



HOSSEIN, ANDRÉ

HOSSEIN, ANDRÉ AMINOLLAH, French composer of Persian origins (b. 1905 in Samarkand; d. 1983 in Paris; [Figure 1](#)). His father was a rich merchant, and his mother initiated him in-to music. He was studying in Moscow when the 1917 Revolution occurred. He then left for Germany and continued his studies there, where his father wanted him to do medicine. Simultaneously, however, he studied music at the Stuttgart Conservatory, and later in Tübingen and Berlin, where he studied piano with Arthur Schnabel and composition with W. Klatt. He settled in France in 1927 and entered the Paris Conservatory, where he studied composition and orchestration with Paul Vidal (Maḥmud, pp. 386-90; Akbarzādeh, p. 64).

As a composer, Hossein was much inspired by traditional Persian music, and most of his works demonstrate this intellectual preoccupation. He knew the *tār* very well and could be considered one of the great *tār* players of his time. He began playing this instrument, ancestor to most string instruments, as a child, and later composed several works for it. He was a fairly prolific composer and was generally acclaimed by the critics. He also composed some twenty film scores, mostly for films directed by his son, Robert Hossein, the French actor and director.

His orchestrated works include *Symphonie des sables* (1946), *Symphonie Persepolis* (1947), *Symphonie Arya* (1976), and three concertos for the piano (no. 1 “Capriccio,” 1946; no. 2, 1946; and no. 3 “quasi una fantasia”). His works for the ballet were: *Vers la lumière* (1935), *Miniatures Iraniennes* (1975), *Sheherezade* (1975), *Danse d’Esmeralda* (1980), and *Vacances sur Glace* (1982),



which must have been his last published work. Hossein also composed a number of piano pieces, many of them named after Persian themes, and several songs (Baker and N. Slonimsky; Akbarzādeh, p. 64).

As a composer trying to find expression in Western music for ideas derived from Persian impressions, Hossein must be considered as one of the pioneers whose music was by and large well received. Others, both before and after Hossein, have tried to make use of Persian melodies in classical music, but none received as large an audience as he did. He never attained the depth or breadth of contemporaries such as Bartok and Shostakovich (to name only two) in exploring the possibilities of folkloric music and themes; but, so far as Persian music is concerned, there has been no real successor to Hossein in the West.

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