



BAM 2018 Winter/Spring Season

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC PETER JAY SHARP BUILDING 30 LAFAYETTE AVENUE BROOKLYN, NY 11217—1486

**BAM and Aga Khan Music Initiative present *Qyrq Qyz (Forty Girls)*, director Saodat Ismailova's multimedia retelling of an ancient epic from the steppes of Central Asia, Mar 23 & 24**

**Combining film and live performance, *Qyrq Qyz* introduces audience to an unfamiliar story with a universal theme of female power in a patriarchal society**

**Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor**

BAM and Aga Khan Music Initiative present

***Qyrq Qyz (Forty Girls)***

Directed by Saodat Ismailova

Music by Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky

**NY Premiere**

Scenography by Kamilla Kurmanbekova

Lighting design by Séverine Rième

Costumes by Hilola Shermatova

Produced by the Aga Khan Music Initiative, a program of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture

**BAM Harvey Theater (651 Fulton St)**

Mar 23 & 24 at 7:30pm

Tickets start at \$25

**Feb 13, 2018/Brooklyn, NY**—A popular oral and musical epic of women's power from the steppes of Central Asia receives a contemporary multimedia treatment in *Qyrq Qyz*, directed by Uzbek filmmaker Saodat Ismailova, with music by Tashkent-based Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky and nine young musicians trained in the oral tradition. The production is co-presented by BAM and Aga Khan Music Initiative.

The legend of *Qyrq Qyz* (literally “40 girls”) is widely known across Central Asia, home to one of the world's great traditions of epic. It tells the story of Gulaim, the 16-year-old daughter of Allayar, a ruler of the semi-nomadic Karakalpak people, who lives in the fortress of Sarkop. When an enemy troop invaded Sarkop and killed Allayar, Gulaim and her 40 companions rose

to the challenge, vanquished the enemy, and liberated their people. Belonging in the same rank as other legendary female warriors such as Tomyris, Artemisia, Joan of Arc, and Hua Mulan, Gulaim's story is a vivid testament to the universal fascination with strong women in patriarchal societies and the reversal of conventional gender power.

Ismailova's retelling of the story is both ancient and modern, honoring its oral tradition while enriching a contemporary audience's experience of it. Video—filmed in the wind-sculpted Karakalpak steppes with local, nonprofessional actors—is paired with a musical score by Yanov-Yanovsky that merges on-location ambient sounds and staged performance by a group of young bards. Meshing full-throated singing, plangent instrumental music, and quasi ritualized action, these bards perform songs and instrumental music drawn from the traditional styles and genres of epic reciters. This is a rare window into a story and a culture that is not often featured on a New York stage.

*Qyrq Qyz* is co-presented by BAM and the Aga Khan Music Initiative, a program of the Aga Khan Development Network that has played a leading role in the post-Soviet revitalization and ongoing evolution of the performing arts in Central Asia and Afghanistan. The Music Initiative supported the three-year-long artistic development of *Qyrq Qyz*, which involved a region-wide talent search and establishment of a training program wherein master-musicians worked intensively with the young bards in a modern-day version of oral-tradition master-disciple music teaching and learning.

The performers are: Raushan Orazbaeva (music director, qobyz), Alibek Kabdurakhmanov (percussion, chang), Gumisay Berdikhanova (vocal, girjek), Gumshagul Bekturganova (vocal, dutar), Aziza Davronova (vocal, dutar, frame drum), Tokzhan Karatai (vocal, qobyz), Makhabat Kobogonova (vocal, kyl-kiyak, choor, chopo-choor, jaw harps), Arailym Omirbekova (vocal, dombyra), and Saltanat Yersultan (vocal, jetigen).

**Saodat Ismailova** is one of the most internationally visible and accomplished representatives of a new generation of artists from Central Asia who came of age in the post-Soviet era and have established cosmopolitan, artistic lives while remaining deeply engaged with their native region as a source of creative inspiration. Her debut feature film, *40 Days of Silence*, a poignant depiction of four generations of Tajik women living in the complete absence of men, was nominated for best debut film at the 2014 Berlin International Film Festival and has been screened in more than two dozen prestigious festivals around the world. Her video installation *Zukhra* was featured in the Central Asian Pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale and her documentary film *Aral: Fishing in an Invisible Sea* won Best Documentary at the 2004 Turin Film Festival. Among her many other works are nine music documentaries for the CD-DVD anthology *Music of Central Asia*, co-produced by the Aga Khan Music Initiative and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Saodat Ismailova resides in Tashkent and Paris, and is affiliated with Le Fresnoy, France's National Studio of Contemporary Arts.

**Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky** has produced a distinguished and culturally unique body of work characterized by merging musical influences from his native Central Asia with postmodernist styles from Russia and Eastern Europe. His music has been commissioned and performed by leading musicians and musical organizations including Yo-Yo Ma, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Kronos Quartet, soprano Dawn Upshaw, and the New Juilliard Ensemble. Yanov-Yanovsky was a composer-in-residence at Harvard University and also taught music composition at Dartmouth College. His music has been recognized internationally through prizes and awards, recordings, and performances in prestigious concert venues. Yanov-Yanovsky is also a prolific composer of film soundtracks. From 1996—2006, he

served as artistic director of the International Contemporary Music Festival Ilkhom, in Tashkent, the only festival of its kind in Central Asia.

The **Aga Khan Music Initiative** is an interregional music and arts education program with worldwide performance, outreach, mentoring, and artistic production activities. The Initiative was launched by His Highness the Aga Khan to support talented musicians and music educators working to preserve, transmit, and further develop their musical heritage in contemporary forms. The Music Initiative began its work in Central Asia, with projects in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, and subsequently expanded its cultural development activities to include artistic communities and audiences in the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and West Africa.

For press information, contact David Hsieh at [dhsieh@BAM.org](mailto:dhsieh@BAM.org) or 718.724.8027.

#### Credits

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#### General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn's only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming.

BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, offers varied light fare and bar service prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater); D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue  
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center  
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM  
Car: Limited commercial parking lots are located near BAM. Visit [BAM.org](http://BAM.org) for information.

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit [BAM.org](http://BAM.org).

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