



## MINBĀŠIĀN, ĠOLĀM-ḤOSAYN

**MINBĀŠIĀN, Ġolām-Ḥosayn**, violinist, pianist, and conductor of orchestra (b. Tehran, 5 Ābān 1286 Š/25 Nov. 1907; d. Tehran, Ābān 1357 Š /Nov. 1978). He was the son of Ġolām-Rezā Minbāšiān Sālār Mo‘azzaz and is known for his contemptuous disregard for traditional Persian music and his attempts to restructure and, to some extent, replace it with Western music.

Minbāšiān left Persia for Europe after finishing the music school of *Dār al-Fonun* to study music at the Geneva Conservatory. There he studied the violin and the piano for three years and learned the principles of harmony. He was one of the most studious students of the conservatory and each year was awarded the first prize for the performance of the violin and received special honors for his achievements in the field of harmony. He then, at the recommendation of his father, transferred to the Berlin Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Klate, Bohmke, and Robert Mendelssohn and learned the techniques of conducting an orchestra (Behruzi, pp. 535-38).

Minbāšiān returned to Persia in 1932 and entered the military academy and was commissioned as first lieutenant after six months of military training. He then served in the music department of the army as the assistant director and within two years was appointed director of the Conservatory of National Music (*Honarestān-e musiqi*) and four years later became the director of the department of music in the Ministry of Education (*Edāra-ye musiqi-e kešvar*).

Minbāšiān, who was totally uninterested in Persian music, was resolved to reshape the institution after the model of Western conservatories. Following



the edict of Reżā Shah that Persian music must be reformed and based on the principles of Western music and that any performance or publications concerning music would be banned unless they be in conformity with “modern music” (*musiqi-e jadid*), he omitted the teaching of all Persian instruments from the curriculum and terminated all instructions concerning traditional Persian music (see the edict in *Majalla-ye musiqi* 1/1-2, 1939, p. 4). He had all the *tārs* (a long-necked lute) placed in the storage and assigned the master musicians Musā Maʿrufi to a menial desk job and forbade the performance of Persian music at the conservatory (Kāleqi, III, p. 80). He compared the playing of Persian instruments such as *tār*, *tombak* (chalice drum), and *kamānča* (a spike fiddle) with Western music as a camel in a hopeless race against a railroad train, only to find out that it was lagging farther behind all the time. He believed that Persian music had been stagnant in the past and had served no purpose for the common people except to help arouse their carnal desires on festive occasions, and, furthermore, if some elite could take occasional pleasure in them it would be solely because of the beauty of the vocalized lyrics (Minbāšīān, p. 2; Loṭfi, p. 86). Minbāšīān was eventually dismissed from office in 1941 by the Prime Minister [Moḥammad-ʿAli Foruqi](#), who was fond of traditional Persian music and an admirer of Ḥabib Samāʿi, the master performer of the *santur* (hammered dulcimer). Samāʿi made him aware of the forsaken position of Persian music at the conservatory, thereupon he appointed two masters of Persian music, [ʿAli-Naqi Vaziri](#) and [Ruḥ-Allāh Kāleqi](#), to run that institution (Şafwat, p. 63).

Significant measures taken by Minbāšīān during his tenure in office include the hiring of ten Czechoslovak musicologists, publishing a music magazine (*Majalla-ye musiqi*), composing a number of anthems for elementary school children, and training music instructors for elementary and high schools (Kāleqi, p. 591)

For a music sample, see [Hymn of Fozieh](#).

For a music sample, see [Iranian National March](#).



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

Šāpur Behruzi, *Čehrahā-ye musiqi-e Irān*, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1993.

Ruḥ-Allāh Kāleqi, *Sargodašt-e musiqi-e Irān* III, ed. Sāsān Sepantā, Tehran, 1998; ed. ‘Ali-Mohammad Rašidi, Tehran, 1998.

Moḥammad-Rezā Loṭfi, ed., *Ketāb-e sāl-e Šeyda*, no. 1, Washington, D.C., 1992.

Ġolām-Ĥosayn MinbāšĪān, “Musiqi-e kešvar,” *Majalla-ye musiqi* 1/1-2, 1939, pp. 1-3.

Sāsān Sepantā, *Čašmandāz-e musiqi-e Irān*, Tehran, 1990, pp. 162-65.

Dāriuš Šafwat, *Pažuheš-i kutāh dar bāra-ye ostādān-e musiqi-e Irān wa alḥān-e musiqi-e irāni*, Tehran, n.d.