance types, musical accompaniment, national costumes, as well as the modern stages of dance development. The article provides information on the differences between women's and men's dances, movement plasticity, mimicry, musical rhythm and stage interpretations. It also highlights the role of Turkmen dance in folk culture, its educational and spiritual significance. The results of the study show that Turkmen dance has formed as a unique art form within the rich cultural heritage of the peoples of the East. The article is important as a guide for students studying in the fields of Turkology, ethnography, dance art and cultural studies, as well as for folklore researchers.

Keywords: Turkmen dance, folk dances, national costumes, musical accompaniment, movement plasticity, stage art, Eastern dance.

The Turkmen people are one of the most ancient ethnic groups in Central Asia, and among their rich cultural heritage, national dance art occupies a special place. Turkmen dances are a unique form of artistic expression of human inner experiences, lifestyle, labor processes, and attitude to nature. This article broadly covers the history of Turkmen dance, its artistic and stylistic features, musical accompaniment, gender differentiation, development as a performing art, and its current status.

Turkmen dances have been formed over the centuries and have incorporated specific elements of the nomadic way of life. Since ancient times, Turkmen tribes have expressed emotions through various movements at weddings, ceremonies, war celebrations, and religious ceremonies.

Archaeological and ethnographic research shows that rhythmic movements among the Turkmen were originally ceremonial in nature. For example:

During harvest ceremonies, couples danced with simple rhythmic movements, wishing for a bountiful harvest.

During military celebrations, men performed dances on the field with sharp, heroic movements that expressed strength and courage.

During wedding ceremonies, women expressed their tenderness with graceful, gentle steps, mainly through the plasticity of their hands and fingers.

Over time, these ceremonial movements took on an artistic character and became an independent national dance genre. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Turkmen dance began to develop into a professional performing art. By the Soviet era, folk ensembles were organized, dances were staged, national costumes were improved, and they began to be taught in special choreographic schools.

Turkmen dance movements usually begin with a calm, oriental rhythm, and then the rhythm gradually increases. The main features of the dance:

- Hand movements - graceful lifting up and to the side, gentle rotation, decoration with fingers.
- Steps - small but precise rhythmic steps; some dances also contain elements of jumping.
- Body position - the chest is slightly pushed forward, the body is erect, and the head is often slightly turned to the side.
- Turns - are performed not in a thumping manner, but in a calm, graceful manner.

The performer's facial expressions play an important role during the dance. Turkmen dance usually requires:

- a gentle smile,
- sincere expression through the eyes,
- not a sad, but rather a lively mood.

Differences between men's and women's dance

Women's dance

Women's dances are elegant, plastic, and rich in hand movements. The steps are small, and the clothes are wide, so the movements seem fluid. The following images are mainly embodied:

- simplicity and tenderness,
- shyness,
- spiritual purity,
- the joys of life.

Men's dance

Men's dance is sharp, courageous, and strongly rhythmic. Jumps in steps, raising the knees high, and confidently spreading the arms wide are predominant. The body is erect, and the movements are inspiring.

Turkmen dances are usually performed to the accompaniment of the following musical instruments:

- Dutor - a two-stringed instrument; its soft, resonant sound gives softness to the dance.
- Gijjak - gives lyricism with its elasticity.
- Doyra - the main instrument that sets the rhythm.
- Harmonica – widely used in dance compositions since the 20th century.

Musical melodies are often found in 2/4, 4/4 and 6/8 time signatures. The rhythm is medium-paced, sonorous and melodious.

The Turkmen dance heritage is very rich. In terms of territory and content, they are divided into several types.

“Kusht depdi”

is one of the most famous dances of the Turkmen people, meaning “to step”, “to kick”. In this dance:

- the steps alternate rhythmically,
- the hand movements are performed close to the shoulders,
- the general mood is cheerful and exciting.

“Kusht depdi” is often performed at weddings and holidays. It is very popular among young people and is performed in groups.

“Gelin oyini” - a bridal dance

A very delicate, gentle dance performed during wedding ceremonies. This dance expresses the shyness, delicacy, and joy of a woman entering a new life. In it:

- the plasticity of the hands and fingers plays the most important role,

- small steps are taken in a moderate rhythm,
- a gentle smile appears on the bride's face.

“Çarwa oyini” — a dance of herders

Inspired by the life of nomadic herders. Dance movements:

- artistically depict horse riding,
- camel driving,
- sheep herding. Performed by men, full of sharp and powerful movements.

“Election” dances

This type of dance is performed at public holidays, trade fairs, Navruz, and other celebrations. They are collective, joyful.

National costumes play an important role in enhancing the artistic impression of the dance. Turkmen dance costumes are distinguished by their diversity, the predominance of silk and satin fabrics.

- A long and wide shirt, usually red, burgundy or green.
- A jacket (cepken) or a decorated jacket is worn over the shirt.
- Long silver jewelry, necklaces, bracelets, and a ball are worn on the head.
- Headdresses with special patterns around the edges are often used.

Men's costume

- A white or black shirt, a wide cape over it.
- A belt tied around the waist.
- The famous telpek is a high headdress made of sheep's wool.
- Boots or leather shoes.
- Clothes are selected in accordance with the content, rhythm and image of the dance.

Turkmen dance on stage: 20th and 21st centuries

Since the 30s and 40s of the 20th century, Turkmen dance began to take shape as a professional art. Folk dance ensembles were formed in Ashgabat, and choreographers began to rework national dances into stage performances.

Today, Turkmen dance:

- in the repertoire of folk ensembles,
- at international festivals,
- is widely promoted on Internet platforms. Although modern choreographic elements are added to the dance, its original spirit - restraint, oriental elegance and nationality - has been preserved. Turkmen dance is not only a form of artistic art, but also a means of embodying the worldview, values, and historical memory of the people. It:
- educates young people in the spirit of respect for national identity,
- strengthens team spirit and solidarity,
- develops aesthetic taste,
- serves the development of cultural tourism.

After Turkmenistan gained independence, national dances were supported at the state level and began to be promoted at various international competitions. This laid the foundation for Turkmen dance to take its place in global culture.

Conclusion

Turkmen dance is an art form that embodies the centuries-old cultural heritage of the Turkmen people, with elegant aesthetics and rich artistic content. Its every movement, every melody expresses the spirit, lifestyle, and hopes of the people. Today, Turkmen dance is valued

not only as a national treasure, but also as an art form that is becoming familiar to the peoples of the world. Its study and promotion is an important part of preserving cultural heritage.

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