



DARVĪŠ KHAN, ĠOLĀM-ḤOSAYN

DARVĪŠ KHAN, ĠOLĀM-ḤOSAYN (b. Tehran, 1289/1872, d. Tehran, 2 Āḍar 1305 Š./23 November 1926), master musician, renowned teacher, and innovative composer of Persian classical music. He was a transitional figure, both a guardian of tradition and an innovator, introducing changes in style of performance, composition, and construction of instruments.

Ġolām-Ḥosayn's father, Ḥāji Bašīr Ṭālaqānī, was a postal official and an amateur musician; it was he who first called his son Darvīš, apparently a habit of his. The boy was enrolled in the band at *Dār al-Fonūn*, directed by the Frenchman Alfred Lemaire (Mallāḥ, 1333 Š./1954, p. 68). There he learned to play trumpet and drum; he also played the drum in a children's band formed for the young 'Azīz-al-Solṭān, a favorite of Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah (1264-1313/1848-96). He became interested in the *setār* and received his first lessons from his father, later studying the *tār* with the master Āqā Ḥosaynqolī, whose best student he is considered to have been (Kāleqī, pp. 300-03).

Darvīš Khan was introduced to Prince Šo'ā'-al-Salṭana, a son of Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah (1313-24 /1896-1907), by Kamāl-al-Salṭana, father of his own later student *Abu'l-Ḥasan Šabā*. One night Āqā Ḥosaynqolī was playing for the prince and, after starting a particular *dastgāh*, asked permission for his pupil Darvīš Khan to finish it. The prince was so impressed with the performance that he invited Darvīš Khan to join his retinue of musicians, which also included Nāyeb Asad-



Allāh and Āqā Jān (Mallāh, 1333 Š./1954, p. 70). After several months the prince was sent to Shiraz, taking his musicians with him. There Darvīš Khan married Nowrasīda, daughter of Badr-al-Salṭana, a military adviser, and eventually they had a daughter named Qamar (Mallāh, 1333 Š./1954, p. 71; Kāleqī, p. 303). After his marriage Darvīš Khan began to supplement his income by playing at the parties of local princes. Šo‘ā‘-al-Salṭana became angry and ordered his fingers severed, but Kamāl-al-Salṭana interceded to prevent this misfortune.

After returning to Tehran Darvīš Khan started a small music class. He also asked other princes to help free him from his commitment to Šo‘ā‘-al-Salṭana (Mallāh, 1333 Š./1954, p. 71). The infuriated prince sent a servant to summon Darvīš Khan to his presence. The latter asked the servant to wait while he changed his clothes, then escaped through the back entrance and sought refuge with ‘Abbāsqolī Khan, chief custodian of the British embassy. After Darvīš Khan had explained his predicament and played a European piece on the *tār* for the ambassador’s wife, the ambassador wrote to the prince, asking him to free Darvīš Khan from his commitment, which the prince agreed to do (Kāleqī, pp. 303-05) Darvīš Khan expanded his music classes and continued to play at private gatherings, one of which was described by the poet ‘Āref Qazvīnī in his *Dīvān* (pp. 128-32). He joined the Sufī order [Anjoman-e oḵowwat](#), led by Mīrzā ‘Alī Khan Ḥahīr-al-Dawla, and became director of its orchestra. Ḥahīr-al-Dawla encouraged musical performances, and in 1324/1906 the society sponsored what is considered to have been the first public concert in Persia. It was held in a garden on the outskirts of Tehran and reportedly lasted twenty-four hours (Zonis, p. 144). Darvīš Khan also gave concerts in the hall of the Grand Hotel (Gerānd Hotel).

Traditional performance of a *dastgāh* usually began with a nonmetric *āvāz* or a *čahārmežrāb*, an improvised instrumental solo. Musical ensembles were small, and solo instrumentalists took turns playing alone or accompanying a singer; in the *tašnīf* (rhythmic song) and *reng* (a classical dance form) they might also play as an ensemble at the end of the *dastgāh*. The classical *radīf* (repertoire) itself included only a few metric pieces, most of them short. The influence of Western music, with its large orchestras and concert format, was growing in Persia, however. Musicians like Darvīš Khan organized larger orchestras, which encouraged the composition of more ensemble pieces. At one concert rehearsal of the Anjoman orchestra the composer Rokn-al-Dīn Khan Moḵtār introduced a new, metric opening piece. As it came before the *darāmad*, it was called *pīšdarāmad* (prelude). Both Moḵtār and Darvīš Khan



composed many *pīšdarāmad*s, and Darvīš Khan is credited with having popularized them both through performance and through teaching them to his students. Although at first the *pīšdarāmad* was a short piece based on the *darāmad*, Darvīš Khan expanded it to include sections in the major *gūšas* of the *dastgāh*. His *pīšdarāmad*s are known for their variety of rhythm and melody (Mallāḥ, 1337-38 Š./1958-59, 16, p. 22; Khāleqī, pp. 309-13).

At some unknown time Āqā Ḥosaynqolī was invited by His Master's Voice to bring an orchestra to London to record traditional Persian music. Apparently because of the growing popularity of the *pīšdarāmad*, however, these more old-fashioned recordings sold badly in the Persian market (Mallāḥ, 1333 Š./1954, pp. 74-75). Later Darvīš Khan himself made two recording trips with another group of musicians, one to London and one to Tiflis in 1332/1914.

Darvīš Khan was an open and generous teacher. He addressed everyone by a single phrase, “Yā Pīr Jān,” which became one of his own nicknames. Both Darvīš and Pīr Jān were appropriate to his association with the Sufis; he used to present his graduating students with the emblem of the Anjoman, two crossed hatchets (*tabarzīn*) and a begging bowl (*kaškūl*), in copper, silver, or gold, depending on the level reached (Maḥmūdī, p. 12). His classes were organized according to three levels of the *radīf*; completion of all three took approximately ten years. Students came twice a week to classes organized according to difficulty. Each had an individual lesson while the others waited and listened in the next room (Nettl, 1974, p. 168). Only about twenty students ever completed the full course and received the gold medal (Maḥmūdī, p. 12). The most talented included Abu'l-Ḥasan Šabā, Mūsā Ma'rūfī, Mortazā Ney Dāwūd, Ḥosaynqolī Ġaffārī, Šokr-Allāh (Šokrī), 'Alī-Moḥammad Šafā'ī, 'Abd-Allāh Dādvar, Ḥosayn Sanjarī, and Arsalān Dargāhī (Khāleqī, pp. 430-42).

Darvīš Khan's own playing on *tār* and *setār* was considered both technically masterly and artistically warm and melodious. The variety he introduced in his performance style is attributed to the European tunes he played on the *tār* (Mallāḥ, 1337-38 Š./1958-59, 22, p. 22), to which he added a sixth string, just before the lowest, doubling the low C string. In this innovation he followed Moštāq-'Alīšāh, who had added a resonating string to the *setār*. Both strings are thus known as *sīm-e moštāq* (Caron and Safvate, pp. 166-68).

Darvīš Khan's twenty-four compositions, particularly his *rengs*, are considered among the finest works of his time (Khāleqī, p. 322). They are characterized by variety in both melody and rhythm. He particularly popularized the 2/4 meter



in Persian music (Mallāḥ, 1337-38 Š./1958-59, 23, p. 22; for a list of his compositions, see Khāleqī, pp. 312-17).

Darvīš Khan died in 1305 Š./1926 as the result of a collision between a carriage and an automobile. He was a quiet and sensitive person, a great lover of flowers, known not only for hospitality to his friends but also for generosity to the needy, though he himself never had a substantial income. He organized benefit concerts for the poor, orphaned, and victims of fire or famine. His influence on the development of Persian music in the 20th century can be seen in the number, variety, and length of rhythmic pieces, as well as in larger orchestras and the expansion of the audience to include many levels of society. Contrary to the custom of his time, he functioned as an independent musician and paved the way for other musicians to perform with freedom and respect.

For a music sample, see [Darvīš Khān – Pīšdarāmad](#).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. ‘Āref Qazvīnī, *Kollīāt-e Dīvān-e ‘Āref Qazvīnī*, Tehran, 1347 Š./1968, pp. 128-32, 611-15.

Š. Behrūzī, *Ĉehrahā-ye mūsīqī-e Īrān I*, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1372 Š./1993, pp. 62-64.

N. Caron and D. Safvate, *Les traditions musicales. Iran*, Berlin, 1966, pp. 146-49, 166-68.

R. Kāleqī, *Sargodašt-e mūsīqī-e Īrān I*, Tehran, 1333 Š./1954.

M. Maḥmūdī, “‘Darvīš Kān,’ kāleq-e pīšdarāmad,” *Rastākīz*, 23 Mordād 2536=1356 Š./14 August 1977, p. 12.

Ĥ.-‘A. Mallāḥ, “Ğolām-Ĥosayn Darvīš,” *Payām-e now* 7/1, 1333 Š./1954, pp. 68-77.

Idem, “Ğolām-Ĥosayn Darvīš,” *Majalla-ye mūsīqī* 3/10-11, 1336 Š./1957.



Idem, “Sargodašt-e Darviš,” *Majalla-ye mūsīqī-e Rādīō Īrān* 15-23, Farvardīn 1337-Āḡar 1338 Š./April 1958-December 1959.

B. Nettl, “Nour-Ali Boroumand, a Twentieth Century Master of Persian Music,” *Studia Instrumentorum Musicae Popularis* 3, 1974, pp. 167-71.

Idem, “Persian Classical Music in Tehran. The Processes of Change,” in B. Nettl, ed., *Eight Urban Musical Cultures*, Urbana, Ill., 1978, pp. 146-85.

D. Şafwat, *Ostādān-e mūsīqī-e Īrān wa alḥān-e mūsīqī-e Īrān*, Tehran, 1350 Š./1971, p. 57.

S. Sepantā, *Čašmandāz-e mūsīqī-e Īrān*, Tehran, 1369 Š./1990, pp. 109-21.

E. Zonis, *Classical Persian Music. An Introduction*, Cambridge, Mass., 1973, pp. 144, 157, 192.