



KĀNUN-E PARVAREŠ-E FEKRI-E KUDAKĀN VA NOWJAVĀNĀN VI. MUSIC AND SOUND PRODUCTION

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In 1967, Kanun produced only one storytelling phonograph record—"The little mermaid" (see above, i; [Figure 1](#)). Later, a sound version of Šamad Behrangī's "The little black fish" ([Figure 2](#)) was also produced for Kanun by Ẕosrow Bornuš, who was working for NIRT as a sound technician at the time. Regular music and sound production did not begin until four years later in 1971, when Aḥmad-Rezā Aḥmadi (see below, viii) was invited to establish the center for music and sound production. Kanun was aware that the task's most important prerequisite was talent in communication; he, though not a musician, with his easygoing and witty manner on the one hand, and a good ear for music on the other, succeeded in producing beautiful musical collections with the help of a small team of four colleagues. He can also be credited with recording for posterity voices that today, more than thirty years later, are considered part of the country's valuable audio cultural heritage (see below). In less than eight



years, thanks in no small part to the talent and perseverance of Aḥmadi and his small team, the Center for the Production of Records and Cassettes for Children and Young Adults (Markaz-e tahiye-ye navār va šafḥ-e barā-ye kudakān va nowjavānān) produced five collections of quality recordings befitting a major company in the United States or Europe: “Folk music,” “Traditional Iranian modes,” “The voice of the poet,” and “Songs for children,” and “Great music composers and their works.” Also produced were a series of audio books for children (Aḥmadi, 2001, pp. 183-204).

“*Folk music.*” New arrangements written by Fereydun Šahbāziān, Kāmbiz Rošanravān, Ardešir Ruḥāni, Esmā‘il Tehrāni, Esmā‘il Vāteqi, and Varoj Hakhbandian (1935-78, known as Varoujan), and orchestrated for both traditional instrumentalists and classical musicians, revitalized many beautiful folk songs. They were performed by vocalists such as Pari Zangeneh, Monir Vakili, and Minu Javan (all with classical music education backgrounds; [Figure 10](#)).

The quality of these new versions of old folk songs of different regions, while observing the local dialects and accents, opened a new avenue in music production, not only in the folk songs branch but also in Iranian popular music. The one-time recording process was replaced by sound mixing techniques, which allowed the composers/arrangers to work on different parts—on the desired performances and sound quality separately—and to separate the recording of the vocalists and the chorus. His experience in the folk music genre persuaded Aḥmadi to apply the same editing techniques to other musical revivals. Sometimes he resurrected century-old songs, which were recorded in polished performances with creative new arrangements. These recordings created a taste for long forgotten old numbers among the younger generation that was discovering them for the first time. The music and lyrics of Šaydā and ‘Āref Qazvini (q.v.), artists of the Constitutional Revolution (q.v.) era, made a comeback thanks to excellent arrangements by Vāteqi, admirably performed by Simā Māfihā.

A new and difficult challenge was to write and compose music on New Wave poets. The experience familiarized the younger generation not only with new poems, but also with operatic music. Rāmin Entezāmi (son of the prolific Iranian actor ‘Ezzat-Allāh Entezāmi), a young classical music student and instrumentalist (violin), who since then has composed for films and written musical plays for children in Germany such as “Mouse and lion” (*Muš o šir*), was invited to compose on poets selected from collections by Hušang Ebtehāj



(Sāyeh), Yad-Allāh Ro'yā'i, Farhād Šaybāni, Mehdi Aḳavān Tālet, and Sohrāb Sepehri. Pari Zangeneh, who revitalized many folk songs with her lyric voice, is the vocalist on the album "Songs of today" (*Āvāzhā-ye emruz*; see Aḥmadi, pp. 188-96 as well as one of those on "Folk music."

"*Traditional Iranian modes.*" Kāmbiz Rowšan Ravān (a U.S. music graduate and teacher) produced the collection of ten 33rpm vinyl records, containing all the modes of Persian classical systems. (Each sequence of melodies is explained on the covers with a full description of each mode, in both Persian and English.) The modes are played as documented in the collection published by Musā Ma'rufi, with talented instrumentalists such as Hušang Žarif (*tār*), Mehrbānu Towfiq (*setār*), Raḥmat-Allāh Badi'i (*kamānča*, q.v.), Kamāl Sāme'i (*ney*), and Esmā'il Tehrāni (*santur*). The voice of Moḥammad-Rezā Šajariān, today a world-famous Iranian traditional singer, was recorded for the first time on records in this collection. The collection, while having its shortcomings, is still the one and only exhaustive reference collection on the subject (Aḥmadi, pp. 199-201; author's personal communication with Aḥmadi).

"*The voice of the poet.*" Not only children, but also many adults with higher education, have difficulty reading and reciting classical poems of the great Persian poets. The New Persian language is generally written without any phonetic signs for short vowels, which are often necessary for adults or children to read correctly.

Moreover, the New Wave style of Persian poetry was also strange and difficult to read for people, young and old, who, for centuries, had been used to different Persian rhythmic styles of classical poetry (*ghazal*, *robā'i*, *qašida*, *maṭnavi*, etc.). "The voice of the poet" was, and still is, effective in alleviating some of these problems, attracting younger generations to Persian poetry, and familiarizing them with it.

Of contemporary poets, Nāder Nāderpur (1929-2000), Aḥmad Šāmlu (1925-2000), Hušang Ebtehāj (1927-), and Šahriār (1906-88) recited their own poems for the collection. Bižan Mofid, actor and playwright, recited those of Aḥmad-Rezā Aḥmadi. Aḥmad Šāmlu recited poems of Nimā Yušij, as well as great classics of Mawlavi (Rumi), Rudaki, and Sa'di, accompanied by specially composed music for each title of this collection by Sheida Gharachedaghi, Aḥmad Pežmān, Fereydoun Šahbāziān, Esfandyār Monfaredzādeh, Parviz Atābaki, and Karim Gugerdči (Aḥmadi, pp. 196-98; author's interview with Aḥmadi; [Figure 11](#)).



“*Songs for children.*” Simin Ġadiri, a music graduate and children’s music teacher who had composed and sung songs on poems written by Maḥmud Kiānuš for her classes, was invited to record her songs for Kanun. Fariborz Lāčini worked on the songs, and new versions and orchestrations of Simin Ġadiri’s songs, with her own voice, were recorded on two albums. These were more directly aimed at children and were among the most successful children’s song collections produced by Kanun. They were widely played and sung in schools and cultural centers. (Today, as women’s singing is at odds with strict codes, they are no longer in Kanun’s reissue program; see below, ix.) For the well-known album “Other songs” (*Āvāzhā-ye digar*), produced by Simin Ġadiri and Fariborz Lāčini, in addition to Maḥmud Kiānuš, poets such as Žilā Mosā’ed, Behruz Razavi, and Aḥmad-Režā Aḥmadi also contributed to the project (Aḥmadi, pp. 202-3; author’s interview with Aḥmadi).

“*Great music composers and their works.*” The life and works of Iranian musicians such as Abu’l-Ḥasan Ṣabā (1902-57; [Figure 12](#)), Amin-Allāh Hussein (also known as Andre Hossein, 1905-83; q.v.; [Figure 13](#)) as well as such classical music figures as J. S. Bach, L. van Beethoven, Antonio Vivaldi, Franz Schubert, Frédéric Chopin, and P. I. Tchaikovsky were introduced in this collection. For the Ṣabā production, old recordings of his voice were mixed on tracks of his violin recordings.

For the Hussein record, Arsalān Sāsāni, a music lover and filmmaker, flew to Paris to record a conversation with him. This is among the rare registered conversations with the composer in Persian. (The tape was a valuable source for the present writer on Hussein, including samples of his compositions and the voice of the Iranian-born French composer.)

For the classical music project, Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker* stories were narrated, accompanied by his music. Some of the best translators of the day, such as Moḥammad Qāzi, Ḳosrow Sami’i, Bižan Ḳorsand, and newcomers Purān Solḥ-e Koll and Behroḳ Montazmi, were invited to collaborate for this collection. Lily Amiranjomand contributed to the collection by translating a biography of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It was narrated by the best dramatic voice of Iran, Manouchehr Anvar, a Shakespearian London Dramatic Arts graduate, actor, and filmmaker. He also contributed in both Persian and English to most of the 12 editions of the pre-Revolution international children’s film festivals organized by Kanun, recording bilingually the “in-competition films” starting announcements (synopses and generics; see Aḥmadi, pp. 188-99; author’s interview with Aḥmadi).



“*Audio books for children.*” In this collection, there were a number of fables and stories written by Iranian poet/writers—such as Manučehr Neyestāni, M. Āzād, Nur-al-Din Zarrinkelk, and Šamad Behrangi—that had already been published by Kanun. On record, these were recounted in different styles—recited, narrated, or delivered in the form of radio plays, accompanied by special compositions from Sheida Gharachedaghi (see above, iii and vi). There were also translations of foreign children’s stories, such as Oscar Wilde’s “The Happy Prince” (tr. F. Moezi-Moghadam as *Šāhzāde-ye šād*, 1976).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See at end of part [IX](#).