

Bobopirak

Bobopirak is a traditional musical combining theatrical, singing and dance elements. It is one of the widespread forms of the folk musical in Badakhshan province also known as «Pirak» or «Pirakbazai» in Bartang valley, «Prakbozi» in Vanj region and «Bobopirak» in Rushan region.

Bobopirak is performed during the wedding by a group of 2 dancers and 3 or 4 musicians. Bobopirak performance consists of two parts. The first part is largely singing and dancing and has lyrical nature and the second part includes humorous songs and it is more like comedy.

One of the two performers plays Bobopirak and the second one plays a woman role. They sing in quatrains taking turn and after finishing each quatrain they make a short dance.

A person playing Bobopirak wears a make-up and artificial moustache and beard. He wears a big overcoat and ties up bulky things in his body to make him look having a «big belly». He wears his hat inside out and holds a stick.

The woman role is played by a man wear-



ing female costume and covering her face with a veil and only leaving her eyes open.

The musical takes place indoor in the home of the person who has wedding. At the begging of the musical Bobopirak figure comes into the house walking in a «duck» manner. Once he comes into the house he begins boasting proudly about his wealth. Than he raises his stick and will try to threaten someone from the audience. The audience familiar with the context of Bobopirak would imagine him being in the garden of certain princes. He sings some quatrains sited and the musicians will repeat the chorus and play the motif.

The female figure appears with her face covered. Bobopirak seeing her rises up and greets her and they sing to one another. During the singing Bobopirak and the woman change their position moving around and singing. Bobopirak walk in funny manner to make the audience laugh. When singing he points to the woman with his index finger and makes different hand gestures. As the singing progresses the woman choses a random audience and hugs him. In this moment Bobopirak approaches him and sings:

- Hey brother! Give my woman back
- The man replies: Where is your woman? And pushes Bobopirak's belly
- Bobopirak answers: This man has got my woman and points to a man who is hugging a 'woman' dancer.
- The audience responds that «I am young and you are old; why do you need a woman?»
- Bobopirak than replies: You wished a wife and snatched my woman? Pay me for my woman.

Then a man gives Bobopirak either traditional sock (jurab) or some dried fruits. The woman than goes and clings to another audience and the same dialogue is repeated. After the performance finishes the performers divide the collected presents between themselves.