



DARARIĀN, VIGEN

DARARIĀN, Vigen, (b. Hamadan, 1308 Š./1929; d. Los Angeles, 1382 Š./2003) renowned pop singer and performer on the guitar. Vigen possessed a very tender (exquisite, silky) and pleasant voice, and during his long artistic career of more than half a century, he performed some 600 songs, many of which became lasting contemporary pieces of Persian music. His joyous, moving songs became so popular in Iran that Vigen was nicknamed ‘the sultan of Iranian pop music.’

Vigen was in love with music and singing from childhood, and for years he desperately longed to possess a guitar. As a young boy, Vigen became acquainted with an Armenian soldier from the Soviet Union who played the guitar and was willing to sell him the instrument. Vigen then studied the guitar with his brother-in-law and soon began singing Armenian, Turkish, Russian, Italian, Spanish, and English songs, accompanying himself on his guitar (Kayhān, London ed., no.845, p.5). By the time he turned 22, he was already well-known in Tehran as a singer who presented a new brand of music utterly different from traditional Persian music. At the time he was working for a nightclub-restaurant called Bāg-e Šemirānāt as a singer and guitarist, singing passionate, joyful and moving songs. Vigen was a baritone, but the sensation and exhilaration in his voice was so enchanting to everyone—especially the younger generation—that crowds came from all over Tehran every night to watch his performance. It was during one of these nightly programs that Vigen met and made friends with Nāṣer Rastegār-nežād, the well-known modernist poet and songwriter. Rastegār-nežād composed the



now well-known song Payām-e raqib with the assistance of ‘Aṭā’-Allāh Ḳorram (q.v.), the composer and violinist, for Vigen. This song was broadcast on Radio Tehran the following Friday and immediately received nearly universal acclaim. This success prompted the continuation of the cooperation between the three artists, and Rastegār-nežād and Ḳorram composed a number of other songs which were performed by Vigen in the following Radio Tehran music programs with equal success.

After World War II, jazz had gradually begun to influence Persian music. Before Vigen, however, Iranian jazz basically consisted of Western jazz songs preformed with Farsi lyrics, receiving little appreciation from the Iranian public. Vigen’s songs, however, were composed by Iranian musicians and based on Persian melodies, and therefore possessed the taste and feel of Iranian music. ‘Aṭā’-Allāh Ḳorram composed entirely new tunes by combining familiar Persian melodies with the new and alien Western rhythms. He then sought the assistance of such songwriters as Nāṣer Rastegār-nežād, Nozar Parang, Parviz Vakili, and Syrus Āriānpur to compose very plain lyrics in colloquial language to go along with these tunes. The songs were then performed with Vigen’s passionate and blissful voice, impressing the Iranian public, and particularly the youth (Ḳorram, p. 396). Vigen’s works were in fact a prologue for a new type of music just taking root in Iran (Kayhān, London, No.845, p.5). Up to that time most Persian songs merely talked of candles, flowers, butterflies, etc., and described virtual loves, imaginary paramours, the pains of separation (ḥejran) from the beloved, the bitterness of one’s misfortunes, and the miseries of one’s vile destiny. Vigen’s songs, on the other hand, were deeply influenced by the rising tide of change in modern Persian poetry, replacing the traditional gloomy descriptions and interpretations with new and mirthful content derived from the lives of common people and expressed in colloquial language, while at the same time drawing on the rhythm of Persian rhythmic songs.

Despite the fact that Vigen did not possess a higher education, he managed to select the most meaningful and enduring lyrics derived from the lives of ordinary people, thus rendering his melodies pleasing to a large sector of the Iranian population. For this reason many of his works were among the most popular songs for several decades.

Vigen also had an interest in acting and appeared in a number of Farsi films, including *ḵun wa šaraf*, *Z’ālem-balā*, *Tappa-ye ‘ešq Āršin mālālān*, *Češma-ye ‘oššāq*, *Ātaš wa kākestar*, *‘Arus-e daryā* and *E’terāf* (Mešgin qalam, p. 453).



Bibliography:

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Sa'īd Mešgin-qalam, Taṣnifhā wa tarāna-hā wa sorudhā-ye Irānzamin I, 2nd ed., Teheran, 1378 Š./1999, p. 453.

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'Aṭā'-Allāh Korram, Golestān-e Musiqi-e Irān, 2nd ed., Los Angeles, 1986.