



ZELLI, REZĀQOLI MIRZĀ

ZELLI, Rezāqoli Mirzā (b. Tehran, 1906; d. Tehran, 1945), singer. Zelli lost his father, Aḥmad Mirzā, in childhood and was brought up by his elder brother. He got a job in the telephone company after finishing middle school. He became a teacher later and was finally employed by Bank Melli Iran. He studied the repertoire (*radif*) of Persian music with [Āref Qazvini](#) for a while and then with the famous singer of the time [Eqbāl Āḍar](#) (Purmandān, p. 144; Behruzi, p. 449). He was, however, diagnosed with tuberculosis in his early youth and was, therefore, prescribed to live in a cool area with clean air and also quit singing. He moved to the mountainous area of Hamadān in 1941, but, disregarding his doctor's prescription, continued to sing. Hīasan Mašḥun (II, p. 668) mentions a memorable evening when Zelli and another singer, Sayyed Rezā Aṭṭār, kept singing until dawn. Zelli succumbed to the illness at the age of 38.

Zelli had a clear voice with wide range, which his distinct, beautiful yodeling (*taḥrir*; see [ĀVĀZ](#)) made especially enchanting. Zelli's singing was influenced by the piano music of Hīabib-Allāh Mošīr Homāyun, and is an exemplary of the Tehran singing school. A selection of his singing, accompanied by the piano of Mošīr Homāyun, were published on phonograph records in 1933. These singings are in the modes of Čahār Gāh, [Bayāt-e Tork](#), [Bayāt-e Ešfahān](#), [Homāyun](#), [Afšāri](#), and [Abu 'Aṭā](#), and they are considered among the most beautiful samples of Persian singing. He also left two more recordings in the modes of Šur and Segāh, accompanied by Arsalān Dargāhi's *setār* and Abu'l-Ḥasan Šabā's violin, respectively (Behruzi, pp. 254, 451).



For a music sample, see [Dastgāh-e Čahārgāh](#).

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