

Mapping Iranian Music Information Elements to the BIBFRAME Model: Identifying Gaps and Proposing Model Extensions

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Why This Matters

Why Iranian classical music is a useful stress test for bibliographic modeling

UNESCO · 2009

**250+ melodic units
(gusheh)**

Oral transmission

**Improvisation
is central**

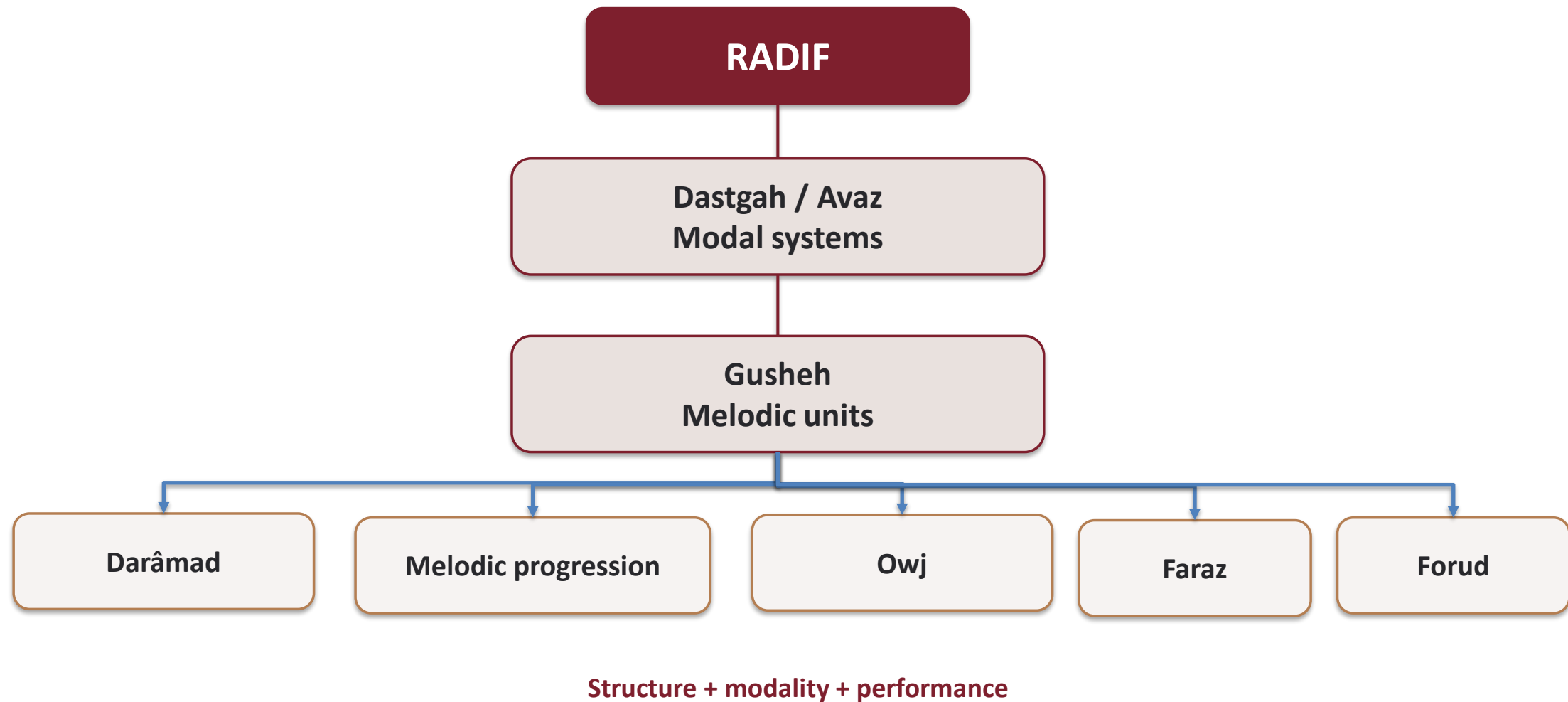
The challenge

A tradition can be structured, transmitted orally, and realized differently in performance — without behaving like a single fixed Western-style musical work.

Question: Can a bibliographic framework preserve both interoperability and cultural specificity?

What Is the Radif?

A 30-second primer — just enough musicology for the rest of the talk



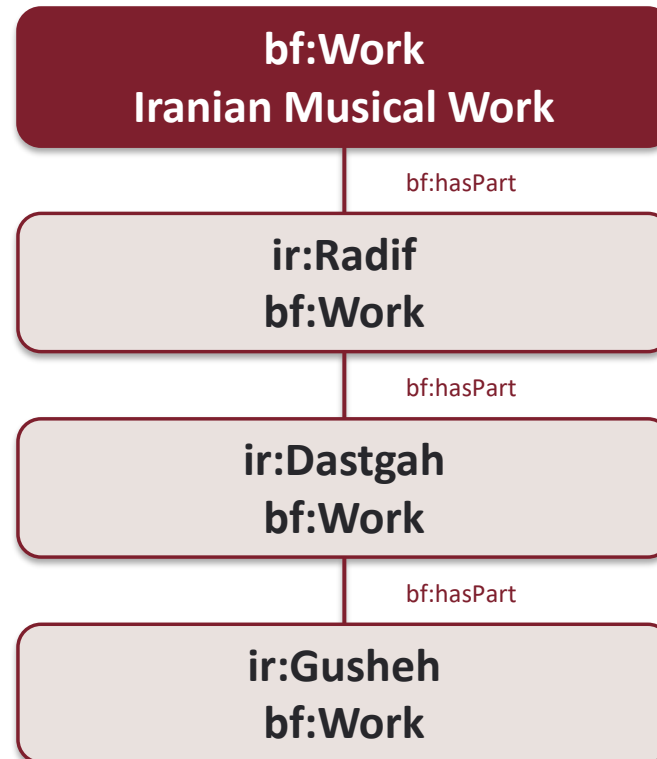
Challenge 1 · Nested Structure

Reuse BIBFRAME before inventing new structure

Key rule

Every level in the chain is explicitly typed as `bf:Work`.

The structure is reusable; the cultural semantics come later through extensions.



Lesson Learned · Genre/Form

A genre label is not a performable Work

BEFORE

Pish-Daramad
Tasnif
Chaharmezrab
Reng

modeled as subclasses
of bf:GenreForm

FIX

AFTER

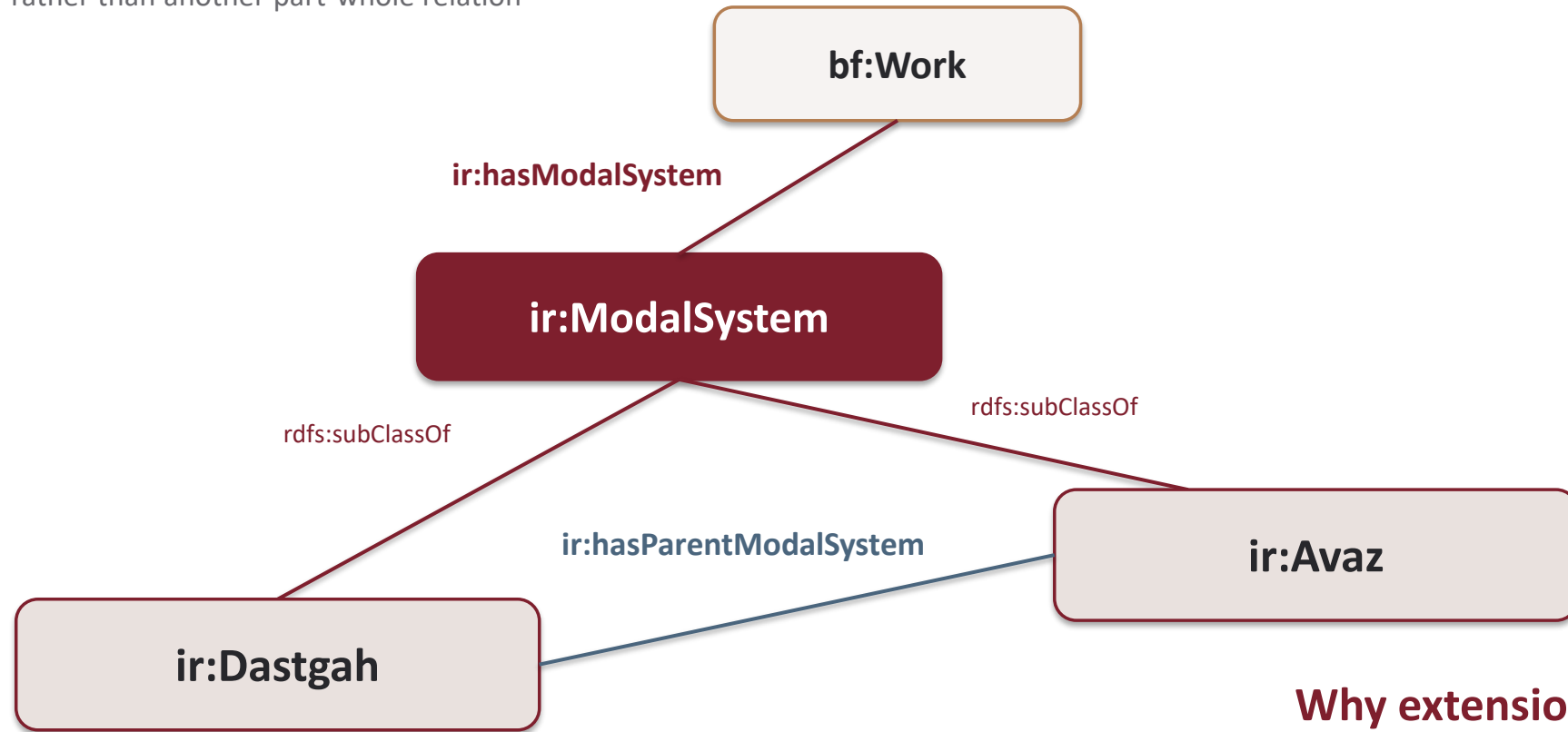
ir:Pish-Daramad
ir:Tasnif
ir:Chaharmezrab
ir:Reng

bf:genreForm → term
term rdf:type bf:GenreForm
term rdf:type skos:Concept

**The Work is
performed; the
genre/form term
classifies it.**

The Modal Layer · Dastgah and Avaz

A domain-specific layer rather than another part-whole relation

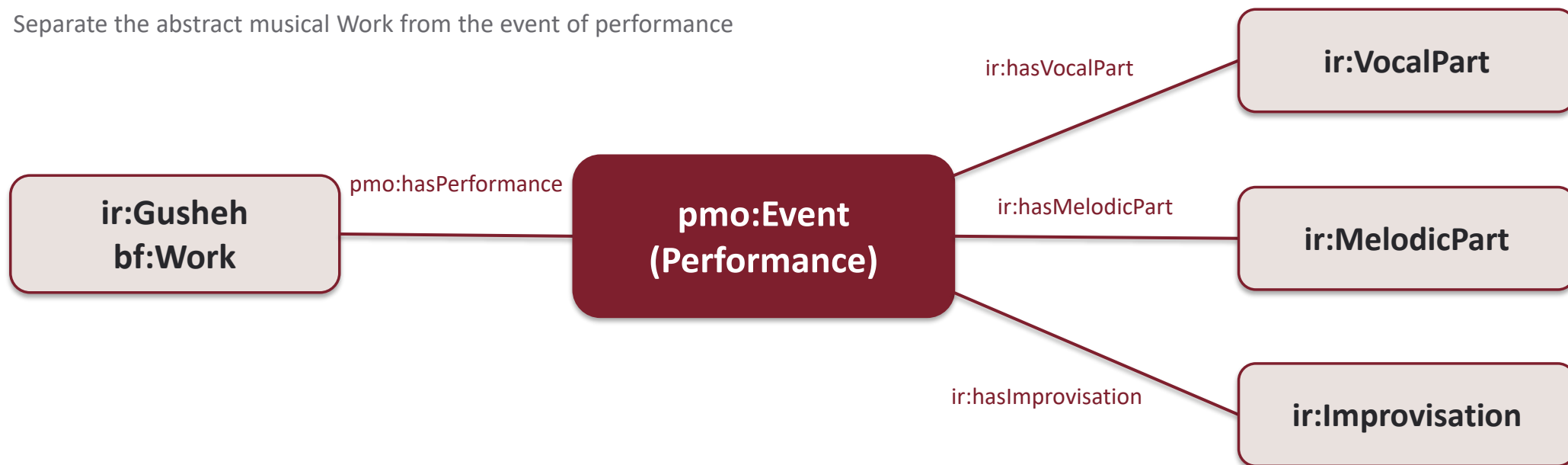


Why extension?

Modality is not the same thing as a bibliographic part.

Entering Performance · PMO

Separate the abstract musical Work from the event of performance



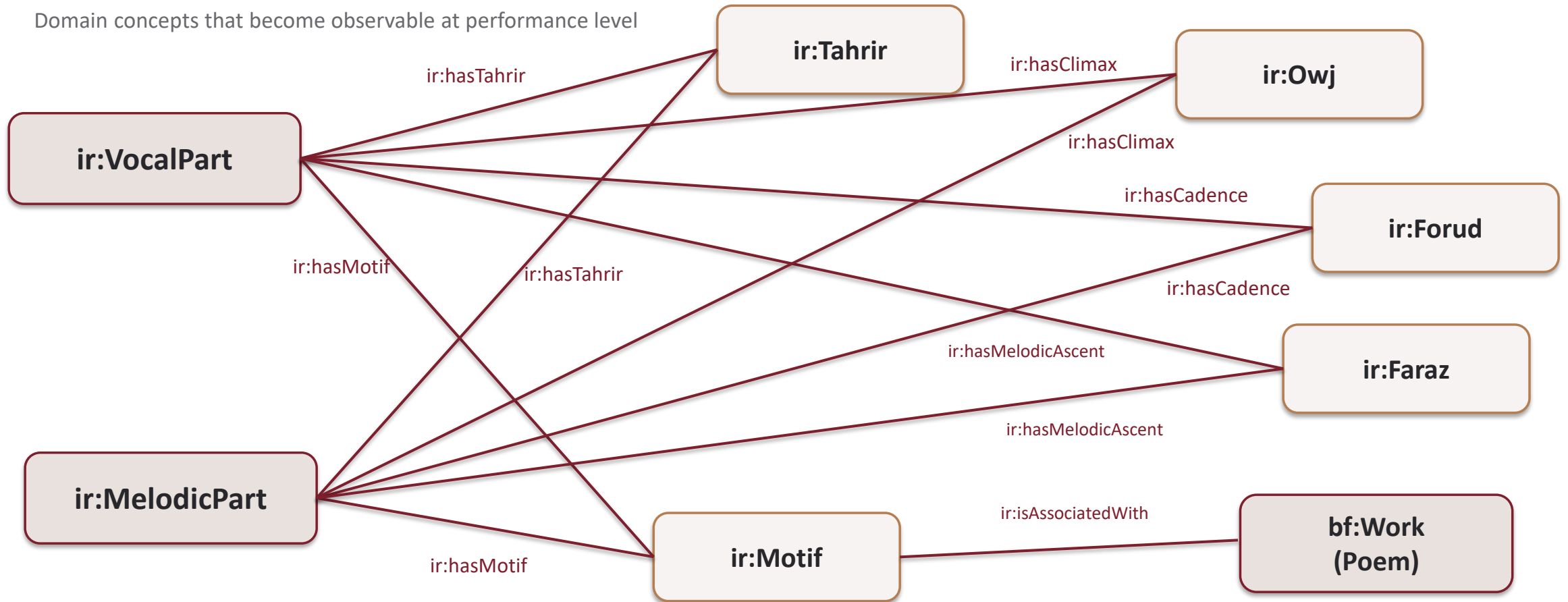
Performance is an event layer.

It is where variation, embodiment and improvisation become explicit data.

PMO
Event-based
pattern

Inside a Performance · Fine Structure

Domain concepts that become observable at performance level



Same vocabulary, different performance manifestations

What I Had to Add

Extensions appear where domain meaning cannot be recovered from generic structure

NEW CLASSES

ir:ModalSystem

ir:Dastgah

ir:Avaz

ir:Gusheh

ir:ModalTransition

ir:Forud

ir:VocalPart

ir:MelodicPart

ir:Improvisation

ir:Faraz

NEW / SPECIALIZED RELATIONSHIPS

ir:hasModalSystem

ir:hasParentModalSystem

ir:hasModalTransition

ir:fromModalSystem

ir:toModalSystem

ir:hasForud

ir:hasVocalPart

ir:hasMelodicPart

ir:hasImprovisation

ir:hasTahrir

ir:hasClimax

ir:hasCadence

ir:hasMotif

ir:hasMelodicAscent

Principle: reuse existing BIBFRAME / PMO semantics first; extend only where the domain requires explicit meaning.

The Mother Model

Three layers, connected but not collapsed into one another



Three conclusions

1

BIBFRAME is a useful foundation.

Reuse first.

2

The main gaps are semantic, not merely descriptive.

Add domain entities and relationships.

3

Cultural extensions can preserve interoperability.

Extend without replacing.

**The goal is not to replace
BIBFRAME,
but to make it culturally
extensible.**

**Thank you for
your attention**