



FORUTAN, YŪSOF

FORUTAN, YŪSOF, a master of Persian music. Born in Tehran to a family of educated aristocrats, he developed a sharp interest and received his early education in music by frequenting the music circle of his brother Mo'addeb-al-Saltāna. Later he received private lessons in playing the *setār* and *tār* from the masters of the time, Mīrzā 'Abd-Allāhand Āqā Ḥosaynqolī (qq.v.). He also learned the piano and the violin, but he especially distinguished himself with his remarkable virtuosity in playing the *setār*.

He pursued the career of a high-ranking bureaucrat, which led him to live in Europe for several years away from the musical milieu of Persia. His music was appreciated only by a few connoisseurs since he did not play in public and rarely joined the private gatherings of fellow musicians. He did not have much respect for professional musicians, and his only public performance was as a young artist in the concerts given by Anjoman-e Oḳowwat (q.v.), where he played the piano (Kāleqī, I, p. 87), and once at the Shiraz Art Festival (*jašn-e honar*) toward the end of his life. In the 1970s he taught at the newly founded Center for the Preservation and Propagation of Traditional Persian Music (Markaz-e ḥefz o ešā'a-ye mūsīqī-e Irānī), where he trained a number of advanced students that included the current masters Jalāl-al-Dīn Du'l-fonūn and Dārīūš Ṭelā'ī and also had his vast repertoire of Persian music recorded. His repertoire, besides an authentic interpretation of the *radīfs*, included a large number of measured pieces (*rengs* and *pīšdarāmads*), notably the ones composed by Rokn-al-Dīn Moḳtār, that he had memorized and enhanced by skillful interpretation. He himself composed some rhythmic pieces (*zarbī*),



including several melodies in the mode Māhūr specially designed to be played by the *setār*.

Forūtan was an exceptional player of *setār*. He had a unique style of playing, which was very refined and subtle and, at the same time, vigorous and taut with sharp attacks. He had a singular style for producing long and gentle embellishments while maintaining a tremolo (*rīz*). He claimed that his originality came from integrating in his playing the *setār* the styles of all the other instruments that he played.

For a music sample, see [Dašti](#).

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