

**A musician from Shusha who
could simultaneously play two
accordions: Karbalai Latif**



An accordionist Karbalai Latif (full name: Latif Huseyn oglu Aliyev) was born in 1876 in the city of Shusha in the family of a shoemaker.

[\[Encyclopedia of Azerbaijani mugham. 2012, p. 131\]](#)

[\[F. Shushinski. Azerbaijani folk musicians. 1985, p. 189\]](#)

Latif's father, who was also a well-known amateur musician, taught him how to play the accordion. At the age of 20, having learnt to play the accordion, Latif and his brother started to perform at street celebrations and wedding parties in Shusha.

[\[F. Shushinski. Shusha. 1968, p. 118\]](#)

[\[F. Shushinski. Azerbaijani folk musicians. 1985, p. 189\]](#)

For many years, Karbalai Latif accompanied by accordion his brother Muhammed and Azerbaijani singers: Malibeyli Jumshud, Kechachioghlu Muhammed, Paskhan Jalil and Kasab Abish in Garabagh celebrations. He became popularly known as "Shirin barmaglar" (translated from Azerbaijani as "Sweet fingers").

[\[F. Shushinski. Azerbaijani folk musicians. 1985, p. 189\]](#)

The Azerbaijani musicologist Firudin Shushinski noted in his book "Azerbaijani Folk Musicians" that in 1910 the English Gramophone Society in Riga (now Latvia) recorded the performance of Karbalai Latif. In 1913-1914-1915 the mugams "Shur," "Rast," "Segah," "Bayati-Gajar," "Choban bayati", the Azerbaijani folk dances such as "Vagzali," "Gizilgul," "Turaji" and others performed by Karbalai Latif were recorded by "Extraphone" company in Kyiv (Ukraine).

[\[F. Shushinski. Azerbaijani folk musicians. 1985, pp. 29;189\]](#)

[\[Encyclopedia of Azerbaijani mugham. 2012, p. 131\]](#)

[\[F. Shushinski. Shusha. 1968, p. 118\]](#)

After the Sovietization of Azerbaijan (1920), Karbalai Latif taught at the Shusha Musical College.

[\[F. Shushinski. Shusha. 1968, p. 118\]](#)

[\[F. Shushinski. Azerbaijani folk musicians. 1985, p. 189\]](#)

In 1922 Karbalai Latif traveled to Iran, Iraq, and other Arab countries. During the visits, he became well familiar with classical eastern music.

[\[F. Shushinski. Azerbaijani folk musicians. 1985, p. 189\]](#)

Karbalai Latif was an expert on many Azerbaijani folk songs

and dances. While composing the opera “Shahsenem”, the Soviet composer Reinhold Gliere traveled to Garabagh where he learned about thirty folk songs performed by Karbalai Latif. In 1936, while working on the ballet “The Maiden Tower”, the Azerbaijani composer Afrasiyab Badalbeyli together with the Azerbaijani ballet dancer Gamar Almaszadeh visited Karbalai Latif in Shusha. They received thorough explanations from Karbalai Latif regarding the national dances and the Shusha dancers’ performance technique.

[\[F. Shushinski. Azerbaijani folk musicians. 1985, p. 189\]](#)



In December 1935, Karbalai Latif became the winner of the first Amateur Art Competition in Baku, dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the Soviet Power in Azerbaijan. He played on two accordions the mughams “Bayati-Gajar”, “Segah”, “Chobani”. In 1939, he was awarded an Honorary Diploma at the All-Union festival of Folk Instrument Performers in Moscow.

[\[F. Shushinski. Azerbaijani folk musicians. 1985, pp. 189-190\]](#)

[\[F. Shushinski. Shusha. 1968, p. 118\]](#)

[\[Newspaper "Communist". 12/29/1935. № 299\(4625\) page 4\]](#)

Karbalai Latif died on December 6, 1944 in Barda (Azerbaijan).

[\[Encyclopedia of Azerbaijani mugham. 2012, p. 131\]](#)

[\[F. Shushinski. Azerbaijani folk musicians. 1985, p. 190\]](#)