CLASSICAL MUSIC OF IRAN, THE DASTGAH SYSTEMS Compiled, edited, and annotated by Ella Zonis Mahler with the technical assistance of Mr. Ruhallah Khaleqi



Mr. Heydari playing the santour

Previously issued in 1966 as FW 8831 and FW 8832 (three tracks have been omitted in this reissue)

Descriptive notes enclosed



An Iranian musician playing the setar (this musician does not appear on the album).



Mr. Zarif playing the tar

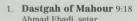
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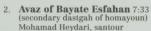
Classical Music of Iran Dastgah Systems



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- 3. **Avaz of Afshari** 3:10 (secondary dastgah of shour) Asghar Baharai, kamancheh
- 4. **Dastgah of Shour** 10:51 Khatereh Parvaneh, voice
- 5. **Dastgah of Chahargah** 4:42 Houshang Zarif, tar
- 6. Dastgah of Homayoun 4:24 Hassan Kassavi, nei
- Dastgah of Segah 10:30
 Ali Tajvidi, violin; Nasser Effetah, drum;
 Hossein Fakhtei, vocal
- 8. **Avaz of Bayate Tork** 6:10 (secondary dastgah of shour) Houshang Zarif, tar
- Avaz of Abu Ata 9:12 (secondary dastgah of shour) Housang Zarif, tar; Khatereh Parveneh, vocal
- 10. **Avaz of Dashti** 5:25 (secondary dastgah of shour) Ahmad Ebadi, tar

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Stunning performances of Iranian classical music by some of Iran's finest musicians. Recorded before the 1979 Iranian revolution drove many performers into exile, this represents some of the best of Iranian classical music. Includes recordings of ten of the twelve dastgah, or tone sets performed on tar, santour, drum, flute, violin and voice. Notes by Dr. Ella Zonis Mahler explain the principles of the musical forms, describe the instruments, and present the poetry of the vocal performances in both the original Arabic and in English translations.



Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings Office of Folklife Programs 955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600 Smithsonian Institution Washington DC 20560 Classical Music of Iran, The Dastgah Systems Compiled, edited, and annotated by Ella Zonis Mahler with the technical assistance of Mr. Ruhallah Khalegi

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- Dastgah of Mahour 9:18
 Ahmad Ebadi, setar
- Avaz of Bayate Esfahan 7:33 (secondary dastgah of homayoun) Mohamad Heydari, santour
- Avaz of Afshari 3:10 (secondary dastgah of shour)
 Asghar Baharai, kamancheh
- 4. Dastgah of Shour 10:51 Khatereh Parvaneh, voice
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Introduction to the 1991 edition Anthony Seeger

Director, Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings

This collection by Dr. Ella Zonis Mahler presents brilliant performances in ten of the twelve tone sets, or dastgah, of Iranian classical music. The selections were recorded in Iran before the 1979 revolution drove many musicians into exile, and present some of the best classical musicians of that period. The notes by Dr. Mahler explain the principles of the musical forms, describe the instruments, and present the poetry of the vocal performances in both the original Arabic and English translations.

A review in Ethnomusicology (volume 15 p. 152-154) hailed this as an excellent collection that includes recordings on most of the currently employed musical instruments by active musicians of the highest caliber: it characterized the compiler's notes as invaluable. In preparing the 2 LP albums for reissue on a 70-minute CD, time limitations forced us to delete two dastgah (Rast-panjgah and Nava) and a drum solo. The compiler selected these dastgah to be dropped because they were performed so infrequently. The two dastgah not on this CD are available on Folkways 8832 (see separate box), for those who wish to complete their set of dastaah. The drum solo is available on Folkways 8831.

After the Iranian revolution forced the Shah of Iran into exile and brought Islamic fundamentalists to power, the status of this music in Iran changed. Many fine musicians went into exile in Europe and the United States,

where they continue to perform to enthusiastic audiences. For those who remained, public performances were less frequent and house concerts more the rule. A logical step for those who enjoy these recordings is to attend live performances. Iranian classical music is performed in many large U.S. cities today.

Listeners who would like to read more about Iranian music are fortunate in the availability of sources. The compiler published her own fine introduction to the subject (see Ella Zonis 1973, below) that provides much greater detail than she was able to include in these notes. The most concise discussion of Iranian classical music is in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Volume 9, pages 292-299. Copies of this dictionary are available at many public and university libraries. Other sources include:

Bruno Nettl_"Persian Classical Music in Iran: The Processes of Change" in Eight Urban Musical Cultures: Tradition and Change. Urbana: University of Illinois Press,1978, pages 146-186.

Bruno Nettl, The Radif of Persian Music: Studies of Structure and Culture Context, with an audio cassette. Champaign Illinois: Elephant and Cat, 1987.

Thomas Ogger, Maq:am Seg:ah/s:lk:ah Vergleich der Kunstmusik des Irak und des Iran Anhand eines Maq:am-modells. Hamburg: Verlag der Musikalienhandlung, K.D. Wagner 1987.

Ella Zonis. Classical Persian Music, an Introduction. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1973.

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Traditional Persian Classical Music by Ella Zonis Mahler

The art music of Iran has a long continuous history. Music heard today, we believe, is quite similar to that of medieval Persia and even to that of ancient Persia. Under the religious provisions and social system of Islam, the practice of music was severely limited; and for more than a millennium Persian music lacked the support of the Church, a patronage vital to European music during the corresponding period. Art music was relegated to private practice and to use by certain Sufi orders. Being thus secluded, Persian music was able to remain in its original form for an unusually long period of time; and, therefore, it now provides us with a link to musics which have long since disappeared, for example that of Ancient Greece with whom Persia had close contact from the fifth century B.C.

In the contemporary art music of Iran we find many characteristics of older musical traditions, preserved in Persia during this long historical period. Persian music is still a chamber music and is not traditionally played by orchestras. The most usual performances are solo instruments or the combination of a single singer and drummer. The music is monophonic, with frequent references to a second melodic line in the use of the bourdon bass and occasional chordal decorations. When the instrumentalist performs with a singer, the texture is heterophonic; that is, the same melody suggested by the singer is repeated, with slight variation, by the instrumentalist.

There is no distinction between composer and performer in Persian music as the musician creates his own composition while playing. He improvises during his performance, using traditional melody patterns as the basis for his improvisation. Because so much of the improvisation consists of adding musical ornaments to the basic melody patterns, the resulting style is extremely ornate. This is immediately heard in the famous trills of Persian singers, and even the solo instrumental performances have this florid vocal character. Much of the music is unmeasured, and is similar to the ad libitum rhythm in the European fantasia form. But there are also rhythmic sections, the most famous being the chahar mezrab where the performer displays his virtuosity as in the cadenza of a concerto. The repertoire of traditional melody patterns, which musicians use as the basis for their improvisation, is organized into seven systems called dastaah, and five secondary systems called avaz. Like the Indian raga and the Arabic magam, each of the twelve Persian systems has its own scale, its own special degrees of the scale where the melodies center and where they stop, and its own group of traditional melody patterns. The more important of these patterns. called goucheh, may add an accidental to the original scale of the dastgah and may center around different notes. Also they may be in a higher or lower range. The five avaz can be considered derivative dastaah, as each borrows melodies and cadence formulae from its own parent dastgah.

A Persian musician thinks of a *dastgah* in terms of its melody patterns, which are tetrachordal units, and not in terms of its scale. However, for

illustration, we may abstract a scale for each. Many of those quoted below, transposed from their performance pitches to start on the note C, contain intervals smaller than the European half-step. The size of these micro-intervals varies from player to player and also varies according to the use of that interval in the melody. They are not exact quarter-tones. The sign *koron* P indicates a lowering of the tone to a point between natural and flat. The interval C to E *koron*, for example, may be considered to be a neutral third; it is neither a major third nor a minor third, but is somewhere in between.

The use of micro-intervals plus the free-floating unmeasured rhythm and the particular tone of the instruments and voice, create for the European or American listener a quality of sadness in all Persian music. Iranians themselves characterize most of the dastgah as being of melancffoly character. But the Persians have an acute sensitivity to this emotion and can distinguish many fine degrees of sadness, from the depths of despair to the sweet sadness of a lover's longing. This music is well suited to the basic philosophical nature of Persian culture, especially when combined with verses from the great Persian mystic poets.

Performances of Persian music normally open with a rhythmic introduction followed by an unmeasured daramad, or prelude. After the musician has established the most important scale degrees of the dastgah, he plays a number of goucheh. These introduce both a new range and new stressed scale degrees. Each goucheh may contain several unmeasured sections and perhaps a chahar mezrab (virtuoso section).

Close to the end of the performance the musician will descend to the original range of the dastgah. Typical dastgah performances are heard here in the longer vocal sections. The shorter instrumental performances are less typical, but here serve to illustrate the major characteristics of ten of the twelve dastgah systems used in Iran today. [Editor's reminder: all aspects of the dastgah system are more fully treated in Ella Zonis, Classical Persian Music, an Introduction. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973].

The Recordings

 Dastgah of Mahour Scale: C D E F G A B C Mr. Ahmad Ebadi, Setar

Although this scale is similar to the European major scale, additional chromatic tones are added for the major goucheh. For example, in the goucheh of Mahour called Delkash the seventh scale step is lowered to B flat and the sixth to A koron; here the fifth scale degree is stressed. Near the close of the performance the intervals are resolved to their original value in the foroud, or the return to the starting range of mahour.

The instrument played in this example, the setar, is the most characteristic traditional Persian musical instrument in use today. In medieval Persia it was called the tambour or pandore and it is widely discussed in the theoretical treatises of Al-Farabi (d. 950) and Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (d. 1037). Instruments

similar to the *setar* are found throughout Western and Central Asia. Two of its four strings are tuned to G and C'; the other two are changed according to the *dastgah* being performed, and the *setar* is plucked with the right forefinger nail. Mr. Ahmad Ebadi was the foremost *setar* player in Iran at the time of this recording.

Avaz of Bayate Esfahan (secondary dastaah of

Homayoun)

Scale: C D E-flat F G A-koron B(-koron) C Mr. Mohamad Heydari, Santour

The santour, which resembles the hammer-dulcimer, has become very popular in Iran because of its brilliant sound and because it offers opportunity for dramatic virtuoso playing. It is a trapezoidal hollow box over which eighteen sets of strings are stretched, supported by wooden platforms. The strings are tuned for a range of three octaves. Unlike the European zither, which it resembles, the santour is not plucked or strummed, but rather it is struck with wooden mallets. For this recording Mr. Mohamad Heydari uses felt coverings on his mallets, bringing the tone of the santour close to its structural descendent, the piano.

3. Avaz of Afshari (secondary dastgah of shour)

Scale: C D E-koron F G A(-koron) B-flat C Mr. Asghar Baharai, *Kamancheh* The *kamancheh* is a small bowed instrument held vertically and supported on the player's knee. The tuning of its four strings is similar to the Persian violin tuning, most often a, e' a' e" or a, d' a', d". Of all the traditional instruments represented here, the *kamancheh* is the rarest and has been replaced almost entirely by the violin. Mr Asghar Bahari plays a *daramad* or prelude in *Afshari*.

4. Dastgah of Shour

Scale: C D-koron E-flat F G A-flat B-flat C Miss Khatereh Parvaneh, voice

For this performance of Shour, Miss Khatereh Parveneh has chosen verses from the Masnavi, famous mystic poetry written in the thirteenth century by Jalal al-Din Rumi, the founder of the Malevi order of Dervishes (the "whirling" Dervishes). The verses are set in a free unmeasured rhythm, allowing great freedom for the addition of ornamentation and trills.

The poem, which is presented in the original Persian in figure 1, is allegorical. The love described in it is the love of God. A free translation is:

The grieving of the heart announces the state of love

And there is no illness like that of the heart

As much as I describe love When I attain it, I am helpless

The cause of the lovers' illness is unique To them, the religion and the cause is God Although words illuminate In love, wordlessness is clearer

If other than at the beloved you look It is not love, but stray desire

Love is the torch, which, when lit Burns everything—but the beloved.

عاشقی بیدات اززاری دل بینت بیاری چربیاری دل برسرگویم مثن راشرح و بیان چون بیشتی آیم فروه انمازآن ماشت ماشتی را نامه و معت خد آن کرچه نیمیز ربان روشکرست لیک مثنی بی ربان روشکرست خیرموشوق را را ماشایی بود مشتی و دهرزه خوا ان میتود میشود میرزه خوا ان میتود میشود میش

Figure 1. Poem of Jalal al-Din Rumi, Dastgah of Shour

Small Sheepha &

5. Dastgah of Chahargah Scale: C D-koron E F G A-koron B C Mr. Houshang Zarif. *Tar*

The *tar* is a larger instrument than the *setar* and it has a uniquely shaped double belly covered with a thin skin membrane. Its six strings are tuned in pairs: the first pair is variable and tuned according to the *dastgah*; the second, tuned to g, the third to c'.

6. Dastgah of Homayoun

Scale: C D-koron E F G A-flat B-flat C. Mr. Hassan Kassayi, *Nei*

The *nei*, or Persian flute is a long piece of bamboo pierced with finger holes and capped with a metal mouthpiece. It can be held in two positions, under the lower lip or between the player's upper teeth. With these two positions the player produces two distinct registers. These are heard in alternation in this recording.

Mr. Hassan Kassayi here plays an important goucheh of Homayoun called Shushtari. Because it is now often played by itself, separated from Homayoun, this goucheh is likely to be classified as a secondary dastgah (avaz) by future theorists.

7. Dastgah of Segah
Scale: C D E-koron F G A-koron B-flat C (E-koron is the tonic)

Mr. Ali Tajvidi, violin; Mr. Nasser Eftetah, drum; Mr. Hossein Fakhtei, voice.

و خولس ات من النت مرت کوه ماز کرده ن که ای روزهجوان مثب درازکردن بررز دخی مرکز کرب پر تو به نازها که داری من ونیاز کردن د د لکون ث مه به نسه از کر د ن تو ـ خانی ن مرخانه ازکرون به نکنی د و نت بخو و منسده و برم چه نوش است گفت منی وال کار دن سرکوی دانب من برم م کید ماند که بهرون کی رویتوان فازکر دن

Figure 2. Poem of Neshat Esfahani, Dastgah of Segah

The violin is extremely well-suited for Persian music, as the micro-intervals can easily be played and its bowing technique is suitable for the bourdon or pedal effect characteristic of the chahar-mezrab. There are a number of tunings in use today. The most usual are g, d' g' d'', and a, e', a', e". The violinist is Mr. Ali Tajvidi; the drum player Mr. Nasser Eftetah. Mr. Hossein Fakhtei sings the verses of Neshat Esfahani, a 19th century poet. The original Persian is given in Figure 2. They may be freely translated as:

What a pleasure to complain in the presence of your hair,
To utter my complaints of separation to this long night.

Each day I think of the time to come, When you shall tease and I shall desire.

The door of the heart is not to be opened by everyone.

While you are in this house, I shall not open the

door.

Because of your words my complaints were

begun.

What a pleasure to discover fine words in those who are close.

The street of my beloved is like the Ka'beh, * Where one can pray in any direction.

[*The Ka'beh is the center of Mecca]

Avaz of Bayate Tork (second dastgah of shour)
 Scale: C D E F G A-koron C
 Mr. Houshang Zarif. Tar

9. Avaz of Abu Ata (secondary dastgah of shour)
Scale: C D-koron E-flat F G A-flat B-flat C

Mr. Houshang Zarif, *Tar*; Miss Parvaneh, voice.

The verses sung by Miss Parveneh are from the famous thirteenth century poet Sa'adi and by the eighteenth century poet Hatef. Mr. Zarif accompanies Miss Parveneh on the tar.

First poem of Sa'adi (see figure 3)

He who has not a sorrow like mine, how could he know How my eyes treasured your image all through the long night.

Now I must be defeated, for all my life I have never borne such a sadness.

And with this suffering I cannot go on; Alas! The desire of your image stays in my heart.

If I wrote of the anguish of separation,
Sighs would appear from the hearts of all who
read.

وقت که از پای درآم که بهرغر باری نخشه م که به هجیدان توبانه ترسم که نما نم من از این نج دیفا کانه دل کوشوق قراق تو نویم فراد که کوشوق قراق تو نویم فراد که کوشوق قراق تو نویم

کرنوق توام ۱۰۰ حدث می گذراند

أنزاكه عي جن عمن مت حردانه

Figure 3. First poem of Sa'adi, Avaz of Abu Ata

Poem of Hataf (see figure 4)

If for loyalty's sake you can look at my pale face,

You will heal all my pain by that look.

For it is you who have spring the bow and are

taut with expectancy. You will shoot me...and I grieve.

And all my grief comes to this: What will happen if, heaven forbid, you miss?

You are the king and the world is yours. You are the moon and the world is yours. Therefore what harm is there if, by way of generosity,
You grace a beggar with your glance.

چرشود به هیره اردین نفری زراه و فاکنی که اگر کنی به دردین به یکی نظاره دواکنی توکان کمشیده و درنس که زنی به تیرم وین غین بیرهم بوداز بین که خدانکر دوخطا کنی توشمی و مکت جهان ترا تو مهی و مکت جهان ا

Figure 4. Poem of Hatef, Avaz of Abu Ata

ما تث

Second poem of Sa'adi (see figure 5)

Leave me physician as I know I have no mind for your healing; I leave my life as I do not know I live.

But stop—visit with me—in your presence I am unconscious and shall improve. Leave me pure delicious wine to relieve my sorrow.

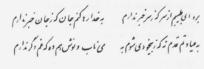


Figure 5. Second poem of Sa'adi, Avaz of Abu Ata

65.40

10. Avaz of Dashti (secondary dastgah of shour)
Scale: C D-koron E-flat F G A-flat B-flat C
Mr. Ahmad Ebadi, tar

Acknowledgements:

The performances of Miss Parvaneh, Mr. Heydari, and Mr. Zarif were through the courtesy of the Fine Arts Organization of the Government of Iran. Recordings of the performances of Mr. Ebadi, Mr. Bahari, Mr. Kassayi, Mr. Fakhtei, Mr. Tajvidi, and Mr. Effetah were obtained through the courtesy of Badio Iran.

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