Tea House Music of Afghanistan
FOLKWAYS ETHNIC RECORDS FE 4255

SIDE A
1. Farida Mahwash: Come to me in the morning / Pashtu (2:05)
   Kabul traditional style. Accompaniment: roubab, sarenda, harmonica, tabla.
2. Telah Mohammed: Pashtuna / Pashtu (4:40)
3. Djila: Lovesong / Dari (4:45)
   Kabul style. Accompaniment: sitar, drehka, tambour, roubab, clarinet, harmonica, tabla.
4. Moussa Kassimi: Traditional / Pashtu (8:55)
   Khyal style. Accompaniment: tampoura, sarangi, harmonica, sarenda, tabla.

SIDE B
1. Aziz G嶙navi: Love Forever / Pashtu (3:00)
   Ghazni style. Accompaniment: sarangi, drehka, tambour, santour, roubab, clarinet, harmonica, tabla.
2. Chahma: Come with me to the priest (to get married) / Dari (3:00)
   Kabul style. Accompaniment: clarinet, dotar, santour, tambour, tabla.
3. Hamida Rochdsha: My Love / Pashtu (3:50)
   Kandahar style. Accompaniment: sarangi, sarenda, dotar, roubab, clarinet, harmonica, santour, tabla.
4. Moussa Kassimi: Blue Eyes / Dari (3:50)
   Kabul style. Accompaniment: sarangi, sarenda, tambour, dotar, santour, roubab, clarinet, harmonica, tabla.
5. Moussa Kassimi: Traditional / Dari (6:50)
   Khyal style. Accompaniment: tampoura, sarangi, harmonica, sarenda, tabla.

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Tea House Music of Afghanistan
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COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE
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FOLKWAYS ETHNIC RECORDS FE 4255
TEAHOUSE MUSIC OF AFGHANISTAN
Recorded in Kabul by Peter ten Hoopen

In the old cities of Afghanistan, hidden between the high ranges of the Hindu Kush, or standing out in bare deserts like daring clusters of human endeavour, the teahouse is the meeting place par excellence. It is the hub of social life, the central clearinghouse of trade information, community news - and gossip.

If these virtues alone were not enough to underscore the importance of the teahouse for Afghan culture, it is also the place where travelling storytellers transmit the lore of the country, and (apart from the courts of local rulers or 'khang') the main stage for the country's musicians.

Especially during the festive Eid weeks concluding the Muslim months of fasting, Moharram and Ramadan, the teahouses at night are filled to the roof beams with sparkling, thrilling music. The public squats and stands around in quilted coats, turbans and riding boots, quietly sipping tea, the Afghani's favorite refreshment.

Little boys scurry around selling walnuts and sunflowerseeds, or are sent out to the streets to fetch some naswar snuff, a lump of hashish, or a packet of contraband filter kings. As women do not partake in Muslim social life, the teahouse is as closed to them as their veils are to the eyes of strangers.

The music of Afghanistan is like its people, rugged and hearty, lively and passionate. Their music more often than not has a fast pulse rate, quickening as it goes along. Only now and then do the musicians allow themselves and their public the break of a slow ballad. But even the slower songs can be heartbreaking, speaking of heartbreak and sorrow and distant loves. Many of the songs of course are of a religious nature — and they are among the most fervent of all.

The music heard on this album is typical of Afghanistan as a focal point of cultural exchange. Situated between Persia in the West, Soviet Uzbekistan in the North, China in the North-East, and the Indian/Pakistani subcontinent along its Eastern and Southern flanks, Afghanistan has always been an important crossroads for Asian transcontinental traffic.

Within the boundaries of Afghanistan lie the strategic passes of the Hindu Kush mountain range, crossed in the past by such illustrious travellers as Alexander the Great, Attila's Mongol hordes, Turkoman invaders, and the Moghul warriors fanning out from Afghanistan to conquer the Indian subcontinent.

The original folk music of Afghanistan was the product of a melting pot. The Moghuls took this product and imported it into the wide plains of
the Indus and Ganges rivers (the area of what is now Pakistan, Bangla Desh, and the Northern half of India), where it strongly influenced the local court music.

Present day Indian classical music is a direct descendant of the marriage between the old Vedic music and the Mogul (Afghani) court music.

But the flow of cultural exchange is rarely unidirectional: now the music of India and Pakistan is flowing back into Afghanistan over the radio waves, Indian movies spill out their lilting melodies over the heads of Afghans who, lacking their own film industry, tend to prefer Indian movies over the Western, more alien product.

It is interesting to note here in passing that Indian and Pakistani film music displays fairly substantial Western influences. So: back in the old melting pot again.

Yet, listening to these recordings one is struck by the originality, the unmistakable Afghani character. Certainly this is due in part to the fact that most of the instruments are of true Afghani origin—although some of them have been brought to India by the Moghuls to be there perfected: roubab led to sarod, tambour and dutar married to the Indian vina led to the sitar.

The musicians heard on this album are among the most well known in the country, all of them members of the Radio Afghanistan orchestra, many of them representatives of the 'teahouse tradition,' some (including all of the women) representatives of a generation of musicians that got their renown by the broadcasts of Radio Afghanistan.

If one listens well one can hear influences from as far afield as Mongolia and Greece, from a thousand years ago till the present day, but mostly what one hears is the living heart of Afghanistan, its sweet, thrilling music.
track 1. Farida Mahwash: Come to me in the morning / Pashtu
Kabuli traditional style. Accompaniment: roubab, sarenda, harmonica, tabla. 2'05"

2. Telah Mohammed: Pashtuna / Pashtu
4'40"

3. Djila: Lovesong / Dari
Kabuli style. Accompaniment: sitar, delroba, tambour, roubab, clarinet, harmonica, tabla.
4'45"

4. Moussa Kassimi: Traditional / Pashtu
Khyal style. Accompaniment: tampoura, sarangi, harmonica, sarenda, tabla.
6'55"

SIDE B, track 1. Aziz Gznavi: Love Forever / Pashtu
Chazni style. Accompaniment: sarangi, delroba, tambour, santour, roubab, clarinet, harmonica, tabla.
3'00"

2. Chatam: Come with me to the priest (to get married) / Dari
Kabuli style. Accompaniment: clarinet, dotar, santour, tambour, tabla.
3'00"

3. Hamida Rochshana: My Love / Pashtu
Kandahar style. Accompaniment: sarangi, sarenda, dotar, roubab, clarinet, harmonica, santour, tabla.
3'50"

4. Moussa Kassimi: Blue Eyes / Dari
Kabuli style. Accompaniment: sarangi, sarenda, tambour, dotar, santour, roubab, clarinet, harmonica, tabla.
3'50"

5. Moussa Kassimi: Traditional / Dari
Khyal style. Accompaniment: tampoura, sarangi, harmonica, sarenda, tabla.
6'50"