



ŽARRĀBI, MOLUK

ŽARRĀBI, Moluk, the stage name of Moluk Faršforuš Kāšāni (b. Kāšān, ca 1289 Š./1910; d. Tehran, 1378 Š./1999), Persian singer and actress. Moluk was born into a musically inclined family. Her grandfather Ḥāji Ja‘far was known as a singer at the court of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah Qājār, who bestowed upon him the honorary name of “Bolol” (Nightingale); thereafter, he was known as Ḥāji Ja‘far Bolbol. Her father Ḥāji Ḥosayn Faršforuš also had a local reputation for his good voice. She inherited the family’s vocal talent and precociously exhibited it at the age of seven. Her early desire to sing entailed familial discontentment and social ostracism at school as it nearly did for every musically gifted girl of her time. In spite of all the difficulties, Moluk was found to be singing at social gathering in Kāšān at the age of thirteen in 1923 (Māleki, pp. 196-97).

Initial recognition and musical training. Moluk Kāšāni credited singer Sayyed Ḥosayn T rāherzādawith discovering her potential as a singer at the home of the patron of music ‘Eyn-al-Solṭān and for offering her two years of vocal lessons. She also cited one-headed drum (*tombak/żarb*) player Ḥāji Khan ‘Eyn-al-Dawla’i to have tutored her for a year in rhythmic patterns of metered Persian songs (Ḥāddādi, p. 380; Māleki, p. 196). Her alto voice with its limited one-octave range was suited to singing rhythmic, through-composed songs (*tasĀnif-e żarbi*), in distinction to the unmetred *āvāz*, the prominent Persian modal chants. In time, she became so widely identified with such rhythmic songs that she was given the stage name Žarrābi, which derives from her mastery of tašnif-e żarbi. She also received vocal lessons from the singer Abu’l-



Ḥasan Eqbāl Āḍar and was considered to be one of his students (Ḥāddādi, p. 42; Sepantā, p. 212). She also attentively listened to recordings of Persian music available to her, particularly those of master singer Qamar-al-Moluk Waziri.

Musical and stage career. Žarrābi’s professional career as a singer began with two public performances in Tehran at Firuz Bahrām High School and with master *setār* player Aḥmad ‘Ebādi at The Grand Hotel in 1924. Later, she joined *tār* player Esmā’il Mehrtāš’s music-theater group Jāme’a-ye Bārbod that had been established in 1926. Her collaboration with the pioneering Bārbod orchestra resulted in her performances in such plays as *‘Adālat* (Justice), and musicals and recordings such as *Ḳosrow o Širin* and *Layli o Majnun*. These performances ensured Žarrābi a place on the roster of prominent singers and the actresses of the first half of the 20th century Persian theater and cinema.

Soon after the establishment of Radio Tehran in 1940, Žarrābi was invited to sing with various broadcast ensembles. For these radio programs, she associated with such well-known musicians as violinist Abu’l-Ḥasan Šabā and Ḥosayn Yāḥaqqi, pianist Mortazā Maḥjubi, *santur* player Ḥabib Samā’i, and tombak player Ḥosayn Tehrāni. Lyricist Ḥasan Sālek provided the lyrics and Ḥosayn Yāḥaqqi composed the song “Kisti” (Who are you?) for Žarrābi’s inaugural radio performance. About 1957, Žarrābi was chosen as the honorary member of Radio Tehran Orchestra Number Seven or Orkestr-e viža (Special orchestra) under the direction of violinist ‘Abd-Allāh Jahān-panāh (Māleki, pp. 196-97).

Recordings and songs. In 1938, Žarrābi traveled with musicians Esmā’il Mehrtāš, Abu’l-Ḥasan Šabā, Ḥosaynqoli Ṭāṭā’i and singers Jawād Badi’zāda, Tāj Ešfahāni, Maleka Ḥekmat-še‘ār (laer Maleka Honar), and Adib Ḳvānsari to Syria and Lebanon to make recordings (Behruzi, p. 166; Mašḥun, p. 601). Žarrābi’s recordings include *‘Ašeq-am man* (I am in love) for the recording company Odeon, the operetta *Ḳosrow o Širin* and *Ḳod-setā’i-e Širin* (Širin’s song of self-praise), which she performed with Mehrtāš’s Bārbod orchestra (Sepantā, p. 178). Among her well-known recorded songs are “Sargašta deldār o ḡām-e hejran” (The confused beloved and the sorrow of separation), “Arus-e golaz bād-e šabā” (Flower bride, floating on a gentle breeze), “Doḳtarān-e Sirus” (Cyrus’s daughters), “To rafti o ‘ahd-e ḳod šekasti” (You left and broke your promise), “Ey šuḳ, eynegārā” (Oh, playful beloved!), and “Mawsem-e gol” (Flower season; Behruzi, p. 514; Māleki, pp. 197-99; Sepantā, pp. 116, 178).



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