



ḲĀLEDI, MEHDI

ḲĀLEDI, Mehdi, Persian violinist and songwriter (b. Tehran, 1 Mordād 1298 Š./24 July 1919, d. Tehran, 9 Āḡar 1369 Š./30 November 1990). As a violinist, Ḳāledi was known for his command of traditional Persian music (*musiqi-e aṣi1*) and its innovative interpretation. As a composer, he was admired for the range of his rhythmically varied and elegiac songs.

Education. Ḳāledi was born into a musically inclined family: his father was knowledgeable about traditional Persian music. In his elementary and secondary schooling he acquired a thorough grounding in Persian classical poetry and calligraphy.

Ḳāledi began his apprenticeship 1936 under master violinist Abu'l-Ḥasan Ṣabā, a former student of Mirzā 'Abd-Allāh and [Darviš Khan](#), and 'Ali-Naqi W/Vaziri. For three years Ḳāledi diligently applied himself to learning Ṣabā's repertoire of traditional modes (*radif*) for violin, which the master had considerably condensed, annotated, and textualized (Sepantā, p. 182). After Ḳāledi completed his training, Ṣabā is reputed to have said, "I have had many students, but Ḳāledi falls in a category all by himself" (Naṣirifar, p. 16; Behruzi, pp. 166-67). In the ensuing years, Ḳāledi followed the example of his versatile teacher by learning to play the *setār* and *tombak*, and when the latter died, he composed a dirge, *Ba yād-e Ṣabā* (Remembering Ṣabā), which was sung by [Ḡolām-Ḥosayn Banān](#) and broadcast on the national radio.

Career as violinist and ensemble leader. Radio Tehran inaugurated its national broadcasts on 24 April 1940. In July, on Ṣabā's recommendation, the twenty-



one-year old Ḳāledi auditioned there for the position of resident violin soloist. At Ṣabā's behest, the director of the Conservatory of Music (*Honarestān-e musiqi*), Ġolām-Ḥosayn Minbāšīān, convened a panel of examiners, who endorsed Ḳāledi's mastery of Persian traditional music (Behruzi, p. 168). Ḳāledi subsequently broadcast his own twice-weekly fifteen-minute program of solo performances.

In 1945, at the invitation of All-India Radio, Ḳāledi traveled to Delhi and Bombay, accompanied by a singer and three other instrumentalists. The quintet broadcast a series of Persian musical programs in Delhi and made eighty recordings in Bombay (Naṣirifar, p. 12; Behruzi, p. 163), most of which are lost. The following year Ḳāledi returned to India with three other musicians, including a twenty-two-year-old alto singer known as Delkaš. They performed for All-India Radio in Bombay, Lahore, and Karachi (Naṣirifar, p. 22) and made twenty-five recordings (Behruzi, p. 163; Nakjavāni, p. 57).

Upon his return to Persia, Ḳāledi formed a sixteen-piece ensemble known as the Youth Orchestra, featuring Persian and Western instruments, with Delkaš as its singer and Ḳāledi himself as main soloist and songwriter (Behruzi, pp. 163, 170). His brother, Aṣḡar, an accomplished santur player, was also a member of this orchestra, which had weekly broadcasts on Sunday evenings. The collaboration between Ḳāledi and Delkaš came to an end in 1952 (Behruzi, p. 189).

A few years later, Ḳāledi became director of music (*sarparast-e musiqi*) at Tehran Radio and organized seven broadcast ensembles. As a violinist and songwriter, he collaborated with Dāwud Pirniā in the production of radio programs such as *Golhā-ye jāvidān*, designed to promote Persian traditional music (Behruzi, p. 165; Naṣirifar, p. 33). He also recorded violin performances together with *setār* virtuoso Aḡmad 'Ebādi (q.v.), santur player Aṣḡar Ḳāledi, and tombak player Ḥosayn Hamadāniān.

As both violinist and songwriter, Ḳāledi accorded the human voice a singularly privileged place. Apart from Delkaš, he worked with many other singers, both male and female (Behruzi, p. 170). In addition to his trip to India, Ḳāledi had occasions to visit and perform in Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and the Soviet Azarbaijan (Naṣirifar, pp. 27-28). In 1969, he retired both from the Tehran radio and the Iranian Railroad, where he had been employed. He died in 1990 after several years of suffering from a stroke and throat cancer. Ḳāledi had been married twice and had three children.



Ķāledi as a songwriter. The first song composed by Ķāledi was “Raḡṡ-e parvāna” (Dance of the butterfly), which was later arranged by Ruḡ-Allāh Ķāleḡi and broadcast on Radio Tehran in 1942 (Behruzi, p. 170). Subsequently, Ķāledi wrote 246 songs (*taṡnif, tarāna*) in various modes of the twelve dastgāhs (Behruzi, p. 170). He set to music many poems of major Persian poets, including Hafez, Sa’di, Rumi, and Ķayyām.

In general, Ķāledi’s compositional techniques were informed by the theoretical precepts and innovations of the three elder musicians Ṣabā, Vaziri, and Ķāleḡi; but his compositions are original in that they show the influence of Persian folk songs and the declamatory style of Persian classical poetry. Characteristics of this are his songs’ varying rhythms, combination of plangent but often energetic tempo, and a compressed but intense vocal phraseology.

Contribution to Persian film music. Ķāledi cooperated with Ṣabā in writing music for the lyrics of the film *Ṭufān-e zendagi* (Life’s tempest, 1948). His own success in film music began with the extremely popular songs he wrote for *Ṣarmsār* (Disgraced, 1950), which starred Delkaš. He went on to compose vocal numbers for *Mādar* (Mother, 1951), *Afsungar* (Spellbinder, 1953), *Bāzgašt* (Return, 1953), and *Morād* (1954). In 1955, Ķāledi, Sanasar Ķāčāturiān, and ‘Ali Zāhedī co-produced the film *Mājarā-ye zendagi* (Life story); Ķāledi wrote songs for the star, soprano Faraḡ ‘Āfiatpur, known as Faraḡ Panāhi (Issari, pp. 266-67, 269, 272, 275-76, 280; Maghsoudlou, p. 465).

Style as a violinist. Ķāledi has credited a number of musicians with having influenced his exceptional style as a violinist, among them Ṣabā, violinist and *kamānča* player Ḥosayn Yāḡaḡḡi, *kamānča* player ‘Ali-Reza Čangi, *santur* player Ḥabīb Samā’i, singers Adīb Ķvānsāri, Tāj Eṡfahāni, Jawād Badī’zāda, Mortazā Neydāwud, *tār* players Mortazā Neydāwud, ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Ṣahnāzi, composer Ruḡ-Allāh Ķāleḡi, and his own father (Behruzi, pp. 164-65). Ķāledi’s performance aesthetics, however, derived mainly from his own conviction that musical instruments and compositions should express, as far as possible, the affective richness of the human voice in general, and the rhythm of Persian classical poetry and modern lyrics in particular. Ķāledi made a practice of performing solos with selected poems, mostly of Hafez’s *divān* open before him on his music stand (Nawwāb-e Ṣafā, p. 117).

In his violin playing, Ķāledi tended to omit the intricate but essential ornamentations of Persian music known as *riza-kāri*. His was not an ostentatiously virtuoso style, yet it required considerable technical facility,



concentration, and dedication. His performance always came across as authentic, pure, sonorous, and emotionally vibrant.

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Selected discography. Mehdi Ḳāledi, accompanied by Ḥosayn Hamadāniān on tombak, Violin Solo 1, (Šur, Šur Salmak, Homāyun, Dašti); *Violin Solo 2* (Šahrzād, Bayāt-e Ešfahān, Bayāt-e Tork, Afšāri); *Violin Solo 3* (Segāh, Māhur, Šuštari, Ĉahārgāh), audiocassettes, *C and G Audio and Video Recording and Reproducing, Northridge, Cal., 1984.*

Mehdi Ḳāledi, violin, Aḡmad ‘Ebādi, setār, Ašḡar Ḳāledi, santur, Mehrdād Ḳāledi tombak: Homāyun, Šuštari, Āvāz-e Ešfahān, Āvāz-e Bayāt-e Tork, Kānun-e parvareš-e fekri-e kudakān o now-javānān, n.p., n.d. Mehdi Ḳāledi, violin, Aḡmad ‘Ebādi, setār, Ḥasan Kasā’i, *ney*, Mortazā Maḡjubi, songwriter:



Šāk-e gol 6, Irān-šadā, n.d.

Selected song compositions(mode: lyricist/poet, title). Abu 'Aṭā: Kāju Kermāni, "Maḥram-e rāz"; Mir-Nāṣer Šarifi, "Sāqi." Afšāri: Ḥāfez, "Goftam, goftā"; Mir Nāṣer Šarifi, "Deldāda." Bayāt-e Tork: Parviz Kaṭibi, "Mārā bas"; Nawwāb-e Šafā, "Nāla-ye del." Bayāt-e Ešfahān: Foruḡi Beštāmi, "Mehrbāni"; Māzandarān folksong, "Maryam jān"; Nawwāb-e Šafā, "Āmād nowbahār"; Sa'di, "Ru-ye zibā"; Mir-Nāṣer Šarifi, "Biqarār." Čahārgāh: Parviz Kaṭibi, "Kanda wa gerya; Rahi Mo'ayyeri, "Maḥfel-e 'ešq"; Nawwāb-e Šafā, "Daḡ-e lāla." Dašti: 'Aṭṭār, "Zolf-e yār"; Parviz Kaṭibi, "Nāla-ye ney"; Mo'ini Kermānšāhi, "Gereftār"; Nāder Nāderpur, "Didār"; Rumi, "Su-ye mastān"; Bižan Taraqqi, "Ešq-e waṭan." Homāyun: Mehdi Kāledi, "Doḡtar-e bāḡ"; Parviz Kaṭibi, "Bāḡ o čaman"; Rahi Mo'ayyeri, "Be-kenar-am benšin"; Mir-Nāṣer Šarifi, "Beḡvāhi naḡvāhi," "Afsorda-del." Māhur: Rahi Mo'ayyeri, "Ātaš-e jān," "Golbarg"; Mir-Nāṣer Šarifi, "Ra'nā jān," "Tab-e 'ešq," "Yār āmad." Segāh: Dānešvari, "Botsāz"; Karim Fakur, "Nāzanin-e man"; Nawwāb-e Šafā, "Ro'yā-ye šā'er." Šur: Simin Behbahāni, "Gol-e ro'yā"; Māzandarān folksong, "Āy bānu"; Mehdi Kāledi, "Če konam"; Nawwāb-e Šafā, "Nā-omid, rafti." Šuštari: Simin Behbahāni, "Borrow"; Parviz Kaṭibi, "Ṭa'na-ye yār."