

Symphonic picture “Caravan” by Soltan Hajibeyov

<https://qarabag.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/videoplayback1-1.mp4>

A symphonic picture “Caravan” was composed by Azerbaijani composer [Soltan Hajibeyov](#) in 1945 (the second edition in 1952). For the first time it was performed in 1946 by the Azerbaijan State Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Azerbaijani conductor Niyazi Taghizade-Hajibeyov.

[\[Encyclopedia of music. volume 1. 1973, p. 871\]](#)

[\[A. Taghizade. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1985, p.11\]](#)

[\[“Caravan” and Soltan Hajibeyov’s overture. Explanation.1964, p.13\]](#)

[\[E. Abbasova. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1965, p. 10\]](#)

[\[Azerbaijani Soviet encyclopedia. X volume. 1987, p. 147\]](#)

Soltan Hajibeyov dedicated “Caravan” to his uncle, Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov.

[\[Encyclopedia of Uzeyir Hajibeyov. 2003, p. 66\]](#)

[\[D. X. Danilov. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1956, p. 15\]](#)

In the middle of the 1940s, by the order of State Opera and Ballet Theater of Turkmenistan, Soltan Hajibeyov began to compose an opera based on the plot of the folk legend “Kamine and Kazi”. Unfortunately, this opera remained unfinished. One of the pieces of this opera was an orchestra picture depicting images of Central Asian landscapes. In 1945 Soltan Hajibeyov completed this fragment by turning it into the independent symphonic work called “Caravan”. This work was also called “Caravan” as an orchestral piece.

[\[“Caravan” and Soltan Hajibeyov’s overture. Explanation.1964, p.13\]](#)

[\[A. Taghizade. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1985, p. 39\]](#)

[\[S. Gasimova. N. Baghirov. Azerbaijani Soviet music literature. 1986, p. 176\]](#)

The prototype of the piece “Caravan” was the orchestra picture

of Russian composer Alexander Borodin's "In Central Asia".

"Caravan" coincides with Borodin's work in terms of its idea, image, musical language and means of expression. But, in contrast to it, "Caravan" has no detailed plot line.

According to the book "Soltan Hajibeyov" by A.Taghizade, the traditions of the scenic symphony of A. Borodin and the Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov were slightly changed in "Caravan".

[\[D. X. Danilov. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1956, p. 15\]](#)

[\[S. Gasimova, L. Mehmandarova, R. Zohrabov. Azerbaijani music literature. 1984, p.100\]](#)

[\[A. Taghizade. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1985, p.11\]](#)

In 1952 Soltan Hajibeyov created the second edition of "Caravan" by freeing it from the overload of orchestration. However, it was shown in the book of "Soltan Hajibeyov" (1956) by D.Kh.Danilov that Soltan Hajibeyov created the second edition of "Caravan" in 1955, in which he made a number of changes in order to improve the piece. The sheet music (notation for orchestra, choir or ensemble composition) of this work was published in 1955.

[\[A. Taghizade. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1985, p. 39\]](#)

[\["Caravan" and Soltan Hajibeyov's overture. Explanation.1964, p.13\]](#)

[\[D. X. Danilov. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1956, p. 15\]](#)

[\[E. Abbasova. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1965, p. 10\]](#)

The "Caravan" depicts the slow movement of a large camel caravan in the sun-scorched desert and its procession is accompanied by a mournful song of a camel driver.

In the book "Soltan Hajibeyov" (1985) by A.Taghizade the following is mentioned:

"The music of "Caravan" revives the landscape of Central Asia, that is, S. Hajibeyov tends to the picturesque description. The composer presents himself as a master – a landscape artist.

"... S. Hajibeyov's ability to create the images of a landscape was manifested with great force in "Caravan". This creative line of the composer can also be seen in his works of the following years..."

The beginning specifies the three-part structure of the work. The meaningful aspects within it can be combined into the following scheme: appearance of the caravan, raging elements (depicts the image of a storm that unexpectedly occurs in the desert) and removal of the caravan.

Throughout "Caravan" composition, a rhythmic figure is preserved, which is played first by string instruments, then by trombones and tuba (a brass wind instrument with a wide scale). It creates an image of the constant movement of the caravan. The image of the desert is created by the continuous sounds of bass clarinet, bassoons and solo violin; the tinkling of the bells depicts the descending and ascending passages of the flutes. The roaring of camels is described with the help of the brass instruments. The main theme of "Caravan" is patterned melody in the manner of "Hijaz" performed with flute (the section of Shur - "Hijaz" tune of mugham is typical for the melodies of the "Caravan" songs and for playing on the instruments). The inclusion of bells, xylophone and tam-tam (percussion instruments) in the orchestra results in the colorful sounding of the pieces.

[\[D. X. Danilov. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1956, p. 15\]](#)

[\[A. Taghizade. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1985, p. 39-40;42;44\]](#)

[\["Caravan" and Soltan Hajibeyov's overture. Explanation. 1964. p. 18\]](#)

[\[E. Abbasova. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1965, p. 10\]](#)

Soltan Hajibeyov's artistic task in "Caravan" is to express feelings of a human who was conquered by the unique beauty and grandeur of the steppe expanses.

In the book "Soltan Hajibeyov" (1985) by A.Taghizade the following is mentioned:

In "Caravan" the best features of the composer's creative talent are manifested with even greater precision than in the First Symphony (Soltan Hajibeyov). The style features such as concreteness, laconicism, tendency to symmetry of forms and colorful orchestration are described.

..."Caravan" was destined to become one of the most well-known works of the composer..."

[\[A. Taghizade. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1985, p.11\]](#)

[\["Caravan" and Soltan Hajibeyov's overture. Explanation. 1964. p. 15\]](#)

"Caravan" symphonic picture by Soltan Hajibeyov was recorded on plates and performed in Hungary, Japan, Bulgaria. This work was included in the repertoires of outstanding Soviet conductors such as Stasevich A., Jansons K., Eliasberg and others. According to the book "Caravan and Soltan Hajibeyov's overture. Explanation" (1964), in 1960 the Lviv State Opera and Ballet Theater in Ukraine prepared a one-act ballet based on the music of "Caravan".

[\["Caravan" and Soltan Hajibeyov's overture. Explanation.1964, p.13\]](#)

[\[E. Abbasova. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1965, p. 10\]](#)

[\[A. Taghizade. Soltan Hajibeyov. 1985, p.11\]](#)